

Advance Course in Social Psychology

Lecture 04: Methods Adopted in Social Psychology: Part II

Hello friends, welcome back. So today I will continue with the second module that is methods adopted in social psychology. And I will continue my discussion with another method apart from observation, experimental and case study that is questionnaire method. It is one of the most popular and classical research method that is being used in social psychology to understand human behavior and measure human behavior. Questionnaire was invented by Sir Francis Galton and forms a backbone of any survey and its success lies in the design of a questionnaire. As the term implies questionnaire, this simply entails questions which target the population and the specific behavior pattern and if it is well planned, then it evokes certain pattern of behavior.

So when we are talking about questionnaire method, so we can define questionnaire as a planned research method in which there is a series of standardized stimuli in form of questions which are presented before the subject to elicit certain kind of responses and these responses are collected to gather information about an individual's attitude, thoughts, behaviors and emotions. So as rightly said that any questionnaire forms the backbone of any survey and its success lies in the design of a questionnaire. That means the items in the questions and the language of the question should be designed in a way that it touches the specific behavioral aspect that is being measured and becomes scientific in its true manner. So when we are talking about questionnaire, there are standardized stimuli in terms of questions which are very much relevant to the subjects, which are relevant to the larger population and which are very much relevant to a specific thought, emotion, feelings and behavior.

So questionnaire is about, its forms, the questionnaires are of two forms, the closed or the structured questionnaire or open or the unstructured questionnaire. So right now I will talk about closed or structured questionnaires which is the most frequently used form of questionnaire. These questionnaires comprise of some items, statements or questions which are determined in advance and the questions have alternative answers. That means alternative answers here means the degree to which an individual agrees to that particular question. Now this degree of agreement is at a length.

It can be a 5 point scale or it can be a 7 point scale. So whenever there is a questionnaire, there either can be a degree of agreement of the subject from 1 to 5. That is strongly agree is 5, strongly disagree is 1, disagree is 2, neutral is 3, agree is 4 and strongly agree is 5. So there is a range of agreement from 1 to 5 and from 1 to 5 a person or the subject can easily identify that to what extent the person is confirming to his belief based on that scale. So there are alternative answers in terms of agreement which forms the most basic feature of a structured questionnaire.

So when we talk about structured questionnaires, these are the questionnaires which are scientifically constructed in a way where the norms are being decided in form of that this particular questionnaire is applicable to a particular sample representing the population. For example, personality test, it can be an anxiety test, it can be a vocational inventory where an individual has the preference for every particular vocation and to what extent they have the preference for a particular vocation. So based on these standardization of stimuli, the responses become very much scientific or specific or precise in nature because there are options for a person to highlight that to what extent he would prefer to take up this occupation or vocation or it can be about emotions as well. So when we are talking about closed questionnaires, then the most important feature is that these questions are considered as the standardized stimuli which elicit specific response based on the length of the responses available on the scale or questionnaires. So the most important advantage of structured questionnaire is that it consumes less time, money and labor and scoring and coding is required, is easily available.

Whenever there is a questionnaire that is being presented to the subjects, if it has some certain answers in terms of strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree, then the scores are readily available to the researcher and it becomes very convenient to get a precise score or accurate information of an individual's behavioral pattern. So this is the most important advantage of any closed or structured questionnaire, whereas at the same time there can be some negative tendencies that evoke whenever the questionnaire is being executed on to the sample in terms of response set or the ambiguity of the questions and partial recovery of responses. For instance, whenever the questionnaire is being presented to the subject, may be there can be a tendency of response set that is being observed in the questionnaires that every subject would just reply blindly to only one response that is agree, agree, agree or strongly agree, strongly agree, strongly agree by not giving a complete attention to every particular question. So this tends to deviate the study from its objective because the scoring or the responses are not accurate. There can be a chance of the ambiguity of the questions, sometimes the language of the questions are not clear to the subjects and the subjects find it difficult to respond appropriately to those questions or respond or elicit certain responses in a very effective manner or there can be a partial recovery of responses.

Maybe any subject would not fill the questionnaire or would not respond to all the questions which are being presented to the subject in the questionnaire. So maybe the subject would skip some or the other questions which fails or which create a disadvantage before the researcher to have all the responses recovered for a specific set of behavior. So this forms closed or structured questionnaire. The other is open or unstructured questionnaires. The items or statements or the questions are not determined in advance that is possible responses are not supplied in advance and the respondent is free to respond on his own.

