Prep Answers

Researchers want to conduct an observation investigating students’ use of laptops in their free time in Aldenham School.

1. Explain the difference between time sampling and event sampling in observational research. (4 marks)

Event sampling is when every occurrence of specific behaviours is recorded during the whole event (period of the observation). Time sampling is when behaviour is recorded only during specified time periods (e.g. 10 minutes every hour, 1 hour per day).

1. Outline one strength and one weakness of conducting observational research in this study. (6 marks)

Point = A strength of conducting observational research in this study is that the observer will see how the students use their laptops rather than how they say they use them in their free time.

Explanation = This is a strength because it will increase the validity of the research, as true behaviour is being recorded.

Point = A weakness of conducting observational research in this study is that what is observed does not provide us information about the students’ thoughts or feelings, only their behaviour on their laptops.

Explanation = This is a weakness because we might want to know why they use their free time this way, rather than just know what they are doing.

Researchers want to conduct a covert observation in a self-clear dining hall investigating whether students clear up fully after they have finished their meal.

1. Explain the difference between covert and overt observations. (4 marks)

Covert observations are when the participants do not know they are being observed, whereas in an overt observation the participants do know they are being observed.

1. Outline one strength and one weakness of conducting a covert observation in this study (6 marks)

Point = A strength of conducting a covert observation in this study is that the observer will see the true behaviour of the students clearing away after themselves rather than what they would do if they knew they were being watched.

Explanation = This is a strength because it will increase the validity of the research, as true behaviour is being recorded.

Point = A weakness of conducting a covert observation in this study is that the observer might not gain informed consent from the students to watch their behaviour in the dining hall.

Explanation = This is a weakness because participants in psychological research should be able to give informed consent, so that the general public has trust in psychologists.