

GEOG - 606



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



**DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND NATURAL RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT**

**SCHOOL OF EARTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
UTTARAKHAND OPEN UNIVERSITY**

(Teenpani Bypass, Behind Transport Nagar Haldwani (Nainital) Uttarakhand)

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CONTENTS

CONTENTS		PAGE NO.
BLOCK- 1: Introduction to research methodology and research design.		
UNIT-1	Definition and scope of research, Characteristics of scientific research, Importance of research methodology in academic and professional settings.	1-21
UNIT-2	Types of research; descriptive, exploratory, experimental, correlation, etc.	22-42
UNIT-3	Selection of research topic and formulation of research questions.	43-62
UNIT-4	Criteria for evaluating research designs.	63-78
BLOCK- 2: Literature Review & Conceptual Framework.		
UNIT-5	Conduction a literature review; sources, databases, citation management.	79-96
UNIT-6	Developing a conceptual framework; theories, hypotheses, variables.	97-122
UNIT-7	Sampling techniques- probability sampling methods; simple random sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling- Non- probability sampling methods; convenience sampling, purposive sampling, snowball sampling, sample size determination and power analysis.	123-143
BLOCK- 3: Data Collection Methods.		
UNIT-8	Questionnaire design; types of questions, scale development, pilot testing.	144-166
UNIT-9	Interview techniques; structured, semi- structured, unstructured interviews.	167-186
UNIT-10	Observation methods; participant observation, systematic observation.	187-203
BLOCK- 4: Experimental Design		
UNIT-11	Basics of experimental research; independent and dependent variables, control groups, randomization, laboratory vs. field experiments.	204-227
UNIT-12	Qualitative research methods, quantitative data analysis; software tools for data analysis; SPSS, R, Python.	228-245
UNIT-13	Research Ethics and reporting; ethical principles in research conduct; informed consent, confidentiality, integrity, writing research reports; structure, formatting, citation styles.	246-259

BLOCK-1 INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH

UNIT 1: DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF RESEARCH, CHARACTERISTICS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IN ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL SETTING.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

1.2 INTRODUCTION

1.3 DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF RESEARCH,

1.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH,

1.5 IMPORTENCE OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IN ACADEMIC

1.6 IMPORTENCE OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IN PROFESSIONAL SETTING.

1.7 SUMMAREY

1.8 GLOSSARY

1.9 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1.10 REFFERENCE

1.11 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1.1 OBJECTIVES

After having the detailed study of this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the definition and scope of research in various academic disciplines and professional areas.
- Identify and explain fundamental aspects of scientific research, including objectivity, empirical evidence, and systematic investigation.
- Analyze the significance of research methodology for validity, reliability, and ethical conduct.
- Evaluate the impact of research methodology on critical thinking, academic writing, and scholarly exploration in education.
- Evaluate research methodology's practical applicability in professional settings to improve decision-making, innovation, and organizational performance.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

Research is a systematic and organized process of investigation that seeks to answer specific questions, phenomena, or problems. It tries to discover facts, relationships, and general concepts that help to the advancement of knowledge. Depending on the nature and objective of the study, research can be characterized as descriptive, exploratory, explanatory, or applied. At its core, research entails critical thinking and the use of scientific procedures to verify that the results are accurate, reliable, and reproducible. The scope of research is broad, spanning fields such as social sciences, natural sciences, humanities, and business. Research frequently leads to the creation of new ideas, models, and frameworks that can increase academic understanding and inform professional practice.

Several fundamental aspects distinguish scientific study from other types of inquiry. First and foremost, it is empirical, drawing conclusions based on observable and measurable evidence. The research process is objective, with the goal of minimizing bias and ensuring that the findings are based on true facts rather than personal ideas or interpretations. Furthermore, scientific research is systematic and methodical, with organized procedures for problem identification, hypothesis formation, data gathering, analysis, and conclusion. It is also reproducible, which means that other researchers should be able to repeat the study and get similar results.

Furthermore, scientific study is theoretical, with the goal of adding to existing knowledge or developing new theories. Finally, it is transparent and ethical, following established norms and ethical standards to maintain the research's integrity and credibility.

Research methodology is extremely important in both academic and professional settings. It establishes the structure and principles for doing research in a methodical and rigorous manner, guaranteeing that the findings are valid and reliable. In academic settings, research methodology is vital because it allows students and academics to approach research topics in an organized manner, assisting them in generating significant insights that contribute to their field's knowledge base. A well-defined research technique allows researchers to critically examine and understand existing literature, conduct experiments or surveys, analyze data, and draw sound conclusions.

In professional settings, the significance of research technique extends beyond theoretical understanding to practical applications. Businesses, legislators, and professionals rely on solid research methodologies to make educated decisions, devise strategies, and address real-world challenges. For example, in healthcare, research technique supports clinical trials to establish treatment efficacy, whereas in business, market research methodologies influence product creation and marketing tactics. Overall, research methodology guarantees that conclusions are both academically sound and relevant to practical problem solutions.

1.3 DEFINITION OF RESEARCH

By definition, research is a deliberate and systematic examination into many disciplines of knowledge with the goal of uncovering new facts or ideas. The adjective "search" in the word "research" is important because it signifies that researchers are constantly looking for new truths, often without knowing where their investigation will go. This never-ending pursuit of truth, along with an inherent skepticism of established conventions, propels the discovery process forward. Research is more than just a meticulous search for answers; it is a dynamic and developing activity that tests existing knowledge and leads to new insights.

In the domain of social sciences, research has a dual purpose: it aids in both the invention of new theories and the testing and confirmation of established ones. This discipline's theories are constantly changing through empirical research and theoretical improvement. Interdisciplinary approaches, drawing not just from the social sciences but also from the physical

sciences, have helped to develop a strong theoretical foundation in the subject of communication. Westley and Stempel (1981) described communication research as the study of mass communication processes, their effects, and institutional transformation, making it a dynamic and multidisciplinary field.

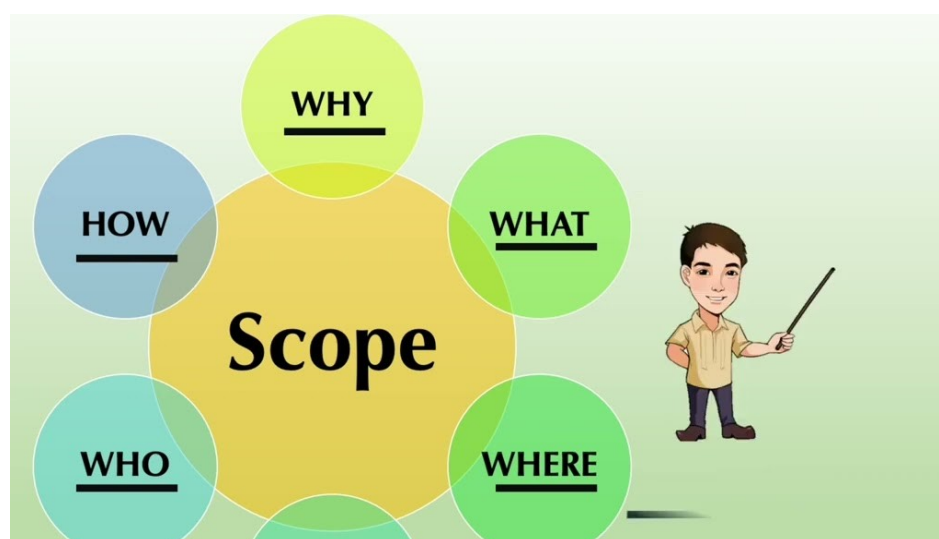
The emphasis on continual investigation, theory testing, and validation defines social science research, particularly in communication. Researchers are frequently driven by a desire to question the status quo and contribute to a better knowledge of complex processes.

1.4 SCOPE OF RESEARCH

Anthropology, sociology, political science, economics, psychology, and other disciplines all play an important role in communication study. Essentially, it is the study of how people communicate, both in person and through technology-mediated channels. Media and communication studies, a subfield of human communication, focus on the creation and design of media messages, as well as their delivery and consumption by audiences.

Technology is fundamental to media studies. Reading newspapers, watching television, listening to the radio, using mobile phones, and viewing films in theatres are all examples of communication study. Almost every aspect of communication can be investigated, including who develops the communication, what is conveyed, how it is sent and received, which messages reach the intended audience, and the effects of the communication.

Fig.1



Source: Google

As previously stated, communication research has several subfields, including market research, cinema studies, media research, audience research, content analysis, and advertising research. The core components of communication—sender, message, channel, receiver, and feedback—can be studied separately or together. Researchers in this subject investigate these factors separately, employing suitable methods, or examine how they interact. But what specific areas do communication researchers study?

Communication academics often focus on three major areas: communication production, transmission, and interpretation; message content or form; and communication functions and impacts. Within these broad categories, there are various subfields of communication research. When communication research is combined with other social sciences, new areas of study develop. Some of these include:

1. Communication policy and law
2. Organizational communication
3. Cross-cultural communication
4. Intrapersonal communication
5. Family communication
6. Development communication
7. Marketing communication
8. Persuasive communication
9. Political communication
10. Health communication
11. Instructional communication
12. Public relations

Each of these categories can be tackled using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.

1.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Horton and Hunt identified the following nine characteristics of the scientific method:

1. Verifiable evidence refers to factual facts that other observers can see and corroborate.
2. Accuracy in describing what truly exists. It relates to the precision or correctness of a statement, expressing things exactly as they are, and avoiding jumping to unfounded conclusions through exaggeration or fantasy.
3. Precision, i.e. making things as exact as possible or providing an exact amount or measurement. Instead of saying, "I interviewed a large number of people," you say, "I interviewed 493 people." Instead of saying "most people were against family planning," one says "72 percent were against family planning." Instead of saying, "Every moment one is born; every moment a man dies," one can say, "Thirty people are born in one minute in India." Thus, with scientific precision, one avoids colorful literature and ambiguous interpretations. The level of precision required in social science will vary depending on the situation.
4. Systematization is the process of attempting to locate all relevant information or accumulating information in an ordered and systematic manner in order to create reliable results. In general, information obtained from informal memories is insufficient, resulting in erroneous assessments and conclusions.
5. Objectivity refers to the absence of prejudice and particular interests. It implies that the observer's views, opinions, and preferences have as little influence on observation as possible, and that he may see and accept facts as they are rather than how he wishes them to be. The researcher defends his preconceived notions while keeping detached from his wants, emotions, and prejudices. A bias is the inadvertent tendency to perceive facts in a specific way based on personal preferences, values, and interests. For example, some individuals may see a university student protest march as a sensible Endeavour to improve the students' well-being, whilst others may see it as a dumb plan to appease their concerns. The researcher will offer any data and perspectives from students, teachers, administrators, and others in an objective manner. Because he will not be emotionally immersed in the situation, he will not purposefully disregard or emphasize specific facts. He will make an effort to be truthful in the data he collects, as well as in what he observes and hears. He will have no personal interest in reporting and evaluating the

facts because he is an unbiased researcher. The researcher is also aware that others with opposing viewpoints may question and criticize his analysis. He will not allow his biases to impact his results and conclusions since he is concerned that his research will be misreported.

6. Recording, which means writing down all relevant facts as quickly as possible. Because of human memory limits, every information gathered is logged. The researcher will analyze the situation using recorded data rather than remembered facts. Drawing conclusions from recalled unrecorded data is not reliable.

7. The practice of controlling all variables except one and then observing what happens when that variable is altered is referred to as controlling conditions. All scientific experiments follow the fundamental method of allowing one variable to vary while keeping all other variables constant. We cannot determine which variable caused the findings unless all except one is controlled. In a laboratory experiment, a physical scientist can control as many variables as he likes (heat, light, air pressure, time interval, and so on), whereas a social scientist cannot. He works under a lot of constraints. For example, a researcher may wish to investigate student behavior in the classroom. Students' behavior in the classroom is today determined by a range of factors, including the teacher's ability to express his ideas, the subject being taught, the availability of a blackboard, fan, and other facilities in the room, the silence of the verandah outside the classroom, and so on. A researcher may be able to influence some, but not all, of these elements. Students' behavior will vary based on the circumstances. A social science researcher, on the other hand, can investigate multiple variables at the same time. It's called multivariate analysis. Because the social scientist is not always able to control all of the variables he desires, his findings do not allow him to make predictions.

8. Training investigators include imparting necessary knowledge to investigators so that they understand what to search for, how to analyze it, and how to avoid collecting incorrect evidence. When remarkable observations are reported, the scientist first enquires about the observer's level of education, training, and sophistication. Does he really understand the material he reports? Scientists are always impressed by authenticated accounts.

All of the preceding characteristics of the scientific process suggest that any generalization based on this type of research is true. A systematic accumulation of scientific evidence is seldom questioned. Not unexpectedly, Sigmund has remarked that data collected haphazardly cannot be characterized as scientific research.

Henry Johnson identified the following four qualities of scientific research.

1. It is empirical, which means it is founded on observation and reasoning rather than speculation.
2. It is theoretical, which implies it accurately summarizes facts by building logical linkages between concepts to explain causal relationships.
3. It is cumulative, in the sense that generalizations/ideas are corrected or rejected, and new theories are developed on top of old ones.
4. It is unethical since scientists do not state whether certain objects, events, phenomena, institutions, systems, or structures are good or evil. They just describe them.

Robert B. Burns (2000:5-7) identified four features of the scientific approach: control, operational definition, replication, and hypothesis testing.

Control is essential to eliminate the simultaneous influence of several factors and identify the source of an effect. Control provides unequivocal answers to issues such as why something happens, what triggers an occurrence, and under what conditions it occurs. Operational definition is defining ideas in terms of how to measure them; for example, economic class can be defined as family income, and social class as the father's occupation or both parents' educational degree. Replication necessitates that the results obtained from a repeated study be reliable. If observations cannot be reproduced, our descriptions and explanations are untrustworthy and ineffectual.

Hypothesis testing requires generating a hypothesis and testing it empirically.

1.6 IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

We will discuss research methodology, which is a systematic and rigorous approach to doing and analyzing academic research. We'll discuss what a research technique is, why it's important, and how it may vary depending on the nature, objective, and context of the study. What is the research method?

Research methodology is the systematic and rigorous process of conceptualizing, conducting, analyzing, and reporting on research. It comprises selecting and implementing appropriate data gathering and interpretation processes and tactics, as well as determining the validity, reliability, and ethical implications of research findings.

Research methodology is not a one-size-fits-all approach. It is determined by the study topic, purpose, breadth, and research context. Different types of studies require different approaches, such as quantitative, qualitative, mixed, and action research. Furthermore, research procedures and standards vary by subject, including scientific sciences, social sciences, humanities, and arts.

Why is Research Methodology Important?

Research technique is important for a number of reasons. First, it provides a clear and logical framework for conducting and assessing research. It enables researchers to plan, organize, and implement their study in a systematic and consistent manner. It also enables researchers to justify and explain their study approach, methodology, and techniques.

Second, it ensures the research's high quality and credibility. It allows researchers to collect and analyze data that is relevant, reliable, and legitimate to answer the research question. It also helps researchers prevent or mitigate errors, biases, and ethical issues that could endanger their research findings. It also enables researchers to report and communicate their findings in a clear and accurate way.

Third, it encourages the advancement and dissemination of information. It permits scholars to add to the existing body of knowledge in their field and beyond. It also allows researchers to compare and contrast their findings with those of other studies, revealing gaps and potential areas for further research. It also enables researchers to share and disseminate their findings with colleagues, practitioners, stakeholders, and the general public.

Finally, research techniques are an essential component of academic study. It describes a methodical and rigorous strategy to performing, analyzing, and reporting research. It ensures research quality and integrity while also promoting knowledge advancement and dissemination. Researchers must understand and use appropriate research methodology to their research projects, as well as review and critique the research procedures of others.

1.7 IMPORTANCE IN ACADEMIC SETTING

Academic work relies heavily on research methodology. It is not enough to just gather information; it must be done in a systematic, dependable, and ethical manner that yields valid and relevant results. The following are the important areas where research technique is essential:

1. Foundation for Knowledge Creation.

Systematic Investigation: Academic study seeks to provide new knowledge or validate existing concepts. Research methodology provides a methodical framework for conducting research, ensuring that conclusions are not dependent on preconceptions or biases.

Theory Building: It aids in the creation and refinement of theories. Researchers can use appropriate methodologies to test ideas and give reliable evidence to academic disputes.

2. Enhances Academic Writing and Rigor Structure and Clarity: Methodology enables students and scholars to organize their study coherently. This includes developing research questions, designing studies, gathering and analyzing data, and reaching findings.

Credibility and Reliability: Research conducted using sound methods is more credible. Peer reviewers and readers are more likely to accept study findings that are transparent, repeatable, and logically structured.

3. Provides guidelines for thesis and dissertation development. Research Design: Students working on theses, dissertations, or capstone projects must have a clear methodology. It specifies the sort of data to gather (quantitative or qualitative), the techniques to be used (surveys, interviews, experiments), and how to analyze the data.

Ensures Ethical Research Practices: Methodology involves ethical research norms, such as gaining informed consent and maintaining participant confidentiality, which ensures the work's academic integrity.

4. Promotes innovation and inquiry

Promotes Critical Thinking: Research methodology encourages a questioning mindset. It encourages students not to take information at face value, but rather to examine, question assumptions, and seek evidence.

Supports Original Research: With a solid understanding of methodologies, students can propose new studies, question old paradigms, and bring new insights to their subjects.

Additional Benefits:

Academic Success: Good methodological abilities are frequently associated with improved academic achievement since they enhance the quality of assignments, projects, and presentations.

Preparation for Further Studies: Mastery of research methodologies is essential for students pursuing higher degrees (Master's, PhD), which require extensive independent study.

1.8 IMPORTANCE IN PROFESSIONAL SETTING

In the professional sector, research technique is an effective instrument for innovation, efficiency, and informed decision-making in fields such as business, healthcare, engineering, education, marketing, and public policy. It enables organizations to rely on evidence rather than assumptions.

1. Decision-Making and Problem-Solving

Data-Driven Decisions: Professionals use data to make vital decisions. Research technique provides systematic methods for gathering and analyzing data, hence lowering uncertainty and hazards.

Identifying Problems and Solutions: Research may help organizations identify operational challenges, grasp customer pain points, and discover market gaps. Sound methodology guarantees that the problem is correctly diagnosed and that solutions are supported by evidence.

Policy Development: In government or business policy-making, research methodologies ensure that regulations and initiatives are founded on solid facts rather than guesswork or bias.

2. Enhances Industry Research and Development (R&D)

Innovation and Product Improvement: Businesses use research methodologies to test prototypes, analyze user feedback, and enhance product features. This results in more competitive and customer-focused developments.

Methodology is essential for analyzing client behavior, preferences, and market trends. Surveys, focus groups, and analytics tools all use strong methodological principles.

Quality assurance: In industries such as manufacturing and pharmaceuticals, rigorous research procedures ensure that new goods meet safety and quality criteria prior to distribution.

3. Improves Efficiency and Productivity

Process Optimizations: Research methodologies such as time-motion studies, root cause analysis, and workflow evaluation assist businesses in identifying inefficiencies and streamlining operations.

Performance Measurement: Organizations use research tools to evaluate staff performance, customer satisfaction, and service quality, allowing for targeted improvement.

Evidence-Based Management: Leaders can base their initiatives on established principles, reducing trial and error and resource waste.

4. Upholds Professional Credibility and Standards

Ethical Practices: Research methodology incorporates ethical standards that help professionals acquire and use data responsibly while maintaining confidentiality, transparency, and responsibility.

Compliance and Regulation: Industries like healthcare, banking, and environmental science are highly regulated. Adhering to proper research technique enables organizations to comply with laws and norms, avoiding legal concerns and penalties.

Reputation and Trust: Companies and people who conduct thorough research acquire credibility with stakeholders, investors, clients, and the public.

Additional Impacts:

Employees that receive research methodology training become more analytical, precise, and solution-focused.

Cross-Functional Collaboration: Standard research procedures improve communication across departments (e.g., marketing, product design, and finance), resulting in more integration and strategic alignment.

Bridging Academic and Professional Research

The gap between academic research and professional (or industry-based) research has narrowed in recent decades. Professional research prioritizes practical application, market demands, and rapid problem-solving, whereas academic research frequently focuses on theory, discovery, and long-term impact. Bridging the two provides the best of both worlds: theoretical rigor combined with real-world relevance.

1. Transfer of Research Skills from Academia to Industry

Academic training teaches vital research skills such as critical thinking, data analysis, literature review, and report writing, all of which are directly transferable to professional employment.

Professionals with academic research background apply methodological discipline to industry operations, resulting in higher-quality market research, data interpretation, and strategic planning.

Problem-Solving Orientation: Academic researchers learn how to frame problems systematically, which is useful for dealing with organizational challenges in the workplace.

2. Collaborative Research Initiatives

University-Industry Partnerships: Many academic institutions are now collaborating with corporations to perform joint research. Examples include pharmaceutical businesses collaborating with universities on medication trials and engineering schools engaging with automakers on vehicle advances.

Sponsored Research Projects: Businesses frequently sponsor academic research to investigate topics relevant to their requirements, while academics gain access to real-world data and scenarios.

Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs) are university departments that help commercialize academic research by patenting, licensing, and incubating startups, bridging the gap between innovation and entrepreneurship.

3. Real-World Application of Academic Theories

Business tactics, psychological theories, economic models, and scientific discoveries made in academia are frequently applied directly in professional situations (for example, behavioral science in marketing).

Evidence-Based Practice: Healthcare, education, social work, and management are increasingly adopting evidence-based practice, which involves making professional decisions based on rigorous academic research.

Case Studies and Action Research: Academic tools such as case studies and action research are increasingly used in business consulting and organizational development.

4. Experiential Learning and Internships

Capstone Projects: Many academic programs now include real-world research projects (capstones), which allow students to apply academic approaches to solve real-world problems for businesses or community organizations.

Internships and Cooperative Education: Internships give students the opportunity to apply classroom information in professional settings, honing both their research and work abilities. **Professional Input in Academia:** Industry professionals are invited to academic institutions to collaborate on curricula, assuring the relevance and application of research approaches.

5. Benefits of Bridging the Gap

Innovation Acceleration: Practical industry difficulties can spark academic research, while academic breakthroughs can accelerate industry innovation.

Mutual Learning: Academics get access to real-world data and constraints, while professionals get cutting-edge theory and long-term perspective.

Improved Employability: Graduates with hands-on research experience are more equipped for the job market, while companies gain access to analytically adept people.

Challenges and Limitations

While research methodology is critical for producing trustworthy, valid, and effective knowledge, its implementation is not without problems. When it comes to implementing excellent research techniques, the academic and professional environments face distinct and overlapping challenges.

I. Challenges in the Academic Setting

1. Limited Research Training

Lack of Methodological Skills: Many students and early-career researchers do not receive formal training in study design, data analysis, or ethical procedures, which results in poorly completed studies.

Overemphasis on Theory: Academic institutions sometimes prioritize theoretical knowledge above applied research abilities, resulting in a disconnect between what is taught and what is required in real-world research.

2. Resource Constraints

Financing Limitations: Academic research sometimes relies on grants or institutional financing, which can be restricted and competitive.

Access to Tools and Data: Students and researchers may lack access to advanced software, laboratories, or real-world data sets needed for rigorous study.

3. Time Pressure

Academic Deadlines: Research within coursework or degree timelines may be rushed, compromising quality and depth.

Publication Pressure: The "publish or perish" culture can lead to hasty, repetitive, or low-quality research in order to meet academic standards.

4. Ethical and Bureaucratic Hurdles

Long Approval Processes: Obtaining ethical approval from institutional review boards (IRBs) can be time-consuming and complex.

Participant Recruitment Issues: Finding appropriate and interested study volunteers can be difficult, particularly in sensitive or specialty investigations.

II. Challenges in the Professional Setting

1. Time and Budget Constraints

Short Project Timelines: Businesses frequently prioritize speed and rapid results, which might interfere with the depth required for high-quality research.

Budget constraints: Research may be reprioritized or underfunded in comparison to marketing, operations, or sales services.

2. Resistance to Research Findings

Managers and stakeholders may be resistant to data that calls into question existing assumptions, strategies, or performance.

Selective Data Use: Research findings can be manipulated or cherry-picked to justify predetermined judgments rather than guiding objective analysis.

3. Lack of Methodological Rigor

Informal Research Practices: Some organizations undertake internal surveys or reports without following a rigorous methodology, resulting in biased or incorrect results.

Skill Gaps: Employees performing research may lack formal training, leading in poor design, data misinterpretation, or incorrect conclusions.

4. Data Privacy and Ethical Issues

Handling Sensitive Information: Research utilizing consumer or employee data must adhere to legal and ethical norms (e.g., GDPR), which increases complexity.

Confidentiality Risks: Improper management of proprietary or personal data can result in breaches, legal penalties, and a loss of public trust.

III. Shared Challenges Across Both Settings

1. Complexity of Research Design

Choosing the appropriate approach (qualitative, quantitative, or hybrid) necessitates skill and careful consideration, which are not always available.

2. The creation of Technology and Methods

Both academics and professionals may struggle to keep up with new research tools, software, or analytical approaches, resulting in outmoded practices.

3. Interpreting and communicating the results

Misinterpretation of Data: Both academics and professionals may struggle to evaluate statistical results correctly.

Poor communication: Findings are frequently not converted into practical insights, particularly when reports are very complex or inaccessible to non-experts.

IV. Limitations of Research Methodology Itself

1. Not Universally Applicable

There is no single research method that fits all challenges. What works in one setting could be unproductive or misleading in another.

2. Subjectivity and Bias

Even when using rigorous methodologies, researcher bias can influence how questions are framed, data is analyzed, and findings are reported.

3. Inability to Capture Real-Time Changes

Many study designs, especially in academic contexts, are rigid and difficult to adapt to constantly changing situations, particularly in fast-paced enterprises.

1.9 SUMMARY

Research is a systematic and organized process of investigating new facts, verifying current knowledge, or solving problems using scientific methods. It includes developing hypotheses, collecting and analyzing data, interpreting results, and drawing conclusions. The scope of research is broad and crosses fields, ranging from pure and theoretical studies in academia to applied and problem-solving efforts in the workplace. Research can be divided into two types: basic (or fundamental) research and applied research, with the former focusing on producing new knowledge and the latter on finding answers to real-world problems. In all circumstances, the purpose is to add significantly to the body of information and facilitate informed decision-making.

Scientific research is distinguished by objectivity, accuracy, empirical evidence, ethical norms, and logical reasoning. It requires researchers to retain objectivity, base their results on

observable facts, and use methodical techniques to assure reliability and reliability. In academic settings, a thorough understanding of research methodology improves critical thinking, scholarly writing, and the construction of respectable theses and dissertations. In professional settings, research methodology facilitates data-driven decision-making, innovation, efficiency, and strategic planning. Whether in a laboratory, classroom, corporate office, or public sector, solid research methods ensure that enquiries are meaningful, credible, and ethical-bridging the theoretical and practical divide.