The questions are there but there is no specific scale of responses available and the person or the subject is free to respond in his own way or manner. There is no restriction on to what time that has been given to the subject to respond to those questions and those questions can be subjective in nature to an extent that the person finds easy, the subject finds easy to respond to

a larger length. So this is the nature of any open or unstructured questions that no specific questions are being designed but they are being loosely designed but the subjects have the scope to respond in a very open manner. So this method is used to study personality, beliefs, motivation and cognition that means understanding and interpreting the information. Any situation is being presented to the subjects in an unstructured question form and how any subject would respond to it while identifying their levels of motivation, their cognitions, their personality and beliefs.

So this method allows studying beliefs, attitudes, emotions and prejudice as a respondent is free to ventilate his or her own views in a very natural fashion and at the same time it is useful for extroverts but not very advantageous for introverts because introverts are less talkative, they are shy, they inhibit themselves in expressing themselves. So under such circumstances it varies from person to person, subject to subject that what type of questionnaire is more applicable to collect the responses. If we know that the personality of the subjects in a particular group is introvert then definitely the open or the unstructured questionnaires is not a relevant design to be used for that study but if the subjects are extrovert in nature then definitely open or unstructured questionnaires are more relevant for the study. So this is the nature of profile of questionnaire method. Next comes the interview method.

It is a face to face verbal exchange in which one person that is the interviewer attempts to elicit information or expression of opinion or belief from the other person. So it is a face to face conversation for the purpose of obtaining factual information. Here interaction is very important. To people one person is interviewer and the other is interviewee and how two people are engaging in an interaction where the interviewee is answering questions to the interviewer and how interviewer is collecting that information and responses to come to the conclusion. So there are two forms of interviews, structured and the unstructured and semi-structured interviews.

So when we talk about structured interviews, it is an interview with a preset organization of topics or questions and their order of use is all determined in advance. There are no options available but the questions are predetermined as per the situation and the interviewer or the subject has to respond to those questions. For this an interview schedule is used which is usually a set of questions that are asked and filled in a face to face situation with another person. Now here interview schedule is that every question is arranged in a manner that the information is collected in a very phasic fashion. That first area of specialization is covered then comes another area of specialization which has to be interviewed for the subject and that is how a schedule is being prepared.

So a structured interview may assume a definite format involving charting a jobs holder, sequence of activities in performance or an inventory or questionnaire may be used. Therefore a structured interview is also known as a formal interview like a job interview. So the schedule is basically divided into parts based on the type of interview or the subject, based on the

experience, based on the qualification and based on the expectation of the subject that what kind of job he or she prefers to have in a particular organization. So this structured interview comprises an interview schedule. This is the example, sample structured interview where every question is being measured as per the requirement.

Now in this type of sample interview, structured interview there is a competency mapping interview where all the different kinds of questions are being asked to measure only the competency aspect of an individual in terms of experience, in terms of performances, in terms of qualification, in terms of different projects or experiences. The another is unstructured interviews. In an unstructured interview topics to be discussed are unspecified at the outset. The discussion is left to the unfolding interactions between the interview and the interviewer. There is no preset idea that what questions has to be asked from the subject and it is at the very outset that when the two people that the interviewer and the subject come in contact, face to face verbal interaction occurs and how both the parties tend to unfurl their discussion so that all the information is available in a very unstructured manner.

So in an unstructured interview it involves questions and responses which are free flow and it becomes structured in the sense that the interviewer has a purpose and needs skill to establish a relationship, to generate conversational flow in which interview or the subject offers information factual opinion subjective and objective about aspects of the job and to ensure information received is heard and understood in terms of listening, clarifying and reflective summarizing. So it is completely based on the natural responses that occur in the conversation between the interviewer and the subject and how that relationship has been established and based on that all the information is collected and interpreted accordingly. So at both the ends the interviewer and the subject they both are careful in the face to face interaction but at the same time both the parties are unleashing all the kind of capabilities, competencies to each other in order for having a precise measurement and collection of information. The other is semi-structured interview. A semi-structured interview is a combination of an unstructured interview and a structured interview as the term implies.

