

Research Methods

Research Method	Case Study	Experiments	Sample Surveys
Defined	A case study is the observation of an individual, a situation or a group over a period of time.	An experiment is a controlled environment where tests are conducted to determine how one factor is related to another.	Sample surveys are questionnaires designed to obtain information about the thoughts and behaviours of a limited number of people who represent a large group.
Pros/Cons	<p>Pro – by studying one situation in depth, a lot of detail can be unearthed, and hypothesis about similar situations can be developed</p> <p>Con - Critics of the case study method believe that the study of a small number of cases can offer no grounds for establishing reliability or generality of findings. Others feel that the intense exposure to study of the case biases the findings.</p>	<p>Pro-The benefits of controlled experiments include a more scientific and thus more accepted approach of collecting data, as well as limiting potential bias that could occur in a survey or case study.</p> <p>Con- Sometimes it is difficult to conduct experiments in the social sciences as it may be considered “unethical.”</p>	<p>Pro - Standardized surveys provide data with little to no errors. They are cost effective and efficient as a large group of people can be surveyed in a short period of time.</p> <p>Cons - using surveys to conduct research include the validity based upon honest answers, answer choices could not reflect true opinions and one particular response may be understood differently by the subjects of the study, thus providing less than accurate results.</p>
Examples	<p>A – an anthropologist may study people in 1 culture.</p> <p>P - a psychologist may work closely with 1 individual in order to understand that particular person.</p> <p>S – A sociologist may observe and interview students from 1 class.</p>	<p>A – An anthropologist may try to test prehistoric tools. (make and break them)</p> <p>P – A psychologist setting up an experiment to see if people will do anything if ordered.</p> <p>S – A social scientist may conduct an experiment to determine how “emo” culture could influence one’s thoughts, feelings and actions.</p>	<p>A - Anthropologists sometimes conduct small-scale, face-to-face surveys, but rarely is this method used on a large scale to collect most data for analysis.</p> <p>P - A psychologist may give criminals a survey about their childhood to determine if one’s upbringing has an influence on one’s actions.</p> <p>S- A sociologist may conduct a survey which deals</p>

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Research Method	Interviews	Observation
Defined	An interview takes form of a dialogue between the interviewer and the subject.	<p>(1) Unstructured Observation – involves studying people without a predetermined idea of what to look for.</p> <p>(2) Structured Observation – involves planning beforehand what will be observed and noted, keeping a list of things to look for.</p> <p>(3) Participant Observation – the researcher not only observes the group, but also participates in the group’s activities.</p> <p>Most common form is a checklist</p>
Pros/Cons	<p>Pros – They are extremely useful to obtain detailed information about personal feelings, perceptions and opinions. You get first hand opinions; however, one may give inaccurate information.</p> <p>Cons – People may give incorrect information. It is important that the researcher does not “add” to what was observed by presuming or assuming something that was not stated directly by the participant. · Different interviewers may understand and transcribe interviews in different ways.</p>	<p>(1) Pros – Gives a broad overview of a situation. It is useful when a situation/ subject matter to be studied is unclear.</p> <p>(1) Cons – Only really appropriate as a "first step" to give an overview of a situation / concept / idea.</p> <p>(2) Pros –Allows control of certain variables. Reliability of results can be tested by repeating the study.</p> <p>(2) Cons - The implementation of controls may have an effect on behaviour. People act differently when they know they are being watched. The observer may be biased and misread someone being studied. An observer effect occurs where any change in the participant's behaviour is a result of the observer's presence.</p> <p>(3) Pros – Gives an insiders view. Behaviours are less prone to misinterpretation because researcher was a participant. Opportunity for researcher to become an "accepted" part of the environment.</p> <p>(3) Cons - Possible lack of objectivity on the part of the observer. An observer effect occurs where any change in the participant's behaviour is a result of the observer's presence.</p>
Examples	<p>A – An anthropologist may interview someone of a specific culture to find out about their family practices</p> <p>P – A psychologist may interview a serial killer in order to obtain information on their thoughts and feelings.</p> <p>S- A sociologist could interview university students to examine the impact of a post-secondary institution on their lives.</p>	<p>A - An anthropologist studies people in their own "environment" first hand. Direct observation and varying degrees of participation.</p> <p>P – A psychologist may examine the actions of a person who is depressed, irate of anxious.</p> <p>S- A sociologist may sit on a park bench and observe how people interact with one another.</p>

