

Glossary of subject-specific terms

Glossary term	Glossary definition
acculturation	The process through which individuals from one culture come into contact with and adopt the behaviours, norms and values of another culture.
anecdotal data	Data that is informal from accounts that are not systematically collected. It lacks scientific rigour or empirical support.
approach/perspective	Used interchangeably—these are different theoretical frameworks applied to understand human behaviour.
artefact (brain imaging)	In the context of brain imaging, artefacts are unwanted errors in the images that can arise from movement, scanner malfunction or other external factors.
bar graph	A visual representation of data using separate rectangular bars to show the values of different categories or variables. The length or height of each bar is proportional to the quantity it represents.
behaviour	Behaviour is observable action, in response to internal biological changes, cognitive processes and environmental factors. In DP psychology, intelligence, memory, motivation, language, learning, empathy, relationships—not all of

	which are directly observable—are accepted as examples of behaviour.
bidirectional ambiguity	When the direction of cause and effect between two variables is unclear. It is challenging to determine which variable influences the other or if there is a mutual interaction.
case study	A detailed analysis over time of an area of interest (a case) to produce context-dependent knowledge. A case study could also be an in-depth study of an individual. For the purpose of DP psychology, case studies are considered a research method and use other research methods, such as interviews and observations, to collect data.
causation	The relationship between cause and effect, where one event or factor directly brings about another. It describes how changes in one variable result in changes in another.
cognitive bias	A systematic pattern of deviation from norm or rationality in judgement.
cognitive error	These include errors in memory, attention or perception. Often suggested to be the result of a lack of information or the use of mental shortcuts (heuristics).
cognitive process	Any mental function involved in the acquisition, storage, interpretation, manipulation, transformation and use of knowledge. Examples of these processes include attention, learning,

	memory, perception, thinking and decision-making.
concept	Organizing ideas with distinct attributes that are shared across multiple areas. In DP psychology, the concepts are bias, causality, change, measurement, perspective and responsibility.
conceptual understanding	A comprehension of the underlying principles and connections of a theory, model or idea, beyond mere memorization.
confirmation bias	The tendency to seek, interpret and remember information that confirms pre-existing beliefs while ignoring or downplaying contradictory evidence.
construct	An abstract idea, concept or variable that cannot be directly observed but is used to explain or measure aspects of human behaviour. Examples include intelligence and self-esteem.
content analysis	A data analysis method of examining, organizing and interpreting the content of numerical, written, visual or verbal material, such as data sets, texts or interviews, to identify key themes that can provide insights into human behaviour. It can be used in both quantitative and qualitative research.
context	Circumstances, events and settings that give relevance to learning and information. In DP psychology the contexts are health

	and wellness, human development, human relationships, and learning and cognition.
controlled observation	A method in which researchers closely monitor and record specific behaviours in a controlled environment, such as a laboratory or a classroom, to gather data.
correlation	A method of measuring the relationship between two variables that may move in the same direction (positive correlation) or move in opposite directions (negative correlation).
correlation coefficient	A numerical value that represents the strength and direction of the relationship (correlation) between two variables. It ranges from -1 (perfect negative correlation) to 1 (perfect positive correlation).
correlational research	A type of study investigating relationships between variables without any control over the setting; a focus on two variables.
cost-benefit analysis	An evaluation of the positive and negative consequences of a decision by comparing the costs involved with the rewards it offers. In psychology it is often applied to the ethics of research: the benefits of the knowledge generated are compared with the cost to the individual participant of being deceived regarding the real aim of the study.
covert observation	