It has some structured questions and at the same times there are no questions, completely a face to face informal conversation. So a semi-structured interview is open, allow new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the subject says and the interviewer in a semi-structured interview generally has a framework of themes to be explored. The theme, the idea is there, some questions are being, schedules are being constructed as per the theme and some information is collected from the subject in a very unconventional manner based on the pre-decided themes. So this is a profile of a semi-structured interview. The questions are also loosely structured which gives better opportunity for the subject to express themselves and but at the same time they are less objective and legally harder to defend when compared with structured interviews because whenever the interview becomes unstructured certain information is of no use and we cannot relate that available unrelated information with the present theme of the interview.

So this is how whether it is structured, unstructured or semi-structured interview, all the three type of interviews has their own advantages and disadvantages but applicability depends on the requirement of what kind of interview has to be conducted. So this was interview method. The other is the correlational research. It is a research in which the researcher systematically observes two or more variables to determine whether changes in one are accompanied by changes in the other. That means that change in one variable will have a change in the other variable.

That is change in the independent variable will likely to cause change in the dependent variable. If salary has been increased of the employees then or the quality of work life has been enhanced of the employees then definitely the performance is also going up. So change in one variable lead to a change in the another variable which creates or establish or demonstrate a cause effect relationship between two variables. This is the basic aim of any correlation research. So according to Von Dellen, correlation techniques are used to ascertain the extent to which two variables are related that is the extent to which variations in one factor corresponds with variations in another.

So increase in salary will lead to increase in performance or increase in stress level will lead to decrease in academic performance of the students. So amount of percentage of increment in the stress level will lead to same amount of decrement in the academic performance of the students. So this enhances the cause effect relationship. So when large data are available correlation is often the best method of discovering relationship. That means the more the data is larger the more variables are there to be studied and how every variable can be studied based on establishing a relationship among variables that becomes the relevance of correlation research.

Although the fundamental weakness of correlation study is inability to specify the cause and effect. It becomes very difficult in large data samples that how every factor can be studied and how every factor can be studied based on establishing a cause effect relationship. So this is the most basic form of research analysis as well as research methodology that how cause effect relationship can be demonstrated along with it certain weaknesses. And the last is survey research this refers to the measurement of public opinion by the use of sampling and questionnaire techniques. For example, to understand the opinion or collect the opinion of public regarding the launch of a particular product that is a survey search.

Population studies, consumption of products which are based on the technology of artificial intelligence or internet of things that in a particular demographic area or geographical area. For example, Delhi is a city and in that capital city in that capital city one area has been identified to understand the consumption of gadgets which are operated with by artificial intelligence or internet of things technology and how many families or every house has the consumption of those gadgets. So this becomes a survey search. It is a research in which representative group or respondents are asked a series of questions regarding their behavior, attitude, beliefs, satisfaction and dissatisfaction and studies large and small populations to discover the relative incidence distribution and inter relation of sociological and psychological

variables. It can be about any survey search related to family planning, it can be related to any polling, it can be related to consumption of a particular product, it can be about budget policies, about preferences, attitudes at public level.

So, some different types of surveys include census surveys based on population studies, it can be about sample surveys based on geographical locations, it can be sociological surveys for example, studying the racial discrimination in particular region or area, it can be a psychological survey about particular psychological problem that exist in particular area for example, school or campus. So, some of the most common ways to administer surveys include the mail, telephone, online or at home interviews where people tend to contact people from one nodal point to different people at large and how they collect responses through e-mail in terms of the level of their satisfaction, in terms of market research, in terms of online surveys about particular retailer or product or website or it can be home interviews such as that how people tend to consume different kind of products in their home in day to day life. So, all these examples or resources forms the basis of survey research. So, this is how different methods are being adopted in social psychology where responses or behavior are being quantified in a scientific manner and how it creates a base of a science based on observation, based on experiment, based on case studies, based on interviews, based on survey research. So, I am through here with the one aspect of discussing about the methods adopted in social psychology.

The other discussion will be further based on the qualitative analysis that how qualitative analysis is adding more shine to the core of social psychology to understand human behavior with in-depth analysis. So, that is all for today. I will continue the same discussion in the next class. Thank you.