

Q. A new TV programme has been developed to increase positive social behaviours in box pre-school children.

There is a proposal to carry out an experiment to compare the effects of the new TV programme and an existing TV programme, on positive social behaviours in pre-school children.

A sample of 500 pre-school children and their parents is available for the experiment. The parents have given consent for their children to take part in this experiment.

The experiment will take place over an 8-week period. Data on the children's social behaviours will be gathered from the parents using a self-report method.

Design the experiment to investigate whether watching the new TV programme leads to an increase in positive social behaviours in the children, compared with watching the existing TV programme.

In your answer you will gain credit for providing appropriate details of the following:

- **the type of experimental design, with justification**
- **a self-report method of data collection, with justification**
- **how to control one extraneous variable, with justification as to why this would need to be controlled**

Model Answer

The aim of the experiment is to investigate whether watching a new TV programme leads to an increase in positive social behaviours of children. A directional hypothesis is proposed, stating, "The mean ratings of social behaviour by parents will be significantly higher for children watching the new TV programme for the eight- week period compared to children watching the existing TV programme."

The independent variable is manipulated as, 'type of TV programme watched' at two levels, 'new TV programme' and 'old TV programme.' The operationalised dependent variable is the 'mean ratings on social behaviour questionnaire'.

The experimental design is an independentgroups design as two separate groups will be created - (1) 250 children watching the new TV programme (2) 250 children watching the old TV programme. This will prevent order effects such as fatigue from occurring. For example, the TV programme that airs later in the day might be paid less attention to by children as they would be tired from having watched the programmethat airs earlier. Then their fatigue would

confound the attention they pay to the later programme, reducing its impact on their social behaviour and thereby reducing validity of results.

Standardisation would be maintained such that parents would be asked to assure that their children watch their respective TV programme for its complete duration without moving away. This would introduce consistency to the watching of TV by all children, increasing reliability of results. For control, parents would be instructed to not allow their children to watch similar types of TV programmes on social behaviour for the 8-week period of this study. Specifically, a list of TV programs that their children shouldn't watch would be handed over to them in writing, without explaining why the prohibition is being done. This would prevent watching of other programmes from becoming the reason for children showing certain social behaviours rather than the planned programmes, increasing validity of results. Additionally, parents would not develop any expectations about their children should behave, reducing bias in their later ratings.

Parents would be made to answer a questionnaire comprising entirely of closed questions once the study is completed. Examples of these questions include, "Does your child greet other children when he meets them? Rate on a scale of 1 to 5 with '1' meaning 'hardly ever' to '5' meaning 'nearly always' "Does your child smile at other children?" "Does your child shake hands with children whom he meets for the first time?" etc. The same rating scale mentioned earlier would be used to answer all questions. Parents will be instructed to think back to the past 8 weeks while answering these questions. This type of questionnaire is selected to collect quantitative data as the ratings will be converted to scores of the same value. It will then be possible to calculate mean scores for each group after totalling the scores for each child. Additionally, filler questions such as, "Does your child eat healthy food easily?" "Does your child go outdoors to play?" etc. will be asked so that parents do not understand that their children's social behaviour is being evaluated. This will prevent them from giving unnecessarily favourable ratings to their children, reducing social desirability bias and increasing validity.

Finally, data analysis will be performed by objectively comparing the mean scores obtained by the two groups. The questionnaires are designed in a way that higher the scores, greater are the positive social behaviours shown by the child. Therefore, if higher mean ratings are achieved by the group watching the new TV programme, it will be concluded that it is effective in increasing positive social behaviours in children.

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