1.10 GLOSSARY

- **Research:** Research is a systematic and organized process of inquiry aimed at discovering, interpreting, or revising facts, hypotheses, and applications in a particular field of knowledge.
- **Research Methodology:** Research methodology is the framework or blueprint that defines the methods, strategies, and tools used to do research while maintaining accuracy, objectivity, and reliability.
- **Scientific Method:** The Scientific Method is a rational and empirical approach to scientific study that includes observation, hypothesis creation, experimentation, and conclusion.
- **Hypothesis:** A hypothesis is a tentative, testable prediction or explanation for a phenomenon that directs the course of scientific research.
- **Empirical Evidence:** Empirical evidence is information obtained through observation or experimentation that can be quantified and evaluated objectively.
- **Objectivity:** A key feature of scientific inquiry in which discoveries are based on observable and measurable facts, free of personal prejudices or emotions.
- **Validity:** The degree to which a research study accurately assesses what it wants to measure; necessary for obtaining meaningful results.
- **Reliability:** The extent to which study findings are consistent and reproducible under similar situations.
- **Ethical Research:** Research is performed in accordance with accepted ethical principles, such as informed consent, confidentiality, and participant safety.
- **Academic Research:** Academic institutions perform research that is often theoretical or exploratory in nature, with the goal of extending knowledge or solving scholarly problems.
- **Applied Research:** Practical research aiming at solving real-world problems or improving procedures, which is widely employed in professional or industrial settings.
- **Interdisciplinary Research:** A study methodology that addresses complicated challenges by combining concepts, theories, and procedures from several academic or professional domains.

1.11 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Which of the following best describes research?

- A. A random collection of facts
- B. A technique for memorizing data
- C. A methodical examination to establish facts or principles
- D. An opinion-based explanation.

Answer: C

2. What is the main goal of applied research?

- A. Create new theories
- B. Enhance academic performance
- C. Address real-world issues
- D. To increase reading habits.

Answer: C

3. Which of the following is not a feature of scientific research?

- A. Subjectivity
- B. Objectivity
- C. Logical reasoning.
- D. Empirical Evidence

Answer: A

4. Research methodology refers to:

- A. The results of the research
- B. A set of rules for academic writing
- C. The procedures and techniques used to conduct research
- D. A list of sources in a study

Answer: C

5. In academic settings, research methodology helps students to:

- A. Memorize data quickly
- B. Write fiction creatively
- C. Develop critical thinking and analytical skills
- D. Avoid writing assignments

Answer: C

6. Which of the following is an example of basic (fundamental) research?

- A. Studying the impact of social media on consumer behavior
- B. Testing the effectiveness of a new drug in a hospital
- C. Investigating the properties of a new chemical compound
- D. Improving customer service response time

Answer: C

7. Why is ethical consideration important in research?

- A. To make the research longer
- B. To ensure personal beliefs are included
- C. To protect participants and ensure responsible conduct
- D. To avoid writing a conclusion

Answer: C

8. In professional settings, research methodology contributes to:

- A. Making decisions based on opinions
- B. Promoting guesswork
- C. Data-driven decision-making and strategic planning
- D. Avoiding productivity

Answer: C

9. Which of the following is a key component of scientific research?

- A. Faith-based conclusions
- B. Random guessing
- C. Hypothesis formulation
- D. Ignoring evidence

Answer: C

10. Interdisciplinary research involves:

- A. Repeating the same study in different years
- B. Using a single subject area for all questions
- C. Integrating methods and knowledge from multiple fields
- D. Avoiding collaboration

Answer: C

1.12 REFERENCES

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1.13 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

(A) SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. What is research?
2. Mention any two characteristics of scientific research.
3. Why is research methodology important in academic writing?
4. Differentiate between basic and applied research with one example each.

(B) LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Define research and elaborate on its objectives, types, and overall significance in knowledge development.

2. Discuss in detail the scope of research in various academic disciplines and professional industries.
3. What are the key characteristics of scientific research? Explain how each characteristic ensures the reliability and validity of research outcomes.
4. Differentiate between qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. In what contexts is each more appropriate?
5. Explain the importance of research methodology in academic settings, especially in relation to thesis writing and critical thinking.
6. How does research methodology contribute to problem-solving and innovation in professional environments? Provide examples.
7. Discuss the ethical considerations in conducting research and explain why ethical practices are essential in both academic and professional research.
8. Describe the process of selecting a suitable research methodology for a given problem. What factors should be considered?
9. Examine the challenges and limitations faced while applying research methodology in academic research, and suggest ways to overcome them.
10. Evaluate how bridging academic research and professional research can enhance the relevance and impact of research outcomes. Include examples of successful collaboration.

UNIT: 2 TYPES OF RESEARCH: DESCRIPTIVE, EXPLORATORY, EXPERIMENTAL, CORRELATIONAL, ETC.

2.1 OBJECTIVE

2.2 INTRODUCTION

2.3 CLASSIFICATION OF RESEARCH

2.4 EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

2.5 DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH

2.6 CORRELATION RESEARCH

2.7 EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH

2.8 OTHER TYPES OF RESEARCH

2.9 SUMMARY

2.10 GLOSSARY

2.11 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

2.12 REFERENCES

2.13 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

2.1 OBJECTIVES

After having the detailed study of this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the different types of research used in academic and practical fields.
 - Identify each research type's key characteristics, applications, and limitations.
 - Distinguish between qualitative and quantitative research approaches.
 - Choose the appropriate research type based on research goals.
-

2.2 INTRODUCTION

Research is the foundation of knowledge development, innovation, and evidence-based decision-making in all fields. It is a process of systematic inquiry that entails data collection, analysis, and interpretation aimed at addressing questions or resolving problems (Creswell, 2014). Through strict methodologies, researchers attempt to find patterns, test hypotheses, identify relationships, and make inferences that are of academic, scientific, and practical value. As Clifford Woody (1927) has pointed out, research entails "defining and redefining problems, formulating hypotheses or suggested solutions; collecting, organising and evaluating data; making deductions and reaching conclusions." This not only aids in the formulation of new theories but also tests and refines existing ones.

In the general expanse of research, several kinds are utilized based on the purpose of research, problem nature, and outcomes to be attained. Some of the most popularly used are descriptive, exploratory, experimental, and correlational research. All these kinds serve a distinct purpose in the process of research and cater to different academic or functional requirements. For example, descriptive research is all about depicting a true profile of individuals, events, or situations. It answers the "what is" question, offering a snapshot of variables without manipulating them. It is widely used in social sciences, education, and market research to gather data through surveys, observational methods, and case studies (Robson, 2002).

Conversely, exploratory research is more often used if the problem in question is ill-defined. It aims to explore, create concepts, and build foundations for ensuing, more solid studies. Qualitative methods such as focus groups, literature surveys, and interviewing experts are among the methods in which it often depends (Stebbins, 2001). This method of research proves especially useful for new or prospective fields of research where theories and knowledge already existing are inadequate.

Correlational research aims to identify associations or relationships between two or more variables without suggesting a causal relationship. It aims to establish whether variables tend to move together and the degree of their association. For instance, a researcher may investigate the correlation between physical exercise and academic achievement among students. While correlational studies cannot determine cause and effect, they are crucial in hypothesis generation and the identification of patterns that need to be explored further (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2011).

On the contrary, experimental research entails the intentional manipulation of one variable to see its impact on another, with cause-and-effect links established. It is defined by controlled settings, random assignment, and control groups. Experimental designs are prevalent in the natural sciences, psychology, and medicine where hypotheses are tested via strict procedures (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). Even though it is the strongest type of study in terms of internal validity, it might sometimes be short of external validity as a result of artificial lab conditions. Knowledge of the differences and proper use of these research types is important in creating effective studies. Using the right research design guarantees credible results and their applicability to practical issues. The kinds of research are examined in detail in the sections below, describing their approach, advantages, weaknesses, and common fields of use.

Definition of research.

1. Clifford-Woody (1927)

"Research involves defining and redefining issues, constructing hypotheses or hypothesized solutions; gathering, tabulating and analyzing data; drawing inferences and conclusions; and finally cautiously testing the conclusions to see if they hold up under the constructed hypothesis."

2. Kerlinger (1973)

"Research is a systematic, controlled, empirical, and critical investigation of hypothetical propositions about the presumed relations among natural phenomena."

3. Creswell (2014)

"Research is a process of steps used to collect and analyze information to increase our understanding of a topic or issue."

4. Lundberg (1942)

"Scientific research consists of a systematic and objective attempt to study a problem to derive general principles."

5. Redman and Mory (1923)

"Research is a systematised effort to gain new knowledge."

6. Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (Oxford)

"Research is a careful investigation or inquiry, especially through the search for new facts in any branch of knowledge."

2.3 CLASSIFICATION OF RESEARCH: BASIC VS. APPLIED; QUALITATIVE VS. QUANTITATIVE.

Research can be classified based on its purpose, approach, and methodology. Two major classifications are basic vs. applied research and qualitative vs. quantitative research. Each classification serves distinct objectives and employs different methodologies, making it crucial for researchers to understand their differences and applications.

Basic vs. Applied Research

Research can generally be classified as basic (or fundamental) research and applied research based on its purpose and target.

Basic research, or pure or fundamental research, is primarily performed to enhance knowledge and create theory without a short-term practical end. Its overall objective is to increase comprehension of basic principles, concepts, and mechanisms governing natural or social processes. This kind of research is usually theoretical and seeks to explain questions like "why" and "how" something occurs. For instance, research on the characteristics of black holes in astrophysics, human thinking in psychology, or the genetic origin of diseases in biology would qualify as basic research. Basic research provides the building blocks for future applied research and innovation (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). On the contrary, applied research is problem-centered and seeks to discover real-world practical solutions to given problems.

It is done to enhance current processes, products, or community conditions. Applied research usually draws upon the results of basic research and is widely utilized in medicine, engineering, business, and social sciences. For instance, studies on creating anew vaccine, enhancing manufacturing efficiency, or increasing customer satisfaction in companies come under applied research. Trochim and Donnelly (2007) state that applied research is more practice-oriented and closely related to practice, hence it is crucial for industry and policy formulation. The line that separates basic and applied research is not always sharp, as basic

research results usually translate into applied innovations. To illustrate, quantum mechanics discoveries (basic research) have resulted in improved semiconductors and computers (applied research). Both forms of research are therefore complementary and advance scientific and technological knowledge. Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research

Another crucial categorization of research is determined by methodology, which separates research into qualitative and quantitative methods. These methods vary in data collection, analysis, and interpretation, but are not mutually exclusive and are often brought together in mixed-method research.

Qualitative research is largely exploratory and aims at comprehending human behavior, experiences, and social phenomena through a subjective lens.

It is based on non-numerical information like interviews, focus groups, observations, and text analysis.

Qualitative research aims to discover meanings, themes, and patterns, not to quantify relationships. It is usually applied in fields like anthropology, sociology, psychology, and education. Qualitative research is worth it when very few things are known about a phenomenon, and through it, researchers can learn a lot about the thoughts, emotions, and motivations of participants, according to Creswell (2014). For instance, a qualitative investigation of the effect of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic could include in-depth interviews with students and instructors to determine how they experienced it and encountered challenges. The information would be examined using thematic coding to determine common trends and patterns. Among the greatest strengths of qualitative research is that it can acquire rich, contextual information, but it is also faulted for being subjective and hard to generalise. Conversely, quantitative research is concerned with numerical data and statistical analysis to test hypotheses and quantify relationships between variables. Quantitative research is commonly applied in natural sciences, economics, psychology, and business research.

Quantitative research is based on systematic methodologies like surveys, experiments, and secondary data analysis, employing statistical tools to analyze results.

Quantitative research, as stated by Bryman (2012), offers objective, measurable, and replicable results, which is why it is crucial for hypothesis testing and predictive modelling. For example, a quantitative study of the efficacy of a new drug therapy would entail a controlled trial in which one group receives the drug and another group receives a placebo. The researchers

would then quantify health outcomes through statistical analysis to determine the efficacy of the drug. Quantitative research provides precision and generalizability but can miss contextual subtleties that qualitative research identifies. Both qualitative and quantitative research have their own strengths and weaknesses. In certain situations, researchers use a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to better understand a research issue. For instance, in educational research, a study might employ surveys (quantitative) to measure student satisfaction and then conduct interviews (qualitative) to understand the reasons for the survey results.

2.4 EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

In research, it is important to know a problem prior to carrying out organized investigation. The exploratory research is for this reason as it provides early information on an issue which has not yet been defined. It is usually used where researchers know very little concerning an issue and want to gain better insight into important variables, relationships, and potential patterns. In contrast to some other types of research, exploratory research is open-ended, flexible, and qualitative, enabling wide-ranging exploration instead of hypothesis testing (Stebbins, 2001). Exploratory research is usually a preliminary step in an overall research endeavor, directing scholars and practitioners towards more specified and tighter inquiry.

Exploratory research is especially applicable in new or emerging areas where knowledge is still low. For instance, in examining the effect of artificial intelligence on mental health, researchers would first carry out exploratory research using interviews and literature reviews to determine important themes prior to designing a more quantitative study. This method is also extensively practiced in business, market research, psychology, and social sciences to determine trends, behaviors, and patterns that guided decision-making (Creswell, 2014). Because of its wide scope, exploratory research is not meant to come up with final conclusions but instead produces hypotheses and questions for study that can be verified through other studies. Exploratory research is defined as preliminary studies intended to clarify concepts, uncover insights, and define poorly understood problems.

It assists researchers in investigating a subject thoroughly, making them aware of possible variables and laying down the groundwork for more research. Following Stebbins (2001), exploratory research is "a broad-ranging, purposive, systematic, prearranged undertaking designed to maximise the discovery of generalizations leading to description and understanding."

In the same way, Creswell (2014) states that exploratory research is "an approach to research that is used when a problem is not clearly defined and requires open-ended inquiry to develop new understandings." The techniques employed in exploratory research are literature reviews, expert interviews, focus groups, case studies, and observational studies. These methods enable researchers to determine the most important themes, create initial models, and narrow down research questions for further studies (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). Although exploratory research does not yield final answers, it is essential in the development of future studies and in ensuring that researchers enter their subjects with well-educated points of view.

Purpose: Discover problems, create hypotheses.

Exploratory research plays a basic function in the research process by discovering problems, formulating hypotheses, and giving light to poorly understood issues. As it is done at the initial stage of research, it determines the extent of a problem, reveals patterns, and sets the foundation for follow-up studies (Creswell, 2014). Contrary to confirmatory research, exploratory research is less rigid and aims to create novel concepts and ideas.

Purpose: Identify problems, develop hypotheses.

Exploratory research serves a fundamental role in the research process by identifying problems, developing hypotheses, and providing insights into poorly understood topics. Since it is conducted in the early stages of research, it helps define the scope of a problem, uncover patterns, and lay the groundwork for future investigations (Creswell, 2014). Unlike confirmatory research, which tests existing theories, exploratory research is more flexible and seeks to generate new ideas and perspectives.

Identifying Problems

One of the major functions of exploratory research is to determine and define issues that require investigation. In most instances, decision-makers and researchers can identify that a problem does not exist but do not have an idea of its character, causes, and effects. Exploratory research fills the gap by gathering qualitative information, analyzing literature reviews, and engaging in informal talks with stakeholders and experts (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). For instance, in business research, a firm with decreased customer satisfaction would first perform exploratory studies like focus groups or customer interviews to ascertain the root causes before they can design a full-scale quantitative survey. In healthcare and social sciences, exploratory research helps to discover upcoming societal or medical concerns. For example,

when researchers are looking at the effect of social media on mental well-being, they might start with exploratory interviews to comprehend potential psychological impacts prior to planning controlled experiments. Through identifying key areas of concern, exploratory research guarantees that further studies target significant and useful questions.

Developing Hypotheses

Another key function of exploratory research is to build hypotheses and conceptual models for later research. Because exploratory studies do not test hypotheses, they serve to generate ideas and relations that can be tested in experimental or quantitative studies later on (Stebbins, 2001). Through the identification of possible patterns, correlations, and determinants, researchers can develop testable hypotheses that direct more formal studies.

For instance, an exploratory research on employee productivity and remote work could show that workers with flexible hours are more satisfied in their jobs. This can give rise to the formulation of a formal hypothesis, e.g.:

“Employees with flexible remote work schedules exhibit higher productivity than those with fixed schedules.”

By providing a foundation for hypothesis testing, exploratory research helps researchers design more precise experiments, surveys, and statistical analyses. Without this initial stage, research efforts may lack direction or miss key variables.

Methods: Literature review, expert interviews, focus groups.

Exploratory research is based on qualitative and flexible methods that enable researchers to understand, find patterns, and refine research questions prior to carrying out structured studies. Some of the most frequently employed methods in exploratory research include literature reviews and expert interviews. These methods enable researchers to gather existing knowledge, investigate new concepts, and acquire a better understanding of the research problem.

Literature Review

A literature review is one of the most fundamental exploratory research methods. It involves analysing existing academic and professional publications, including books, journal articles, reports, and online sources, to gain insights into a particular topic. Literature reviews help researchers:

1. Identify gaps in existing research that need further exploration.
2. Understand theoretical frameworks and past studies related to the research problem.

3. Refine research questions and hypotheses based on previous findings.
4. Avoid duplication by building on established knowledge instead of repeating past work.

For example, a researcher studying the effects of artificial intelligence (AI) on job displacement may begin by reviewing existing literature on automation, workforce trends, and economic impact. Through this review, the researcher may identify gaps, such as the lack of studies on AI's impact in developing economies, which can then guide further research. Literature reviews also help researchers compare different perspectives and synthesise information from various sources to build a comprehensive understanding of the topic (Creswell, 2014).

Expert Interviews

Another valuable exploratory research method is expert interviews, where researchers engage with subject matter specialists to gain insights and contextual understanding. Experts can include academics, industry professionals, policymakers, or experienced practitioners who have direct knowledge of the research area.

Expert interviews help researchers:

1. Clarify complex concepts that may not be well-documented in existing literature.
2. Obtain firsthand insights from professionals with direct experience in the field.
3. Identify emerging trends and practical challenges that may not yet be covered in academic studies.
4. Validate preliminary findings before conducting broader research.

For example, a business researcher exploring customer behaviour in digital marketing may interview marketing professionals, data analysts, and consumer psychologists to understand industry trends. Similarly, in healthcare research, interviewing doctors and medical professionals can provide valuable perspectives on new treatment methods or public health challenges.

Expert interviews are typically semi-structured or unstructured, allowing for open-ended discussions where interviewees can share detailed insights beyond predefined questions (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). This flexibility makes expert interviews particularly useful in exploratory research, where rigid survey formats may limit the depth of information gathered.

Advantages & Limitations

Exploratory research plays a vital role in identifying problems, generating insights, and developing hypotheses for further study. However, like any research approach, it has both strengths and weaknesses. Understanding its advantages and limitations helps researchers determine when and how to use exploratory research effectively.

Advantages of Exploratory Research

Flexibility and Adaptability

One of the greatest strengths of exploratory research is its flexible approach. Since it does not follow a rigid structure, researchers can modify their methods, refine their research questions, and explore unexpected insights as new information emerges (Creswell, 2014).

Helps Identify Research Problems

Exploratory research is particularly useful for defining unclear or complex problems. Before conducting large-scale, structured research, exploratory studies help researchers identify key variables, trends, and patterns that require deeper investigation (Stebbins, 2001).

Generates New Ideas and Hypotheses

Because it focuses on open-ended inquiry, exploratory research often leads to new perspectives, concepts, and hypotheses that researchers might not have initially considered (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). This makes it valuable in fields such as market research, social sciences, and emerging technologies.

Provides Rich, Qualitative Insights

Through methods like expert interviews, focus groups, and literature reviews, exploratory research captures detailed, qualitative data that structured research might overlook. This is especially useful in understanding human behaviours, motivations, and experiences (Creswell, 2014).

Cost-Effective and Time-Saving

Compared to large-scale quantitative studies, exploratory research is often less expensive and quicker to conduct. Techniques like literature reviews and informal interviews require fewer resources than experiments or surveys, making exploratory research a practical first step.

Limitations of Exploratory Research

Lack of Conclusive Results

Since exploratory research is open-ended and qualitative, it does not provide definitive conclusions or measurable evidence (Stebbins, 2001). It serves as a foundation for future research but does not establish cause-and-effect relationships.

Subjectivity and Bias

Many exploratory methods, such as interviews and focus groups, rely on subjective opinions. The researcher's interpretation of qualitative data may introduce bias, making it difficult to ensure objectivity (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

Limited Generalizability

Findings from exploratory research are often specific to a particular context and may not be generalizable to larger populations. Since small sample sizes and non-representative data are common, the results cannot be widely applied without further validation (Creswell, 2014).

Potential for Misleading Insights

Because exploratory research lacks structure and statistical testing, it may sometimes produce misleading or incomplete information. Researchers must be cautious when concluding and use follow-up studies to validate findings.

Difficulty in Measuring and Reproducing Results

Unlike experimental or quantitative research, exploratory studies often lack standardised procedures, making it hard to replicate results. This can create challenges in ensuring reliability and consistency across different studies.

2.5 DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH

Descriptive research is a common form of research that aims to systematically describe traits, behaviors, and trends of a defined population, phenomenon, or situation. As opposed to exploratory research, which seeks to uncover problems and create hypotheses, descriptive research is more formal and seeks to capture an accurate image of variables without manipulating them. Descriptive research is frequently applied in social science, business, healthcare, and education to comprehend patterns, relationships, and demographic trends (Creswell, 2014).

Descriptive research is especially useful when researchers must measure observations, statistically analyze data, and contrast various variables. For instance, a survey of consumer attitudes towards environmentally friendly products can be conducted through descriptive research in the form of collecting and analyzing responses through surveys, determining trends in consumer activity without impacting their decisions. Descriptive research is usually done through surveys, case studies, observation, and secondary data analysis (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

2.6 CORRELATIONAL RESEARCH

Correlational research is a type of non-experimental research used to quantify and characterize the direction and strength of association between two or more variables without manipulating them. It is particularly valuable when experimental research cannot be conducted due to ethical, practical, or logistical limitations. In correlational research, data are gathered on variables in their natural setting and analyzed for the intercorrelations among them by the use of statistical methods like Pearson's correlation coefficient, Spearman's rank-order correlation, or regression analysis, depending upon the nature and scale of the data (Creswell, 2014). The main goal of correlational research is to ascertain if a relationship is present, its strength, and direction.

A positive correlation means that as one variable goes up, the other goes up as well (e.g., weight and height), while a negative correlation means that as one variable goes up, the other goes down (e.g., academic performance and stress levels). A correlation coefficient (r) is between -1 and +1, with values closer to -1 or +1 indicating stronger relationships, and a value of 0 meaning no correlation. Correlational research is used extensively in psychology, education, health sciences, business, and social sciences. For instance, in psychology, researchers would investigate the interrelationship between self-esteem and social anxiety. In education, research could investigate the relationship between study habits and academic performance. As a key point, correlation does not equal causation—just because two variables are highly correlated doesn't mean one causes the other. There may be some third variable (a confounding or lurking variable) that is acting on both. Three general correlational research designs exist: cross-sectional, longitudinal, and retrospective. Cross-sectional studies capture data at one point in time, giving a snapshot of relationships. Longitudinal designs follow the same subjects over time to see how relationships between variables change. Retrospective studies examine historical data to determine patterns and associations.

Although correlational research is unable to determine causality, it is priceless for the determination of trends, prediction, and setting the stage for experimental research. It is less costly than experiments and enables researchers to investigate variables that cannot be manipulated ethically or practically. Its disadvantages are the possibility of spurious relationships and not being able to control all confounding variables.

2.7 EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH

Experimental research is a scientific and systematic method of studying causal connections between variables under controlled conditions. It is most commonly accepted as the most robust type of research design in the hierarchy of evidence because it can determine cause-and-effect relationships (Creswell, 2014). In an experimental design, researchers manipulate independent variables one or more to study the impact on dependent variables while holding extraneous factors that may affect the outcome constant. The essence of experimental research lies in the application of control and randomization to reduce bias and provide the study with internal validity. There are three broad categories of experimental designs: true experiments, quasi-experiments, and pre-experiments. True experimental designs involve random assignment of the participants to the experimental and control groups, eliminating the risk of selection bias (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). Quasi-experimental designs are like true experiments but do not involve random assignment, and this can undermine internal validity. Pre-experimental designs tend to miss both control groups and randomization, rendering them less strong.

One of the traditional examples of a genuine experimental design is the Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT), which is commonly employed in clinical and psychological research. Participants in this design are randomly assigned into treatment and control groups so that researchers can remove the influence of the intervention and determine its impact (Hariton & Locascio, 2018). RCTs are regarded as the gold standard for testing the effectiveness of novel treatments, interventions, or programs.

Experimental research is universally applicable in fields such as medicine, psychology, education, and agriculture. For example, in agricultural science, experimental research is employed to evaluate the influence of fertilizers or irrigation systems on crop production under controlled field experiments (Gomez & Gomez, 1984). In education, it can be employed to determine whether the impact of a new educational approach on student performance is significant by comparing results between experimental and control classrooms.

While it has strengths, experimental research also has some limitations. Experimental research can be costly, labor-intensive, and in some instances, ethically or practically unfeasible to manipulate variables within real-world human situations. Moreover, high internal validity might sacrifice external validity so that results fail to generalize effectively to other settings (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002).

2.8 OTHER TYPES OF RESEARCH

Analytical Research

Analytical research is a research methodology that entails the critical analysis and interpretation of current information, data, or theories in order to form new knowledge, make conclusions, or solve issues. Unlike descriptive research, which merely collects and reports facts, analytical research extends further by studying the relationships between variables, discovering patterns, testing hypotheses, and frequently applying quantitative methods like statistical analysis, modeling, or comparative methods. It is widely applied in fields like economics, social sciences, natural sciences, and business, where researchers are interested in learning the underlying causes, effects, or structures of a given phenomenon. The method tends to draw on secondary data sources such as academic literature, historical documents, case studies, and databases, but can also incorporate primary data when the research is intended to sharpen or test theories. The strength of analytical research is that it can critically deconstruct intricate issues, aid in logical reasoning, and generate evidence-based findings that advance theory development or inform decision-making.

Historical Research

Historical inquiry is a scientific approach to studying past occurrences, trends, and experiences to comprehend and interpret their causes, impacts, and relevance to the future and present. It entails gathering, cross-checking, and analyzing evidence from primary sources including letters, documents, archives, photographs, artifacts, and oral accounts, as well as secondary sources such as books, articles, and histories. The purpose of historical inquiry is not merely to chronicle what occurred but to build an intelligible account or explanation that discloses patterns, contexts, and the development of ideas, institutions, or societies over time. Historians have to evaluate the validity, trustworthiness, and pertinence of sources, usually coping with incomplete, partial, or skewed records, which necessitates scrupulous interpretation

and cross-referral. This approach is extensively applied in disciplines like history, political science, sociology, education, and cultural studies to examine how the past influences present realities, human actions, and future choices or policies.

Action Research

Action research is an iterative and participatory research approach that centers on addressing practical problems in real-life situations through a planning, acting, observing, and reflecting cycle with the active engagement of practitioners or stakeholders in the research. It is applied in education, organizational development, healthcare, and community work, among other fields, where researchers and participants cooperate to define issues, apply interventions, and evaluate their impact in a systematic and reflective way. In contrast to other research that is looking to produce generalized knowledge, action research is specific to the context and intends to create practical change and improvement in a given environment while, at the same time, making a contribution to knowledge. Democratic participation, empowerment, and continuous learning are at its core, with cycles of inquiry enabling repeated refinement of approaches based on feedback and observed outcomes. The strength of action research is its potential to overcome the disconnect between theory and practice, thereby rendering it an effective means of professional growth, organizational learning, and social change.

2.9 SUMMARY

In short, the different kinds of research—descriptive, exploratory, experimental, correlational, analytical, historical, and action research—are used for specific purposes in the scientific and scholarly community. Descriptive research is concerned with observing and documenting the qualities of a phenomenon, whereas exploratory research assists in learning about new or undefined problems with open-ended investigation. Experimental research attempts to derive cause-and-effect relationships through the manipulation of variables in controlled conditions, and correlational research detects and quantifies relations between variables without assuming causality. Both approaches are chosen according to the type of the research question, ethical constraints, and practical limitations. Such types of research often complement each other and can be employed together across fields to gain overall insight.

