

A very warm welcome to you dear students, to this paper titled on psychological research. This is Semester 6 and the paper code is PSC 109.

This is unit #1 and the title of the unit is basics of research in psychology. The module name is meaning and goals of psychological research.

I am doctor Michelle Fernandes from Carmel College of Arts, Science and Commerce for women.

In this session we will be talking about the meaning of psychological research, we will be also looking at the different goals of research in psychology.

By the end of this lecture, you will be able to understand the definition and the meaning of research. You should also be able to describe the various goals of research in psychology.

What exactly is research? Research is basically an inquisitiveness. We all possess this inquisitiveness and this inquisitiveness is the mother of all knowledge. The need to understand why, how, when for simple things. So, inquisitiveness is the mother of all knowledge.

Inquisitiveness is the birth of research. It is the method for obtaining knowledge of the unknown. When we're talking about research, we're talking about finding out something that is not known and that is what is research.

You can also define research as a movement, a movement from something that is known to something that is not known or unknown. It is like a voyage, a voyage of discovery, a slow process. You start with one and you go on to the other.

Research is also like a search for knowledge, you're searching for something that is unknown. You're searching for something that is unknown that needs to be found out.

It is also a scientific systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic. Research, in other words, is an art of scientific investigation.

Now let's look at the various definitions of research. I'll be doing a few definitions to give you a broad idea of how different people view research.

Fred Kerlinger, 1976 in the year 1976, he is one of the well-known researchers. He defines research as "a systematic, controlled, empirical and critical investigation of hypothetical propositions about the presumed relations among natural phenomenon".

So you're looking at research in terms of a systematic, a controlled, an empirical and a critical investigation.

Now these all are based on hypothetical propositions. Now what is a hypothetical proposition? For example, somebody knocks at the door, you don't know who it is based on the knock, you make a hypothetical proposition, it could be this particular person

Now for example, if you and your family members knock in a particular way, you will say it could be this member of the family. If it is another kind of a knock, you will say it must be someone else who does not belong to part in the immediate part of the family.

So, it is a hypothetical proposition and you will be able to identify who it is only when you open the door. So same thing with research, you make a proposition, a hypothetical proposition about what could be the relations of something that has occurred, and you study that through a systematic and controlled empirical analytical investigation.

Let's look at another definition. This is by Clifford Woody and he says research comprises of defining and redefining problems. Now Kerlinger did not talk about defining and redefining problems when he defined research.

Now defining problems and redefined a problem that existed could no longer exist in the future or in the present. A problem that was defined in a particular way in the past could be defined in a different way in the future. So, he calls research or he defines research as, Defining and redefining problems, formulating hypothesis, collecting, organizing, and evaluating data. He also says making deductions and reaching conclusions to determine whether they fit the formulating hypothesis.

Another definition by Slesinger and Stevenson from the Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences says that research can be defined as the manipulation of things, concepts, and symbols for the purpose of generalizing to the extent, correct or verify knowledge, whether that knowledge aids in construction of theory or in the practice of an art.

And so, these are different definitions. I gave you a bouquet of different definitions to just look at how different people view research. Different people define research.

So, in conclusion, we can look at research as a systematic method consisting of initiating the problem, formulating the hypothesis, collecting facts or data, analysing the facts, and reaching certain conclusions either in the form of solutions towards the concerned problem, or in certain generalizations from some theoretical formulation.

So, research would be categorized as the process of collecting, analyzing, interpreting information to answer questions, and research would be rigorous, systematic, controlled, critical, empirical Valid and verifiable.

From all the definitions you can extract these characteristics of research as rigorous, systematic, controlled, critical empirical, verifiable and valid.

Now let's proceed, proceed on to the goals of psychological research.

Why do we need to do research? We need to do research to find knowledge, but why do we need to research in psychology?

There are four basic goals as to why we need to do research.

Description, prediction, explanation and application.

We do each of them in detail.

Now when we're doing research for the goal of description, we're trying to find out what is happening and why we're doing that.

We're trying to identify regularly occurring sequences of events, both stimuli and environmental influence events and responses or behavioral events.

Take for example aggression, in some primate species. Now when you want to describe aggression among primate species, you could list out the situations in which they are most likely to fight, they are most likely to be aggressive like for example over food over a mate, etc.

You could describe the various types of threats signals that might precede actual combat, like before they actually start with their aggressive behavior. What would be their signals be like bearing of the teeth? Hunching of their shoulders, etc.

For cats, for example, it would be the wagging of their tails, so you know that they're going to be aggressive.

You could also find out the form of fight itself, the form of fight itself would be how they're actually being aggressive,

So how they would attack their opponents, where they would attack their opponents?

This would all be describing, description would also involve classification of various forms of aggressive behavior, like for example whether it's fighting or predation. It would also provide a clear, accurate description.

Without it, predictions cannot be made and explanations are meaningless.

Now in research in psychology Most research is basically descriptive.

Like for example, you have observational research. You have survey research wherein you're describing behavior.

The next goal is prediction. Through research in psychology you are able or the goal of research in psychology is to be able to predict behavior when will behavior occur again.

Now, once you have established the two events can occur. Systematically, they are related to one another. Then you can make a prediction.

For example, researchers found out that more attractiveness is associated to more lenient sentence.

What are implications of prediction?

It allows us to anticipate events. We know if two things occurring together, what will happen? So, we anticipate an event.

It helps us make better decisions. It strengthens the relationship between behavior and a law of behavior. So you know the behavior. you know the law and that helps you make predictions.

Now, an example of prediction taking the same example of primates. When two primates fight over food and one win the same 2 animals will not fight again.

Now, if this happens again and again repeatedly, if two animals fight and one animal wins. In future, whenever there's an encounter, that animal will not fight with that predator with its opponent, simply because it knows that previously it has fought and it has lost.

That is prediction, so you're able to predict. The animal predicts that if I fight, I will lose, so it's better not to fight.

The third goal is explanation. Why is this happening?

You want to know why an event has happened, why a particular behavior occurs.

Take for example the relationship between television violence and aggression.

We know it's such a big problem. Television violence and aggression.

So you want to explain why aggression takes place. Is it due to imitation? Is it due to modeling after you see violence on TV, you behave like that? Is it a result of desensitisation to violence and its effects? You're not worried about? It does not affect you. Violence does not affect you anymore because you're desensitized to the violence.

Does watching TV violence lead to a belief that aggression is a normal response to frustration and conflict.

All these are examples of explaining behavior.

The fourth goal of a psychological research is application. You're applying principles of behavior learned through research. Psychologists assume that because of the knowledge derived from the research, that they do, it is possible for people's lives to change for the better.

For example, research on factors influencing depression. This would help the therapist to help people diagnose depression to help people who are diagnosed with depression, how they can overcome it.

Research on aggression can help parents raise children more effectively, so one of the goals of research in psychology is to apply that research to everyday life.

I hope you have understood the definition of research the various goals.

For this module you can refer to these books for a little more knowledge.

I hope you all had a pleasant experience learning.

I wish you all the very best.

Thank you.