

PSYCHOLOGY ISSUES & DEBATES



LONGITUDINAL & SNAPSHOT
STUDIES

DEFINITIONS

- **LONGITUDINAL STUDIES:**

- these are studies that take place over a period of time (can be weeks, months, or years). One or more participants are followed throughout the period to monitor changes in behaviour or attitudes.



- **SNAPSHOT STUDIES:**

- these are studies that take place just at one point in time (ten minutes, one hour, one day, etc). They give a 'one-off' picture of the behaviour which is being studied.



LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

- **STRENGTHS:**

- They show **change and development** in an individual
- They give a fuller, & **more accurate** picture of behaviour in general, & thus maybe more **valid**

- **WEAKNESSES:**

- They can be very **expensive & time consuming**
- **Participant attrition** can be a problem:
participants may be difficult to track over a period of time, or may wish to withdraw from the study.

SNAPSHOT STUDIES

- **STRENGTHS:**

- **Quick & convenient** way to collect data
- **Useful** in obtaining preliminary evidence (before doing expensive & time-consuming longitudinal study)
- Data is generally quantitative which makes **statistical analysis** possible

- **WEAKNESSES:**

- Does not show how **behaviour can change over time** (or long-term effectiveness of treatments, etc)
- Behaviour recorded is **limited** to time, place & culture (may lack validity)
- Quantitative data can **over-simplify** behaviour

RESEARCH EXAMPLES

LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

AS CORE STUDIES:

Thigpen & Cleckley (MPD): Eve W monitored over 14 months. Recorded differences between Eve W & Eve B & Jane (EEG, hypnosis, psychometric tests, etc)

A2 KEY STUDIES:

SNAPSHOT STUDIES

AS CORE STUDIES:

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CORE STUDIES EXAMPLES

- LONGITUDINAL STUDIES:

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- SNAPSHOT STUDIES: