

# Linking Methodologies with Research Methods

## A guide



1. This guide aims to focus on core considerations which you should engage in order to choose a good research method for your project.

2. The table below shows some advantages and disadvantages of research methods. Please note that this is not a complete list.

Methods	Types within the method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Complete participant: research conceals role</li> <li>✔ Observer as participant: role of researcher is known</li> <li>✔ Participant as observer: observation role secondary to participant role</li> <li>✔ Complete observer: researcher observes without participating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Researcher has a firsthand experience with participants</li> <li>✔ Researcher can record information as it revealed</li> <li>✔ Account for the complexity of group behaviors</li> <li>✔ Studying research subject in their natural setting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Researcher participation may be seen as intrusive</li> <li>✔ Research can be overwhelmed with data</li> <li>✔ Time consuming</li> <li>✔ Access to the group</li> <li>✔ Data interpretation</li> <li>✔ Cost</li> </ul>
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Face to face</li> <li>✔ Telephone</li> <li>✔ Group</li> <li>✔ In-depth</li> <li>✔ Structural</li> <li>✔ Semi-structural</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Allow researcher to explain and clarify questions</li> <li>✔ Visual materials can be used</li> <li>✔ Research subject may be discussed in depth</li> <li>✔ Allows respondents to describe what is meaningful or important for them using their own words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Participant may not feel comfortable discussing certain issues</li> <li>✔ Researcher presence may bias participant responses</li> <li>✔ Cost and time consuming</li> </ul>
Visual data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Photographs</li> <li>✔ Videotapes</li> <li>✔ Art objects</li> <li>✔ Films</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Provides opportunity for participants to directly share their "reality"</li> <li>✔ Creative in that it captures attention visually</li> <li>✔ Can facilitate discussion on difficult issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ May be difficult to interpret</li> <li>✔ May not be accessible publicly or privately</li> <li>✔ Cost</li> </ul>
Diaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Unstructured</li> <li>✔ Written accounts</li> <li>✔ Semi-structured</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Provide access to naturally occurring sequences of activity described by participants</li> <li>✔ Avoidance of researcher bias</li> <li>✔ Good source of narrative data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Require a lot of commitment from participants</li> <li>✔ Time consuming</li> </ul>

Methods	Types within the method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Focus groups	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Can capture a group interaction</li> <li>✔ Observe of group interaction can be made during the focus group</li> <li>✔ Visual aides can be used</li> <li>✔ Help you get in contact with lots of people fairly cheaply</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Moderator needs to be in control or group dynamics could taint responses</li> <li>✔ Competitive and intimate topics are unsuitable for focus group discussion</li> <li>✔ Assembling a group may require additional resources</li> </ul>

Creswell (2003)

Consider completing [Steps - guiding questions for selecting research methods](#). This will give you guidance how to chose select suitable methodological approach and methods for your study.

If you have more suggestions about advantages and disadvantages of Research Methods, please share them with us - contact Emilia Pietka via [emilia.pietka@strath.ac.uk](mailto:emilia.pietka@strath.ac.uk).