For instance, exploratory research may be employed at the start of a study to formulate hypotheses, which are subsequently tested by experimental or correlational methods. Equally, analytical and historical research interpret existing data and prior events, useful context for recent

studies, while action research bridges theory and practice in collaborative, real-time problem-solving. Collectively, these approaches provide a strong paradigm for producing knowledge, guiding decision-making, and solving real-world problems in an orderly and evidence-based fashion.

2.10 GLOSSARY

- **Descriptive Research** – A research method aimed at accurately and systematically describing a population, situation, or phenomenon without manipulating variables.
- **Exploratory Research** – A preliminary research method used to explore a problem or situation when there are few or no earlier studies to refer to; often helps in formulating hypotheses.
- **Experimental Research** – A method that involves the manipulation of independent variables to observe their effect on dependent variables, typically conducted under controlled conditions.
- **Correlational Research** – A non-experimental method that examines the statistical relationship between two or more variables without implying a causal connection.
- **Analytical Research** – A type of research that critically examines existing information, data, or literature to interpret and explain complex issues or relationships.
- **Historical Research** – A method involving the collection and analysis of data from past events to understand causes, effects, and trends over time.
- **Action Research** – A participatory research approach that focuses on solving practical problems through cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection, often involving stakeholders.
- **Independent Variable** – The variable in experimental research that is manipulated to observe its effect on the dependent variable.
- **Dependent Variable** – The variable in experimental research that is measured to assess the impact of changes made to the independent variable.
- **Hypothesis** – A testable prediction or statement about the expected relationship between two or more variables, often formulated in experimental and co-relational research.

2.11 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Which type of research is primarily used to describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied?

- A. Experimental
- B. Descriptive
- C. Exploratory
- D. Co-rrelational

Answer: B

2. What is the main goal of exploratory research?

- A. To establish causal relationships
- B. To describe variables in detail
- C. To explore new or unclear problems
- D. To compare historical events

Answer: C

3. In which type of research are variables deliberately manipulated to observe effects?

- A. Historical
- B. Correlational
- C. Experimental
- D. Descriptive

Answer: C

4. Which of the following research types determines the relationship between two or more variables without establishing cause and effect?

- A. Experimental
- B. Descriptive
- C. Correlational
- D. Analytical

Answer: C

5. What distinguishes action research from other types of research?

- A. It always uses large sample sizes
- B. It is conducted by external researchers only
- C. It involves practitioners solving real-life problems collaboratively

D. It relies only on historical data

Answer: C

6. What is the primary data source in historical research?

A. Survey responses

B. Experimental results

C. Past records and documents

D. Randomized control trials

Answer: C

7. Which research type often serves as a foundation for developing hypotheses for future studies?

A. Descriptive

B. Exploratory

C. Analytical

D. Experimental

Answer: B

8. Analytical research is most characterized by which of the following?

A. Manipulating variables in a lab setting

B. Observing behaviors in a natural environment

C. Using logical reasoning to evaluate existing data

D. Describing social events without interpretation

Answer: C

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2.13 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Explain the key characteristics, purpose, and applications of descriptive research with suitable examples.
2. Discuss the role of exploratory research in the early stages of a research study. How does it differ from other research types?
3. Describe experimental research in detail. What are the essential components of a true experimental design?

4. Differentiate between correlational and experimental research, highlighting their respective strengths and limitations.
5. Analyze the significance of action research in educational or organizational settings. Provide examples to support your answer.
6. How does analytical research contribute to theory development? Explain its methodology and typical data sources.
7. What are the key features of historical research, and how is it conducted? Discuss its relevance in modern research.
8. Compare and contrast descriptive and exploratory research in terms of purpose, design, and outcomes.
9. Critically evaluate the limitations of correlational research and explain why correlation does not imply causation.
10. Design a basic research study using any one type of research method (e.g., experimental, descriptive), explaining your choice of method and how it suits your research question.

UNIT: 3 SELECTIONS OF RESEARCH TOPICS AND FORMULATION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

3.1 OBJECTIVE

3.2 INTRODUCTION

3.3 SELECTION OF RESEARCH TOPICS

3.4 FORMULATION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

3.5 SUMMARY

3.6 GLOSSARY

3.7 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

3.8 REFERENCES

3.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

3.1 OBJECTIVES

After having the detailed study of this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the selection of research topic.
- Identify the key characteristics of research questions and its formulation.
- Gain knowledge about types of research questions .

3.2 INTRODUCTION

The selection of a research topic is the foundational step in the research process and significantly influences the quality, direction, and relevance of a study. A well-chosen topic serves as the backbone of the entire research framework, helping researchers to focus their efforts and resources effectively. It defines the scope of the inquiry, sets boundaries for the study, and determines the nature of the data to be collected. According to Kothari (2004), a good research topic should be relevant, manageable, and aligned with the researcher's interests and capabilities. The process of topic selection involves not only identifying an area of interest but also considering practical aspects such as data availability, time constraints, and the researcher's familiarity with the subject matter. The growing importance of interdisciplinary studies and current global issues, such as climate change, public health, and digital transformation, has further expanded the range of potential research topics, making the selection process both more complex and more critical.

Once a suitable topic is identified, the next essential step is the formulation of research questions. Research questions serve as the guiding compass of a study, shaping the research design, methodology, and analysis. They help to narrow down the topic into specific, researchable components and ensure that the study remains focused and purposeful. A well-crafted research question is clear, concise, and answerable using available methods and data. It should also reflect the type of study being conducted—whether descriptive, exploratory, explanatory, or experimental (Creswell, 2014). Poorly framed research questions can lead to ambiguity, misdirection, and inconclusive findings, ultimately weakening the contribution of the study to its field. Therefore, investing time and thought into developing robust research questions is essential for producing meaningful and credible research outcomes.

The relationship between the research topic and the research question is dynamic and iterative. A general topic must be refined into a specific question that aligns with the objectives

of the study and fits within theoretical and practical boundaries. This process often requires reviewing existing literature to identify knowledge gaps and understanding how the proposed study can contribute to filling those gaps. Punch (2006) emphasizes that research questions should not only be interesting and relevant but also grounded in existing theory and evidence. In academic and professional research, the formulation of effective research questions not only facilitates a systematic investigation but also enhances the validity, reliability, and overall impact of the study. As such, mastering the art of selecting appropriate research topics and formulating precise research questions is a critical skill for all aspiring researchers.

What is a research topic?

A research topic is a clearly defined subject or issue that a researcher chooses to investigate in a systematic and structured manner. It serves as the foundation for the entire research process, guiding the formulation of research questions, objectives, and methodology. A good research topic should be specific, relevant, researchable, and aligned with the researcher's interests, academic background, and available resources (Kumar, 2011). It should address a real-world problem or gap in existing knowledge and be neither too broad to manage nor too narrow to yield significant findings. The process of selecting a research topic often involves reviewing current literature, analyzing emerging trends, and identifying areas that require further exploration. According to Kothari (2004), the topic must also be feasible in terms of time, data access, and ethical considerations. Ultimately, a well-chosen research topic not only contributes to academic and professional knowledge but also sets the tone for a meaningful and impactful study.

3.3 SELECTION OF RESEARCH TOPICS

The selection of a research topic refers to the deliberate process through which a researcher identifies and chooses a specific subject area or issue to study in depth. It is the starting point of any research activity and plays a pivotal role in shaping the direction, scope, and success of the entire study. The term "research topic" can be defined as a focused subject area within a broader field of knowledge that a researcher intends to investigate using scientific methods. According to Kothari (2004), a research topic is "a specific issue, problem, or area that

is selected by a researcher for inquiry in order to contribute to the existing body of knowledge." The process of topic selection involves not only choosing a subject of interest but also ensuring that the topic is relevant, feasible, original, and aligned with both the researcher's capabilities and academic or professional goals.

The meaning of selecting a research topic goes beyond just picking something interesting—it entails a critical evaluation of whether the topic is researchable, whether sufficient data or resources are available, and whether the research can be conducted within the time and ethical limits. As Kumar (2011) notes, a good research topic must "reflect the researcher's interest, meet the requirements of the discipline, and be capable of being studied using systematic procedures." The selection process is often guided by prior reading, discussions with peers or supervisors, the identification of gaps in the literature, or a response to current social, scientific, or technological issues. For example, a student interested in climate change might narrow the focus to "the impact of climate change on crop yields in Northern India," which is a clear, specific, and actionable research topic.

Selecting the right research topic is crucial because it determines the purpose and clarity of the research questions, the methodology, and ultimately the relevance of the findings. It also helps avoid common problems such as overly broad scopes, irrelevant inquiries, or lack of direction. Creswell (2014) emphasizes that a clearly defined topic leads to "focused data collection and effective communication of research outcomes." In sum, the selection of a research topic is both a strategic and intellectual activity that serves as the foundation upon which the entire research framework is built.

Differences between a general topic and a researchable topic

A general topic refers to a broad area of interest that provides an initial direction for inquiry, whereas a researchable topic is a narrowed, specific issue within that area that can be systematically investigated using established research methods. General topics are often too vague or expansive to form the basis of a focused study—for example, "climate change" or "education systems" encompass numerous variables, contexts, and dimensions, making them difficult to explore in depth without further refinement. In contrast, a researchable topic takes that broad theme and formulates it into a clear, concise, and manageable subject that can guide the development of research questions, such as "the impact of climate change on wheat production in Uttarakhand" or "the effectiveness of online learning in improving reading skills

among primary school students.” As Kumar (2011) explains, a researchable topic must be feasible in terms of time, resources, and data availability, and it should be capable of producing measurable or observable outcomes. Therefore, the key difference lies in specificity and feasibility—a general topic offers an area of interest, while a researchable topic transforms that interest into a concrete focus suitable for systematic study.

Criteria for Selecting a Good Research Topic

Selecting a good research topic is a crucial step in the research process, as it lays the foundation for the entire study. A well-chosen topic ensures that the research remains focused, manageable, and meaningful. One of the most important criteria is relevance—the topic should align with the researcher’s field of study, contribute to existing knowledge, or address a pressing issue in society. It should also be significant enough to warrant investigation, offering the potential for practical application or theoretical advancement. Another essential criterion is interest; the topic must genuinely engage the researcher, as sustained motivation is vital throughout the lengthy and sometimes complex research journey. Without interest, the researcher may lose focus or struggle with maintaining commitment, especially when faced with obstacles or data collection challenges. Clarity and specificity are equally important—vague or overly broad topics can lead to unfocused research questions and ambiguous findings, whereas a well-defined and narrow topic helps in framing precise questions and selecting appropriate methodologies.

In addition to intellectual appeal, practical feasibility plays a major role in topic selection. The chosen topic must be researchable within the available time frame, budget, and access to data or participants. A topic that is too ambitious or technically complex may become unmanageable, especially for students or novice researchers. Availability of data is another critical factor—if relevant, reliable data is inaccessible, the study may be delayed or compromised. Ethical considerations must also be taken into account; the topic should avoid harm to participants and be approved by ethical review boards if required, especially in human-subject research. Lastly, the topic should comply with academic or institutional requirements, such as those set by a university department or funding agency. According to Kumar (2011), a good research topic balances personal curiosity with academic value and feasibility, ultimately setting the stage for a coherent, systematic, and impactful research study.

1. Relevance

The topic should be relevant to the field of study, current issues, or societal needs. It should contribute meaningfully to existing knowledge or solve a real-world problem. A relevant topic also aligns with academic, institutional, or professional goals.

2. Researcher's Interest

A good research topic should reflect the personal or professional interest of the researcher. Interest sustains motivation, curiosity, and persistence, especially during long or challenging research phases.

3. Clarity and Specificity

The topic should be clearly defined and specific. Vague or overly broad topics are hard to manage and may lead to scattered results. Specificity helps in developing precise research questions and selecting suitable methods.

4. Originality

A good research topic should offer something new—either by exploring an under-researched area, using a new methodology, or applying a fresh perspective to an old issue. It should aim to fill a gap in the existing literature or address unresolved questions.

5. Feasibility

The topic must be practical in terms of time, cost, and resource availability. It should match the researcher's skill set, access to data, and the time frame of the research project.

6. Availability of Data

Adequate and reliable data should be available or obtainable for the topic. Without accessible data, the research process can stall or produce unreliable results.

7. Ethical Considerations

The topic must be ethically sound. Research involving human subjects, sensitive information, or controversial issues must follow ethical guidelines and obtain necessary approvals.

8. Alignment with Supervisor or Institutional Guidelines

The topic should be acceptable to academic supervisors and fall within institutional requirements or funding body guidelines, especially in academic or sponsored research.

Relevance to the field of study

Relevance to the field of study is a fundamental criterion when selecting a research topic, as it ensures that the research contributes meaningfully to the ongoing academic or professional discourse within a specific discipline. A topic is considered relevant when it aligns with the core themes, challenges, or emerging trends in the researcher's area of expertise. Conducting research that is relevant to the field helps fill existing knowledge gaps, addresses practical problems, or tests theoretical frameworks, thereby adding value to the discipline. It also increases the likelihood that the research findings will be accepted, published, or implemented by peers, institutions, or policymakers. For instance, in the field of environmental science, researching the effects of climate change on local biodiversity would be highly relevant due to its significance in both scientific understanding and policy-making. As Kothari (2004) emphasizes, a topic that is not connected to the researcher's field may lack direction and coherence, making it difficult to justify or position within existing literature. Therefore, ensuring relevance not only validates the purpose of the research but also enhances its credibility, academic contribution, and practical impact.

Sources for Identifying Research Topics

Identifying a compelling and researchable topic is a critical first step in the research process, and several sources can help guide this process. One of the primary sources for identifying research topics is academic literature. Reviewing published books, journal articles, and dissertations related to a specific field helps researchers understand the scope of existing knowledge, identify gaps, and recognize areas that require further investigation. Literature reviews, in particular, can point to unresolved questions, areas of controversy, or emerging trends in the field. According to Creswell (2014), analyzing current research trends through academic literature is one of the most effective ways to discover a topic that is both significant and relevant. Additionally, the process of reviewing academic literature helps to ensure that the topic is grounded in existing knowledge, allowing the researcher to build upon or challenge previous studies. Exploring research databases like Google Scholar, JSTOR, and institutional repositories further allows researchers to see what has already been done and pinpoint areas in need of further exploration.

Another valuable source for identifying research topics comes from personal experience and observation. Researchers can often draw inspiration from their daily lives, professional

encounters, or personal challenges. For example, a researcher working in public health may observe recurring issues in local healthcare systems or community wellness that could lead to a relevant and practical research question. Similarly, issues encountered in the workplace, such as inefficiencies in organizational processes or gaps in employee training, can become the basis for applied research. Moreover, discussions with experts or mentors can also play a significant role in identifying a research topic. Engaging in conversations with faculty members, industry professionals, or colleagues can help refine vague or broad ideas into specific researchable questions. These discussions may also highlight ongoing debates or emerging areas of interest within the field. Experts often have valuable insights into what topics are under-researched or present new challenges, allowing the researcher to focus on unexplored areas that align with current needs. Ultimately, by combining academic literature, personal experiences, and expert input, researchers can arrive at a well-defined research topic that is both meaningful and feasible.

1. Academic Literature

Reviewing scholarly articles, journals, theses, and books helps identify existing knowledge gaps, unresolved questions, or emerging trends. Literature reviews often highlight areas that require further exploration.

2. Personal Experience and Observation

Everyday experiences, work settings, or personal challenges can inspire meaningful research questions. Observing patterns, problems, or inconsistencies in real-life situations often leads to practical and applied research topics.

3. Discussions with Experts or Mentors

Conversations with professors, supervisors, industry professionals, or experienced researchers can provide valuable insights, suggest unexplored areas, or help refine vague ideas into workable topics.

4. Current Events and Societal Issues

News media, government reports, and social developments often reveal pressing problems or timely topics, such as public health crises, climate change, or education reforms, that are ripe for research.

5. Research Projects and Reports

Reading completed research (dissertations, case studies, government/NGO reports) can help identify limitations, recommendations for future study, or ideas for replication and comparative research.

6. Online Databases and Repositories

Platforms like Google Scholar, JSTOR, Research Gate, and institutional repositories allow researchers to explore topics across disciplines and assess how frequently a topic has been studied.

7. Conferences and Seminars

Academic events expose researchers to cutting-edge findings and unresolved debates. They are great places to network, share ideas, and discover trending topics.

8. Institutional Priorities or Funding Agency Interests

Research can also be guided by institutional goals or calls for proposals from funding bodies. These often define areas of interest they are willing to support, influencing topic selection.

Common Mistakes in Topic Selection

When selecting a research topic, several common mistakes can hinder the effectiveness of the research process and lead to problems during the study. One significant mistake is choosing a topic that is too broad. A broad topic can lead to an overwhelming amount of information and a lack of focus, making it difficult to conduct a systematic study. For example, a general topic like "climate change" or "education systems" can be too expansive and not conducive to focused, actionable research. As Kothari (2004) explains, narrowing down broad topics to specific aspects or questions is essential for creating a well-defined research scope. Without narrowing the topic, the researcher may struggle to maintain direction or produce meaningful results. Conversely, choosing a topic that is too narrow can also be problematic. A highly specialized or limited topic may lack sufficient data or research material, making it difficult to conduct a comprehensive study. It's important to strike a balance between the two extremes, ensuring the topic is both focused and rich in available resources.

Another common mistake is selecting a topic that lacks feasibility in terms of time, resources, or access to data. A topic that seems interesting but requires extensive data collection, high costs, or resources beyond the researcher's reach can lead to frustration and delays. For

instance, choosing a topic that requires data from a large geographical area or a specific population that is difficult to access can cause significant barriers in the research process. Additionally, a topic might appear viable at first but later prove to be ethically problematic, especially when it involves sensitive data or vulnerable populations. Researchers must always assess the ethical implications of their chosen topic and ensure that they can follow proper ethical guidelines and obtain necessary approvals. Finally, many researchers fall into the trap of selecting a topic that lacks originality or doesn't contribute to the existing body of knowledge. Repeating or revisiting well-explored areas without offering new insights or innovative approaches can lead to redundant findings, limiting the impact of the research. Kothari (2004) advises that a good research topic should challenge existing knowledge, offer new perspectives, or explore areas that have not been extensively studied.

1. Choosing a Topic That Is Too Broad

Selecting a broad topic can overwhelm the research process, making it difficult to focus or narrow down the scope. Topics such as "climate change," "education," or "global health" are too general and lack specific research questions. Researchers should refine broad topics into focused, manageable questions or subtopics to ensure clarity and feasibility.

2. Choosing a Topic That Is Too Narrow

Conversely, a topic that is overly specific can lack enough available data, resources, or scholarly literature. A topic that's too narrow may also restrict the scope of the research or fail to yield significant results. It's essential to find a balance between focus and availability of data.

3. Lack of Feasibility

Sometimes, researchers select topics that require extensive data collection, resources, or skills beyond their capabilities. For instance, choosing a topic that involves conducting large-scale surveys in multiple countries may be unfeasible due to time or logistical constraints. Feasibility should always be considered in terms of time, access to data, and researcher expertise.

4. Ethical Issues

Certain topics may raise ethical concerns, especially those involving sensitive data or vulnerable populations. For example, researching the effects of a harmful substance on people without obtaining proper consent or approval can lead to significant ethical violations. It's crucial to ensure that the topic complies with ethical guidelines and requires appropriate review and approval.

5. Lack of Originality

Choosing a topic that has been extensively studied without offering new insights or perspectives can make the research feel redundant. Repeating well-known studies or theories without adding new knowledge or a fresh approach can reduce the academic value of the research.

6. Personal Bias or Interest

Sometimes, researchers might select topics solely because they are personally interested, without considering the broader relevance, practicality, or contribution to the field. Although personal interest is important, the topic should also meet academic and research requirements and contribute meaningfully to the field.

7. Ignoring Available Resources or Data

Selecting a topic without considering the availability of resources (such as data, tools, or participants) can lead to difficulties during the research process. Lack of access to relevant data can severely limit the researcher's ability to conduct thorough and credible research.

8. Overlooking Research Questions and Objectives

Choosing a topic without clearly defined research questions can lead to aimless or unstructured research. A well-defined topic should be accompanied by specific research questions or objectives that guide the direction of the study.

3.4 FORMULATION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Formulation of Research Questions is a crucial step in the research process, as it helps to define the focus and direction of the study. A well-crafted research question serves as the foundation for the entire investigation, guiding the researcher in data collection, analysis, and the drawing of conclusions. The process of formulating a research question involves narrowing down a broad topic into a specific issue that can be explored systematically. According to Creswell (2014), a good research question should be clear, focused, and researchable. It should address a specific problem or gap in the existing literature and be capable of being answered through empirical investigation, either qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. Researchers often begin by reviewing the literature in their field to identify unresolved issues or questions that merit further exploration. This step ensures that the research question is both original and relevant to the field of study. A well-defined research question also helps prevent the study from

becoming too broad or vague, as it provides a specific lens through which the researcher can examine the topic in detail.

Moreover, formulating research questions requires attention to the type of study being conducted. There are different types of research questions based on the nature of the investigation. For example, descriptive research questions focus on describing characteristics or phenomena, asking "What is happening?" or "What are the effects?" These types of questions are suited for exploratory studies where the goal is to gain an understanding of a particular issue. In contrast, causal or experimental research questions investigate cause-and-effect relationships and typically ask "What happens when...?" or "How does X influence Y?" These questions are formulated when researchers are testing hypotheses or investigating causal links. Similarly, correlational research questions seek to identify relationships between variables, asking "How are X and Y related?" The clarity in the formulation of these questions ensures that the research design, methodology, and data analysis align with the researcher's objective. As Kothari (2004) points out, the process of crafting precise research questions is crucial for guiding the entire research journey, helping to ensure that the study remains focused, feasible, and impactful.

Importance of Research Questions

1. Provides Focus and Direction

Research questions help narrow the scope of the study, ensuring the research stays focused and aligned with its objectives. They prevent the study from becoming too broad or vague.

2. Guides the Research Methodology

The research question determines the type of methodology to be used, whether qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. It helps in selecting appropriate research designs and data collection techniques.

3. Clarifies the Purpose of the Study

A well-formulated research question clearly defines the problem or issue being investigated, making it easier for the researcher and readers to understand the study's purpose and goals.

4. Identifies Gaps in Existing Knowledge

Research questions often arise from reviewing existing literature and identifying gaps or unresolved issues, leading to studies that can contribute new knowledge or insights to the field.

5. Ensures Relevance

The research question ensures that the study is relevant to the field of study and addresses current issues or challenges, enhancing its academic or practical value.

6. Shapes Data Collection and Analysis

The research question helps determine what kind of data needs to be collected and how it will be analyzed, guiding the research process from start to finish.

7. Promotes Coherent Structure

By clearly defining what the research aims to answer, research questions provide a coherent framework for organizing the research findings and conclusions in a logical manner.

8. Increases the Significance of the Study

A well-crafted research question can lead to findings that offer meaningful insights, solve real-world problems, or advance theoretical knowledge, thus enhancing the study's impact.

9. Guides the Interpretation of Results

Research questions provide a basis for interpreting the results and findings, helping the researcher draw conclusions that are directly related to the study's objectives.

10. Fosters Academic Rigor

A clear research question ensures the study maintains academic rigor by setting boundaries and preventing the researcher from veering off-topic or becoming too speculative.

Characteristics of a Good Research Question

1. Clear and Focused

A good research question should be precise and unambiguous, leaving no room for confusion or misinterpretation. It must clearly define what the researcher intends to study.

2. Researchable

The question must be feasible and answerable through empirical research, whether quantitative or qualitative. It should be possible to collect data or information to address the question effectively.

3. Concise and Specific

A good research question is concise and to the point. It avoids being overly broad or vague and focuses on a specific issue, phenomenon, or relationship that can be thoroughly explored.

4. Relevant to the Field

The question should address a significant issue or gap in the field of study, contributing to the advancement of knowledge or addressing a current problem in the discipline.

5. Original and Novel

A research question should offer new insights or approaches, or it should explore a topic that has not been extensively studied, thereby contributing original findings to the field.

6. Feasible

The question must be practical and achievable within the constraints of time, resources, and access to data or participants. It should align with the researcher's capabilities and the scope of the project.

7. Answerable with Evidence

A good research question can be answered through evidence-based methods. It should be possible to draw conclusions based on data, observations, or literature review rather than subjective opinions.

8. Not Too Simple or Complex

The question should strike a balance—it should be complex enough to provide meaningful insights, but not so complicated that it is unmanageable or impossible to answer comprehensively.

9. Aligned with the Study's Objectives

The question should reflect the overall purpose of the research. It should guide the study in a way that supports the research objectives and contributes to achieving the goals of the investigation.

10. Open-ended (if applicable)

A good research question often requires an open-ended approach, especially for exploratory, qualitative research, allowing for a deeper understanding and exploration of the issue.

Types of Research Questions

1. Descriptive Research Questions
Purpose: To describe characteristics or phenomena.
Example: "What are the most common health problems faced by elderly people in urban areas?"
Methodology: Often used in surveys or observational studies.
Focus: It focuses on "what" or "how" something occurs providing an overview of existing conditions.

2. Analytical Research Questions

Purpose: To understand relationships between variables and analyze trends or patterns.

Example: "How do socioeconomic factors influence educational attainment in rural communities?"

Methodology: Involves data analysis techniques such as statistical tests, regression, or qualitative analysis.

Focus: Examines the relationship between different factors or variables.

3. Exploratory Research Questions

Purpose: To explore new areas where little is known or to investigate emerging topics.

Example: "What are the factors influencing the rise of e-commerce in rural markets?"

Methodology: Often used in qualitative research methods like interviews, focus groups, or case studies.

Focus: Focuses on discovery and gaining a deeper understanding of an unknown issue or topic.

4. Causal/Experimental Research Questions

Purpose: To determine cause-and-effect relationships between variables.

Example: "What is the effect of online learning on student performance in high school?"

Methodology: Uses experimental designs such as controlled trials or longitudinal studies.

Focus: Focuses on "how" or "why" one variable causes changes in another.

5. Correlational Research Questions

Purpose: To explore the relationships between two or more variables without determining causality.

Example: "Is there a relationship between the number of hours spent studying and academic performance in college students?"

Methodology: Involves statistical analysis to measure the strength and direction of relationships.

Focus: Focuses on the degree of association between variables rather than causation.

3.5 SUMMARY

The process of selecting a research topic is the first critical step in conducting meaningful and impactful research. It involves identifying a general area of interest and narrowing it down into a specific, manageable topic that aligns with the researcher's academic field and goals. A good research topic should be relevant, original, feasible, and significant to current issues or knowledge gaps in the discipline. Researchers often draw ideas from literature reviews, academic discussions, professional experiences, or real-world problems. An effective topic not only reflects the researcher's curiosity or passion but also addresses societal or academic needs. By carefully choosing a topic that is neither too broad nor too narrow, researchers can ensure that their study remains focused, practical, and rich in potential insights.

Once a topic is selected, the next step is the formulation of research questions, which gives clarity and direction to the study. A research question serves as the foundation for the research design and methodology, guiding what kind of data will be collected and how it will be analyzed. These questions can take different forms depending on the purpose of the study—descriptive, exploratory, explanatory, correlational, or comparative. A good research question must be clear, focused, researchable, and relevant to the chosen topic. It should also be framed in a way that it can be answered through empirical evidence, not merely speculation or opinion. The formulation process includes identifying gaps in existing research, defining the research problem, and choosing an appropriate question type based on the study's objectives.

