

Social Psychology

Paper V

B.A. III (Hons.)

Define Survey Method and Discuss its Types.

Survey method is defined as the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions. This type of research allows for a variety of methods to recruit participants, collect data, and utilize various methods of instrumentation. Survey research can use quantitative research strategies (e.g., using questionnaires with numerically rated items), qualitative research strategies (e.g., using open-ended questions), or both strategies (i.e., mixed methods). As it is often used to describe and explore human behaviour, surveys are therefore frequently used in social and psychological research.

“Survey research refers to the measurement of public opinion by the use of sampling and questionnaire techniques”. – Chaplin, 1998

“Survey research is a study of such characteristics of object or people which are uninfluenced by the specific situations in which they are observed”. – Mohsin, 1998

“Survey method involves asking questions of a large sample of subjects”. – Worchel and Cooper, 1979

“Survey research is a research in which a representative group of people (respondents) re asked a series of questions regarding their behaviour, attitudes or beliefs”. – Feldman, 1985

Types of Survey Method

Census Method

Census method is the method of statistical enumeration where all members of the population are studied. A population refers to the set of all observations under concern. For example, if you

want to carry out a survey to find out student's feedback about the facilities of your school, all the students of your school would form a part of the 'population' for your study.

At a more realistic level, a country wants to maintain information and records about all households. It can collect this information by surveying *all* households in the country using the census method.

In our country, the Government conducts the Census of India every ten years. The Census appropriates information from households regarding their incomes, the earning members, the total number of children, members of the family, etc. This method must take into account all the units. It cannot leave out anyone in collecting data. Once collected, the Census of India reveals demographic information such as birth rates, death rates, total population, population growth rate of our country, etc. The last census was conducted in the year 2011.

Sample Method

Like we have studied, the population contains units with some similar characteristics on the basis of which they are grouped together for the study. In the case of the Census of India, for example, the common characteristic was that all units are Indian nationals. But it is not always practical to collect information from all the units of the population.

It is a time-consuming and costly method. Thus, an easy way out would be to collect information from some representative group from the population and then make observations accordingly. This representative group which contains some units from the whole population is called the sample.

Sample method is used in social psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, etc.

Types of sample survey-

- 1) Sociological survey
- 2) Psychological survey
- 3) Official, semi-official and private survey
- 4) Public and confidential survey

Difference between Census and Sample Surveys

Parameter	Census	Sample Survey
Definition	A statistical method that studies all the units or members of a population.	A statistical method that studies only a representative group of the population, and not all its members.
Calculation	Total/Complete	Partial
Time involved	It is a time-consuming process.	It is a quicker process.
Cost involved	It is a costly method.	It is a relatively inexpensive method.
Accuracy	The results obtained are accurate as each member is surveyed. So, there is a negligible error.	The results are relatively inaccurate due to leaving out of items from the sample. The resulting error is large.
Reliability	Highly reliable	Low reliability
Error	Not present	The smaller the sample size, the larger the error.

Relevance

This method is suited for heterogeneous data.

This method is suited for homogeneous data.

(...to be continued)

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