Notre Dame Academy 2024 ~ 2025 Academic Year

Psychology Summer Assignment

Naturalistic Observation Experiment

BACKGROUND: Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behavior. This summer, you will get a taste of how the scientific method is used to learn about behavior. One important research method used by psychologists is naturalistic observation. ***Naturalistic observation is a method that involves observing subjects in their natural environment.*** The goal is to look at behavior in a natural setting without intervention.

OBJECTIVE: I **DO NOT** expect you to design the perfect naturalistic observation or not have errors or mishaps in the process. However I **DO** expect you to record your information and effectively write notes and reflections that will:

- ➢ Convey what happened during your observation
- ➢ Carefully describe and record what you observed
- ➢ Thoughtfully reflect and analyze the behavior you observed
- ➢ Identify difficulties that arose during your study
- ➢ Discuss potential solutions for those problems

DUE DATE: Conduct your observation and compose your report over the summer months. You will be expected to submit your work via Google Classroom on the FIRST day our class will meet in the 2024-2025 school year.

PROCESS:

1. SELECT A BEHAVIOR that you can easily observe in many individuals. Some potential behaviors may include things people do at a mall, the beach, a restaurant, a sporting event, or any other public place you find yourself in this summer. ***Your location must be safe and ethical and have your parents' approval.*** Before beginning your observation, form a question about the behavior. Here are some examples you can choose from, but also feel free to create your own:

- Do more men or women order junk food?
- Are men or women more aggressive while watching sporting events?
- How many people are texting or on their cell phone while waiting in a line?
- Which location in the mall food court do most people choose to eat at?
- How do children react to encountering a pet/animal in public?
- Does age determine whether or not a person will hold a door open for the next person?
- How many are on their cell phones sitting in a restaurant?
- How many people drive through a yellow light?
- How many people wipe down the gym equipment after they use it?
- How many people return their shopping carts to the cart area?
- Your idea? Please feel free to email me if you're not sure about a specific idea or have a question about the behavior you will observe.

2. HYPOTHESIS: Decide what you will observe and develop a hypothesis or expectation of what will happen; for instance "More men than women will order junk food at the mall food court."

3. LOCATION / PROCESS: Select your location and decide exactly how you will observe and collect data unobtrusively. Remember you are NOT TO SPY on anyone! You may only watch people in PUBLIC PLACES. Do not interfere with anyone or let them know you are watching them… all you do is observe and take notes.

4. DATA COLLECTION: Spend **<u>one hour</u>** observing the behavior and collecting data. (Which can be done over four 15-minute sittings or all at once.) Be sure to collect data on those who do the behavior, as well as those who do not. ***ie: If you are collecting data on how many people are littering in a public park, sit in one place, record the total number of people passing by AND how many of those people litter.***

5. CREATE A REPORT: Create a report documenting your study. There is no required length, what is most important is that all of the criteria are clearly addressed. Title each section as shown below. Also, scientific writing is direct. Be concise and specific. The purpose is to convey what you expected, what you did, and what you found as clearly and efficiently as possible. ***(Except for part D that asks for your reflections and analysis)*** You may choose to **create a chart similar to the one below** for your report.

Section	***Required Content***
INTRO-DUCTION	• **A paragraph with proper sentences, grammar and punctuation is required.** • Write about the question you set out to study, explain why it interests you and what you expected to find. • Include your logic for the predictions you made. • The last sentence should be your **hypothesis.** For example "*My hypothesis was that more men than women would hold the door open for the next person.*" A hypothesis is always a statement and never a question.
METHODS	• **Sentence format and/or bulleted notes & phrases are appropriate here.** • Describe & explain the methods you used to gather this information. • Include enough detail for someone to replicate your study if they wish to do so. • Include the location of your observation. • Who exactly you observed ("*92 people exiting the grocery store*"). • The observation date/time frame. ("*Tuesday, July 9, 2024 from 1:15 pm - 2:15 pm.*") • What you did to remain unobtrusive. • How you recorded your data.
RESULTS	• **This section should contain the data along with captions and explanations.** • You are not expected to do any complicated statistics. • Choose the format that works best to represent the data you collected. • Include a visual to help the reader understand the data (bar graph, pie chart, table, etc). • Convert your results to percentages, particularly if you are examining a variable such as age or gender. • In sentence format, write captions to explain and inform the reader.
DISCUSSION	This is the most important part of your report and <u>should be written in paragraph format with proper spelling, grammar and mechanics.</u> ***Don't be too concerned if things don't go as planned or if unexpected variables pop up.*** Just report what occurred. Afterwards, you will think of ways you could have done it more effectively. **It is also perfectly acceptable if your hypothesis is proven wrong** - just try to explain why you think it might have been proven wrong. Talk about what you think the data suggests about your initial question - what new questions were raised,

	what variables were present, and what would you do differently and why? ***Lastly, in some cases it may generate predictions about human behavior, affirm long-held beliefs, or challenge ideas taken for granted.*** Discuss such things if they occur. Have fun doing this! This is meant to make psychology come alive and make learning about the components of research design hands on and memorable.

RUBRIC

A total of 25 possible points.

CATEGORY	5	4	3	2	1
Introduction	Near perfect intro; discusses background for interest in topic; very strong hypothesis with support	Only minor weaknesses; discusses the topic; has a strong hypothesis and support	Discusses why the topic was of interest; weak hypothesis; includes little logic	Only briefly mentions reason for researching topic; unclear /no logic for hypothesis	Does not discuss what triggered this research topic; hypothesis is non-existent.
Methods	Near perfect methods section; data collection methods make logical sense and will allow for easy replication	Only minor weaknesses; data collection method clearly explained with no obvious flaws in the method.	Data collection method described is clear, but there are clear flaws in the method used	Descriptions of data collection are far too vague to allow for replication; method is full of flaws.	No discussion of how data was collected.
Results	Near perfect results section; data is well organized and easy to read; all calculations are correct.	Only minor weaknesses; results/data are clear, precise, and calculated correctly	Results are clearly written, missing visual data however there are clear math errors or distortions	Results provided are so basic as to provide no insight into the behavior or the study, missing visual data.	No results mentioned.
Discussion	Near perfect discussion section; depth of analysis is very strong; ties the results back to the hypothesis; proposes excellent future research and replication ideas.	Only minor weaknesses; digs into the deeper meaning of the results; proposed solid future research and replication ideas	Conducts some analysis of results but not suggest future research paths or ways to better conduct the research	Only a superficial discussion of what the results mean; does not attempt to dig too deep	Did not attempt to discuss what the results meant or the limitations of the study
Grammar & Spelling	Excellent written expression with no errors. Details & explanations enhance understanding.		Only a few minor grammar & spelling errors which do not affect readability.		Grammar & spelling are so bad it makes the paper almost impossible to read