Together, the selection of a research topic and the formulation of research questions lay the groundwork for a coherent and rigorous research project. These two elements are deeply interconnected: a well-defined topic leads to strong research questions, and strong questions refine and focus the topic further. This combined process also enhances the academic quality and practical relevance of the research, ensuring that it contributes to both scholarly discourse and real-world solutions. Researchers who invest time and effort into these foundational stages are more likely to conduct structured, ethical, and impactful studies that advance knowledge in their respective fields. As such, mastering the art of topic selection and question formulation is essential for any successful research endeavor.

3.6 GLOSSARY

- **Research Topic:** A specific subject or area of interest that a researcher chooses to investigate, forming the foundation of the research project.
- **Research Question:** A clearly defined query that outlines what the researcher aims to discover, explain, or analyze through the study.
- **Literature Review:** A comprehensive survey of existing scholarly work related to the research topic, used to identify gaps and inform the formulation of research questions.
- **Feasibility:** The practicality of carrying out research on a chosen topic within available time, resources, and ethical constraints.
- **Relevance:** The degree to which a research topic or question is important or meaningful to a particular field of study or societal issue.
- **Scope:** The boundaries and limitations of a research topic, ensuring that the study remains focused and manageable.
- **Problem Statement:** A clear and concise description of the issue that the research seeks to address, which guides the development of research questions.
- **Gap in Literature:** An area or issue not yet sufficiently explored in existing academic research, which the current study aims to address.
- **Specificity:** The quality of a research question being focused and narrowly defined, allowing for clear data collection and analysis.
- **Research Design:** The overall strategy used to integrate the research question, methods, and procedures, ensuring that the study effectively addresses its objectives.

3.7 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What is the first step in the research process?

- A. Data analysis
- B. Selecting a research topic
- C. Writing a report
- D. Collecting data

Answer: B

2. A good research topic should be:

- A. Vague and complex
- B. Irrelevant to current studies

- C. Broad and general
- D. Specific, feasible, and researchable

Answer: D

3. What is the purpose of a research question?

- A. To provide the conclusion of the study
- B. To guide the research design and focus
- C. To determine the number of participants
- D. To summarize the results

Answer: B

4. Which of the following is NOT a common source of research topics?

- A. Personal interest
- B. Published literature
- C. Social media trends without context
- D. Professional experience

Answer: C

5. A research question must be:

- A. Philosophical and speculative
- B. Unrelated to the research topic
- C. Clear, focused, and answerable
- D. Based solely on assumptions

Answer: C

6. What is a common mistake in selecting a research topic?

- A. Choosing a topic from recent literature
- B. Selecting a topic that is too broad or too narrow
- C. Selecting a topic with practical applications
- D. Reviewing prior studies

Answer: B

7. Which of the following is most helpful in refining a research question?

- A. Skipping the literature review
- B. Conducting preliminary research
- C. Ignoring expert opinions

D. Using unrelated sources

Answer: B

8. Which type of research question investigates relationships between variables?

A. Descriptive

B. Exploratory

C. Correlational

D. Historical

Answer: C

9. What does a gap in the literature indicate?

A. A mistake in previous research

B. An area well-researched already

C. A topic too difficult to study

D. An opportunity for new research

Answer: D

10. Which of these is a characteristic of a well-formulated research question?

A. It can be answered with a yes or no

B. It is overly broad

C. It addresses a specific problem

D. It uses vague terms

Answer: C

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3.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

Short answer type questions

1. What are the key characteristics of a good research topic?
2. Why is conducting a literature review important before formulating a research question?
3. Differentiate between a general topic and a researchable topic.
4. What is meant by the feasibility of a research topic?
5. List any three sources from which research topics can be identified.
6. Define a research question in your own words.
7. Mention two common mistakes made while selecting a research topic.
8. How does a research question guide the research process?

Long answer type questions

1. Explain the process of selecting a research topic. What factors should be considered to ensure it is suitable for academic research?
2. Discuss the importance of formulating a clear and focused research question. How does it influence the overall research design?
3. Describe the major criteria for selecting a good research topic with relevant examples.
4. What are the common sources for identifying potential research topics? Explain how each source can contribute to developing a strong research idea.
5. Compare and contrast a general topic with a researchable topic. Why is narrowing down a topic important in research?
6. Outline the steps involved in formulating a research question from a broad topic. Include examples to illustrate each step.
7. What are some common mistakes researchers make when selecting a topic or formulating research questions? How can these be avoided?
8. Critically evaluate the role of relevance, originality, and feasibility in selecting a research topic. Why must these aspects be balanced?

UNIT 4: CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING RESEARCH DESIGNS

4.1 OBJECTIVES

4.2 INTRODUCTION

4.3 CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING RESEARCH DESIGNS.

4.1 Major parameters of research design evaluation

4.2 Objectives of Research Design

4.3 Steps of research design

4.4 Difference between quantitative and qualitative research design

4.5 Types of research design

4.6 Limitations of research design

4.4 SUMMARY

4.5 GLOSSARY

4.6 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

4.7 REFERENCES

4.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

4.1 OBJECTIVES

- Formulate a research plan
 - Strategize the various stages of research according to scientific methods, maintaining the authenticity and reliability of the research.
 - Ensure a blueprint outlining the research objectives and results.
-

4.2 INTRODUCTION

Research design means to prepare a draft of the outline of the research process or to prepare a systematic blueprint to display the details in which it is determined how the preparation for conducting the research design should be documented in a research work, and how the objectives of the research will be achieved, all these elements are taken into consideration. Therefore, planning is required for validity and reliability in research, that is, how the research will be conducted, and all these strategic steps are included in the research design. Mainly two elements are taken into consideration in research design, how to present properly what the research is looking for, that is, to find out the logical structure of the investigation, the second is how to do it, which methods should be adopted in it and which techniques should be used so that this research results can reach a rational and meaningful conclusion. That is, the research design research process is related to controlled scientific investigation, which works on the plan to plan the results obtained before and after conducting any research.

Henry Mannheim (1977) has clarified that "Research design not only guides and predicts countless visible decisions related to the process of collecting data, testing and analysing data". Therefore, research design is the foundation of any research study, which guides the outline, methods and procedures of the study. An effective research design ensures that the research study is systematic, logical and reliable, therefore, some criteria are set to evaluate the research design on the basis of which its quality and effectiveness are assessed. Research design evaluation mainly includes the internal and external validity of the research results, which represents the objectives of the study with accuracy and reliability, which protects the research from replication of any result, as well as protecting the research work from bias and keeping in mind things like relevance, economic feasibility, coherence and applicability according to the timeliness. Therefore, an effective research design fulfils the objectives of the study and certifies the results obtained from a scientific point of view and helps in ensuring the quality and effectiveness of the design of the research design.

4.3 CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING RESEARCH DESIGNS

Research design is an important framework for the success of any research study, which is a simple blueprint to build a bridge between the methods and techniques adopted to achieve the objectives of the research study and to reach the conclusions, through which the results and conclusions of the research are presented. For good research, it is necessary to have a research design, which is the basic material of the research, the methods for its collection, testing and analysis, and each step is planned in advance on the basis of scientific objectivity and integrity. Afaq (1961) believes that research design is the planning of various steps and processes related to the formulation of research efforts. Whereas Zikmand (1988) has defined research design in such a way that it is “a master plan describing the various steps and processes for the collection and analysis of the desired information”.

4.1 Major parameters of research design evaluation

The parameters mainly adopted in the evaluation of research design are classified according to the following.

1. Validity- The validity of research ensures whether the research study is achieving its objectives properly or not. This test is mainly done in two ways. 1. Internal validity- It clarifies the internal methods of research and the authenticity of the conclusions. 2. External validity- External validity includes the extent to which the conclusions of the research can be applied.

2. Reliability- While preparing the research design, it is kept in mind that it reflects the stability of the instruments used and the data collection technique. If a study is repeated again and again and the same results are obtained, then it is considered a reliable research design, which gives good benefits and results of research. Every research has its originality, based on which the research design is also observed differently. Because the design structure should be prepared in the context of research objectives and diversity. Apart from this, there should be uniformity and consistency in the evaluation done by different researchers; the data collected by modern equipment and appropriate methods should be reliable.

3. Neutrality and impartiality - To maintain neutrality and impartiality of research in a research design, the researcher should not have any personal bias or inclination in the research findings, that is, whether the research is descriptive, exploratory or explanatory or of pure functional type, the data collection and analysis process in it should be impartial.

4. Replicability - The authenticity of the research design provides stability to the research; if a researcher repeats the study using the same methods, then they should get the same results.

5. Timeliness- Research design has to be updated according to the time, i.e. according to the current conditions and scientific progress, in which data collection and analysis of findings should be done according to modern methods, because problems are created and solved according to time.

6. Economic feasibility- In determining the research design, its practicality should be considered by keeping in mind the cost, time and resources, because an effective research design is the one that can provide useful findings even with limited resources.

7. Consistency- There should be logical consistency in the various elements of the research study, sample selection, data collection methods, analysis techniques and presentation of findings, and there should not be any elements like contradiction or inconsistency in it.

8. Ethics- Under research design ethics, mainly the privacy, confidentiality and research transparency of the respondents, which should be fully incorporated in a research design.

9. Interpretability and practicality- The design should be such that the results of the research should be clear, concise and explainable so that the research findings can be applied practically.

10. Innovation - Research design should include new approaches in the research work, which ensures that there is no repetition of any work in the research study, and new knowledge can be created.

11. Sample selection- The samples taken for the study should be appropriate, representative and without bias. These are the biggest features of research design which determine the ethics of research, confidentiality and impartiality, practicality, etc.

Thus, an effective research design is evaluated on the basis of various parameters. Qualities such as validity, reliability, objectivity, economic feasibility and ethics affect the results of the research. If the research design fulfils all these parameters, then it is considered an effective and useful research.

4.2 Objectives of Research Design

The main criteria adopted for determining and evaluating the research design are to ensure that the measurement being adopted for the research, whether the research findings actually show the cause and effect relationship or not, whether any external variable or effect is affecting the research result, whether a control group has been used in the experiment or not, whether the results of the conclusion are applicable to a larger group or not, whether the study will be useful for any place and time or not, whether the research study sample accurately represents the population or not, whether the research is measuring the defined

standards, whether the survey, questionnaire being used for measurement has been used correctly or not, whether the statistical tests related to validity have been done correctly, whether the data used in the study is sufficient and appropriate to draw the conclusion, whether the reliability will remain even if the research work is repeated or retested in the future, whether the research tests are free from bias or not, whether there is transparency in the analysis or the conclusions have been independently verified Whether or not there is a logical relationship between the research problem, statement, research methodology, data analysis used in the research coherence and organized structure, whether the research questions, objectives, methods of data collection are interconnected, whether there is a systematic flow of the research design, whether the ethics of research take care of privacy, whether the research design can be applied practically, whether there is sensitivity and relevance of the context of the research, whether the level of quality of data collection and analysis is useful for the research, whether the data has been analysed systematically and logically, whether statistical and qualitative techniques have been used correctly, the utility of the research result i.e. whether the conclusions are useful for policy-making, society, industry or science, whether this research result will provide a basis for future research or not. The answers to all these questions lie in a research design which thoroughly evaluates validity, reliability, ethics, data collection, analysis and interpretation of findings to maintain the quality of research high. These are the main objectives of creating a research design.

4.3 Steps of research design

Generally, six steps are adopted as a research design for any research work.

1. Selecting the problem of the subject to be studied.
2. Preparing the draft of the research study design.
3. Planning the research sample.
4. Collection of data for the research study.
5. Analysing the collected data.
6. Preparing a report based on the research findings.

While some scholars divide the steps of research design into four parts, (1) Problem selection step, (2) Research design step (4) Meaning clarification step.

In the problem selection stage, problem selection, objective setting, and hypothesis setting are done. In the second stage, planning of research problem, material collection method, classification, coding, tabulation and determination of respondent sample are done. In the third stage, base material collection, testing, tabulation and interpretation are

determined. In the last stage, case analysis, report writing, generalization or determination of theory are done, which are functionally connected to each other.

In quantitative research, research design is divided into seven stages.

First stage- First of all, the problem/subject to be studied is clarified on the basis of the person's interest and the idea of research.

Second stage- It determines the objectives of the research, whether the research is descriptive, exploratory, explanatory or experimental.

Third stage- This is the conceptual part in the research design, in which concepts are operationalized after determining the concept. **Fourth Step-** This step determines the objectives of the study by formulating the hypothesis and other concepts.

Fifth Step- After clarifying the objectives and formulating the hypothesis, the research design is developed, which determines the collection of research data.

Sixth Step- This is the step of research design in which the size of the sample is determined, how much of it should be taken in the population and how it will represent the population.

Seventh Step- This step tabulates the desired material for quantitative and qualitative analysis of the research, which is collected in the form of primary and secondary data.

Eighth Step- This is the last step of research design in which the explanatory aspect is analysed by analysing the base material, finding the conclusions, generalizing and making theories, etc.

In the form of an abbreviation, the various basic elements of research design are explained by scholars in the following manner.

1. Selecting the problem, which can be of any type, like descriptive, explanatory and functional in the research classification.
2. Reviewing the related problem or studying the hypotheses or conclusions.
3. Operationalising the concepts, i.e. clarifying the specific meaning of the data and results used.
4. Identifying the variables of the research study and clarifying the various stages of research and the methods of measurement.
5. Selecting the sample for the research results and theories, which is based on the primary data and laboratory findings.
6. Clarifying the research study tools, selection of base material, questionnaire, list, survey and interview, etc., is observed.
7. Designing the type of analysis, statistical test, clarifying the logic of the type of analysis selected, and whether it will be useful in a comparative study or not.

8.To implement the research work, research time, study method, and research stages have to be determined.

9. Determining research budget and preparing research report.

After the clarification of the study material of various stages of research design, there is a difference in the research design based on the tendencies of the types of research, which are quantitative and qualitative research designs, for which the format of research design is different which are as follows.

4.4 Difference between quantitative and qualitative research design

The format of research design changes based on the types of research, as quantitative researchers are more prescriptive than qualitative researchers. While qualitative researchers imbibe the characteristic of working through instructions, the above research designs are mainly more useful for quantitative research while qualitative researchers do not use research design, they keep the options open and are flexible and they are more free in selection which is not very reliable from the point of view of research and utility.

1.In quantitative research, the problem is large and brief, while in qualitative research, it is general and of a weak nature.

2.In quantitative research, hypotheses are formulated before the study and in qualitative research, hypotheses are formulated during or after the study.

3.In quantitative research, the research sample is representative, whereas it is not so in qualitative research.

4.Measurement is used in quantitative research, whereas in qualitative research, only general characteristics are kept in mind.

5.In quantitative research, the base material of large research is considered to be the investigator, whereas in qualitative research, the researcher alone analyses the base material.

6.In quantitative research, the findings are highly compiled in reporting, whereas in qualitative research, the findings are not compiled.

4.5 Types of research design

Descriptive, exploratory and explanatory research are fundamentally included as research designs. Apart from these, Mannheim 1977 had classified three types of designs into three parts.

1. Survey Research Design

Survey research, as the name suggests, is a design for collecting information through surveys, which is collected through interviews, which mainly aims to collect information for

four purposes, which are description, observation, interpretation and experiment, which can either support a prevalent idea or prove it to be false through correlation and cross-tabulation analysis, which investigates the research subject through survey study, in which quantitative analysis is done for statistical testing. This survey is used to verify the principles of investigations, whether the theoretical ideas are supported by the people or not, which is tested using questionnaires, lists, interviews or observations as tools. Example - Comprehensive study of the attitudes of the Hindu community towards population growth in the context of the Indian nation.

2. Individual study design

In this design, a problem is independently studied in the natural environment. In this method, the base material is collected and analysed over a long period and through many methods, which has very low numerical value. Thus, this design is less useful for both quantitative and qualitative research. Individual study design is mainly used to obtain more base material, to formulate hypotheses and to test the practicality of a quantitative study, which is taken as the prelude to actual research, as a pre-test, as an explanation after the main study. Baker has described this research design as similar to the mainstream design of social research, which gives a logical explanation of any problem-based issues. Example - To do a geographical study of the Bhotiya tribe of Uttarakhand state.

3. Experimental Research Design

In this research design, some variables are studied under controlled conditions, where one factor is kept constant and the experimental factor is free to change. One variable is manipulated and its effect on other variables is measured while other variables which distort the relationship are eliminated or controlled. Thus, there are two types of groups in experimental research:

1. Controlled group, which is not open to experimental variables.
2. Experimental group, which is open to experimental variables. Example: Comparative study of different groups of workers working on the road.

4.5 Other Research Designs

Apart from the research designs mentioned above, the nature of research designs for evaluation and action research is somewhat different in research types, so it is also necessary to present their details.

1. Evaluation Research Design

This research is usually done by sociologists, economists, psychologists and social researchers to evaluate the working systems of various organizations, to evaluate the existing

programs and policies of institutions, which evaluates whether the planned programs have been successful or not, tests the shortcomings in effective programs and includes suggestions in the form of design to make the program effective. The stages of evaluation design research are also similar to other research, although the subject matter of their stages is said to be different.

The stages adopted as design in evaluation research include (defining the problem, selecting the sample, testing the data, testing the data and writing the report sequentially. Example- Social and economic study of the institutions working in the Rural Livelihood Improvement Mission in the state of Uttarakhand.

2. Action Research Design

The main objective of the researcher in action research is to conduct an immediate study of specific problems, in which the researcher himself is not the judge, but the results of action research are determined by the final results. In this research, special attention is paid to the role of the respondent and the techniques of collecting data. The rest of the research design has the same standards as other research. In the first stage of this design, the researcher identifies the problem, selects the sample in the second stage and collects the data in the third stage, data and literature in the fourth stage and reports and concludes in the last stage. It creates generalisation, i.e. theory. Example- Explanatory study of the Sikh riots of 1984.

4.6 Limitations of research design

Generally, any object or substance, whether living or non-living, has its characteristics, whether it is in the form of profit or loss, because both the advantages and disadvantages go together and are included in each other. Similarly, research design also includes both aspects, i.e. profit and loss. The quality and effectiveness of research are strengthened by research design. The details of the main advantages of research design are described as follows.

(1) Advantages of research design

1. It is the way to reach the depth of a problem by providing a scientific basis to the research subject. Because it provides subtle guidelines during research, which also works to prevent the unreliability and wastage of research.
2. Systematic study of the research topic- Research design provides a structured and systematic technique in which the researcher organises their thoughts, observations and selects appropriate research techniques, as well as plans the collection and analysis of data sequentially.

3. The work of providing a clear understanding of the objectives and neglected results set in the research study is done, which is focused and targeted on the research process.

4. Validity and reliability- Research design A well-organized research design ensures the validity of the results, so that the research findings are more accurate and repeatable.

5. A good research design helps the researcher find help in the best solution to the research problems.

6. Better documentation- Research design also makes it clear how the work of the research project and its documentation should be included in the research conclusion.

Thus, a research design is the outline of the research project which ensures the quality, accuracy and effectiveness of the research, which leads to reliable and scientific results.

(2) Drawbacks of Research Design

Since the determination of research design is based on scientific methods and rules, many times due to the problem of theory formation and sample selection in general humanities subjects and lack of knowledge of research techniques, many problems arise in research design, some of the major problems of which are pointed out as follows.

1. Lack of control- In descriptive research designs, the researchers do not have complete control over the variables, due to which there is a high possibility of affecting the reliability of the conclusions.

2. Bias - The personal beliefs and assumptions of the researcher affect the research data and data analysis, due to which the possibility of the research results being unbiased is reduced.

3. Limitations of generalisation - When the sample of research is small and unrepresentative, then it is not considered very successful to apply it in a larger society, thus, it reveals the failure of the research design.

4. Difference in causal relationship- Especially when the trend of research is based on critical and descriptive design, it is difficult to establish the relationship between cause and effect.

5. Problem of coordination in time and resources- In research types, the design of some research gets reflected in more time and some in less time, while in most research, the design of research gets reflected in more time and some in less time.

6. Research control- In research work, random or controlled group methods of research sampling are not ethically useful for research results, which sometimes also occurs due to the complexity of the research design.

7. Self-reporting- During research survey and report writing, the researcher and the interviewee do not write the correct response and report, which does not match the nature of the research design.

Thus, in a research design, research problems or shortcomings are seen, which affect the objectives of the research as well as the results, for which a researcher needs to pay special attention during the research work and at the time of report writing. Mainly, the researcher should not include their biased facts in research projects and reports.

4.4 SUMMARY

Research design means preparing a draft of the research process, how to prepare for conducting the research design, how to document it in a research work, and how to achieve the objectives of the research. All these things are taken into consideration. That is, research design research process is related to controlled scientific investigation, which works on the plan to plan the results obtained after the research before conducting any research. Therefore, an effective research design fulfils the objectives of the study and certifies the results obtained from a scientific point of view, such as validity, reliability, neutrality and impartiality, reproducibility, timeliness, economic feasibility, relevance, ethics, interpretability and practicality, novelty, sample selection, etc. The criteria mainly adopted for determining and evaluating the research design are included, which are contained in the research design, which thoroughly evaluate validity, reliability, ethics, data collection, analysis and interpretation of findings to maintain the quality of research. These are the main objectives of creating a research design. Generally, six steps are adopted.

Selecting the problem of the subject to be studied, preparing the draft of the research study design, planning the research sample, collecting the data of the research study, analysing the collected data and preparing a report based on the research findings. But the format of research design also changes on the basis of the type of research, as seen in the research work of quantitative researchers and qualitative researchers. As a research design distinction, descriptive, exploratory and explanatory research are fundamentally included. Apart from this, there are other types of evaluation research design and action research design. Research design is the way to reach the depth of a problem by providing a scientific basis for the research subject. Because it provides subtle guidelines during research, which makes the research reliable, prevents wastage and prepares the research work for better documentation with order. Whereas sometimes some shortcomings also come in the research design due to control, bias, generalisation, lack of resources, time limit and self-reporting.

4.5 GLOSSARY

Research:	To search about a subject or to do systematic research again questions. about something which has been discovered earlier.
Design:	A plan made for research work or a project in which a blueprint of research methods, procedures and processes is prepared, which shows the researcher the way to walk in the sequential stages of correct research.
Data Representation:	Representation of documented quantitative research data, results, i.e. conclusions in the research report through charts, diagrams and graphs so that the research data can be easily understood.
Outline:	A brief description of the research project, which clarifies the problem, objective and the proposed action plan of the research work.
Research methods:	Research methods are adopted to complete different types of research work, such as research types adopted in quantitative and qualitative research, such as descriptive, experimental, exploratory, applied and action research, etc.
Research Replication:	This is related to reproducibility in a research project. If a research experiment or observation is repeated in the same conditions and the results are the same even after observation, then it is called research replication.
Research ethics:	During research, following ethical principles, what is right and what is wrong in research, results, and theories are to be formed based on these.
Data collection:	Techniques and processes of collecting information for research purposes, which are collected from simple self-reported survey work to more complex quantitative and qualitative experiments, which are collected through surveys, interviews, observation, self-observation, experiments and secondary sources.
Research Observation:	In research work, self-observation is the researcher's observation done during the period of survey on the subject on which he is working.

- Neutrality: While preparing a report on research results, a researcher should avoid acts like bias and repetition of facts; only unbiased facts have to be included in the research. After theory exploration and research repetition, if the result of any research has a similar trend and the same result is obtained, then it is considered as research theory.
- Generalisation Research: Generalization means applying the results of any research on a larger scale.
- Research Report: After completing all the stages of research design, the final stage is the research report, in which the results and theories of the research project are presented.

4.6 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Research design is the outline of the research process, i.e. a systematic blueprint.
- Research design evaluation mainly includes the internal and external validity of the research results.
- Two points are mainly taken into consideration in research design, that is, how to present what the research is looking for.
- In research design, there are parameters for evaluating systematic study, logic and reliability and research design.
- Mainly, research is divided into quantitative and qualitative designs.
- The reliability of a research project is assessed if the same results are obtained by repeating a study again and again.
- Generally, six main steps are adopted as a research design for any research work.
- In quantitative research, the problem is large and brief, whereas in qualitative research, it is general and of a weak nature.
- Descriptive, exploratory and explanatory research are included under fundamental research.
- Apart from these, Mannheim 1977 had classified three types of designs into three parts.
- In survey research design, separate designs are prepared for the information collected through the survey.
- Research design is the way to reach the bottom of a problem by providing a scientific basis for the research subject.

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4.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Long Answer Type Questions

Q-01 What do you understand by research design? Describe in detail the various criteria of research design evaluation.

2. Short Answer Questions

Q-01: Explain the meaning and definition of research design?

Q-02: Describe the various stages of research design.

Q-03: Explain the main objectives of research design?

Q-04: What are the main criteria for research design evaluation?

Q-05: Describe the various basic elements of research design adopted in the research briefing?

Q-06: Explain the difference between quantitative and qualitative research design?

Q-07: Describe the main types of research design?

Q-08 What do you understand by evaluation research design?

Q-09 What is action research design?

Q-10 Describe the limitations of research design?

3. Multiple Choice Questions

Q-01 What is mainly included under the subject matter of research design?

- A. Internal validity of research
- B. External validity of research
- C. Reliability of research
- D. All of the above

Answer- D

Q-02 Research design is the planning of various steps and processes related to the formulation of research efforts. Which scholar has given this statement?

- A. Afaq
- B. Zikmand
- C. Mannheim
- D. Mills

Answer-A

Q-03 Research design mean?

- A. Creating a research project
- B. Drafting the outline of the research process
- C. Finding out the research results
- D. Making a hypothesis

Answer- B

Q-04 What are the things kept in mind to protect the research work from bias?

- A. Relevance as per the timeliness
- B. Economic feasibility
- C. Consistency and applicability
- D. All of the above

Answer- D

Q-05 What are the criteria adopted in determining and evaluating a research design?

- A. Do the research findings show an effect relationship or not?
- B. Are any external variables or effects affecting the research results?
- C. Do the results of the findings apply to a larger group or not?
- D. All of the above

Answer- D

Q-06 Into how many parts are the major phases of the research design study divided?

- A. Three
- B. Five
- C. Six
- D. Seven

Answer- C

Q-07 Into how many parts did Mannheim 1977 classify research designs?

- A. 2
- B. 3

C. 5

D. 7

Answer- B

Question-08 Which of the following is not included in survey research design?

A. Interview

B. Questionnaire

C. Schedule and observation

D. Laboratory test

Answer- D

Q-09 Which of the following is included in personal study design?

A. Natural environment

B. Formulation of hypothesis

C. Quantitative study

D. All of the above

Answer- D

Q-10: Experimental research design is?

A. Scientific basis of research subject

B. Meticulous guidance

C. Wastage control

D. All of the above

Answer- D

Q-11: What is the advantage of research design?

A. Systematic study of the research subject

B. Validity and reliability

C. Better documentation

D. All of the above

Answer-D

Q12: What are included in the shortcomings of research design?

