

Free essay about observation techniques

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What types of research questions in political science might be especially well-suited for investigation using observational techniques? Provide a theoretical overview linking several (though not necessarily all) of the week's readings

The paper seeks to explore the scope of observational techniques as a method of empirical data collection. These observational techniques include participant and non-participant observation methods. The paper analyzes some of the research questions to put into consideration when using observational techniques in research. The paper tries to give a quick analysis that updates some of the empirical findings in another setting.

Research questions for investigation using observational techniques

- Is the data you want to collect accessible?
- Is the data needed qualitative or quantitative?
- Is the data collection method flexible than the other methods?
- Does the observer require special skills in data collection?

DATA ANALYSIS

Data collection method depends on its flexibility to change style with time and venue. According to Moug, (pp. 111, 3rd paragraph) non participative observation offers a wider scope in the degree of participation. He suggests that the non participant observation has an inbuilt flexibility. The researcher is therefore able to cope with unexpected surprises and is able to meet unforeseen opportunities when collecting the data. The researcher must know the nature of data they need to collect. Qualitative data would not be

suitable with observation because it comprises counting techniques.

However, when collecting numbers through non-participative method, the observer may adopt a structured approach, and count the observations (Moug, pp. 110, 3rd paragraph).

Certain data would become extremely difficult to access especially in certain places. Certain places may become unethical to obtain data and this may pose danger to the researcher. Some of the places may again be costly to access and this would otherwise become difficult. Examples are parliamentary buildings and the Houses of the Lords. The researchers using observational techniques require special skills inapplicable to the other techniques of data collection. These researchers must possess the ability to extract data from their natural setting. The researcher must have skills to analyze the data collected in the field. The data collected otherwise would be of no meaning if the researcher has poor skills of analysis. In the nonparticipant observation, the researchers should have skills to remain aloof, without participating in any event to avoid interfering with research outcomes (Muog, pp. 109, 2nd paragraph).

BUSINESS SETTING

The findings above apply to a political setting. However, these findings would also apply in an economic setting. In some business areas, it would become extremely difficult to observe some events. This includes difficulties in accessing major economic summits. It would also be hard to observe economic achievements due to unequal and a good standard of measurement. It would also be unethical and dangerous when observing shopkeepers or any other people dealing with money. This would bring

suspicion and this would be wrong (Wilkinson, pp. 97).

The observation methods would not be appropriate to collect quantitative data in a business setting. This is a data that needs recording and interviewing of the managers and directors. Collection of data in some places would therefore require methods such as interviewing and surveying. In a business setting, the researcher also requires to have some certain skills in order to analyze properly the data collected in the field. The data collected in a market needs perfect analysis and professional interpretation. This is especially when analyzing demand and supply levels in a market. Inadequate analyzing skills would misguide the market players who are the buyers and sellers (Wilkinson, pp. 117).

Works cited

Fenno, R. House Members in Their Constituencies; An Exploration. An American Science Political Review. 1977 print

Moug, P. Non Participative Observation in Political Research. The Poor Relations. Political Studies Assosiation Publishers 2007 print

Wilkinson, D. and P. Birmingham. Using Research Instruments: A Guide for Researchers. Rutledge Publishers: London. 2003 print