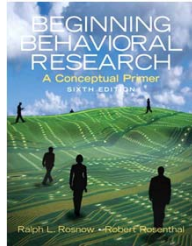


Ch. 4: Strategies of Systematic Observational Research



Rosnow/Rosenthal, *Beginning Behavioral Research*, 6/e. Copyright (c) 2008 by Prentice Hall.

Quantitative vs. Qualitative

- Quantitative Research
 - Data exist in numerical or graphic form
 - e.g. survey results, statistical information
- Qualitative Research
 - Data exist in narrative form
 - e.g. spoken words, conversations

Rosnow/Rosenthal, *Beginning Behavioral Research*, 6/e. Copyright (c) 2008 by Prentice Hall.

APA Guidelines

- Quantitative—Qualitative distinction is a continuum
 - Naturalistic studies (Qualitative)
- Experiments (Qualitative)
- Qualitative data quantified
 - Content of narrative information can be sorted or classified

Rosnow/Rosenthal, *Beginning Behavioral Research*, 6/e. Copyright (c) 2008 by Prentice Hall.

What is Systematic Observational Research?

- Observation = viewing or noting a fact or an occurrence for a scientific purpose
- Systematic = observation follows a particular plan
- Example topics of systematic observation:
 - Power struggle in gorilla communities
 - Interaction between mother and child

Rosnow/Rosenthal, *Beginning Behavioral Research*, 6/e. Copyright (c) 2008 by Prentice Hall.

Naturalistic observation

- Observation of ongoing behavior as it occurs naturally with no intrusion or intervention by the researcher
 - Researchers observe people or animals in their natural environment and record their behavior.
- Goals: Describe behavior as it normally occurs, examine relationships among naturally occurring variables.

Participant observation

- Participant observation is a type of naturalistic observation
- Researcher engages in the same activities as the people he or she is observing
- Observer is an active participant in the natural setting he or she observes.
- Participant is investigator (this is not research participant)

Participant observation

- Undisguised: people in the setting know they are being observed
- Disguised: people don't know they are being observed
 - Disguised participant observation helps control for reactivity, one of the main problems associated with observation.
 - Reactivity occurs when people change their usual behavior because they know they are being observed.

How do Researchers Participate and Observe?

- Study of Cults (Festinger, 1956)
 - Social Psychologists observed a cult (as members)
 - The cult leader predicted the date the world end
 - SP observed 2 months before, and 1 month after the predicted day
 - Many cult leader members quit their jobs, they were careless about money etc.
 - Even though the world did not end, they did not lose faith
 - Interpreted their experience as a rehearsal for real end of the world and strenght of their faith

Rosnow/Rosenthal, *Beginning Behavioral Research*, 6/e. Copyright (c) 2008 by Prentice Hall.

How do Researchers Participate and Observe?

- Stigma (Mark) of mentally ill (Rosenhan, 1973)
 - Co-workers pretend to have psychiatric symptoms (e.g. complain on hearing voices)
 - They admitted to psychiatric hospitals
 - After admitted they behaved quite normally
 - Hospital staff was not informed on the research
 - None of the participant observers was detected
 - All but one diagnosed as schizophrenic
- American Psychiatry Association changed diagnosis criteria

Rosnow/Rosenthal, *Beginning Behavioral Research*, 6/e. Copyright (c) 2008 by Prentice Hall.

Recording Behavior

- Researchers can obtain a *comprehensive record* of people's behavior (e.g., video tapes) or *select specific behaviors* to record.

Recording Behavior

- Qualitative Records
 - Researchers use narrative records when they want a complete (comprehensive) reproduction of people's behavior.
 - *Examples:* videotapes, audiotapes, field notes
 - Narrative records should be made *during* or *soon after* behavior is observed.
 - Observers must be carefully trained.
 - Advantage: Can review the record often to observe behavior.
 - Disadvantage: Costly, time-consuming.

Recording Behavior

- Quantitative Records
 - Selected Behaviors: Researchers choose the behavior they want to observe and ignore other behaviors.
 - Researchers need to decide how they will *measure* the behavior.
 - Examples: frequency of behavior, duration
 - Recording techniques include checklists and electronic recording and tracking.

Naturalistic observation

- Naturalistic Observation
- Pros:
 - Observation is as natural as possible (research is not limited to laboratory)
 - Observing situations impossible to simulate in a lab
 - Observing situations too risky or sensitive to manipulate experimentally

Rosnow/Rosenthal, *Beginning Behavioral Research*, 6/e. Copyright (c) 2008 by Prentice Hall.

Naturalistic observation

- Naturalistic Observation
- Cons:
 - Not credible
 - Not reliable
 - Difficult to replicate

Rosnow/Rosenthal, *Beginning Behavioral Research*, 6/e. Copyright (c) 2008 by Prentice Hall.

How do Researchers Participate and Observe?

- Imagine yourself as a participant observer in a psychiatric hospital
 - How do you observe?
- In naturalistic observations data is primarily field notes.
 - Reliability of field notes is problematic
- Take audio or video recording whenever possible

How do Researchers Participate and Observe?

- Participant observers may sometimes lose their objectivity by becoming too involved in the situation.
- Participant observers may influence the behavior of people they are observing.

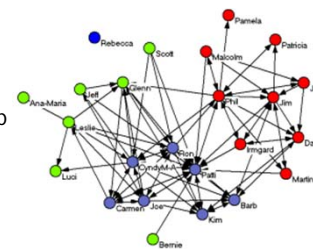
How to Quantify Qualitative Data

- **Social Network Analysis (SNA)**
 - Chart networks of interpersonal behavior
- SNA graphs
 - Maps
 - Nodes
 - Links

Rosnow/Rosenthal, *Beginning Behavioral Research*, 6/e. Copyright (c) 2008 by Prentice Hall.

Social Network Analysis Maps

- Imaginative communication network of students
- How can this map be constructed from naturalistic observations?



Rosnow/Rosenthal, *Beginning Behavioral Research*, 6/e. Copyright (c) 2008 by Prentice Hall.