

RESEARCH METHODS USED BY THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

One

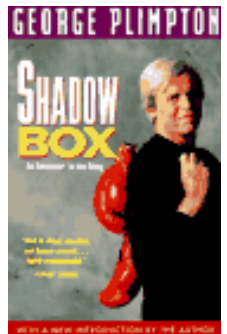
OBSERVATION, *aka* NATURALISTIC OBSERVATION

This technique involves collecting information about behavior without trying to change it. It takes place, typically, in the environment in which the behavior normally occurs, although not always.

There are two general types, *viz.*,

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

A good example of this type of “research” conducted by a writer can be found in the work of George Plimpton. He went three rounds with Archie Moore, a pro boxer, pitched against major baseball players, went through the Detroit Lions summer training camp & played in game, & even had a stint as a circus performer.



NON-PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

One of the best examples of non-participant observation research is that of Jane Goodall. Since 1960 when she first was sent into the jungle by Louis Leakey, she has tirelessly studied the lives of chimpanzees in the wild. She is responsible for establishing the Gombe Stream Research Center and to this day can be found on the lecture circuit speaking out in defense of these endangered animals, our closest genetic relatives in the animal kingdom. You can read more about her here and also you wish to visit her website at:

<http://www.janegoodall.org/>



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Two

SURVEYS & INTERVIEWS

These techniques allow for the collection of vast amounts of data from large numbers of people through the use of QUESTIONNAIRES which are either mailed, as with SURVEYS, or administered by a technician one-on-one, as in INTERVIEWS.

INTERVIEWS, furthermore, may be either STRUCTURED, requiring the technician to follow a precise series of "structured" questions in a particular pre-determined order, or

UNSTRUCTURED In which case the technician is allowed to deviate from the printed questions and go on "fishing expeditions" as his judgement dictates.

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Three

The **CLINICAL METHOD**, aka the **CASE STUDY METHOD**

This technique does one of two things.

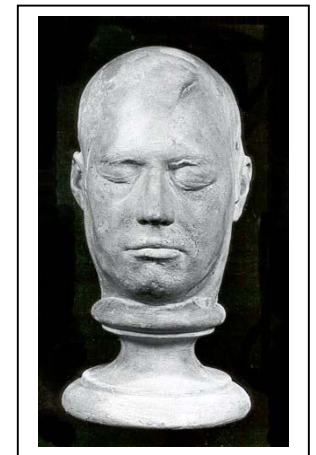
In the **FIRST KIND OF CASE STUDY**, a researcher studies a single individual in depth over an extended period of time as in long-term psychotherapy. Freud, for example, based his psychoanalytic theory on his extensive work with persons seen in his clinical practice.

In the **SECOND KIND OF CASE STUDY**, a researcher takes advantage of a RARE or UNUSUAL EVENT to study one or more persons in depth, *e.g.*, following natural disasters or major accidents.

Studying the aftereffects on people's lives of hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, train wrecks, explosions, mining accidents, *etc.* are good examples.

One of the most famous examples of all time, however, was that of **Phineas Gage of Cavendish, Vermont** on **September 13th, 1848**. His personal tragedy has, ever since that time, been known to all as:

"The Case of the 'Crowbar Skull'". Read more about it here and also see the other photos of this skull taken by Dr. Walsh at this locale.



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Experimental Method

The MOST RIGOROUS OF THE RESEARCH METHODS, this research technique requires

PRECISE MANIPULATION OF ONE OR MORE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

UNDER PRECISELY REGULATED CONDITIONS

INVOLVING ONE OR MORE GROUPS OF EXPERIMENTAL SUBJECTS 

WHO ARE COMPARED TO A CONTROL GROUP (OR TO THEMSELVES)

ON A BEHAVIORAL (RESPONSE) DIMENSION CALLED

THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE

This Is the only research method that is capable of determining CAUSE AND EFFECT CONNECTIONS and supporting or refuting an hypothesis with reasonable certainty.

RESEARCH METHODS USED BY THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES FIVE

CORRELATION

Correlation determines the extent to which a pair of quantitative variables

co-relate with each other, i.e., co-vary with each other in a measurably consistent way allowing us, when the relationship is statistically significant and strong enough, to predict the value of one measure (the criterion Y variable) from knowing the value of the other(the predictor X variable).

Key Terms

Scatterplot; Positive, Negative, and Zero Correlation

Predictor variable (X variable)



Criterion variable (Y variable)

Pearson r statistic

Numerical indicators range from -1.00 to $+1.00$ 

