

SELF ASSESMENT QUESTIONS (SEQs)

1. Explain the meaning and types of experiment.
(Ref. introduction and types of research design next to introduction)
2. Explain informal designs.
(Ref. i,ii,iii in informal experiment design portion.)
3. Explain formal experimental design and control.
(Ref. i,ii,iii,iv in formal experiment design section.)
3. Explain complex factorial design.

UNIT II

LESSON

4

OBSERVATION

LESSON OUTLINE:

- ❖ **Meaning and Characteristics of observation**
- ❖ **Types of observation**
- ❖ **Stages of observation**
- ❖ **Steps in observation**
- ❖ **Problems and**
- ❖ **Merits and Demerits**

After reading this lesson you will be able to know

- ❖ **Meaning and types of observation**
- ❖ **Stages through which observation**

- ❖ **Passes**
- ❖ **Steps followed and the problems coming in observation**
- ❖ **Merits and Demerits**

Introduction

Observation is a method that employs vision as its main means of data collection. It implies the use of eyes rather than of ears and the voice. It is accurate watching and noting of phenomena as they occur with regard to the cause and effect or mutual relations. It is watching other persons' behavior as it actually happens without controlling it. For example, watching bonded laborer's life, or treatment of widows and their drudgery at home, provide graphic description of their social life and sufferings. Observation is also defined as "a planned methodical watching that involves constraints to improve accuracy".

CHARACTERISTICS OF OBSERVATION

Scientific observation differs from other methods of data collection specifically in four ways: (i) observation is always direct while other methods could be direct or indirect; (ii) field observation takes place in a natural setting; (iii)

observation tend to be less structured; and (iv) it makes only the qualitative(and not the quantitative) study which aims at discovering subjects' experiences and how subjects make sense of them(phenomenology) or how subjects understand their life(interpretivism).

Lofland(1955:101-113) has said that this method is more appropriate for studying lifestyles or sub-culture, practices, episodes, encounters, relationships, groups, organizations, settlements and roles, etc. Black and Champion (1976:330) have given the following characteristics of observation:

- Behavior is observed in natural surroundings.
 - It enables understanding significant events affecting social relations of the participants.
 - It determines reality from the perspective of observed person himself.
 - It identifies regularities and recurrences in social life by comparing data in our study with those in other studies.
- Besides, four other characteristics are.
- Observation involves some controls pertaining to the observation and to the means he uses to record data. However, such controls do not exist for the setting or the subject population.
 - It is focused on hypotheses-free inquiry.
 - It avoids manipulations in the independent variable i.e., one that is supposed to cause other variable(s) and is not caused by them.
 - Recording is not selective.

Since, at times, observation technique is indistinguishable from experiment technique, it is necessary to distinguish the two. *One*, that observation involves few controls than the experiment technique. *Two*, the behavior observed in observation is natural whereas in experiment it is not always so. *Three*, behavior observed in experiment in more molecular (of a smaller unit) while one in observation is molar. *Four*, in observation, fewer subjects are watched for long periods of time in more varied circumstances than in experiment. *Five*, training required in observation study is directed more

towards sensitizing the observer to the flow of events whereas training in experiments serves to sharpen the judgment of the subject, *Lastly*, in observational study, the behavior observed is more diffused. Observational methods differ from one another along several variables or dimensions.