A. Lack of control

B. Bias

C. Limitations of generalization

D. All of the above

Answer-D

BLOCK- 2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

UNIT 5: CONDUCTING A RESEARCH LITERATURE REVIEW: SOURCES, DATABASES, CITATION MANAGEMENT

5.1 OBJECTIVES

5.2 INTRODUCTION

5.3 CONDUCTING A RESEARCH LITERATURE REVIEW: SOURCES, DATABASES, CITATION MANAGEMENT

5.1 CONDUCTING A RESEARCH LITERATURE REVIEW:

5.2 SOURCES OF DATABASES

3. CITATION MANAGEMENT

5.4 SUMMARY

5.5 GLOSSARY

5.6 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

5.7 REFERENCES

5.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

5.1 OBJECTIVES

- To make learners and researchers understand the concept of research literature review.
- To develop the skill of using research data collection for researchers or learners.
- To provide the art and skill of finding research information, developing a strategy, using proper reference management, etc.
- To develop literature review writing skills in learners, such as systematic order of literature, critical and relevant literature which is in line with the research and fulfils the research objectives, etc.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

How to do research literature review is a question mark for a researcher because it is mostly a new problem in front of researchers that how many researches have been done on the research problem in the past, whether the results are being repeated or different results are being obtained, a researcher gets to know all these only through in-depth study, analysis and observation of research literature. For reviewing research literature, any researcher has to first choose the subject of the research problem, the subject or question on which you want to collect information, and the boundaries of all those have to be determined that which literary works can be used for the said research. Observation of the research literature is the first step of any research problem that whether this problem is occurring in human society or environmental elements, or is not based on misleading facts, because new facts are established based on research work done earlier and the validity of the research is tested. Whether the said literature has been collected by the researchers from reliable sources or not, all these things are mentioned under research literature.

Research literature review mainly includes dissertations, books, research papers, research reports and gazetteers and current online websites, from which the subject or research problem based facts and information are systematically divided according to the subject matter, time, essence, diversity and principles and used for fulfilling different objectives through critical analysis under the review aspect of research work. The thing to be noted here is whether the literature reveals the quality and reliability of the research subject material, similarities and differences in the results of different research or not, where these results and principles can be useful in research, all these things and facts are arranged sequentially. Thereafter, literature writing is done on a research topic, in which, first of all, the sources are analysed according to the subject matter, summarised, and suggestions are written through proper citation and references. Generally, APA, MLA or Chicago

Bibliography Style is currently being used at the global level in research literature review. For example, for the research problem, in the literature review for the topic "Effect of climate change on global weather system", a researcher will first have to collect literature related to the effect of climate change and weather system which will be available through books, research papers, research literature, research dissertations, from which it will be known which research papers or literature prove the effects of climate change and weather system, all those facts have to be written by a researcher in the form of research note or research literature review. This clarifies which research techniques have been adopted in the said research and what differences and similarities have been observed in different types of research papers, based on which all subject-based facts are organised.

Apart from this, in research literature review, selection of topic, research question format, search of sources, selection of source, literature reading, observation and notes, literature sequencing, review writing, critical analysis and draft revision etc. are placed in a sequence which are organized in clarity and logical sequence with language, flow, structure and logic. As a research review data source, primary sources include original research papers, articles, results of scientific experiments, short research papers, government gazetteers and case studies etc., while secondary sources include review articles, textbooks, meta analysis, analytical reports and grey literature includes conference papers, non-governmental and government reports, informal published articles, technical reports and Google Scholar, PubMed Scopus, Web of Science, Shodh Ganga and Research Gateway etc. are also being used at present. While in citation management research literature overview, it is necessary to present details of various primary and secondary sources and other grey literature. At present, citation management tools like Jethro, a free, easy-to-use browser extraction, Mendeley PDF storage, citation making, EndNote commercial tool, Site This For Me, Rework APA, MLA, BPP - PMM, etc., are being included.

5.3 CONDUCTING A RESEARCH LITERATURE REVIEW: SOURCES, DATABASES, CITATION MANAGEMENT

5.1 CONDUCTING A RESEARCH LITERATURE REVIEW:

Research literature review is an important part of the research process in which research articles and publications done on a particular subject are studied analytically and comprehensively for a new research topic. It clarifies the knowledge before the research as to what work has been done on the said subject to date, in which areas this research is still needed and how it can contribute to the existing knowledge, in which the researcher works to

prepare a format for summarising the research done on a subject. Research literature review mainly consists of description, summary and evaluation of the work of the research problem, which clarifies how this research topic can be meaningful, i.e. how it can be used for the research topic.

5.1.1 Detailed meaning of research literature review

Research literature review is a continuous process in any research work, which is an important phase among the various major phases of research, which provides the basis for the search and selection of a topic of research problem, in which articles, research papers and related subject literature of various scholars are analysed comprehensively in a systematic order, through which literature review is prepared to justify the results of the research problem, which is analysed on the important points of current research on a subject and helps in determining the objectives of the subject being researched. This is the distinctive mark of good research, which is called the review of research literature in the research subject. That is, whether the thing you are investigating is true or not or has already been investigated in your research subject area, this test is the review of research literature. For example, suppose your subject professor asks you to do research work on a research topic "Possibilities and Sustainable Development of Organic Farming in India", for which you will first have to do in-depth study and read literature about the possibilities and sustainable development of organic farming in India and also describe it in a systematic order, in which many research works have already been done, giving reference to the same, new research will be taken forward, so the relation between the research done earlier and the research proposed at present is the research literature review.

Thus, research literature means special knowledge of a research subject, which is contained in the theoretical, scientific and practical aspects of the research subject. The meaning of research review can also be expressed in this way that it is to re-examine the previous work done in the research subject area, in which the student determines whether work has been done on the subject related to the research proposed by him or not, which he observes many research-related literature.

5.1.2 Elements of Research Literature Review

Thus, a researcher has to review the literature prepared by them, which includes reading the entire literature review from beginning to end and analysing the new literature review. Therefore, all the elements like topic selection, identification of sources, selection of literature, analysis and comparison and summarisation, preparing conclusions and

determining the reference list, etc. are included sequentially. The following elements are described by scholars as the characteristics of a research review.

- 1.Organised and systematic
- 2.Unbiased and critical analysis
- 3.Material related to the topic
- 4.Clear writing and reference details.

5.1.3 Need for research literature review

In a research case, literature review helps in doing or planning any research work, whether the subject of the research problem will prove helpful in immediate and long-term problems or new inventions, it is necessary to help in determining and creating hypothesis, to provide appropriate direction to the research subject, to create new knowledge. Thus, literature review is the initial step of every researcher, which starts before the selection of the research problem, which he acquires through libraries, research papers, new updated self-knowledge, online platforms and websites, so that both the objectivity and purity of the research subject remain intact.

5.1.4 Objectives of Research Literature Review

1. Research literature review provides a basis for any research hypothesis, which helps in the formulation of hypothesis of the research problems.
2. It proves helpful in a detailed analysis of prior knowledge, research and theories of the research topic.
3. Research review also makes appropriate research methodology, process, sources of data and statistical techniques and technical skills of modern computer science useful for the research topic.
4. It works to prepare the background of the research, along with determining useful conclusions and comparative facts in the analysis of the results of the research.
5. It helps in concluding the research problem as well as determines the path for new researchers and acts as a link to connect with social values.
6. It helps in clarifying the deep information of the research topic, as well as proving the justification of the comparative study of research topics and experimental method.
7. It communicates scientific novelty by re-making the gap in the research topic into a project.

In conclusion, the most important objective of a researcher is to find out what he has done better with the information already available. The results obtained by comparing the

conclusions with the research results done by you are the real test of the success or failure of the research literature of a researcher.

5.1.5 Types of research literature review

The main types of reviews used in literature review done by any researcher or for research work are divided as follows.

1. Narrative review

In the concentric literature review, a general overview is done in which the researcher presents the information based on their views and experience.

2. Systematic Review

In a systematic review, data is collected and analysed using previously decided research methods, which highlights the objectivity and replication of the literature.

3. Meta-analysis

In this type of literature review, a new analysis is presented by combining the findings of various research studies using statistical methods.

4. Thematic Review

In the thematic literature review, literature is divided and analysed based on topics or issues.

5.1.6 Tools of Research Literature Review

In the field of research, reviewing the relevant literature is an essential tool for the research subject in which before the information revolution, mostly printed material was used which was monthly, semi-annual and annual magazines, research papers, government reports, mini-research papers, research papers, research project reports, summary magazines, books, encyclopaedias, dictionaries and other printed material which were mostly concentrated in libraries but at present, due to communication means and technological development, many secondary research supporting literature are also being used in research literature review through online mediums like electronic digital recording, Shodh Ganga, which is making the literature of the research subject easily available to a researcher at one place.

5.1.7 Steps of Research Literature Review

In a research literature review, mainly the main steps of the research literature are studied sequentially, only after that the researcher moves towards the results, i.e. conclusions. The main steps of the research literature review can be pointed out as follows.

1. Selection of a topic of research problem.
2. Searching for literature related to the topic.
3. Studying the selected literature or research papers.

4.Organising the main points (introduction, main information and conclusions) of the research-related literature review.

5. Highlighting the conclusions of the thesis/research project or short research project.

5.1.8 Usefulness and importance of research literature review

1. Collection of necessary information in determining the definition, limits and hypothesis of the research topic.

2. To clarify the concepts of directions and references for the topic selected for problem solution.

3. To be useful in understanding the current status of research in the research problem area.

4. To help in assessing the possibilities of success of the proposed research and the usefulness and importance of the conclusions.

5.1.9 Precautions of Literature Review

In a literature review, writing flow, logic in arguments, clarity, reference sources, as well as analysis, summary of major findings, insights obtained from research results, importance of research, and prospects, i.e. a continuity from beginning to end, highlight the qualitative aspect of the research review. At the same time, factors like not citing the sources correctly, use of non-relevant sources and lack of original thinking reveal the shortcomings of the research review, in which an investigator has to be especially careful.

5.2 SOURCES OF DATABASES

To do any research work, a researcher has to first consider its various aspects and then decide which methods should be used in collecting the data because the success of collecting the data also depends on the researcher's ability, efficiency and experience. Because without setting the objective, collecting the data is not considered correct. Therefore, Dr.Baule has said that "Generally, discretion is primarily required in collecting the data, in which the researcher should take into account the various aspects of the data."

Experience is the main teacher". After preparing the research plan, a researcher has to collect data as the most important and basic task. Since data has to be collected with utmost accuracy and efficiency, if there is any kind of deficiency in data collection, then the conclusions of the research become unreliable. Data collection generally means the purposeful collection of numerical information obtained from institutions and primary sources related to the subject matter to be used in the research. The data mainly used for research work is divided into two parts.

1. Primary Data
2. Secondary Data

(1) Primary Data- Primary data refers to the data which are collected by the researcher himself for the first time in their original form and which have not been collected earlier. For example, a researcher going among the rural residents and collecting data to find out their economic condition is primary data which is called primary data. According to Sacrist, “Primary data means that they are original, that is, those which have been grouped very little or not at all, the events are counted or recorded in the same way as they are found, mainly they are like raw material.”

(2) Secondary data – Secondary data means such data which has been collected by some other person or organization and the researcher only uses them to achieve his objective, there is lack of originality in them, for example, agricultural sales data used to estimate the government revenue obtained from the business done in the last fifty years in the shops located in the vegetable market in Haldwani city is a secondary category data. **M.S. Baler:** “Secondary data are those which already exist and which have been collected for some other purpose and not for answering the present questions.”

5.2.1 Methods of Collection of Data

Collection of Primary Data: The following types of methods are used for collecting primary data.

1. Direct personal research
2. Indirect original research
3. Data obtained from correspondents or local sources
4. Getting schedules or questionnaires filled out by informants
5. Filling schedules by enumerators
6. Registration method

(1) Direct personal research: In this method, the researcher himself goes to the research area and establishes direct personal contact with the concerned persons and collects the necessary information and data. This method was first used by Lipple in Europe for the study of family budgets and in India it was first used by Young for the study of agricultural production.

2. Indirect oral research- In this method, information is not directly obtained from the persons related to the research or journalists; rather, data is collected by oral inquiry from journalists who have information about them. For example, if information is to be obtained about the students of the class, then instead of asking the students, information is obtained

from the class teacher. Especially, the police and journalism departments use this method for investigation and research work, and the scope of this method is wide.

3. Data obtained from correspondents or local sources- For the collection of data by this method, correspondents are appointed by the researcher in the local area, or any person already working or a local source is used. For example, this method is widely used for publishing price data in newspapers. It is used by the government for the estimation of prices and crops of different mandis.

4. Filling of questionnaire by enumerators- Under this system, enumerators are appointed to collect data for research, and those enumerators collect data based on a fixed questionnaire. In India, a survey/study of population data is done by this method. And the enumerator himself fills the questionnaire by collecting information from the concerned person personally. There is a fixed area of data collection by this method.

5. Getting schedules or questionnaires filled by informants- This method is also called the postal questionnaire method. Under this method, first of all the researcher prepares a questionnaire and sends one copy of it to the area through postman or other persons and along with it a request letter is also attached which describes the aim and importance of the research and the questionnaire should be sent back within the stipulated time and a message is sent that all the information will be kept confidential.

6. Registration method- In this method, arrangement is made for the registration of information related to a fact, and on that basis, data is collected. For example, in Uttarakhand, to get an employment allowance, it is mandatory to register at the employment office first. Only after this, employment is available, and through this registration, the number of unemployed in Uttarakhand is collected, and the data of the unemployed is obtained, which is economic data.

2- Methods of secondary data collection

The researcher receives secondary data collection mainly in three forms.

1. In published form
2. In unpublished form
3. In digital and online form

1. In published form

1. Government publications - This type of data is collected by various ministries and their departments of the central and state governments. These data are considered to be very reliable for research work such as the Census of India, progress report of five-year plans, etc.

2. Reports of committees and commissions - The central and state governments of our country form committees or commissions from time to time to study and investigate various

problems, which collect various data and information and submit their reports with the help of which research work is completed such as Report at the National Commission on Labor, Report Finance Commission etc.

3. Publications of international organizations- Some international organizations like UNO, World Bank, IMF, etc. also publish comparative data of different countries of the world which are useful for economic and social studies.

4. Publications of universities and research institutions- Some prominent universities and many government research institutes also publish specific research work from time to time, which are helpful from analytical point of view. Like UGC, NCERT, ICSR, etc.

5. Publications by business organizations- Many business organizations and industries publish data related to their field which a researcher can use to complete his research. Like publication of data by stock markets and produce markets, Indian Sugar Mills Association, Indian Cotton Mills Foundation, etc.

6. Non-governmental data- Data and information collected by the organizations which work for their own use or for public works like newspapers, magazines, internet, etc. The Economic Times and Facts for You are such organizations and magazines which have their own research departments.

2. Collection of secondary data in unpublished form-We also get it in unpublished form through various means such as research work done by individuals which is published in magazines or books, records of private institutions, land related records in tehsils etc.

3. Digital data and online sources- In present times, due to advancement in information technology, research data is available in the form of digital online journals and magazines, Google Scholar, Research Gate, Digital Library, Shodh Ganga, DocRect Open Access Journals List, News Portals and Reports, Online Encyclopedia and Reference List and Online Courses and Lectures etc.

Determination of methods of collection of data -

1. Determination of primary data

Serial No.	Method	Suitability
1	Direct personal Research	1. If the research area is limited. 2. If original and pure data is required. 3. When data is to be kept confidential 4. Feasibility is to be checked.

2	Indirect Oral Research	1. The area of research is very wide. 2. It is impossible to establish personal contact with the informants directly, or they are unable to give information due to ignorance and disinterest. 3. When the problem has to be kept secret from the person related to it, or they are expected to behave in a biased manner.
3	Data obtained from correspondents or local sources	1. The area of research is very wide. 2. Where there is a need for regular data collection. 3. Where there is no need for a high level of probability and only estimates or trends are to be found.
4	Getting schedules filled by informants	This method is suitable in those researches where the area is very wide and the person giving information is educated.
5	Filling of questionnaires by enumerators	This method is specially used for survey work like a population census.
6	Registration method	The registration method is used for collecting birth and death data, registration of unemployment, registration of construction contractors, etc. to find out the numbers.

2. Determination of secondary data

Sl. No	Method	Suitability
1	All the methods of obtaining secondary data	The determination of secondary data is done for comparative study in research work and to know the level of purity of primary data etc.

Representation of data- One of the important tasks of the researcher in research work is that different types of data are collected but how to present them, for this the researcher adopts a simple, clear, attractive and effective form of the data and by classifying and tabulating the data the data gets organized but they do not become attractive and effective because a common man cannot understand the importance of the table as Mr. W.I. King has said. "It is not easy for the brain to understand and remember the numbers even in their best

form for the purpose of comparison and to remember them for a long time. Therefore, to overcome all these shortcomings, we display data in the following manner.

1. Graphical representation of data

Graphical display is a method of presentation of facts in which data is shown through pictures. Under this, data is presented through various types of interesting and attractive geometric shapes. Such as bar, circle, rectangle, square picture, map, charts and models, etc. are used.

Major diagrams used in the presentation of data

1. *One-Dimensional Diagram*

1. Line Diagram
2. Bar Diagram
3. Multi-Bar Diagram
4. Subdivided Bar Diagram
5. Bar Diagrams showing the difference
6. Bar Diagrams dividing the percentage difference
7. Deviation Bar Diagram Bidirectional Bar Diagram

2. *Two-Dimensional Bar Diagram*

- (1) Rectangle Diagram
- (2) Square Diagram
- (3) Circle Diagram

3. *Three-Dimensional Diagram*

4. *Pictograph* 5. *Map*

5.1 CONDUCTING A RESEARCH LITERATURE REVIEW:

5.2 SOURCES OF DATABASES

3. CITATION MANAGEMENT

Research Citation Management means to cite the reference sources used in research writing or literature review in an organized and correct manner which gives the description of the work of a researcher, protection from academic plagiarism, correct description of the sources mentioned by the author in which many different citation styles are used. The styles of APA (American Psychological Association style, MLA (Modern Language Association style, Chicago style & Harvard style. various types of styles in which sources are collected through tools like .Mendeley, Zetro, EndNote, RefWorks for their management i.e. organization, in which each style has its own rules such as name of the author, year, name of

the research topic, name of the publication and page number etc. (APA style, the method of writing. Sharma, A. 2023. Development of Indian Economy, Delhi, BharatPrakashan) is clear. Thus, if you take information or words from any author, book, website or other source in a research paper or dissertation, then you have to mention that source which is the biggest systematic basis for maintaining academic integrity of a researcher, on the basis of which a reference list or bibliography is prepared. This proves that the researcher also protects their reputation of the researcher by making the research report professional and reliable.

5.4 SUMMARY

Research Literature Review a researcher has to first select the research problem as a solution, because the observation of research literature is the first step of any research problem. The establishment of new facts and the research validity are tested based on previously done research work. Research literature review mainly includes dissertations, books, research papers, research reports and gazetteers and current online websites etc., which are included under the critical aspect in critical analysis to fulfil different objectives of research. Where the thing to be noted is that whether the literature reveals the quality and reliability of the research subject material, the similarities and differences in the results of different researches or not, then the work of writing literature on a research topic is done, in which first of all the analysis of sources according to the subject matter, their summarization and suggestions are presented with proper quotations and references.

Apart from this, in research literature review, selection of topic, research question format, search for sources, selection of sources, literature reading, observation and notes, literature sequencing, review writing, critical analysis and draft revision etc. are set in a sequence which are arranged in clarity and logical sequence with language, flow, structure and logic which are identified as research literature elements. A research literature review is required to do or plan any research work, to know the research problem, to find new discoveries, to help in determining and creating hypothesis and to create new knowledge. Its main objective is to provide a basis for any research hypothesis, to do a detailed discussion of prior knowledge, research and theories of the research topic, to communicate its scientific novelty by re-projecting the gap in the research topic, in which concentrated, systematic, meta-analysis and thematic review types are included. Research Review Data Primary sources include original research papers, articles, results of scientific experiments, short research papers, government gazetteers and case studies and secondary sources include review articles, text books, meta-analysis, analytical reports and grey literature includes

conference papers, non-governmental and government reports, unofficial published articles, technical reports and Google Scholar, Pubmed Scopus, Web of Science, Science Direct, Shodh Ganga and Research Gateway etc.

5.5 GLOSSARY

Literature Review:	Studying and analysing the results of previous research for research work or for creation of new knowledge is called literature review.
Investigation:	Discovering a new fact or obtaining new information through the process of research is called investigation.
Hypothesis:	Scientifically imagining about a subject or assuming any element before doing research work.
Primary Data:	The data collected by any survey or institution by going there itself, or the data which is collected for the first time is called primary data.
Secondary Data:	Secondary data is the data which has been collected earlier by any institution or government.
Summarization:	The process of briefly mentioning the essence and results of the research work done by any author, investigator or researcher in research literature review.
Sequence:	The work done in a prescribed format from the first stage of research to the last stage in research work, which has its own scientific stages and principles. Non-governmental data Data collected by any institution without receiving government aid is called non-governmental data.
Research citation management:	Systematic order of reference sources used in research writing or literature review.
Shodh Gang:	A digital research bank of research work done by all the universities of the country.
PubMed:	Research related to medical and life sciences.
Research Gate:	An Online network of researchers, in which research articles are submitted.
Endnote:	Research Professional Tool adopted by Universities

5.6 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Research Literature Review The researcher has to collect the previous information on the related subject before doing new research work.
- Research literature review mainly includes dissertations, books, research papers, research reports and gazetteers and current online websites.
- In research literature, primary sources include original research dissertations, articles, results of scientific experiments, short research dissertations, government gazetteers and case studies.
- Research literature review is one of the main phases of continuous research in any research work.
- A research review element should have the characteristics of impartiality and critical analysis, clear writing and reference details.
- Research literature review provides a basis for any research hypothesis.
- A general overview is done in a concentrated literature review in which the researcher presents information based on their views and experience.
- In the thematic literature review, literature is divided and analysed based on topics or issues. The objective of the research literature review is to help in concluding the research problem.
- The usefulness and importance of the research literature review help in assessing the success of the proposed research and the usefulness and importance of the conclusions.
- Primary data refers to those data which are collected by the researcher themselves and for the first time in their original form.
- Secondary data refers to such data which has been collected by other persons or organisations.
- Secondary data is collected in published, unpublished and digital, online form.
- Research citation management refers to quoting the reference sources used in research writing or literature review in an organised and correct manner.

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5.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Long Answer Questions

Q-01 What is a research literature review? explain the meaning of research literature review and describe it in detail.

Q-02 What is the importance of data collection in research literature review? Describe the sources of primary and secondary data in detail in your own words?

2. Short Answer Questions

Q-01 Explain the meaning and definition of research literature review?

Q-02 What are the elements of research literature review, explain it?

Q-03 Why does a researcher need research literature review?

Q-04 Throw light on the objectives of research literature review?

Q-05 Describe the types of research literature review?

Q-06 Explain the various stages of research literature review?

Q- 07 Explain the utility and importance of research literature review?

Q- 08 What precautions are required to be taken while reviewing research literature?

Q- 09 Describe the meaning of primary data of research literature and the types of data?

Q- 10 What are the secondary data of research literature review, describe them briefly?

Q- 11 What is direct personal research literature?

Q- 12 What do you understand by indirect and oral research?

Q- 13 What is the importance of schedules and questionnaires in research?

Q- 14 What are the methods of graphical representation of research data?

Q- 15 What do you mean by research quotation management?

3. Multiple Choice Questions

Q- 01 What is the first work done by the researcher in research literature review?

- A. Selection of research problem topic
- B. Selection of research literature
- C. Research evaluation
- D. Research writing

Answer- A

Q-2 What are mainly included in a research literature review?

- A. Research dissertation and books
- B. Research papers and research reports
- C. Gazetteer and online website
- D. All of the above

Answer- D

Q-3 Which global styles are generally used in writing a research literature review?

- A. APA
- B. MLA
- C. B. C.P.B.H.V
- D. All of the above

Answer- D

Q-4 Research review data is not included under the primary source.

- A. Original research paper
- B. Results of the scientific experiment
- C. Population census
- D. Small research paper

Answer- C

Q-5 What is included in secondary data sources?

- A. Review articles
- B. Textbooks
- C. Analytical reports
- D. All of the above

Answer-D

Q-6 What is not included in the characteristics of research review?

- A. Systematicity
- B. Unbiased and critical analysis
- C. Clear writing and reference details
- D. All of the above

Answer-D

Q-7 A researcher needs research literature for?

- A. To determine and formulate a research hypothesis
- B. To provide appropriate direction to the research topic

- C. To create new knowledge
- D. All of the above

Answer- 4

Q-8 What is not included in the types of research review?

- A. Narrative Review
- B. Systematic review
- C. Meta-analysis
- D. Reference review

Answer-D

Q-9 What are the main steps of the research literature review?

- A. Selection of one topic of research problem
- B. Searching for literature related to the subject
- C. Studying selected literature or research papers.
- D. All of the above

Answer- D

Q-10 What are the methods of collecting secondary data?

- A. In published form
- B. in unpublished form
- C. in digital and online form
- D. All of the above

Answer-11

Q-11 What does research output management generally mean?

- A. Systematic order of reference sources and details of the work of the researcher
- B. Protection from academic plagiarism
- C. Correct details of the sources mentioned by the author
- D. All of the above

Answer- D

UNIT-6: DEVELOPING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: THEORIES, HYPOTHESES, VARIABLES

6.1 OBJECTIVES

6.2 INTRODUCTION

6.3 THEORIES:

6.4 VARIABLES:

6.5 HYPOTHESES

6.6 SUMMARY

6.7 GLOSSARY

6.8 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

6.9 REFERENCES

6.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

6.1 OBJECTIVES

After carefully studying this unit, you will be able to meet the following objectives.

- Understand the components of a conceptual framework and their research significance.
- Identify and classify different types of variables in research studies.
- Recognize the roles of independent, dependent, intervening, and control variables.
- Develop testable hypotheses based on observable variable relationships.
- Distinguish between qualitative and quantitative variables.

6.2 INTRODUCTION

The conceptual framework is a basic structure in research, which helps the researcher to give direction to his research. It is a map that explains what theories, ideas and variables the researcher is based on in his research, and how they are all interconnected. It can be understood as a compilation that links the theories, hypotheses and variables used during the research. This framework makes it clear: what is the researcher's idea? What aspects are being focused on?, and how are they all interconnected? Etc. The theoretical framework can be thought of as a map or a travel plan. Just like when planning a trip in an unfamiliar country, people want to find out as much information as possible about the best way to travel using past experience and accounts of other people who have gone on similar trips. 'Survival advice' and 'top tips' enable them to find out the abilities, expectations and tools that can help them have a successful trip with good results, achieve their objectives and return to base safely. At the beginning of any research study, it is important to consider the relevant theory that underlies the knowledge base of the phenomenon being researched. By addressing simple questions, the researcher can begin to develop a loosely-structured theoretical framework to guide them.

Creating a conceptual framework involves clarifying the structure and logic of a research project. It connects theory, hypotheses, and variables to explain a phenomenon or predict outcomes. Here's a structured guide to help you develop one:

6.3 THEORIES:

There is little agreement among social scientists on what theory is. for example, according to Goode and Hatt (1952), a theory refers to the relationship between facts or the ordering of them in some meaningful ways, whereas to Kerlinger (1973), a theory is a set of interrelated constructs (concept), definitions and propositions that present a systematic view of

phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena.

There are many more explanations of what a theory is. Despite the disagreement, there are certain common points in almost all the explanations. Keeping this in view we can understand a theory as a systematic explanation for the observed facts and their interrelations. According to Theodorson (1969:436) theory is a bundle of predictions. The main part of a theory consists of logically interrelated and empirically verifiable propositions. The propositions of a theory are constantly tested and reconsidered on the basis of experience. Zikmund (1988:20) has described a theory as "a coherent bundle of internal propositions explaining the apparent relationships of some observed phenomena".

