

- *5 Becker et al. (2002) conducted a natural experiment in Fiji to investigate the impact of television on eating behaviours. They assessed attitudes to eating in 1995, just as television was being introduced to the native population. They returned in 1998 to assess eating behaviours after three years of television exposure.

63 girls with a mean age of 17.3 years took part in 1995. A second sample of 65 girls with a mean age of 16.9 years took part in 1998.

To score eating behaviours, the two samples of girls completed a standardised EAT-26 questionnaire. They also answered questions about television viewing. Their weight, height, and body mass index (BMI) were also recorded.

Comparisons between 1995 and 1998 data indicated that, after exposure to western imagery on television, the reports of disordered eating such as self-induced vomiting to lose weight had increased.

✓ X
high ecological validity Not as controlled
Diff. indiv. diff

Evaluate the use of natural experiments to investigate human behaviour.

(12)

A natural experiment is where the researcher ~~does not~~ does not control the independent variable, ~~have any variables~~ that will affect the arm of the investigation and allows it to be carried out naturally.

~~One strength of a natural experiment is that it has high ecological validity. This is because it is done naturally and any variable that affects the results would be by chance. The findings from variables would be by chance.~~

* This means that the experiment can be generalised to other groups, in this scenario it can be applied to other native countries who have introduced western television. Another strength of a natural experiment is that it is easy for the experimenter to set up as they do not need to create an artificial environment for the



experiment to take place within. This means it is not as time consuming and makes it quicker for the experiment to start. To add, there will be no demand characteristics as the environment is natural, making it more reliable.

However, a weakness for ~~that type~~ natural experiments is that the environment is not as controlled as a lab or field experiment, which may make it less reliable as there may be extraneous variables that affect the results. There also may be individual differences that affect the results, such as a person's own upbringing or how they have been taught and this can affect the findings of the study.

These can be applied to this scenario as it has high ecological validity as it was a natural experiment and can be generalised. However, they used 2 samples of girls which may have affected the results; they should have used the same set of girls to make the findings more accurate. To add, Becker et al only investigated this on girls, he should have done it on boys as well to make it more representative. This scenario is likely to have no demand characteristics as he used two separate samples, so neither knew the true aim of the



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study. He also made them fill out questionnaires, reducing social desirability.

To conclude, I think natural experiments are a good way to ~~test for~~ investigate human behaviour as there will be no demand characteristics and it ~~even~~ has high ecological validity. Despite it being less scientific than a lab experiment due to the lack of control, it can be generalized to the public which is an advantage.

* One strength of a natural experiment is that it has high ecological validity. This is because it is done naturally and any extraneous variables that affect the findings are due to chance.



(Total for Question 5 = 12 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 37 MARKS



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