	Observing participants without their knowledge, to avoid participant expectations altering their behaviour.
credibility	The degree to which the research gives a true picture of what is being investigated and the results represent the perceptions and opinions of the research participants. Credibility is a factor in establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research.
critical thinking	Analysing, evaluating and synthesizing information and arguments to make reasoned and informed judgements or decisions.
cross-sectional research design	A type of study that collects data from participants at a single point in time. It is often used to compare different groups of people or variables at a specific moment, providing a snapshot of their behaviour.
culture	The shared beliefs, values, norms and behaviours of a group of people. It plays a significant role, through enculturation, in shaping individual and collective identity and behaviour.
cultural bias	The tendency to interpret people's behaviour based on one's own cultural norms and values. It can lead to misunderstandings and unfair judgements when assessing individuals from different cultures.
cultural competence	The ability to interact effectively and sensitively with individuals from diverse cultures. It

	involves understanding and respecting cultural differences and adapting communication and practices to be inclusive and culturally sensitive.
deductive research methodology	A method where researchers start with a general theory or hypothesis and then collect data to test or confirm that hypothesis. It involves moving from a general idea to specific conclusions.
descriptive statistics	These are used to calculate and describe spread of data and measures of central tendency.
determinism	The argument that events, including human actions and choices, are predetermined and inevitable. In psychology, the term is used in relation to biology or environment and implies little or no personal choice in human behaviour.
digital technology	Electronic technology that generates, stores and processes data (for example, smart phones and computers).
double-blind design	When neither the participants nor the researchers conducting the study are aware who is in the control group and who is in the experimental group. This is done to minimize bias and increase the reliability of results.
emic perspective/approach	This involves research that studies a culture or group from within, focusing on its unique beliefs, values and norms. It seeks to understand phenomena from the perspective of the individuals within that culture.

empirical data	Data collected through systematic and objective methods. Information or evidence that is based on direct observation or experience rather than purely theoretical or abstract concepts.
enculturation	The process of learning and adopting the cultural norms, values and behaviours of one's own culture, typically through socialization and upbringing.
ethical consideration	Considerations that are vital in any psychology investigation; they concern the ethics of treating participants fairly and without causing harm.
etic perspective/approach	Research that studies cultures or groups from an outsider's perspective, often using universal criteria that apply across cultures. It aims to identify common behaviours and make comparisons.
experimental controls	Measures put in place during research to minimize the influence of extraneous variables that could affect the results. These controls help ensure that changes in the dependent variable are due to the manipulation of the independent variable.
extraneous variable	Variables other than the independent variable in an experiment that can potentially influence the dependent variable. If not controlled, they can become confounding variables.
focus group	

	A research method involving a small group discussion led by a facilitator to gather diverse opinions and insights on a particular topic.
frequency table	A data presentation method that displays the number of times each value or category appears in a data set.
genetic inheritance	Genetic inheritance refers to the passing of traits and characteristics information from one generation to the next through the transmission of genes from parents to offspring. It plays a crucial role in the development of traits and behaviours in individuals.
generalizability	The extent to which research findings or conclusions drawn from a study can be applied to a different population or other settings. It demonstrates the external validity of research.
graph (chart)	A visual representation of data, often used in psychology to illustrate patterns, trends or relationships between variables. Common types include bar graphs, box and whiskers plots and scatter plots.
histogram	A visual representation that uses touching rectangular bars to illustrate a frequency distribution—how often each value occurs in a data set. The length or height of each bar is proportional to the quantity it represents and the shape of the histogram shows the distribution of the data.
holism	

	<p>An approach in psychology that emphasizes the idea that human behaviour should be viewed as a whole integrated experience, and not as separate parts. (Opposite of reductionism.)</p>
Indigenous psychologies	<p>Indigenous psychologies are distinct from mainstream Western psychology. They refer to the diverse and culturally relevant ways of understanding and studying human behaviour and cognitive processes within specific Indigenous communities. These psychologies are rooted in the cultural, historical and social contexts of these communities and often incorporate traditional beliefs, practices and world views.</p>
Indigenous societies	<p>Communities who are native to a particular region or land and have a unique cultural, historical and often ancestral connection to that place. They are distinct from the dominant cultures that may have colonized or influenced the region.</p>
inductive research methodology	<p>An approach in which researchers start with specific observations or data and use them to develop broader theories or general principles. It involves moving from specific instances to generalizations. An example is grounded theory, where the theory is developed from (“grounded in”) the data, rather than the other way around.</p>
innate	<p>Describes qualities, characteristics or abilities that are present in an organism from birth or are</p>