Theory has two purposes- understanding and predicting. In most cases, the functions of predicting and understanding go hand in hand. To predict a phenomenon, we must have an explanation of why the variables that are causing the behavior do so. Theories provide this explanation. For example, the "aggression-frustration theory" states that aggression is a response to frustration. Its explanation is that aggression is a learned social behavior and it is aroused when the individual experiences frustration. He learns that aggression is often advantageous. This learning comes not only from the individual's own experience but also from observing others. But it does not help in the task of prediction to simply say that aggressive responses are learned when these responses actually occur. Aggressive actions are aroused by a variety of experiences- such as frustration, pain, humiliation, etc. Such experiences arouse the emotions of the individual. But whether they will act aggressively will depend on what consequences they foresee. People act aggressively when they feel they will be rewarded for it.

The propositions which comprise a theory are considered scientific laws if they have been sufficiently confirmed to be widely accepted. By the deductive process, the theory provides specific hypotheses for research and by the inductive process, the research data provides generalizations to improve and incorporate the theory. The essence of theory is that it attempts to explain a wide variety of empirical phenomena.

According to Black and Champion (1976:561), theory is a group of related propositions that systematically explain the causative relationships between variables. The ideas contained in the theory should conform to the following criteria (ibid: 57)-

1. They should be logically consistent i.e. there should not be any internal contradiction.

2. There must be mutual relationship between them.
3. The propositions must be mutually exclusive.
4. They must be capable of empirical verification.

Key Characteristics of a Theory:

Systematic; a theory is organized and structured. It connects concepts and principles in a logical framework.

Explanatory; Theories explain why and how something happens. For example, the theory of gravity explains why apples fall to the ground.

Predictive; a strong theory doesn't just explain the past — it can predict what will happen under certain conditions.

Based on Evidence; Theories arise from repeated observation, testing, and analysis of facts and data.

Testable and Falsifiable; Good theories can be tested through experiments. If proven wrong, they can be rejected or revised.

Evolving; Theories are not static; they can be updated or replaced when new evidence is found.

A theory is not just a guess — it is a comprehensive explanation backed by evidence. It helps us make sense of complex systems, predict future outcomes, and solve real-world problems.

6.4 VARIABLES

'Variable' it is a characteristic that has two or more values. It is something that keeps on changing. It is a characteristic that is similar in many individuals, groups, events, objects etc. Individual cases can differ only to the extent that they have this characteristic. Thus age (young, middle aged, old), income group (low, middle, high), caste (low, middle or high), education (uneducated, less educated, highly educated), occupation (low level, high level) etc. are all variables. It is not uncommon to see confusion between variables and the characteristics or categories contained in them. Gender is a variable that has two categories male and female. Income is a variable that has different categories of poor, poorer, middle class and rich. The researcher has to clearly understand the difference between variable and category.

The variable selected for analysis is called explanatory variable and all other variables are called extraneous variables. Extraneous variables which are not part of the explanatory variables are classified into controlled and uncontrolled. Controlled variables, usually called control variables, are kept constant or unchanged during the study. This is done to limit the focus of the

research. For example, in age, all men and women below the age of 18 years may be excluded from the study. This means that the hypothesis does not pertain to any particular sub-group. Thus variables may be of different levels of description or belong to different categories (e.g., positive or negative), so that the category it falls into may differ from the others.

Types of variables;

Variables are classified into different groups-

- (i) Dependent and independent
- (ii) Experimental and measured
- (iii) Discrete and continuous,
- (iv) Qualitative and quantitative
- (v) Categorical and numerical.

Dependent and independent variables;

An independent variable is a possible cause of the dependent variable- a possible effect. When we say that 'A' causes 'B', it means that A is the independent variable and B is the dependent variable. Thus the independent variable is one that causes a change in the dependent variable. The dependent variable (also called the 'Y' variable in statistics) is one that changes in relation to a change in the other variable(s). The independent variable (also called the 'X' variable in statistics) is one whose change changes the outcome of the other variables. In a controlled experiment the independent variable is the experimental variable, i.e. the one that is excluded from the control group. In experiments, the independent variable is the variable which is manipulated by the experimenter. For example, a teacher wants to know which teaching method is more effective in making students understand- lecture method, question-answer method, visual method or a combination of two or more of these methods. Here, the teaching method is the independent variable which is manipulated by the teacher. 'Effect on students' understanding' is the dependent variable. The dependent variable is the condition which we are trying to explain. In this experiment, other independent variables apart from teaching method may be 'type of personality' (of students), social class (of students), type of motivation (reward and punishment), classroom environment, attitude towards teacher etc. Similarly, in the study of juvenile delinquency (dependent variable), the independent variables (i.e. causes of juvenile delinquency) may be poverty, type of committee, nature of family control etc.

It may be noted that the variable which is dependent in one study may be the independent variable in another. Take the case of the relationship between income of a farmer and availability of water to him. If we consider income as the dependent variable and availability of water (for irrigation) as the independent variable, then the relationship between the two variables can be expressed as "the more water is available, the higher the income and the lesser the water is available, the lower the income". But if we want to show the relationship between income (independent variable) and quality of life (dependent variable), we can say "the higher the income, the higher the quality of life" (or standard of living). In the first study, income is the outcome and in the second it is the cause.

Intervening variable is that which comes between independent and dependent variables. Suppose we hypothesize relationship between poverty of farmers and size of land. We say, 'smaller the size of land, more will be the poverty of the farmer and vice versa, larger the size of land, more will be the richer farmer'. But it is possible that a person has large size of land but he does not use good seeds, good fertilizers and tractor etc. This will reduce his income and increase poverty i.e. it will change our perceived relationship. In other words, technology, seeds, fertilizers affect the agricultural production of the farmer and his income. Create concepts and we can intervene between incomes. All these variables (technology, seeds, and fertilizers) will be intermediate variables.

Experimental and measured variables;

Experimental variables describe the detailed manipulation of the investigator while measured variables describe the measurement. For example, rural development (measured variable can be measured in terms of increase in income, level of literacy, availability of infrastructure, availability of health facilities, social security etc. In another study on 'factors affecting student achievement' (high or low marks) we can examine availability/non-availability of books, library, good teachers, use of visual aids etc. All these are experimental variables or manipulations for the researcher. It is important to distinguish between these two types of variables while planning and carrying out research.

Forgiveness of variables; Variables can be measured at four levels: ordinal, interval and ratio.

Ordinal level measurement is the simplest type of measurement. It involves classification of events into categories which should be clear, one-dimensional and mutually exclusive. For example, classification of respondents into categories such as male-female, married-unmarried,

young-old, Hindu-Muslim, rural-urban, uneducated and educated is based on ordinal measurement. Ordinal measurement has the following characteristics: (i) It is essentially qualitative, (ii) It cannot be placed on a low or high continuum, (iii) It is based on the principle of equivalence.

In ordinal measurement, not only categorization takes place but also the variables are placed in a continuous order, e.g., first, second and third class students, lower, middle and upper class, lower, middle and upper castes, etc. Other examples of continuum forms in ordinal measurement (apart from income, class, caste) are: status (low, middle, high), size (small, medium, large), quality (bad, good, best), occupation (high and low status occupations).

Interval level provides information about the distance between the values and has equal intervals like every 5th, 10th, 15th student... This is definitely a quantitative measure. Another example is three students have IQs of 100, 110 and 125 respectively. In nominal terms this means that the IQs of the students vary in ordinal terms, the first student has a low IQ, the second student has a high IQ, and the third student has a high IQ, the fourth

The second student has the highest IQ and the third has the highest IQ. In simple terms, the second student's IQ is only 10 points higher and the third student's IQ is 15 points higher than the second student.

The ratio level measures ratios and proportions, i.e. relates the value of one to another. For example, a person weighs 30 kg and another weighs 70 kg. It means that the second person is times heavier than the first person.

Variables are not measured at a particular level. It will depend on the type of indicators being used during measurement. For example age can be measured at ordinal level (young, middle aged and old), at subgroup level (youngest, oldest person), at class level (15 year old student in a class) and at ratio level (a 40 year old person is twice as old as a 20 year old person).

Active and Assigned Variables;

Manipulated or experimental variables will be called active variables while measured variables will be called specified variables. In other words, anything that can be manipulated is an active variable and a variable that cannot be manipulated is a specified variable.

Qualitative and Quantitative Variables;

A quantitative variable is one whose values or categories are numbers and the difference between its categories can be expressed in numbers. Thus, income, size, etc. are quantitative

variables. A qualitative variable is one that has discrete categories instead of numerical units. This variable has two or more categories which are different from each other. Class (low, middle, high), caste (low, middle and upper), sex (male, female), religion (Hindu, non-Hindu) are all qualitative variables.

The relationship between quantitative variables can be either positive or negative (Singleton & Straits, 1999, 3rd Ed. 76). A positive relationship exists if as the value of one variable increases the value of the other increases or as the value of one variable decreases the value of the other decreases. In other words the two variables change continuously in the same direction e.g. if the father is tall the son will also be tall. A negative relationship between variables exists if the value of one variable decreases as the value of the other increases e.g. as age increases the life span decreases.

Becker (Therese Becker, Doing Social Research, McRae Hill Book Company, New York, 1988, 125-126) used the terms categorical and numerical for qualitative and quantitative variables respectively. Concepts, constructs, and variables

We have used the term 'variable'. Categorical variables (such as occupation, religion, caste, sex, education, income) are made up of groups of categories (or attributes) to which two rules apply: one, the categories should be completely distinct from each other, i.e. they should not be included in one another, and second, the categories should be all-inclusive, i.e. they should include all the changes in the variable. In terms of education, after placing oneself in the category of educated (the other category being illiterate), one can place oneself in the sub-categories of undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate.

Numerical variables are broken down into units in which the numbers used have mathematical meaning. Numbers may be either discrete (1, 2, 3, etc.) that cannot be broken down into smaller parts (e.g., number of children) or continuous.

What is the relationship between qualitative and quantitative variables? What happens when both qualitative and quantitative variables are involved? In such cases, usually the independent variable is qualitative (e.g. income) and the dependent variable is quantitative (e.g. crime). The relationship between the two can be described if different categories of the independent variable (low, middle, high income groups) predict different values for the dependent variable (crime). Thus if each category of the independent variable is considered as a separate group, then the relationship can be described as the difference between groups of the

dependent variable (e.g. people in the low income group commit more crimes than people in the middle and high income groups). Here crime rate is the quantitative variable. The annual average rate of crimes can be calculated separately for the three income groups. This can show the relationship between income and crime.

Variables may be dichotomous or continuous. While gender is a dichotomous variable, intelligence is a continuous variable. Usually only a few variables are truly dichotomous. Most variables are capable of taking continuous values. However, it is useful to remember that it is often necessary or convenient to convert continuous variables into dichotomous or tripartite variables.

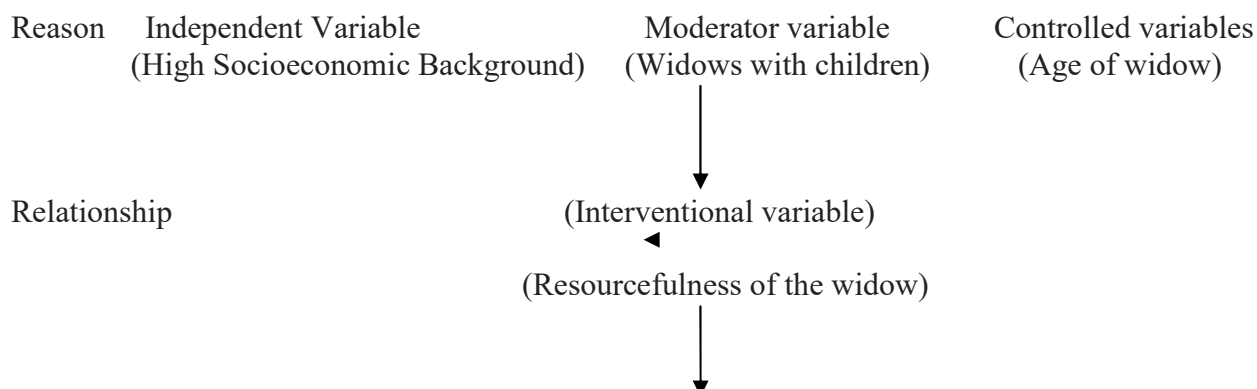
The Moderator Variable;

It is a secondary independent variable which is selected to determine whether it affects the relationship between the primary and dependent variables. In the relationship between X (independent variable) and Y (dependent variable), if Y is changed due to a third factor Z, then Z is a moderating variable. Suppose we take a hypothesis 'Attitudes of widows towards remarriage are related to their socio-economic background.' Here, attitudes of widows are the dependent variable and their socio-economic background is the independent variable (primary). It is possible that attitudes of widows towards remarriage are related to their socio-economic background. Concepts Constructs and Variables.

Widows with children may also influence their perceptions towards remarriage. Hence, the third factor "widows with children" (secondary independent variable) may also influence their perceptions.

The Combined Variables;

The relationship between the five types of variables can be illustrated using the above example of 'the perception of widows towards remarriage' using a diagram:



Effect

Dependent variable
(Widow's perception of marriage)

6.5 HYPOTHESES

After operationalising the variables, the researcher wants a clear framework and guidance for collecting and interpreting the data. His interest is in determining the relationship between the variables. Hypotheses provide such guidance. While in qualitative research the hypotheses arise from the research itself, in quantitative research the hypotheses work to take the research forward.

What is Hypotheses?

A hypothesis is a prediction about the relationship between variables. It is a tentative explanation of the research problem, or a conjecture about the results of the research. Before starting the research, the researcher has relatively unorganized, vague and simple ideas about the problem. It may take a long time for the researcher to state what questions he is trying to answer. Therefore, it is very important to make a suitable statement about the research problem. What is a good statement of the problem? It is an interrogative statement asking what the relationship between two or more variables is. It then goes on to ask whether A is related to B or not? How are A and B related to C? Is A related to B in situations X and Y? Proposing a statement about the relationship between A and B is called a hypothesis.

According to Theodorson (1969:191), a hypothesis is an empirical statement claiming a relationship between some facts. Carlinger (1973:8) has explained it thus, "A hypothesis is a speculative statement that describes the relationship between two or more variables". Black and Champion (1976:126) have described it thus, "An empirical statement about something whose validity is generally unknown". This statement is to be tested by self-experience and then either it is considered to be proven or it is to be rejected. If the statement is not sufficiently established then it is not considered to be a scientific law.

Webster (1968) defined a hypothesis as a means of drawing a conclusion and proving its logical or Experimental conjecture is defined as the process of testing self-experienced results. Here testing means either proving it wrong or confirming it. Since

A hypothesis involves the empirical investigation of the statements. Hence, all statements that are merely hypothetical (e.g., diseases increase with age), value judgments (e.g., contemporary politicians are corrupt and serve vested interests), or normative (e.g., all people should wake up in the morning) are excluded from the definition of a hypothesis. A normative statement is a statement that tells what should happen, not a factual statement that can be shown to be true or false through investigation.

In other words, a hypothesis explicitly states the alleged relationship to be tested, i.e., it contains variables that can be measured and states how they are related. A statement that does not contain variables or does not state how the variables are related is not a hypothesis in the scientific sense.

Some examples of hypotheses are as follows-

- Studying in groups leads to higher division achievements.
- Hostel dwellers consume alcohol more frequently than non-hostel dwellers.
- Young women (aged 16-30) are more likely to be victims of crimes against women than middle-aged women (aged 30-40).
- Lower class men commit more crimes than middle class men.
- Students with high status and high ability participate less in student movements than students with low status or low ability.
- Suicide rate decreases as social unity increases and increases as social unity decreases.
- Young people are more satisfied with the social development efforts made by democratic leadership than the efforts made by autocratic leadership.
- Educated women face more problems of adjustment after marriage than uneducated women.
- Economic instability hinders the growth of any establishment.
- As the number of work events increases, the satisfaction derived from job decreases.
- Aggression arises due to frustration.
- Children from divided families become more criminals.
- Upper class people have fewer children than lower class people.

Criteria for Hypotheses Construction

A hypothesis is never formulated in the form of a question. Kennedy Bailey (1982), Baker (1989), Selits etc. (1970) and Sartakos (1998:134) have asked to keep in mind several criteria in formulating a hypothesis.

1. The hypothesis must be testable by experience, whether it is true or false.
2. It must be clear and precise.
3. The statements of the hypothesis should not be contradictory.
4. The variables between which the relationship is to be established should be specifically mentioned.
5. Only one problem should be mentioned in it.

The hypothesis should be either descriptive or relational in nature. Descriptive form describes events and relational form establishes the relationship between variables. The hypothesis can be directional, non-directional or null in nature.

Nature of Hypotheses

A scientific and rational hypothesis should have the following criteria:

It should accurately reflect meaningful sociological facts.

This should not be contrary to accepted meaningful descriptions in other fields of study in science.

It should take into consideration the experiences of other researchers.

Hypotheses cannot be said to be true or false. They can be in accordance or contrary to the title of the research. For example, the causes of poverty in a village can be explored in this sense.

- (i) Low development of agriculture (lack of irrigation, sandy soil, uncertain rainfall and use of traditional means of agriculture) is the cause of poverty.
- (ii) Lack of basic infrastructure (electricity, markets, and roads) is the cause of poverty.
- (iii) Scarcity of resources (water, soil, and minerals), lack of supports (rainfall, irrigation, livestock) and disruption of social systems (credit, infrastructure wastefulness and markets) impede rural development.

The important hypotheses may be as follows-

1. Rural credit availability is relatively linked to access to credit.
2. Rural poverty is caused by the lack of basic infrastructure facilities.
3. Poverty is linked to wasteful social expenditure.
4. Rural poverty is inversely related to resource scarcity (water, soil, minerals).

Sarantakos (1998:135) has stated some hypotheses regarding the effect of education on religion: (i) Highly educated people are less religious, (ii) Education is inversely related to

religiosity, (iii) Education is positively correlated with religiosity, (iv) There is no relationship between education and religiosity.

Types of Hypothesis

Here are some common types of hypotheses:

- Simple Hypothesis
- Complex Hypothesis
- Directional Hypothesis
- Non-directional Hypothesis
- Null Hypothesis (H_0)
- Alternative Hypothesis (H_1 or H_a)
- Statistical Hypothesis
- Research Hypothesis
- Associative Hypothesis
- Causal Hypothesis

Simple Hypothesis; Simple Hypothesis guesses a connection between two things. It says that there is a connection or difference between variables, but it doesn't tell us which way the relationship goes.

Example: (i) Studying more can help you do better on tests.

(ii) Getting more sun makes people have higher amounts of vitamin D.

Complex Hypothesis; Complex Hypothesis tells us what will happen when more than two things are connected. It looks at how different things interact and may be linked together.

Example: (i) How rich you are how easy it is to get education and healthcare greatly affects the number of years people live.

(ii) A new medicine's success relies on the amount used, how old a person is who takes it and their genes.

Directional Hypothesis; Directional Hypothesis says how one thing is related to another. For example, it guesses that one thing will help or hurt another thing.

Example: (i) Drinking more sweet drinks is linked to a higher body weight score.

(ii) Too much stress makes people less productive at work.

Non-Directional Hypothesis; Non-Directional Hypothesis are the one that don't say how the relationship between things will be. They just say that there is a connection, without telling which way it goes.

Example: (i) Drinking caffeine can affect how well you sleep.

(ii) People often like different kinds of music based on their gender.

Null Hypothesis (H₀); Null hypothesis is a statement that says there's no connection or difference between different things. It implies that any seen impacts are because of luck or random changes in the information.

Example:

(i) The average test scores of Group A and Group B are not much different.

(ii) There is no connection between using a certain fertilizer and how much it helps crops grow.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁ or H_a); Alternative Hypothesis is different from the null hypothesis and shows that there's a big connection or gap between variables. Scientists want to say no to the null hypothesis and choose the alternative one.

Example: (i) Patients on Diet A have much different cholesterol levels than those following Diet B.

(ii) Exposure to a certain type of light can change how plants grow compared to normal sunlight.

Statistical Hypothesis; Statistical Hypothesis is used in math testing and includes making ideas about what groups or bits of them look like. You aim to get information or test certain things using these top-level, common words only.

Example:

(i) The average smarts score of kids in a certain school area is 100.

(ii) The usual time it takes to finish a job using Method A is the same as with Method B.

Research Hypothesis; Research Hypothesis comes from the research question and tells what link is expected between things or factors. It leads the study and chooses where to look more closely.

Example: (i) Having more kids go to early learning classes helps them do better in school when they get older.

- (ii) Using specific ways of talking affects how much customers get involved in marketing activities.

Associative Hypothesis; Associative Hypothesis guesses that there is a link or connection between things without really saying it caused them. It means that when one thing changes, it is connected to another thing changing.

Example:

- (i) Regular exercise helps to lower the chances of heart disease.
- (ii) Going to school more can help people make more money.

Causal Hypothesis; Causal Hypothesis is different from other ideas because they say that one thing causes another. This means there's a cause and effect relationship between variables involved in the situation. They say that when one thing changes, it directly makes another thing change.

- Example: (i) Playing violent video games makes teens more likely to act aggressively.
(ii) Less clean air directly impacts breathing health in city populations.

Importance of Hypotheses; Sarantakos (1998:137) points out the following three functions of hypotheses:

1. To provide guidance to researchers by specifying structure and functionality.
2. To provide tentative answers to the research questions.
3. To facilitate statistical analysis of variables in the context of hypothesis testing.

The importance of hypotheses can also be explained in the following way-

- 1 Hypotheses are important as tools in scientific investigation/research because they are either derived from theories or theories are derived from them. The relationships expressed in the hypotheses tell the researcher how to conduct the investigation, what kind of data is required to be collected and how the data is to be analyzed. Suppose we take three hypotheses: H_1 , H_2 and H_3 , we say that if H_2 is true then H_2 must also be true and H_3 is not true, then we test H_2 and H_3 . If H_2 is found to be true and H_3 is false then H_1 will be confirmed.
- 2 (In hypothesis) facts get a chance to prove or disprove the truth. Scientific solution of the problem cannot be found until it is converted into the form of a hypothesis because the problem is in the form of a question extended to it and is not directly testable. The question is not tested but the relationship between two variables is tested.

- 3 Hypotheses are tools for the development of knowledge because they go beyond man's values and ideas.
- 4 Hypotheses help social scientists to propose a theory that predicts events. Although most research moves from theories to hypotheses, the opposite also happens sometimes.
- 5 Hypotheses also perform the function of description. A hypothesis tells us about the phenomenon to which it relates. The collection of information as a result of hypothesis testing reduces the amount of ignorance we have about why a social phenomenon occurs in a given manner.

In short, the main functions of hypotheses are- (i) to test theories (ii) to suggest theories and (iii) to describe social phenomena. Its secondary functions are: (a) to help in the formulation of social policies such as for rural communities, for penal institutions, for slums in urban communities, for educational institutions, for solving various types of social problems (b) to help in removing some common concepts (such as men are more intelligent than women), (c) to provide new knowledge to point out the need for changes in the system and structures.

Testing of Hypothesis

To test a hypothesis, we have to define the concepts used in the hypothesis in a measurable way. For example, "talented people often have unhappy married lives" is not a testable hypothesis unless it is defined at the empirical level, i.e., in terms of intelligence quotient (IQ) and characteristics/indicators of happy/unhappy married life. If we define "the higher a person's IQ, the more marital troubles he or she will have in his or her family", we can test the hypothesis by measuring IQ and troubles. Not surprisingly, scholars favour quantitative measurement of variables in a hypothesis because quantification reduces ambiguity.

When the concepts in the hypothesis are abstract and difficult to measure, how can one ensure that the measurement of the concept is error-free? Kenneth Bailey (1982:53) has drawn attention to the classical approach to hypothesis formulation and testing.

Classical Approach

There are three stages in this approach, first is the conceptual stage, second is the empirical stage and third is the stage of collection and analysis of data. In other words, the first stage is to write the propositions by defining the concepts and variables and stating the relationship between them. The second stage involves writing the testable hypothesis which links the empirical measures of the two concepts; the third stage is to test the hypothesis on the basis

of the collected data and its analysis. Thus the hypothesis that "talented people lead unhappy married lives" is the first stage of the conceptual level. In the second stage it is expressed in terms of empirical measures i.e. the higher the IQ of a person, the greater is the possibility of family conflict. In the third stage, the hypothesis can be confirmed by measuring IQ and giving marks to different IQ levels (say, less than 80, 81 to 90, 91 to 100, 101 to 110, 111 to 120, 121 to 130, and more than 130) and counting the number of quarrels in a year (say, less than 4 quarrels, 4 to 6 quarrels, 7 to 9 quarrels, 10 to 12 quarrels, and more than 12 quarrels) and giving marks to the quarrels.

Here happiness is measured on the basis of a single variable, i.e. marital quarrels. But several variables can also be taken and each can be given marks. For example, conformity to the expected role, number of conflicts, finding time to spend with partner, taking interest in friendships and various organizations and children's education, etc., occasionally visiting friends and meeting relatives with wife, etc. By giving two points to each indicator of marital happiness, we can estimate the total score obtained by the respondent and We can measure his level of mental happiness. By relating these scores to the scores obtained from the IQ test, we can determine whether the hypothesized relationship (the higher the IQ, the less happiness) exists or not. There may be no relationship between the two or if the relationship is positive, it may be stronger or weaker. Here the researcher also has to show that high IQ itself does not give rise to marital conflicts, rather high IQ makes a person more committed to work roles. Due to which he neglects his role at home, which affects his relationship with his wife and children and also creates marital conflicts.

There are several reasons why a hypothesis may fail: one, the stated hypothesis may be wrong, two, the proposition may be true in the first stage but false in the second stage, third, there may be error in measurement, fourth, the sample on which the hypothesis was tested may be inadequate, fifth, the respondents selected may be the wrong people. The hypothesis which is to be revised (if necessary) on the basis of the findings may be called the working hypothesis.

Hypothetico-Deductive Method

Singleton and Straits (1999:53-58) have described the hypothetical-deductive method for testing a hypothesis. It involves three stages, first, formulating a hypothesis, second, deriving consequences from the hypothesis and third, drawing conclusions about the hypothesis on the basis of one's observations. We can take the example of Durkheim's work on suicide where he

says: "The greater the social solidarity, the lower the rate of suicide". He analyzed social solidarity between married and divorced persons, childless and childless persons, persons living in the city and in the country, etc. Durkheim tested the hypothesis using the hypothetical-deductive method as follows:

first step; Proposition of Hypothesis If social solidarity in one group is more than in another group then its suicide rate will be lower (Hypothesis)

Second step; (Drawing conclusions from the hypothesis) Social integration is higher among married people than among widowers or divorced people.

Third step; (Drawing conclusions based on observations) the rate of suicide is lower among married people than among widowers or searchers. (Observed fact).

Thus these interpretations of facts show that our hypothesis is valid which does not necessarily mean that it is true.

Let us take another example of hypothesis testing in a research conducted on widows. Suppose a woman becomes a widow at a young age (say, at the age of 22-23 years, within one year of marriage). She faces two problems, one of grief and the other of exploitation by her in-laws. How should she adjust to this new situation? Her adjustment will depend on (1) the behavior of the social structure in which she lives and works, i.e., the help and the obstacles she faces in renewing, filling in the gaps, restoring, and reviving her life, (2) her social background (age, education, value orientation, occupation, etc.), (3) dependence on traditional support systems (i.e., in-laws, parents, office colleagues, neighbors, relatives, peers, etc.), (4) gender specific support systems, i.e., the support she gets from her elder brother-in-law, father-in-law, brother, father, male relatives, etc., in support services, such as, in shopping, commuting, during illness, house repairs, legal proceedings, etc., (5) her own self-confidence and self-esteem (modest, timid, courageous, fearless, extrovert, etc.), (6) her replacement attachments, i.e., the focus she places on work, social work, music, art, religious activities, etc.

