

## **Time-Diary Research Method: Methodological Context, Evaluation and Applications.**

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### **Abstract**

*The diary method has been used for a long time in many sciences as a research tool that provides rich data which is different from that provided by other methods. Time-diary is one of different types of diaries that are used in research. The history of application of time-diary goes back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This paper aims to extend the investigation on the use of time-diary research method in particular. Firstly, we review the literature on the use of diaries in research, the evaluation of the diary method, the technology applied in different diary designs, and the typology of diary methods. Secondly, we compare between the time-diary method and other methodological approaches of measuring the use of time, in order to find out the characteristics and the comparative disadvantages of the time-diary method. Finally, we discuss examples on the use of time-diary in different research fields.*

Keywords: diary-studies, time-diary, time-use methods, psychology-research, work-research, consumer-research.

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### **1. Literature review: The use of the diary method in research and the methodological context of the use of time-diary.**

The diary can be defined as a regular personal record organized by its writer who is an identifiable individual for the purpose of registering the sequence of dated regular events during a period of time. Entries in the diary are made either at the time of its happening or very close to that time, so the diary is kept contemporaneous. Because recording the events should respect the timing of the entries, usually the diary has a time-structured format (Alaszewski 2006).

The objective of this section is to review briefly the literature to give an overview on the context of using diaries in research including the historical trends, main fields of application, technology and design of the tool, evaluation as a research method, and finally we present a typology of diary methods. This typology positions the time-diary method in its place compared with other diary designs.

#### **1.1 Historical trends and examples of application fields:**

Since the start of the twentieth century, there has been an interest in using diaries for researching on-going everyday life events in order to comprehend the reality of what happens in people's lives by capturing in-vivo