

Quadrant II - Notes

Paper Code: EDU12

Module Name: OBSERVATION AS A DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE PART - II

Module No: 13

Steps:

1. What is the purpose of the Observation? Who are the subjects/participants?

The purpose of the observation is based on the research questions or the stated objectives. You need to plan in advance what aspects you are going to observe. Will this include the environment, people and their relationships, behavior, actions and activities? Will it include verbal behavior, psychological stances (body language)?

At this stage the researcher is concerned with establishing a foundation for the observation in terms of what the researcher wishes to be able to do with data (outcomes) and what and whom he wishes to observe (the content)

2. Fieldwork Preparation

You need to have a good theoretical knowledge about the area/aspects you want to observe. The researcher must go in for extensive reading of literature (related area). The researcher may also make preliminary visits to similar situations where group work is conducted. This will enable the observer to gain insights on what behaviors are to be observed, how, what frequency etc. This would help the observer to develop a framework for observation. In the example above the researcher in his/her visits has observed that some students particularly the academically weaker ones are withdrawn and distracted besides responding in mono syllables etc.

3. How will observation data be recorded/Selection of techniques for observation.

Observation data can be collected in different ways. The observer can make use of a check list on which the observer tick marks presence/absence, true/false, yes/no etc. The observer can also use a rating scale which indicates intensity i.e. from least to highest, check list etc.

4. Develop the measuring tool (check list, rating scale, sociometric tool)

When developing the observation tool, the researcher must ensure that (1) there is consistency in the aspects/behaviors (dimensions) to be observed, (2) the tool helps to collect data required by the observer, (3) the observation tool provides the structure the researcher wishes to have, (4) the statements/items in the observation tool are appropriately framed, (5) the tool enables the researcher to collect relevant data for the dimensions spelled out.

5. Pilot test or try out the observation tool

Try out the observation tool to determine the effectiveness of the tool. Every tool is expected to perform the task it is designed to perform. It is necessary to determine whether there is consistency in the aspects/behaviors (dimensions) to be observed, whether the tool helps to collect data required by the observer, does the observation tool provide the structure the researcher wishes to have, the framing of the statements/items in the observation tool, does the tool enable the researcher to collect relevant data for the dimensions spelled out.

6. Conduct the Observation

Researcher should be unobtrusive during the observation, and be involved in meaningful observation.

7. Analysis of data