	inherent to its nature, rather than being learned or acquired through experience.
interpretive approach	Understanding of human behaviour through subjective analysis and context. It emphasizes the role of personal meaning and cultural context in understanding behaviour.
line graph	A straight or curved line used to depict where data points lie on a chart.
longitudinal design	A research design in which data is collected from the same individuals or groups over an extended period, in order to study changes or developments over time.
maturation	The natural process of individual growth and development over time, leading to changes in physical, cognitive and emotional abilities.
model	A theoretical representation or framework used to explain and understand complex processes in order to test hypotheses and make predictions.
motivation	The impetus that gives purpose or direction to behaviour and operates in humans at a conscious or unconscious level.
mundane realism	The degree to which a research study or experimental setting resembles real-life situations and experiences. It impacts the external validity of findings.
naturalistic observation	Observing and recording behaviour in a natural setting (such as on the street or in a

	supermarket) without researcher interference, to study behaviour as it occurs naturally.
non-participant observation	Observing a group or situation without actively participating, maintaining a more objective “outsider” view.
operationalization	Stating exactly how a variable will be manipulated or measured in experimental research.
overt observation	Observing participants openly, so they are aware of being watched.
participant bias	Occurs when participants in a study alter their behaviour or responses due to their awareness of being observed or their expectations about the study’s purpose.
participant observation	Researchers immerse themselves in the activities of the group being studied, participating in them to gain a deeper understanding of the group’s behaviour.
placebo	A treatment that has no therapeutic effect but is given to participants in a research study. It helps researchers assess the effects of an active treatment by comparing it to the non-active placebo.
positivism	Emphasizes the use of empirical evidence and scientific methods to gain knowledge and understand the human behaviour. It contrasts

	with more interpretive or qualitative approaches in psychology.
prevalence	The proportion or percentage of a population that shows a particular condition or trait at a specific point in time or over a lifetime. It is commonly used in health and wellness research.
prospective research	Research that follows individuals or groups over time, collecting data periodically. Used to investigate the outcomes of specific events or conditions.
psychological literacy	The understanding of psychology and application of problem-solving skills and psychological principles to real-life problems in different contexts. Includes acting ethically, thinking critically, cultural competence and self-awareness.
publication bias	When the results of research are selectively published based on the direction or significance of their findings. It can lead to a partial and biased representation of the research literature, as studies with positive or statistically significant results are more likely to be published.
qualitative research methodology	The collection and analysis of textual or verbal data to understand and explore the meaning behind people's behaviour. Methods such as interviews, observations and content analysis are used to investigate the experiences and meanings that individuals attribute to them.
quantitative research methodology	

	<p>The collection and analysis of numerical data to examine relationships between variables. It relies on statistical techniques to test hypotheses and make inferences about populations based on data.</p>
quasi-experiment	<p>A research method that resembles a true experiment but lacks random assignment of participants to different groups. In a true experiment, researchers randomly assign participants to different conditions. In a quasi-experiment, researchers often have limited control over participant assignment, meaning it is unable to establish a cause-and-effect relationship.</p>
reductionism	<p>An approach in psychology that seeks to understand complex phenomena by breaking them down into simpler, more manageable components or elements. (Opposite of holism.)</p>
reflexivity	<p>The researcher's awareness of their own perspectives, biases and values and how these may influence the research process and findings. It involves ongoing critical self-reflection during the research process. Epistemological reflexivity involves reflecting on the process and methodology used to try to gain understanding. Personal reflexivity involves the researcher reflecting on their own biases and values that may affect the findings and conclusions drawn.</p>
reliability	<p>The consistency of measurement tools or methods. A reliable measure or assessment</p>

