

# Observational research



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Observational Research This paper aims to define the observational research method. It will also discuss the various components and steps of the observational research method. Observational Research “ Observational research is a combination of a first-person and a second-person account, which takes place in a naturalistic setting, of the actions and behaviours of a specific group of people” (The Glaring Facts, 2010, par. 1). The goal of observational research is to capture the minute details or findings that cannot be uncovered by surveys and focus groups. Observational research may either be participant or non-participant observation. In participant observation, the researcher is completely immersed in the observation setting. On the other hand, in non-participant observation, the role of the observer is limited to that of a spectator (DocShare, 2009). The components of observational research are a collaboration of several skills. These include listening skills, non-verbal behavior, conflict management, relationship management, creativity, critical thinking, communication and analysis skills. These components are needed so that the researcher can embark on a successful observation research project. The observational research process includes nine steps (DocShare, 2009). First, is to determine the research objectives, what the researcher wants to observe and his purpose. Second is the selection of the research subjects, i. e. the people to be observed. The third step is for the researcher to decide what field role he is going to adopt, whether a participant or non-participant. Gaining entry to the research field or going where the participants spend time is the fourth step. The fifth step is building rapport with the subjects to develop a reciprocal relationship and mutual trust. The next step is observing the phenomena of interest and recording the findings. The seventh step is exiting from the field of study.

The researcher must thank his subjects for participating in the study. Data analysis is the second to the last step. Finally, a presentation of the findings is done once conclusions have been arrived at. References The Glaring Facts (2010). How to conduct observational research. Retrieved 12 April 2011. <http://www.theglaringfacts.com/2010/08/observational-research> DocShare.com (2009). Observation research. Retrieved 12 April 2011. <http://www.docshare.com/doc/135851/Observation-Research>