

1. Controlled vs Naturalistic Observation

Naturalistic Observation

Behaviour is observed in a real-life setting.

Features:

- Takes place in a natural environment (school, street, home, etc.)
- Behaviour is more realistic
- Participants may not know they are being observed

Strengths: High ecological validity

Weakness: Less control over variables

Controlled Observation

Behaviour is observed in a structured or lab setting.

Features:

- Researcher controls the environment
- Often uses standardised tasks or situations
- Easier to replicate

Strengths: More control, more reliable

Weakness: Behaviour may be less natural

2. Overt vs Covert Observation

Overt Observation

Participants know they are being observed.

Features:

- **Ethical (consent can be obtained)**
 - **Behaviour may change due to awareness (Hawthorne effect)**
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Covert Observation

Participants do NOT know they are being observed.

Features:

- **Behaviour is more natural**
 - **Raises ethical issues (no consent, privacy concerns)**
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3. Participant vs Non-Participant Observation

Participant Observation

Researcher becomes part of the group.

Features:

- **Researcher interacts with participants**
 - **Can gain deeper insight**
 - **Risk of bias or losing objectivity**
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Non-Participant Observation

Researcher stays separate.

Features:

- **Researcher does not join the group**
 - **More objective**
 - **Less detailed understanding of context**
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4. Structured vs Unstructured Observation

Structured Observation

Uses a pre-prepared checklist of behaviours.

Features:

- **Specific behaviours are counted or timed**
 - **Produces quantitative data**
 - **Easier to compare between observers**
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Unstructured Observation

Observer records everything that seems relevant.

Features:

- **No fixed checklist**
 - **Produces qualitative data**
 - **Rich detail but harder to analyse**
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🕒 5. Sampling Methods (How behaviour is recorded)

Event Sampling

- **Every time a specific behaviour happens, it is recorded**

Time Sampling

- **Behaviour is recorded at fixed time intervals (e.g., every 30 seconds)**
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Summary for Exams

Observation studies in Psychology 9990 are defined by decisions about:

Feature	Type	Options
Setting		Naturalistic / Controlled
Awareness		Overt / Covert
Researcher role		Participant / Non-participant
Recording style		Structured / Unstructured
Sampling		Event / Time