Your notes

GCSE Psychology: revision notes

Research methods: sampling, ethics and data

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Sampling

- The **target population** is the group a study is about; a sample is the people who take part.
- **Random sampling**: everyone has an equal chance of being chosen. **Opportunity sampling**: whoever is available. Systematic sampling: every nth person. Stratified sampling: subgroups are represented in proportion.
- A representative sample allows findings to be generalised to the **target population**.

Ethics

- Researchers should gain **informed consent**, avoid deception where possible, protect participants from harm, keep data confidential, allow the right to withdraw, and debrief participants afterwards.

Data and analysis

- Quantitative data is numerical; qualitative data is descriptive. Primary data is collected by the researcher; secondary data already exists.
- Measures of central tendency: **mean** (add up and divide by the number of scores), **median** (the middle value) and mode (the most common value). Range is a measure of spread: the highest minus the lowest.
- **Correlations** can be positive (both variables rise together), negative (one rises as the other falls) or show no **correlation**. They are shown on scatter diagrams, and don't prove cause and effect.
- Reliability: consistency of results. Validity: whether a study measures what it claims to.

Key terms

Target population	The group a study is about.
Random sampling	Everyone has an equal chance of being chosen.
Opportunity sampling	Using whoever is available.
Informed consent	Agreeing to take part knowing what the study involves.
Debriefing	Telling participants the full aims after the study.
Mean	The total of the scores divided by the number of scores.
Median	The middle value when scores are in order.
Correlation	A relationship between two variables.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. What is random sampling?
2. What is opportunity sampling?
3. What is debriefing?
4. What is the mean of 2, 4 and 9?
5. What is the median of 3, 7, 8, 10 and 12?
6. What is the mode?
7. What is the range of 4, 9 and 15?
8. What does a negative correlation show?

Answers

1. Everyone in the target population has an equal chance of being chosen
2. Using whoever is available
3. Telling participants the full aims after the study
4. 5
5. 8
6. The most common value
7. 11
8. As one variable rises, the other falls

What to do next

Practise 10 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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