On this basis, the four factors that hinder a widow's adjustment are (1) low self-esteem, that is, a feeling of helplessness, shyness, (2) lack of new investments, (3) economic dependency, and (4) lack of emotional support.

Now we present a hypothesis on the process of adjustment of a widowed woman: "The more psycho-socio-economic obstacles there are, the less will be the adjustment of widows." Another hypothesis can also be: "The effect of protecting women from grief, sorrow and

exploitation due to death grief is directly related to the development of substitute attachment" i.e. the more substitute attachment she has, the less will be her exploitation and sorrow due to grief of death grief." These hypotheses can be seen as inductive conclusions in an experimental sense. The validity of these hypotheses can be tested by drawing results from the hypotheses. This method will be the hypothetical deductive method.

The logic behind verifying a hypothesis by inferential deduction is that (a) if the hypothesis is true, then the predicted facts are also true. (b) Since the predicted facts are true, therefore the hypothesis is also true.

In the above example the hypothesis is that "the greater the substitute attachment, the less will be the exploitation and grief of death or the greater will be the adjustment of the widow." The outcome is "Adjustment will be higher among widows who have the resources support of education, attachment (economic, emotional and social) and modern values." The observed fact would be - "The widows who have resources will be more adjusted than those who do not have resources."

6.6 SUMMARY

The conceptual framework is a foundational structure that guides research by mapping out the theories, ideas, and variables that inform the study. It helps the researcher understand what they are studying, why, and how the components are interconnected. Much like a travel plan, it organizes previous knowledge, insights, and 'best practices' to ensure a well-directed research journey. Theories are built on logic, empirical verification, and internal consistency. They serve to understand and predict behavior, as shown in examples like the aggression-frustration theory. A robust theory must be testable, explanatory, predictive, and capable of evolving with new evidence. Ultimately, a theory is more than speculation—it is a structured, evidence-supported framework for understanding complex realities. A variable is a characteristic that can take on different values across individuals, groups, or situations, such as age, income, or education. Variables can be independent (cause), dependent (effect), intervening, moderator, or control. They are classified into types like qualitative vs. quantitative, categorical vs. numerical, and discrete vs. continuous. Variables can be measured or manipulated, and measured at different levels: ordinal, interval, and ratio. Understanding the type and role of each variable is crucial in research to establish clear relationships and valid conclusions. A hypothesis is a testable statement predicting a relationship between variables. It helps structure research, guides

data collection and analysis, and supports or challenges theories. Hypotheses can be simple or complex, directional or non-directional, null or alternative, associative or causal. They must be clear, measurable, and based on observable facts. Hypothesis testing involves defining concepts, collecting data, and analyzing results, often using the classical or Hypothetico-deductive method.

6.7 GLOSSARY

- **Conceptual Framework** – A structured plan that connects theories, variables, and hypotheses to guide research design and analysis.
- **Theory** – A systematic explanation of relationships between variables, used to understand and predict phenomena.
- **Variable** – A characteristic or property that can vary across individuals or groups, such as age, income, or education.
- **Independent Variable** – The presumed cause in a study, which influences or determines the dependent variable.
- **Dependent Variable** – The outcome or effect being studied, which is influenced by the independent variable.
- **Hypothesis** – A testable statement predicting a relationship between two or more variables.
- **Null Hypothesis (H_0)** – A hypothesis stating there is no relationship or difference between variables being tested.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H_1 or H_a)** – The hypothesis that contradicts the null and suggests a significant relationship between variables.
- **Moderator Variable** – A variable that influences the strength or direction of the relationship between an independent and dependent variable.
- **Hypothetico-Deductive Method** – A scientific method involving hypothesis formulation, prediction, and empirical testing to validate or refute the hypothesis.

6.8 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Question 1: What is the main purpose of conceptual framework?

- A. To collect data only
- B. To guide research and organize theories, ideas and variables
- C. To draw conclusions only

D. To conduct interviews

Answer: B.

Question 2: Which of the following properties should a robust theory have?

A. To be predictive

B. To be based on ideas only

C. To be untestable

D. To be explanatory only

Answer: A.

Question 3: Which of the following is not a variable?

A. Age

B. Education

C. Book

D. Income

Answer: C.

Question 4: What is the main function of a hypothesis?

A. Conducting interviews

B. Misleading the data

C. Predicting the relationship between variables

D. Hiding the conclusion

Answer: C.

Question 5: Which variable is seen as an influence in research?

A. Independent Variable

B. Inactive Variable

C. Dependent Variable

D. Control Variable

Answer: C.

Question 6: What is a hypothesis?

A. A proven scientific law

B. A normative statement

C. A prediction or tentative explanation about the relationship between variables

D. A universally accepted fact

Answer: C

Question7. Which of the following is NOT a characteristic of a good hypothesis?

- A. It must be testable
- B. It should contain value judgments
- C. It should clearly state the variables involved
- D. It should not be contradictory

Answer: B

Question8. What type of hypothesis suggests a specific direction of the relationship between variables?

- A. Null Hypothesis
- B. Non-directional Hypothesis
- C. Directional Hypothesis
- D. Statistical Hypothesis

Answer: C

Question9. "There is no relationship between education level and religiosity" is an example of which type of hypothesis?

- A. Research Hypothesis
- B. Complex Hypothesis
- C. Alternative Hypothesis
- D. Null Hypothesis

Answer: D

Question10. According to the classical approach, what is the first step in hypothesis testing?

- A. Data analysis
- B. Defining variables in measurable terms
- C. Formulating propositions by defining concepts and variables
- D. Collecting sample data

Answer: C

Question11. What does a causal hypothesis claim?

- A. There is no relationship between variables
- B. One variable is related to another without causation
- C. One variable causes a change in another

D. Variables are unrelated due to external factors

Answer: C

Question12. Which type of hypothesis would this example fall under: “People who exercise regularly have lower chances of heart disease”?

A. Causal Hypothesis

B. Associative Hypothesis

C. Null Hypothesis

D. Complex Hypothesis

Answer: B

Question13. Which of the following is an example of a complex hypothesis?

A. Studying leads to better test scores

B. Exposure to sunlight increases vitamin D

C. Economic status, education, and healthcare access affect life expectancy

D. Exercise reduces cholesterol

Answer: C

Question14. What is the main function of a hypothesis in research?

A. To describe government policies

B. To propose untestable questions

C. To provide a framework for testing relationships between variables

D. To offer opinions of the researcher

Answer: C

Question15. Why is quantification important in hypothesis testing?

A. It eliminates the need for hypotheses

B. It makes abstract concepts easier to ignore

C. It reduces ambiguity and allows precise measurement

D. It prevents errors in data collection

Answer: C

Question16. Which of the following is a correct example of a categorical (qualitative) variable?

A. Height in centimeters

B. Weight in kilograms

C. Monthly income

D. Religion

Answer: D.

Question 17. In a study where a researcher investigates the effect of teaching methods on student performance, which is the dependent variable?

- A. Teaching methods
- B. Student performance
- C. Type of school
- D. Gender of students

Answer: B.

Question 18. A researcher wants to study how income level affects crime rate. Here, crime rate is:

- A. A qualitative variable
- B. An independent variable
- C. A dependent variable
- D. A moderator variable

Answer: C. A

Question 19. Which type of variable can be manipulated in an experimental study?

- A. Measured variable
- B. Active variable
- C. Dependent variable
- D. Control variable

Answer: B.

Question 20. What is an intervening variable?

- A. A variable that modifies the relationship between the independent and dependent variables
- B. A variable manipulated by the researcher
- C. A variable that is measured but not manipulated
- D. A variable that explains the relationship between independent and dependent variables

Answer: D.

6.9 REFERENCES

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6.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

Short Questions

1. What is the main objective of a theory? Mention the characteristics of a good theory.
2. What is a variable? Give an example of dependent and independent variable.
3. What type of variable is gender: qualitative or quantitative? Explain in detail
4. What are control variables and why are they important in research?
5. What is a hypothesis and what does it explain about the relationship between?
6. Explain the main features of a good hypothesis.
7. What is the meaning of null hypothesis? Explain with an example.
8. Mention the steps taken to test a hypothesis.
9. What is hypothesis? Explain its types with examples.

Long Questions

- 1 Explain the importance of a conceptual framework in guiding the research process.
- 2 Discuss the key characteristics of a good theory with suitable examples.
- 3 Define and differentiate between independent, dependent, and intervening variables.
- 4 What are moderator and control variables? How do they affect research outcomes?
- 5 Describe the process of formulating a research hypothesis. Why is it essential in quantitative research?
- 6 Compare and contrast the different types of hypotheses with relevant examples.
- 7 Explain the steps involved in the Hypothetico-Deductive Method of hypothesis testing.
- 8 How are variables measured at different levels such as ordinal, interval, and ratio? Give examples.
- 9 Differentiate between qualitative and quantitative variables with illustrations.
- 10 Analyze the role of hypotheses in validating or challenging theoretical assumptions in social research.

UNIT-7: SAMPLING TECHNIQUES- PROBABILITY SAMPLING METHODS: SIMPLE RANDOM SAMPLING, STRATIFIED SAMPLING, CLUSTER SAMPLING- NON-PROBABILITY SAMPLING METHODS: CONVENIENCE SAMPLING, PURPOSIVE SAMPLING, SNOWBALL SAMPLING, SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION AND POWER ANALYSIS

7.1 OBJECTIVES

7.2 INTRODUCTION

7.3 MAJOR TYPES OF SAMPLING

7.4 SUMMARY

7.5 GLOSSARY

7.6 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

7.7 REFERENCES

7.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

7.1 OBJECTIVES

After carefully studying this unit, you will be able to meet the following objectives.

- Understand the concepts of population and sample in research.
- Differentiate between probability and non-probability sampling methods.
- Explain various types of probability sampling: simple random, stratified, and cluster sampling.
- Describe non-probability sampling techniques: convenience, purposive, and snowball sampling.
- Learn the principles of sample size determination and the basics of power analysis.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

While conducting a survey in any research work, a question is usually asked: should all people (entire population) be studied or only a limited number of persons drawn from the total population are studied and then extend our findings about the sample to the entire population? Here 'population' refers to "all those people with the characteristics which the researcher wants to study within the context of a particular research problem". Such as a population could be all students in the college, all households in the village, all workers in the factory, all victims of a natural disaster in a particular area, all patients in the hospital and so on. When the population is relatively large and is physically not accessible, researchers survey only a sample. In other words "Sampling" the representative unit selected for any group is called sample.

According to Manheim (1977:270), "a sample is a part of the population which is studied in order to make inferences about the whole population".

Kidder (1981), a representative sampling plan ensures that the selected sample is sufficiently representative of the population to justify our running the risk of taking it as representative.

Neiswanger, in the sampling technique, instead of every unit of the universe, only a part of the universe is studied and the conclusions are drawn on that basis for the entire universe. So the process of selecting a small representative sample from a larger population is called sampling. Its purpose is to draw inferences or conclusions about the whole population. The choice of sampling technique depends on the type of results the researcher wants to obtain and which method would be appropriate for analyzing the data. The choice of sampling technique depends on the research objective, time, resources and availability.

Objective of sampling:

The primary objective of the sample survey is to obtain accurate and reliable information about the universe with minimum of cost, time and energy and to set out the limits of accuracy of such estimates.

Assumptions of sampling:

Selection of a sample as representative of the whole universe is based upon following assumptions:

1. Homogeneity amidst Complexity- social phenomena is very complex in nature and every unit appears to be different from another .but at the same time they also possess similarities in many respects.

2. Possibility of Representative Selection- “sampling has its origin in the mathematical theory of probability and law of statistical regularity. The law of statistical regularity lays down that a group o objects chosen at random from a large group tend to possess the characteristics of that large group.

3. Absolute Accuracy not Essential- the absolute accuracy is not essential in the case of large scale observation and the results of sufficiently accurate to draw valid generalizations with a given standard of accuracy. Thus it is not the absolute accuracy but relative or significant accuracy that is needed in case of large scale observations. In fact in any statistical enquiry perfect accuracy in final results is practically impossible to achieve because of the errors in measurement, collection of data, its analysis and interpretation of the results.

7.3 MAJOR TYPES OF SAMPLING

Sampling methods fall into two broad categories:

7.3.1. Probability sampling

7.3.2. Non-probability sampling

7.3.1. Probability sampling: Probability sampling is one in which every unit of the population has an equal probability to being selected for the sample. It offers a high degree of representativeness. However, this method is expensive, time- consuming and relatively complicated since it requires a large sample size and the units selected are usually widely scattered. In probability sampling, the units of the population are not selected at the discretion of

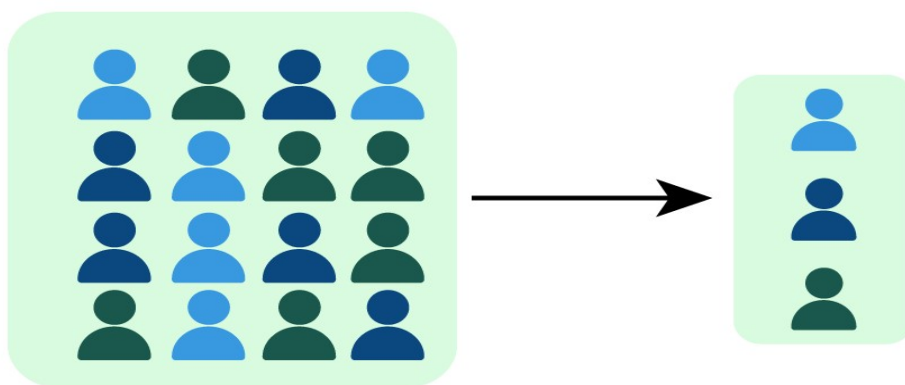
the researcher, but by means of certain procedures which ensure that every unit of a population has one fixed probability of being included in the sample.

According to Good (1966, p.217) Probability samples have the following characteristics:

1. Each unit in the sample has some known probability of entering the sample.
2. Weights appropriate to the probabilities are used in the analysis of the sample.
3. The process of sampling is automatic in one or more steps of selection of units in the sample.

SIMPLE RANDOM SAMPLING: A process that gives each element in the population an equal chance of being included in the sample is termed as simple random sampling. The elements are selected, using a list of random numbers appended with most textbooks of research and statistics. Before using the table of random numbers, it is first necessary to number all the elements in the population to be studied. then the tables is marked at some point and the case whose numbers come up as one from this point down the column of numbers are taken into the sample until the desired number of elements is obtained. The selection of any given element places no limits on other element being selected, thus making equally possible the selection of any one of the many possible combinations of elements. In this sampling, the sample units are selected by means of a number of methods like lottery method, pricking blind foldedly, tippets tables, computer, and personal identification number or by first letter.

Simple Random Sample



Source: Google map

The advantages of simple random sampling are

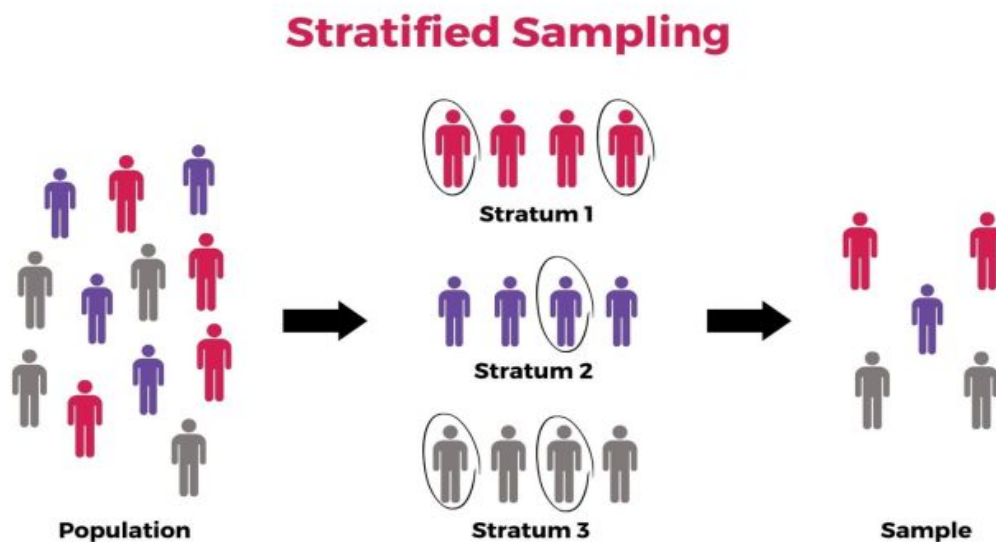
1. All elements have equal chance of being included.
2. It is the simplest of all sampling methods and easiest to conduct.

3. This method can be used in conjunction with other methods in probability sampling.
4. Researcher does not need to know the true composition of the population before hand, i.e., he requires minimum knowledge of population in advance.
5. Degree of sampling error is low.

The disadvantage of simple random sampling is

1. It does not make use of knowledge of population which researcher may have.
2. It produces greater errors in the results than do other sampling methods.
3. It cannot be used if the researcher wants to break respondents into sub-groups or strata for comparison purposes.

STRATIFIED SAMPLING: this is the form of sampling in which the population is divided into a number of strata or sub-groups and a sample is drawn from each stratum. These sub-samples make up the final sample of the study. It is defined as "the method involving dividing the population in homogeneous strata and then selecting simple random samples from each of the stratum". The division of the population into homogeneous strata is based on one or more criteria, e.g., sex, age, class, educational level, residential background, family type, religion, occupation and so on. Stratification does not involve raking.



Source: Google map

Advantages of stratified sampling:

Heterogeneous Populations: This sampling provides fair representation from each subgroup like age, income, or location, giving a more accurate overall picture.

Variability in Attributes: It ensures proportional representation, making conclusions applicable across different segments, if there are significant differences in certain traits within your population, like opinions or behaviors.

Limited Resources: It optimizes resources by focusing on specific subgroups, yielding reliable results without sampling every individual, when time, budget, or manpower is scarce.

Targeted Analysis: Stratification technique ensures they're well-represented, enabling meaningful comparisons and insights into their characteristics, for in-depth study of specific subgroups.

Increased Precision: It boosts precision, especially with high population variation, by ensuring each subgroup is adequately represented, reducing sampling error.

Compliance with Regulations: This method requires meeting regulatory standards, ensuring adequate representation of specific demographics for valid and ethical findings, in research contexts like surveys or clinical trials.

Disadvantages of stratified sampling:

1. It is a very difficult task to divide the universe into homogeneous strata.
2. If the strata are over-lapping, unsuitable or disproportionate the selection of samples may not be representative.
3. If stratification is faulty, the results obtained may be biased. Such errors cannot be compensated even by taking large samples.
4. Disproportionate stratification requires weighting which again introduces selective factor in the sample and under weighting makes the sample unrepresentative.

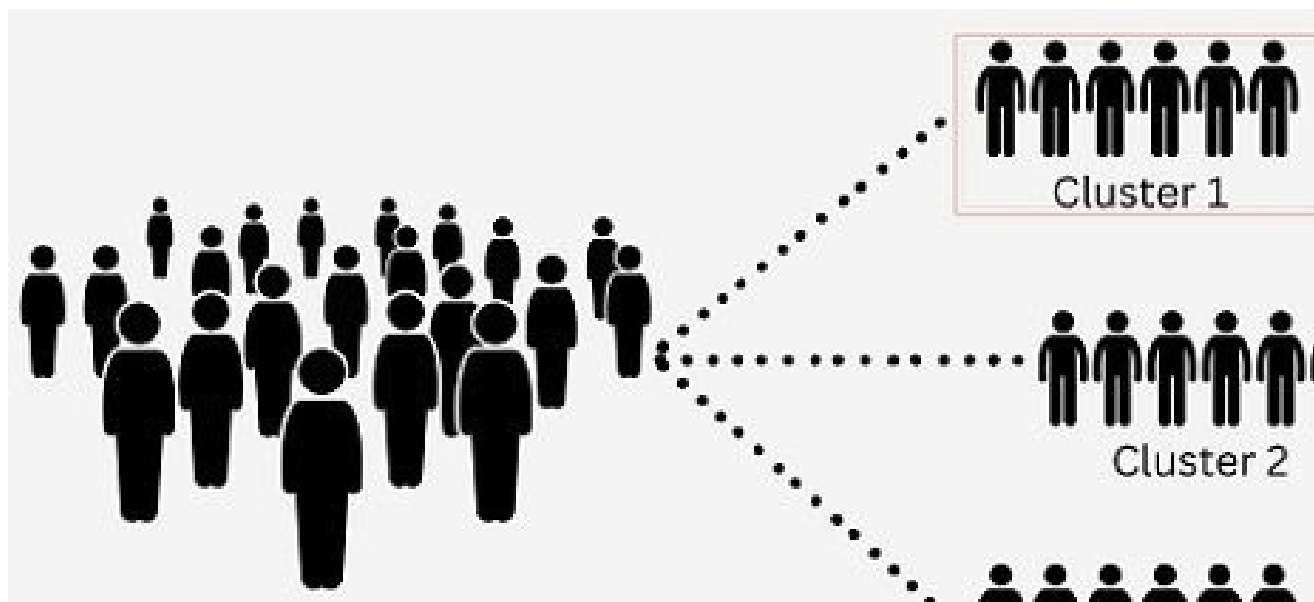
CLUSTER SAMPLING:

In case the area of study is markedly widespread, large expenses are involved if simple stratified random sampling is used. For example, in the preparation of sampling frame from the population and in covering the widespread areas by interviewers, a large amount of expenditure is required. The more widely spread the area of study, known as the greater are the travel expenses, the greater is the time spent in travelling, and hence expensive- and the tasks of administering, monitoring and supervision of the research project and in particular supervising

the field staff become more complicated. For e reasons mentioned above and few other reasons, large-scale research studies make use of the cluster sampling methods.

This sampling implies dividing population into clusters and drawing random sample either from all clusters or selected clusters. This method is used when (i) cluster criteria are significant for the study, and (ii) economic considerations are significant. Initial clusters are called primary sampling units; clusters within the primary clusters are called secondary sampling units; and clusters within the secondary clusters are called multi-stage clusters. When clusters are geographic units, it is called area sampling. For example, dividing one city into various wards, each ward into areas, each area into each neighborhoods and each neighborhood into lanes.

We can take a like example of a hospital. The issue is to ascertain the problems faced by doctors, patients and visitors in different units and to introduce some reformative programmes. Administratively, it will not be viable to call all doctors from all units nor a large number of patients admitted in different unit cardiology, neurology, orthopedic, gynecology, and so on. Treating each unit as a cluster, randomly selected doctors and patients - say two doctors and three patients or about 50 people all together- from all units may be invited for discussions. Arriving at a consensus for immediate reforms needed. a plan can be chalked out for seeking grant from the government.



Source: Google map

Advantages of cluster sampling:

1. It is much easier to apply this sample when large populations are studied or when large geographical area is studied.
2. Cost in this method is much less than in other methods of sampling.
3. Respondents can be readily substituted for other respondents.
4. Flexibility is possible.
5. It is administratively simple since no identification of individuals is necessary.

Disadvantages of cluster sampling:

1. Each cluster is not of equal size in selection of one district from one state, or one village from one block. The district or the village can be small, intermediate or large-sized.
2. Sampling error is greater.
3. Same individual can belong to two clusters and studied twice.
4. It lacks representation.
5. There could be homogeneity in one cluster but heterogeneity in other.

7.3.2. Non-probability sampling: Non-probability sampling makes no claim for representativeness, as every unit does not get the chance of being selected. Probability sampling remains the primary method for selecting large, representative samples for social science and business research.

In non-probability sampling, the units are selected at the discretion of the researcher. Such samples use human judgment in selecting units and have no theoretical basis for estimating population characteristics. If the researcher is to select sample of 200 school students, he may exercise his own judgment based on experience for including a given student in the sample. The sample so selected is called a judgment or purposive sample. Such a sample is arbitrarily selected because there is good evidence that it is a representative of the total population. The evidence is always based on his past experience.

The non-probability sampling methods are very convenient in the situations when the sample to be selected is very small and the researcher wants to get some idea of the population characteristic in a short time. Such samples are used in the situations where the researcher does not want a representative sample but to gain insight into the problem by selecting only informed persons who can provide him the maximum degree of insight into his problem with comprehensive information.

Advantages and Limitations of Non-Probability Sampling

The major advantages of using non-probability samples are the following:

1. They are quicker, cost effective and convenient than probability samples.
2. Non-probability samples do not require a sampling frame.
3. The sample size and quota requirement are usually achieved.

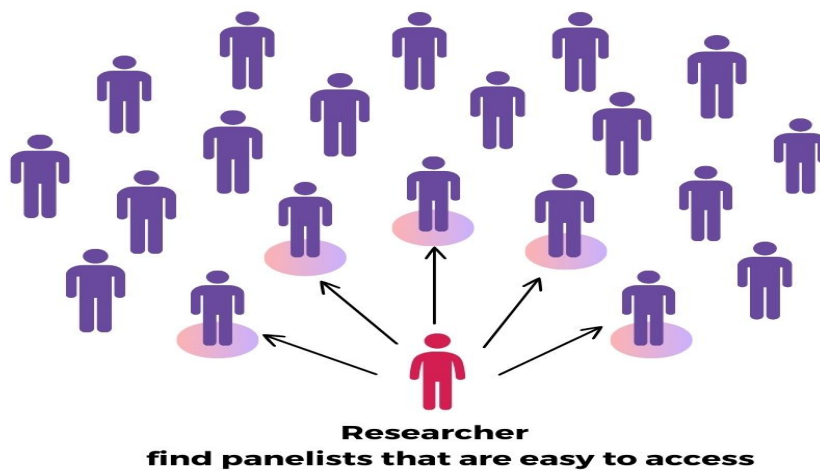
While there are certain advantages of the non-probability sampling methods, the following are some limitations also in the use of these samples:

1. No confidence can be placed in the data obtained from such samples and results thus obtained cannot be generalized for the entire population. Generalizations beyond any sample can be made safely only when it represents the population in every significant respect.
2. The selective sampling based on convenience affects the variance within groups as well as between groups and so sampling error of such samples cannot be determined.
3. Sometimes such samples are based on obsolete frame which does not adequately cover the population.
4. There is a considerable scope for bias in the selection of units to be included in the sample.

CONVENIENCE SAMPLING: In Convenience sampling technique where participants are selected based on their availability, proximity, or ease of access rather than through a randomized process. This method is widely used when researchers prioritize speed, cost-efficiency, and practicality over statistical representativeness. Unlike probability sampling, which ensures that every individual in the population has an equal chance of being selected, convenience sampling lacks randomization, leading to potential biases and reduced generalizability. For instance, a market researcher testing consumer preferences for a new mobile app may distribute surveys among coworkers, social media followers, or nearby shoppers. While this expedites data collection and minimizes costs, it also limits the diversity of responses, increasing the risk of selection bias. According to Dr. Floyd Fowler, a leading expert in survey methodology, “Convenience sampling is useful for preliminary research, but its findings should be interpreted cautiously, as they do not reliably reflect the broader population.” Despite its limitations, convenience sampling is particularly valuable in exploratory research, where initial insights are needed quickly. Pilot studies, which test survey designs before larger studies. Time-sensitive research, such as public opinion polling during unfolding events.



