

METHODS OF STUDY

Introspection:

It is self-observation – looking within 'or looking inward'. To introspect means to attend to the workings of one's own mind in a systematic way. Mental experiences are observed as and when they occur and attempts are made to understand their nature so that generalizations can be made. The results of introspection are usually subjective; they are not scientifically valid. Further the moment you begin to study a mental state, it tends to disappear. In case of anger or fear one becomes emotional. In such circumstances one cannot look within. Suppose you are being chased by a wild animal, you start running under the grip of fear. Suppose you have become extremely angry because of disturbance caused by somebody, you are charged with emotion. In such frightened or emotionally charged circumstances, you can never introspect. The remedy suggested is retrospection – observation of the mental process immediately after it is over, when the impression or memory is still fresh. To think about a present experience is introspection. To collect a past experience is retrospection. As a result of a gap between the present and the past the original account may be distorted. Introspection cannot be used to study the behaviour of children, animals or insane people. In spite of its imitations introspection, as a method of study of human behaviour, is still valid with special reference to mental processes like thinking or reasoning.

Extrospection (Observation):

While introspection is subjective extrospection is objective. We observe the mental processes of others by observing their behaviour – overt behaviour and motor reactions. When we want to study the experiences of the individual not only from the point

of view of overt expressions but from the point of view of inner impressions, feelings, this method will have serious limitations.

Observation is regulated perception – disciplined perception – perception with a specific purpose. By observing external behaviour, we attempt to study and interpret internal behaviour. There are different kinds of observation – direct and indirect, scheduled and unscheduled, participant and non-participant. To make observation purposeful and meaningful the observer should specify the objectives of observation in clear and operational terms.

Experimental Method:

Experiment is observation under controlled conditions. Modern psychological science is largely based on experimental method. It is not able to depend wholly on this kind of method (experimental) used by exact sciences because of the subject matter of psychology, the human being. Experiment consists of objective observation of actions performed under rigidly controlled conditions. The purpose of experiment in psychology is to identify the causal factors of behaviour.

If two situations are alike in every respect and one factor is introduced or withdrawn from the one but not from the other, any difference that emerges is the result of the operation of that factor.

Here is an illustration. Suppose we want to study the effect of encouraging remarks on the answer scripts. Two equivalent groups of students are identified based on 'matching' or 'balancing' them on their previous academic performance and related factors. One is called control group. No remarks (encouraging or discouraging) are given on the answer scripts of these students. The other group is called experimental group. Encouraging remarks are given on the answer scripts. After some time (six months or so – six monthly tests and treatment) the performance of the two groups are compared. If the experimental group is superior

to the control one, then it can be concluded that encouraging remarks on the answer scripts do facilitate higher academic performance.

Case Study:

A case study is also known as the case history of the individual because it is the analysis of the most important aspects of the individual. The analysis is in the form of past record, present position and future possibilities. The objective of case study is to study the individual or the group to diagnose specific problems and suggest remedial measures. The complete and detailed study of a case may involve the use of observations, interview, medical examination and use of various tests in intelligence, interest, aptitude and personality. Case study may involve a group of individuals, an institution, or a psychological phenomenon and the like.

Survey

Case study is intensive whereas survey is extensive. With the application of psychology to various aspects of life it has become necessary to collect data from a large number of people – attitudes, beliefs, prejudices and the like. Questionnaires, attitude scales, rating scales, observation schedules, interview schedules, interest inventories, personality inventories and such other tools of research will be employed to collect data. Appropriate statistical techniques will be used to analyse and interpret data.

Educational Psychology:

Educational psychology is not merely the application of principles of psychology to educational situations but something more than that. It is the study of the psychological aspects of educational situations. The objective of educational psychology is to help teachers develop an understanding of educational process especially class room learning.

Educational psychology is concerned with three focal areas

– the learner, the learning process and the learning situation.

The Learner:

Teachers must have an understanding of the psychology of the learner – the various psychological forces which operate in his field – interests, attitudes, feelings, sentiments emotions, needs, urges and the like.

The Learning Process:

It focusses on what happens to the individual when he learns, why he learns what the teacher wants him to learn, why he does not learn what the teacher wants him to learn. It attempts to pinpoint specific behaviours of learning.

The Learning Situation:

It is concerned with those factors or conditions that influence the learner and the learning process – class room climate conducive to effective learning. Can we identify and introduce factors which facilitate learning? Can we identify and remove factors which affect learning?

Good teaching is much more than understanding these areas. But understanding is a basic requirement. The specific objectives of educational psychology are:

- To develop a scientific attitude in the teacher towards educational problems.
- To help the teacher set up appropriate educational situations so that changes in behaviour of the learners can be brought about towards desirable goals.
- To help the teacher in treating his students with sympathy and empathy.
- To help the teacher organize the academic content to be taught.
- To help the teacher realize that the social relationships are of utmost importance in the educational process.

- To help the teacher develop a problem solving research attitude.
- To help the teacher in providing guidance and counselling to his students.
- To help the educational administrators organize and administer the institutions.
- To provide the teacher with effective methods of teaching.

Questions

1. What is Psychology? (in about 75 words)
2. Identify the major subfields of psychology (in about 75 words)
3. Define the term, 'Theory' (in about 25 words).
4. Define 'Behaviour'. Identify and briefly explain the three domains of behaviour (in about 75 words)
5. Attempt a critical estimate of the different approaches to human behaviour (in about 750 words)
6. Distinguish between introspection and extrospection (in about 150 words)
7. Define and explain experimental method in psychology (in about 300 words)
8. Distinguish between case study and survey (in about 300 words)
9. Define the term, 'Educational Psychology'. Identify and briefly explain its three focal areas. Briefly outline its specific objectives (in about 300 words).