OBSERVATION

Observation is a research tool used to examine persons in natural settings. “Because observed incidents are less predictable there is a certain freshness to this form of data collection that is often denied in other forms, e.g. a questionnaire or a test” (Cohen et al., 2007: 396). Therefore, observation helps the researcher to get a deep understanding of the studied phenomenon.

General guidelines:

- The researcher should think about when, where, how and what to observe.

- He/ she should think about the duration of the period of observation.

- The researcher should take into consideration the timing of the observation (morning or afternoon).

- He/ she should think about the context of the observation.

- He/ she should concentrate and be attentive.

- The researcher has to focus on details.

- The researcher has to record the events of the observation.

Advantages:

- The researcher can record information about the natural behaviour of a group.

- The researcher can collect reliable information easily.

- The subjectivity of the informants is eliminated.

Disadvantages:

- The researcher may not control the observation.

- The observer may be subjective.

- The collected information may be limited.

References:

- Cohen, Louis, Manion, Lawrence, and Morrison, Keith (2007). Research Methods in Education. New York: Routledge. .

- Kothari, C.R. (2004). Research Methodology. India: New Age International Publishers.