

Unobtrusive methods in social research

Sociology



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The presence of the researcher potentially has consequences for the quality of responses, typically shaping them in socially patterned ways. In addition, research-based on self-report is vulnerable to the social factors affecting both the availability of research participants and their willingness to respond to researchers questions (Lee 15).

Therefore, there is a bias already when a survey is executed.

On the other hand, ethnographic fieldwork is a more comprehensive way of conducting qualitative research. In fact, it is a part of documentary research. Nevertheless, the setting dictates when documentary research is more useful than ethnographic fieldwork. When a researcher studies a contemporary organization, documentary research is a necessity since records such as financial statements, employee records, and other primary written sources play a role in completing the investigation. In conclusion, documentary research complements other research methods and can stand alone only if data is needed.