

Hello students, welcome to the program.

Bachelor of Arts third year subject Psychology Semester 6 course code PSC109, Course title
Psychological Research.

I am Asst. Professor Maria Fatima D'Costa and I will present to you on Unit 4- Non-Experimental
methods of psychological research.

The name of this module is case studies.

The outline of this presentation will be a small introduction on Non - Experimental Research followed by

The application of the case study approach.

The major phases involved in case study and finally the evaluation of case studies.

At the end of this presentation, you will be able to understand the meaning of case studies and also
evaluate both the benefits and the limitations of using a case study approach in psychological research.

Before we begin with what is case studies, I would like to highlight a few points on non-experimental
Research.

So far in the previous modules you have already learned what is experimental research, the designs and
the methods.

Non- experimental research focuses on providing descriptive results.

It does not establish a cause effect relationship between the variables of study. And does not involve any
manipulation of control variables or independent variables.

So what is a case study?

A case study in psychology can be described as a detailed description and analysis of a single
individual or a group or even an event. Commonly case studies are also referred to as case history

because it is a close analysis of the history of a person's life or even a part of it.

Case studies are a type of qualitative research because the description is often in a narrative form.

Although it involves qualitative research, the data can also be quantitative in nature, like that from the results obtained from psychological testing.

One of the famous practitioners of a case study approach was Sigmund Freud. Sigmund Freud developed his own personality theory based on case studies that is detailed case studies of his patients in order to understand and help them overcome their illnesses.

Case study is a common approach used in psychology, often by psychologist, therapist, including psychiatrists.

The case study method incorporates a variety of other methods and therefore it is not limited to a single source of data. The sources included depend on what is available and what is relevant for studying the case. These are some of the methods that are incorporated in the case study approach.

Physiological measures, like brain scans, psychometric measures like IQ tests, archival data like student records, information from libraries, public agencies, court records which can be both quantitative as well as qualitative in nature.

They can include interviews. That is, interviews from significant people who are under study or those who are closely related to them. These serve as most important source for case studies.

Besides, you have systematic observations of behavior which can be direct or participant observation.

And finally, documents like letters, newspaper articles, notes, and even pictures can be a part of case studies.

The application of a case study approach.

Case studies are commonly used in clinical work in order to understand and illustrate the causes for psychological disorders as well as treatment for the disorders.

The other disciplines that also use case studies are history, management, anthropology and even medicine.

Case studies on individuals with brain damage or trauma help us to understand brain functioning.

Besides clinical work in psychology or the branch of psychology that uses case studies involves experimental psychology, experts in the field of management, anthropologists, sociologists, historians, and even novelists make use of case study approach to understand the problems and find solutions in their specific areas.

Although case studies involve individuals, it also applies to the analysis of unique events.

Major phases in case study involves identifying recognition and determination of the phenomenon or the problem to be investigated. This is followed by data collection involving various sources of data examination and history of the given phenomenon.

Identification of the causal factors forms the basis for the treatment employed, application of treatment and therapy is often characterized as a case work.

Finally, it also includes follow up programs in order to determine the effectiveness of the treatments.

Case studies help researchers to collect a great deal of information.

They provide a detailed analysis, which is often absent in other research strategies. A good case study also provides prototypical descriptions of certain types of individuals, and this information is very valuable to clinicians who can then make comparisons for their own clients.

Case studies further provide an inductive support for theories they suggest hypothesis for further testing

using other several methods and also for falsifying any weak theories.

Case studies are a definitely useful source of detailed information for researchers.

Also, case studies help to construct appropriate questionnaires or schedules as this involves a thorough knowledge of the unit of study.

Case studies allow the use of several research methods and this definitely makes case study approach a flexible one.

Like all research methods, case studies also have their own limitations.

They can be highly subjective. Because it depends on the researcher's interpretation of the responses given by the participants or even evaluation of the problem under study.

The conclusions that are derived from a case study are based on a single case and therefore they cannot be generalized to the population because this could add to problems with external validity.

Case study includes collecting large amounts of data and all the data may not be relevant, and so it may lead to waste of resources.

Case studies also lack control over extraneous variables.

Extraneous variables are of least importance to experimenters and researchers, and if they're not controlled then they can affect the outcome of the research.

Case studies are also difficult to replicate because they involve the study of an individual or unique events that can be time-consuming and also expensive if it is a study involving a large sample.

Information also can sometimes be distorted in order to fit the particular theories about behavior.

This is also called as a theoretical bias of the researcher.

One of the final limitations of the case studies is based on memory failures.

Participants in a case study are often required to recall events from the past.

Limitations to memory of participants and researchers are definitely observed where memories are distorted by several incidents that occur between the target event and its recall.

Our subsequent memories are often constructions of the event and the late occurrences.

This brings us to the summary of today's presentation.

Case studies provide a framework for observations made by several methods.

It involves detailed factual information.

Case studies is a common practice in clinical work in order to study people with common disorder or even those with rare attributes.

Yet it is a method which is susceptible to bias.

Finally, to conclude, case studies is one of the best ways to understand the psychology of an individual.

It is a research method that concentrates on the individual, but yet the results cannot be easily generalized.

Case studies is a useful method in generating new research ideas, and definitely an important method for psychological research.

Well, we have come to the end of this presentation.

You can refer to the following books on research in psychology by Goodwin, Kothari and Kumar for further reading and reference.

Thank you.