

## Triangulation

In responding to IB essay questions include something about triangulation. Try to answer the question "to what extent is the theory and research examined in the essay triangulated"?

**Definition: Triangulation is a multi-method [multiple research method] and/or multi-approach [multiple theories used] way to study human behavior. Triangulation is the standard by which all knowledge claims are measured in the IB psychology curriculum.**

### Four types of triangulation

1. Data triangulation. This involves conducting research at different times, in different locations, and using different groups of subjects.
2. Observer triangulation. This is when more than one observer is used in a study. One example is the use of independent raters and the calculation of inter-rater reliability in research.
3. Methodological triangulation. This is when a theory is investigated using a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods. For example, Bandura's cites animal experiments, correlated studies on humans, and human experiments to draw conclusions about social learning theory and health psychology.
4. Theory triangulation. This is when more than one perspective is used before coming to a conclusion. For example, the General Aggression Model (GAM) uses social learning theory together with other relevant theories on aggression to create a complex causation model of human aggression. Complex causation is more realistic in explaining human behavior than reductionist theories. It is often hard for one theory to stand alone as an explanation for human behavior.

### Advantages of triangulation

1. It reduces the likelihood of experimenter bias.
2. It gives a broader and complex causation explanation of human behavior. Recent research in behavioral genetics points to a bi-directional nature of human behavior. This means that human behavior is a combination of inherited and acquired influences.
3. It increases our understanding of phenomena because of the variety of methods and perspectives examined.
4. It reduces method-boundness. Skinner drew conclusions about complex human behavior from animal experiments. Freud drew conclusions about personality development from case studies of his neurotic patients. Both are examples of method-boundness. Further research using different methods, researchers, and perspectives show some limitations of Skinner and Freud.
5. It reduces culture-boundness. This is when entire theories are based on observations