Research Methods of the Social Sciences

Participant Observation: Researcher participates in the group life of the subjects.

Natural Observation: Researcher watches the subjects in their natural settings. Ex. Jane Goodall

Library Research: Use of documents and previous research

Questionnaire: Handout with questions to determine attitudes, beliefs. (A series of questions to gather information)

Experiments: Research in a controlled settings. Field or Lab. May use a control group and an experimental group.

Interview: Questions asked directly to one person

Case study: In depth examination of one case.

The Experimental Method

1. Define the problem: Form a question to investigate.
2. State a hypothesis: An educated guess. What you would expect the answer to be.
3. Gather information and observe: Use research methods above.
4. Interpret and analyse observations: Look for patterns in the results. The results are interpreted and explained.
5. State Conclusions: Sum up observations and results. Determine whether the hypothesis was correct or not.