	should yield consistent results when administered repeatedly under similar conditions and with a similar population.
repeated measures design	A research design in which the same group of participants is measured or tested more than once under different conditions. This design allows for the examination of changes within the same individuals.
research method	The specific techniques or procedures used to collect data for a research study. Examples include surveys/questionnaires, case studies, experiments, interviews and observations.
research methodology	The broader framework and philosophical approach that guides the entire research process. It includes the choice of research methods, sampling techniques, data collection, analysis techniques and the overall strategy for conducting research.
researcher bias	When a researcher's personal values or expectations influence the design, data collection or interpretation of findings, potentially leading to biased results.
retrospective research	This involves the examination of past events, data or records to understand and analyse behaviour that has already occurred. It relies on historical data and participants' memories.
sampling bias	This occurs when the sample used in a research study is not representative of the population

	from which it was drawn and to which the findings may be generalized.
self-reported data	Data collected directly from individuals through their own accounts, typically through surveys, questionnaires or interviews.
semi-structured interview	An interview approach combining open-ended and closed-ended questions, providing flexibility for in-depth exploration while maintaining some structure.
skewness	The degree to which the distribution of data in a dataset is asymmetrical, as shown when graphed. A positively skewed distribution has a longer tail on the right side, while a negatively skewed distribution has a longer tail on the left side.
statistical significance	Statistical significance in research indicates that the results of a statistical test are unlikely to have occurred by chance. It is represented by a level of probability, usually $p < 0.05$ in psychology, meaning there is less than a 5% probability that the results occurred by chance.
stigma	Refers to negative beliefs about and attitudes towards individuals or groups based on certain characteristics, such as mental disorders or social identity.
substance misuse	The inappropriate or harmful use of medications or substances, which may include exceeding

	recommended doses, or using drugs for non-medical purposes.
survey/questionnaire	A set of questions used to obtain information from a respondent about a topic of interest, such as attitudes, behaviours, personality or values. A survey or questionnaire may be administered with pen and paper, in a face-to-face interview or online. For the purposes of DP psychology, the two terms are interchangeable.
synthesis	The process of combining different pieces of information or ideas to create a new, integrated understanding. It involves taking separate elements and merging them into a coherent whole, often to generate new insights or theories.
theory	A systematic and organized set of principles or ideas that explain and predict behaviour or phenomena. Theories are used to understand and make sense of various psychological phenomena and are often tested through research to evaluate their validity.
thematic analysis	A qualitative research method that involves systematically identifying, analysing and interpreting recurring patterns within data such as interviews, surveys or texts. It aims to uncover the underlying meanings and a deeper understanding of the participants.
transferability	Term used in qualitative research to mean the extent to which findings from a study can be

	<p>applied or generalized to other contexts or settings beyond the specific study's participants or conditions. It assesses the applicability of research findings to different situations.</p>
transfer skills	<p>The ability to apply knowledge and understanding gained in one situation or context to another, unfamiliar situation.</p>
true experiment	<p>A controlled experiment where researchers manipulate an independent variable to observe its impact on a dependent variable, using random allocation of participants to conditions to ensure causation.</p>
type I error	<p>Also known as a false positive, this occurs in hypothesis testing when a null hypothesis that is actually true is rejected. Therefore, it represents the conclusion that there is a significant effect or relationship when there is not.</p>
type II error	<p>Also known as a false negative, this occurs when a null hypothesis that is actually false is not rejected. It represents the conclusion that there is no significant effect or relationship when there is one.</p>
unstructured interview	<p>A qualitative research method where one or two open-ended questions are used to start a conversational interview. This allows participants to express themselves freely and it is often used to explore personal experiences and perspectives.</p>
validity	

	<p>Internal validity—the extent that a measurement conducted within a study accurately measures or assesses what it claims to measure.</p> <p>External validity—the extent to which findings from a study can be generalized to a different setting or population.</p>
variable	<p>Any factor or characteristic that can vary and is subject to measurement or manipulation in research. Variables are used to investigate and describe various aspects of human behaviour. Usually identified most clearly in experiments as independent variables (manipulated), dependent variables (measured) and controlled variables (held stable).</p>
wait-listing	<p>A research design wherein participants are placed on a waiting list to receive a treatment or intervention at a later time. It is used in experiments to compare the behaviour of a group of participants receiving an intervention or treatment to the behaviour of those who have not yet received it.</p>

