An Overview of Psychological Research

Why do we need psychological research?
- Hindsight bias, overconfidence, rage for order

Basic Research vs. Applied Research
- Increase scientific knowledge base vs. solve practical problems

The Scientific Method
- Define theory, hypothesis, population, random sample, informed consent, debriefing, reliability, validity, and ethics

Descriptive Studies
- Case study, naturalistic observation, interviews, focus groups

Correlational Studies (Sometimes considered descriptive studies)
- Test, survey, positive and negative correlations

Experiments/Causation
- Experimental group, control group, random assignment, independent variable, dependent variable, confounding variables, double-blind procedure, placebo effect
The Psychological Research Process

**Step 1** - Identify an idea, *theory*, or problem

**Step 2** – Pose a question

**Step 3** – State your *hypothesis*

**Step 4** – Review literature (What do we already know about this issue? Have studies already been conducted on this issue? Are there any *operational definitions* that need to be defined?)

**Step 5** – Identify *population* of interest and establish participant criteria. Is your sample *random* or *purposive*?

**Step 6** – Determine which *methodology* will best answer your research question (*Descriptive, correlational, or experimental*) and make sure that study can be replicated

**Step 7** – Determine procedure for data collection (Depends on your methodology. *Descriptive* = *focus groups, interviews, observations, case studies*. *Correlational* = *surveys* *Experimental* = *experiments*)

**Step 8** – Decide if you will develop an interview guide or instrument of measurement, or use a pre-existing guide or instrument and request permission from publisher.

**Step 9** – Prepare *ethical documents* (IRB applications, *Informed Consent* forms, demographics forms, flyers, etc.)

**Step 10** – Recruit participants and collect data

**Step 11** – Analyze data (Depends on methodology)

**Step 12** – Compile results

**Step 13** – Discuss results (confirm or reject *hypothesis*)

**Step 14** – Discuss limitations, future research, and action steps

**Step 15** – Publish and disseminate findings