Convenience Sampling



Source: Google map

Advantages of Convenience Sampling:

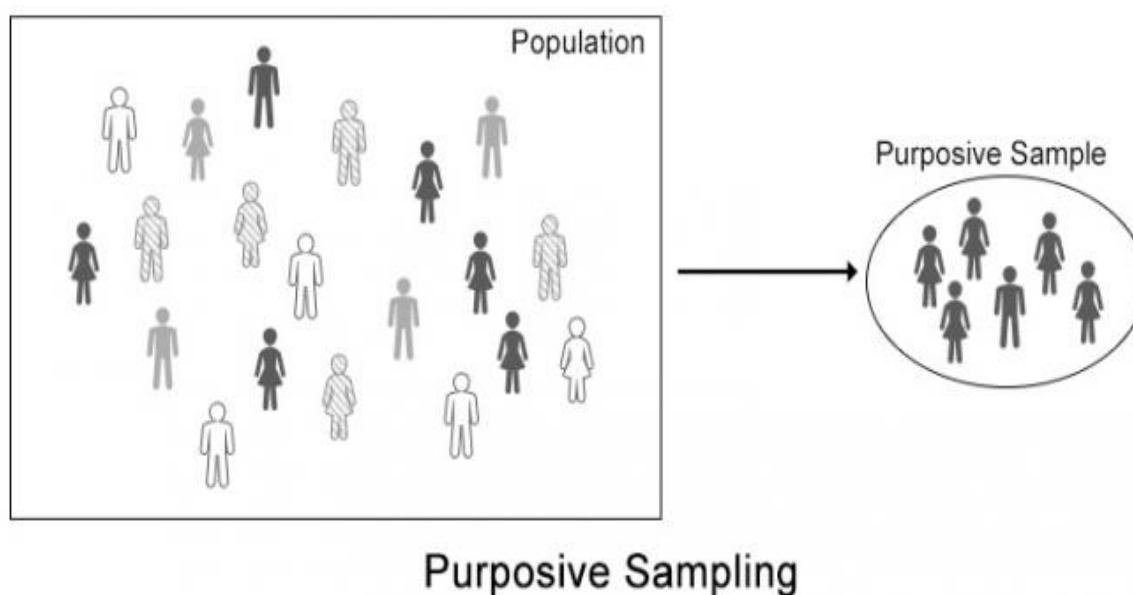
1. **Simplicity and Ease of Use;** Convenience sampling is straightforward and easy to implement. Researchers or businesses can collect data without needing extensive planning, complex tools, or statistical expertise.
2. **Cost-Effectiveness;** this method requires minimal resources, making it ideal for organizations operating on tight budgets.
3. **Time Efficiency;** Convenience sampling allows data to be collected quickly, making it invaluable for projects with tight deadlines.
4. **Flexibility in Application;** The method can be applied in various contexts, from informal interviews to structured surveys, depending on the research needs.
5. **Exploratory Value;** Convenience sampling provides a foundation for exploratory research. It allows researchers to identify initial patterns, trends, or issues before committing to a more comprehensive study.

Disadvantages of Convenience Sampling

1. **Lack of Representativeness;** Convenience sampling often fails to capture the diversity of the target population.
2. **High Potential for Bias;** Bias is inherent in convenience sampling because it relies on the researcher's choice of participants. This selection bias limits the reliability of the findings.

3. Limited Generalizability; the results of convenience sampling are not Generalizable to the larger population.
4. Risk of Oversimplification; Convenience sampling often simplifies the research process, potentially overlooking important variables or nuances.

PURPOSIVE SAMPLING: Purposive sampling is based on the presumption that with good judgment one can select the sample units that are satisfactory in relation to one's requirements. In this sampling, also known as judgmental sampling, the researcher purposely chooses persons who, in his judgment about some appropriate characteristic required of the sample members, are thought to be relevant to the research topic and are easily available to him. For example, suppose, the researcher wants to study beggars. He knows the three areas in the city where the beggars are found in abundance. He will visit only these three areas and interview beggars of his choice and convenience. The manufacturers (of cosmetics, oils, garments, etc.) select test market cities because they are viewed as typical cities with demographic profiles closely matching the national profile. Popular journals conduct surveys in selected metropolitan cities to assess the popularity of politicians and political parties or to forecast election results. Thus, in this technique, some variables are given importance and it represents the universe but the selection of units is deliberate and based on prior judgment.



Source: Google map

Advantages of Purposive Sampling (Judgment Sampling)

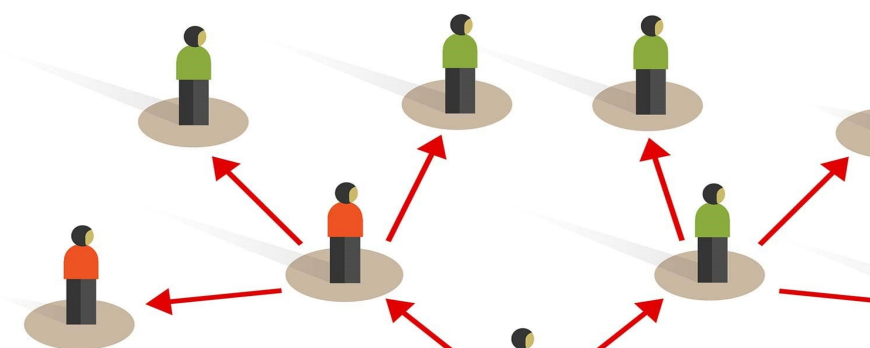
1. Purposive sampling is one of the most cost-effective and time-effective sampling methods available.
2. Purposive sampling may be the only appropriate method available if there are only limited numbers of primary data sources who can contribute to the study.
3. This sampling technique can be effective in exploring anthropological situations where the discovery of meaning can benefit from an intuitive approach.

Disadvantages of Purposive Sampling (Judgment Sampling)

1. Vulnerability to errors in judgment by researcher.
2. Low level of reliability and high levels of bias.
3. Inability to generalize research findings

SNOWBALL SAMPLING: in this technique, the researcher begins the research with the few respondents who are known and available to him. Subsequently, these respondents give other names who meet the criteria of research, who in turn give more new names. This process is continued until 'adequate' number of persons is interviewed or until no more respondents are discovered. For instance, in studying wife battering, the researcher may first interview those cases whom he knows, who may later on give additional names, and who in turn may give still new names. This method is employed when the target population is unknown or when it is difficult to approach the respondents in any other way. Reduced sample sizes and costs are a clear advantage of snowball sampling. Bias enters because a person known to someone (also in the sample) has a higher probability of being similar to the first person. If there are major differences between those who are widely known by others and those who are not, there may be serious problems with snowball sampling.

Snowball sampling



Source: Google map

Advantages of snowball sampling

1. Enables access to hidden populations
2. Avoids risk
3. Saves money and time

Disadvantages of snowball sampling

1. Difficult to determine sampling error; Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling method, so researchers cannot calculate the sampling error.
2. Bias is possible; since current participants select other members for the sample, bias is likely.
3. Not always representative of the greater population; because researchers are not selecting the participants themselves, they have little control over the sample.

SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION:

Considerations in sample size; A question is often asked: how many persons should be included in the sample, i.e., how large or small must the sample be to be representative? Some people say, the most common size is one-tenth so the total population. Some other says that a minimum of 100 subjects is required to allow statistical inferences. However, these estimates are not always correct. The sample size has to be based on the following considerations:

1. The size of the population, i.e., whether the total population to be studied is very large, large or small.
2. Purpose of study. i.e., whether the study is descriptive, exploratory or explanatory.
3. Nature of population, i.e., whether the population is homogeneous. In the former, a small sample may suffice but in the latter, a larger sample is required.

4. Whether the study is qualitative or quantitative. In qualitative studies, sampling does not resort to numerical boundaries to determine the size of sample. Similarly, when purposive or accidental sampling is employed, the researcher himself can decide the sufficient number of respondents. In such cases, generalizations are concerned with quality rather than with quantity.
5. Accessibility of the elements. Many a time it is difficult to contact respondents at time and place convenient to the researchers.
6. Cost of obtaining elements. With more resources, an adequate number of investigators can be appointed and a large sample may be considered.
7. Variability required. Sometimes the respondents required have to be persons of different groups, e.g., of different age, different income, different educational background, different occupations and so on.

Finding Sample Size by Formula

Formula for Infinite Population:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1-p)}{E^2}$$

Where:

n = Required Sample Size

Z = Z-score (according to confidence level)

90% → 1.645

95% → 1.96

99% → 2.576

p = Estimated proportion (often taken as 0.5 if not known)

E = Margin of error (e.g. 0.05 for 5%)

Example:

Confidence level = 95% → Z = 1.96

p = 0.5

Margin of error = 5% i.e. 0.05

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot (1-0.5)}{0.05^2} = \frac{3.8416 \cdot 0.25}{0.0025} = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025} = 384.16$$

This means you should take a sample of at least 385 people.

Adjusting for Finite Population:

If the population is not very large (e.g. 10,000 or less), the sample size is adjusted using the following formula:

$$n = \text{adj} = \frac{n}{1 + \frac{(n-1)}{N}}$$

n = derived sample size

N = total population

7.4 SUMMARY

In research, sampling is used to study a portion of a population in order to make inferences about the whole, especially when the population is very large or inaccessible. A sample must be representative, and its selection depends on research objectives, resources, time, and population characteristics. The goal of sampling is to obtain accurate and reliable information efficiently. It assumes (1) homogeneity within complexity, (2) representation through random selection, and (3) that absolute accuracy is not necessary—relative accuracy is sufficient. There are basically two major types of sampling: 1. Probability sampling—in which each unit has a known probability of selection, allowing generalizations. Its subdivisions include 1. 1. Simple random sampling: equal probability for all; easy, but not suitable for subgroup analysis. 1. 2. Stratified sampling: population divided into homogeneous groups (strata); increases accuracy. 1. 3. Cluster Sampling: Useful for large or geographically dispersed populations; less expensive, but more error. 2. Non-Probability Sampling - no equal probability; selection is based on researcher's judgment. Its subdivisions include 2.1 Convenience Sampling: Based on ease of access; fast but biased. 2.1 Purposive Sampling: Based on researcher's judgment; useful in special studies. 2.3 Snowball Sampling: Existing subjects recruit new people; good for hidden populations but lacks control. An ideal sample size depends on population size, type of study, variability, accessibility, cost, and whether the study is qualitative or quantitative.

7.5 GLOSSARY

- **Population** – The entire group of individuals or elements a researcher aims to study.
- **Sample** – A subset of the population selected to represent the whole in a study.
- **Sampling** – The process of selecting a representative group from a larger population for research purposes.

- **Probability Sampling** – A sampling method where each unit has a known and equal chance of being selected.
- **Simple Random Sampling** – A method where each member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being chosen.
- **Stratified Sampling** – Dividing the population into homogeneous groups (strata) and sampling from each group.
- **Cluster Sampling** – Selecting groups or clusters randomly when the population is geographically widespread.
- **Non-Probability Sampling** – A sampling technique where not all members have a chance of being selected, relying on the researcher's judgment.
- **Purposive Sampling** – A type of non-probability sampling where participants are selected based on specific characteristics or purpose.
- **Snowball Sampling** – A method where existing subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances.

7.6 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Question: 1. what is the main purpose of "Sampling"?

- A. To study the whole population
- B. To obtain accurate and reliable information in less cost, time and energy
- C. To analyse the sample only
- D. To collect only numerical data

Answer: B.

Question 2: According to Neiswanger, what is done in sampling technique?

- A. To analyse the whole population
- B. To study only a particular area
- C. To study only a part of the population instead of the whole universe
- D. To study only comparatively

Answer: C.

Question 3. In probability sampling, each unit of the population has:

- A. Zero chance of being selected
- B. Equal and known probability of selection
- C. Random selection by the researcher

D. Unequal and unknown chances of being selected

Answer: B

Question 4. Which of the following is a probability sampling method?

A. Convenience Sampling

B. Snowball Sampling

C. Simple Random Sampling

D. Purposive Sampling

Answer: C

Question 5. The method of sampling where population is divided into homogeneous sub-groups is called:

A. Simple Random Sampling

B. Stratified Sampling

C. Cluster Sampling

D. Convenience Sampling

Answer: B

Question 6. One major disadvantage of simple random sampling is:

A. It is difficult to conduct

B. It requires prior stratification

C. It produces greater errors than some other methods

D. It is not useful for small populations

Answer: C

Question 7. In cluster sampling, the clusters are often based on:

A. Educational level

B. Gender

C. Geographic location

D. Income levels

Answer: C

Question 8. In stratified sampling, if the strata are overlapping or disproportionate, the result may be:

A. Highly Generalizable

B. More accurate

- C. Biased and unrepresentative
- D. Simplified and easy

Answer: C

Question 9. Which of the following is not an advantage of simple random sampling?

- A. Equal chance of selection
- B. Requires detailed population knowledge
- C. Low sampling error
- D. Simplicity of method

Answer: B

Question 10. What is a major advantage of cluster sampling?

- A. It eliminates all bias
- B. It is best for small populations
- C. It reduces administrative complexity and cost
- D. It ensures each subgroup is equally represented

Answer: C

Question 11. Which sampling method is best suited when the researcher has limited time and budget?

- A. Simple Random Sampling
- B. Stratified Sampling
- C. Convenience Sampling
- D. Area Sampling

Answer: C

Question 12. In non-probability sampling, the sample selection depends on:

- A. Lottery method
- B. Researcher's judgment
- C. Random number tables
- D. Equal probability

Answer: B

Question 13. A researcher selecting respondents based on pre-set criteria and judgment is using:

- A. Snowball Sampling
- B. Purposive Sampling

C. Random Sampling

D. Area Sampling

Answer: B

Question 14. In snowball sampling, new respondents are identified through:

A. Random lists

B. Telephone directories

C. Suggestions from current respondents

D. Government databases

Answer: C

Question 15. Which of the following is a major limitation of convenience sampling?

A. It requires randomization

B. It increases cost

C. It lacks representativeness

D. It cannot be conducted quickly

Answer: C

Question 16. According to Good (1966), a probability sample must include:

A. Randomized questions

B. Automatic stratification

C. Known probabilities for inclusion

D. Only human judgment

Answer: C

Question 17. What is one key difference between probability and non-probability sampling?

A. Probability sampling does not require randomization

B. Non-probability sampling ensures representativeness

C. Probability sampling allows calculation of sampling error

D. Non-probability sampling includes more people

Answer: C

7.7 REFERENCES

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7.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

Short Questions:

1. What is the main characteristic that distinguishes probability sampling from non-probability sampling?
2. Mention two methods of selecting samples in simple random sampling.
3. Define in detailed purposive (judgment) sampling.
4. What is the key limitation of convenience sampling regarding the generalization of results?
5. Explain in snowball sampling, how are new respondents identified?

6. Detailed explain of any two advantages of stratified sampling.

Long Questions:

1. Compare and contrast Probability Sampling and Non-Probability Sampling. Discuss their definitions, types, advantages, disadvantages, and the contexts in which each method is appropriate.
2. Explain the procedure and characteristics (merits and demerits) of simple random sampling.
3. What is Cluster Sampling? Describe its methodology, advantages, and limitations with the help of a real-life example.

BLOCK 3: DATA COLLECTION METHODS

UNIT 8: QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN: TYPES OF QUESTIONS, SCALE DEVELOPMENT, PILOT TESTING

8.1 OBJECTIVES

8.2 INTRODUCTION

8.3 INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

8.4 SUMMARY

8.5 GLOSSARY

8.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

8.7 REFERENCES

8.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

8.1 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, learners will be able to:

- Understand the idea and importance of questionnaire design.
- Identify various kinds of questions employed in survey research.
- Describe different scales of measurement and their uses.
- Identify the importance of pilot testing and how to perform it effectively.
- Differentiate between a survey and questionnaire

8.2 INTRODUCTION

Creating a questionnaire is a key part of research in fields like social sciences, education, business, and health sciences. A well-designed questionnaire helps gather accurate and relevant information. This unit discusses different types of questions, how to create scales, and the importance of testing surveys before using them.

Questionnaires serve several important purposes:

- They help researchers collect data
- Provide a clear structure for interviews
- Allow people to answer questions in an organized way
- Make it easier to process data after collection

Clarity is crucial in questionnaire design. Both the interviewer and the respondent should easily understand the questions, using a language that both are comfortable with. When developing a questionnaire, focus on figuring out key questions, forming the main message, exploring early ideas, and choosing the right research method. This is especially important when one element is crucial to how effective the method is.

8.3 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN: TYPES OF QUESTIONS, SCALE DEVELOPMENT, PILOT TESTING

A questionnaire is a list of enquiries intended to elicit data from a participant. It is crucial because it serves as the primary conduit between the respondent and the institution and has a big impact on the analysis's results and the agency's reputation. It significantly affects interviewer performance, respondent behaviour, data collecting expenses, and, consequently, data accuracy. In a nutshell, it is essential to the process of gathering data.

These factors make creating a "good" questionnaire crucial. A "good" or well-designed questionnaire should gather information that aligns with the survey's goals while also taking

into account the demographics of the population being surveyed, the administrative and data processing needs, and the statistical needs of data users.

A well-designed questionnaire typically imposes minimal effort on respondents and is regarded as user-friendly by both respondents and interviewers. The phrasing and structure of the questions should motivate respondents to complete the questionnaire with accuracy.

Thus, an effective questionnaire:

- Centre on the survey's subject;
- Remains concise;
- Maintains a logical flow from one question to the next;
- Aids respondents' memory;
- Simplifies data coding and entry;
- Reduces instances of non-response and the need for editing or imputing missing data;
- Ultimately lowers the cost and time required for data collection and processing.

What is a Interview Schedule

The set of structured questions in which answers are recorded by the interviewer himself is called interview schedule or schedule. It is distinguished from the respondent in the sense that in the latter (questionnaire) the answers are filled in by the respondent himself. Though the questionnaire is used when the respondents are educated, the schedule can be used both for the illiterate and the educated respondents. The questionnaire is used when the respondents are scattered in a large geographical area but the schedule is used when the respondents are located in a small area so that they can be personally contacted. In the questionnaire, the size, physical appearance and attractiveness are more important than in the schedule in securing information from the respondents. The wordings of the questions in the questionnaire have to be simple since the interviewer is not present to explain the meaning to the respondent. In the schedule, the investigator gets the opportunity to explain difficult terms.

Three categories of information are sought by the questionnaire/schedule's questions:

- i. The interviewee's identifying demographic data
- ii. Useful data that is important to the topic being studied
- iii. Extra data that might confirm the main information

Format of the Questionnaire/Schedule: Some Practical Concerns

Questionnaire/Schedule format refers to the general model which provides guidelines on how questions should be placed in a sequence and in a logical order of relationship to each other, what type of question should be considered, how long the questionnaire/ schedule should be

and how the questionnaire/schedule should be presented so that it is clear and easy to understand.

The format of the questionnaire/schedule should be carefully concerned with the following aspects:

- Length
- Clearly typed
- Adequate space for answers
- Avoid abbreviations
- Proper instructions

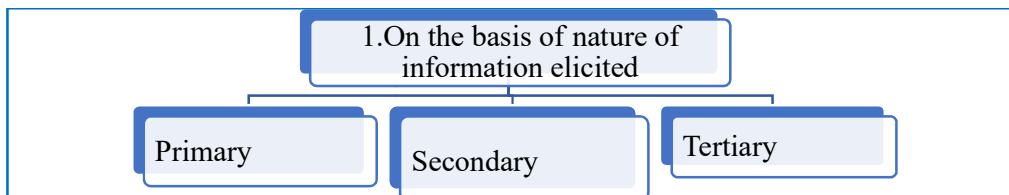
Types of Questions

Questions in the questionnaire vary with respect to a number of criteria. We will briefly describe each one of them separately.

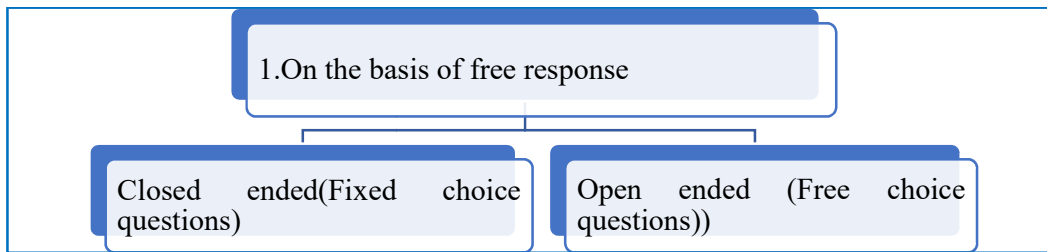
1. On the basis of nature of information elicited
2. On the basis of free response
3. On the basis of person about whom information is sought
4. On the basis of measuring response

Now above given types of given questions further divided

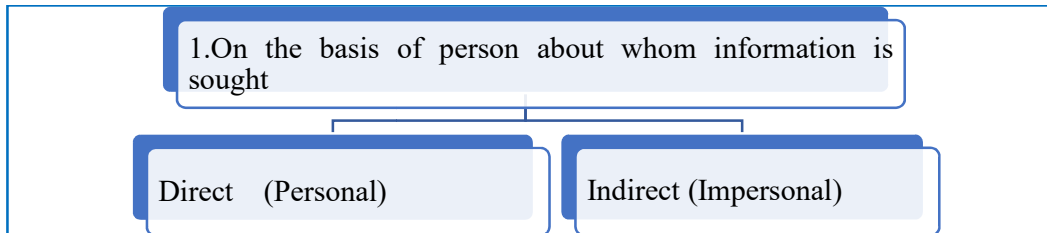
1. On the basis of the nature of information elicited, questions may be classified as primary, secondary and tertiary.
 - i. Primary questions elicit information directly related to the research topic. Each question provides information about a specific aspect of the topic.
 - ii. Secondary questions elicit information which do not relate directly to the topic, i.e., the information is of secondary importance.
 - iii. The tertiary questions are of neither primary nor of secondary importance. These only establish a framework that allows convenient data collection and sufficient information without exhausting or biasing the respondent.



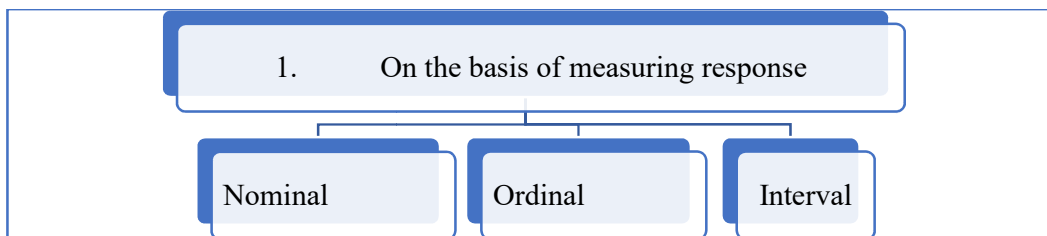
2. On the basis of free response:



3. On the basis of person about whom information is sought:

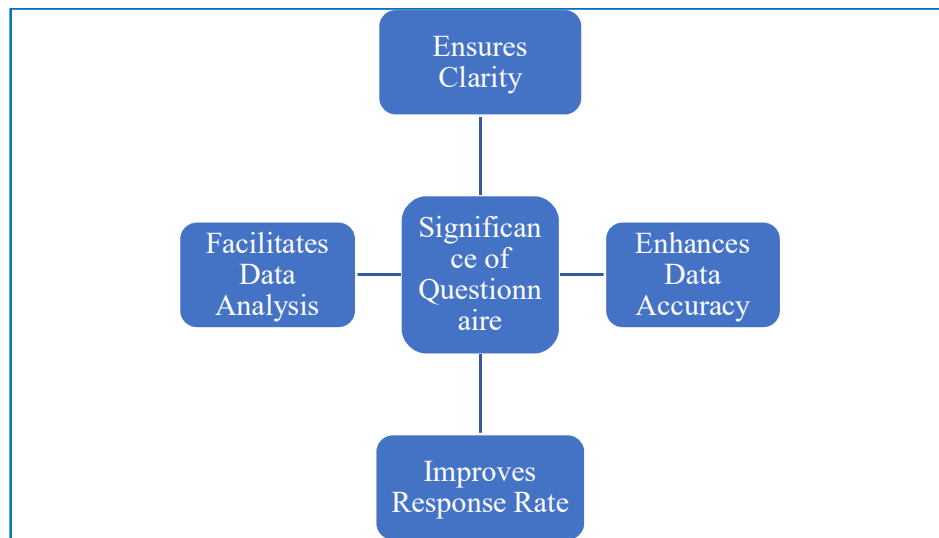


4. On the basis of measuring response



Significance /Importance of Questionnaire Design

- a) **Ensures Clarity:** Well-structured questions minimize ambiguity.
- b) **Enhances Data Accuracy:** Proper question formulation prevents biased or misleading responses.
- c) **Improves Response Rate:** A clear, engaging, and easy-to-understand questionnaire encourages participation.
- d) **Facilitates Data Analysis:** Using appropriate question types and scales simplifies statistical analysis.



Questionnaire vs Survey?

A questionnaire is a series of formal questions that are intended to elicit precise data from interviewees. It's the instrument employed by a survey to capture information.

Survey, on the contrary, is an expansive research instrument that entails collecting and analyzing responses from a pool of respondents. Surveys involve different tools including questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and observations.

You can design effective conversational questionnaires using robust survey tools like Survey Sparrow. After you design questionnaires, you can gather feedback, analyze data, and take actions based on the insights with ease.

Characteristics of a Good Questionnaire

A good questionnaire should be concise, clear, and free from bias. The ease of comprehending the questions is most crucial. Following are some things you should keep in mind while designing one:

1. **Clarity:** Questions should not use jargon or be ambiguous. Respondents should find it easy to comprehend what is being asked.
2. **Relevance:** Every question should directly relate to the research purpose. Irrelevant questions may confuse participants and weaken the quality of data.
3. **Simplicity:** Keep language simple and sentence structure simple. Complex questions may be misinterpreted.
4. **Objectivity:** Questions must be neutral and unbiased, not leading or suggestive, so as not to affect respondents' answers.
5. **Conciseness:** Be specific. Complex, lengthy questions may confuse respondents. Try to be brief while making sure the question gets the information needed.

6. Specificity: One subject at a time should be addressed in questions. Avoid putting several ideas into one question.
7. Structured Responses: Provide concise response options. Multiple-choice, Likert scale, or open-ended, structured responses facilitate simple analysis.
8. Pilot Testing: Always pilot test prior to widespread deployment of the questionnaire. This identifies ambiguous questions or answer options so everyone knows what they mean.
9. Respondent Perspective: Think from the respondents' point of view and set questions from there. Questions should be appropriate and meaningful to the participants so as to evoke candid answers.
10. Flexibility: Questionnaires must be flexible enough to accommodate various formats (paper, online, interviews) and publics. Flexibility allows for wider participation and varied insights.

STEPS IN QUESTIONNAIRE CONSTRUCTION/DESIGN

Determine how to group questions and what order to administer them in before you begin writing them. Other significant tasks also need to be completed, particularly when designing the questionnaire from beginning to end up.

The following is a list of these preparatory actions:

1. Review of the literature
2. Outlining the goals of the survey
3. An explanation of the fundamental ideas
4. Define the variables and create the plan for tabulation.
5. Model selection for data gathering.
6. Creating an initial version of the survey
7. Examining the survey

Only at step 6 can a preliminary questionnaire framework "see the light" and questions be written.

Hence, the questionnaire design is a very well-organised procedure consisting of multiple processes that, when properly executed, enable the production of a high-quality questionnaire with a minimal effect (bias) on the overall survey inaccuracy.

Each of the above steps is briefly described below.

Step 1: Review of the literature

Verifying whether there are previous surveys on the same topic that can offer helpful advice on how to construct the questionnaire is crucial. The following steps are advised to be taken during this step:

- Conduct a literature review on the survey's subject.
- Confirm whether the survey's questions have already been addressed in other surveys, paying particular attention to those conducted by your organisation.
- To prevent similar issues, examine the results and experiments of comparable surveys, particularly those conducted within your organisation.

Step 2: Outlining the goals of the survey

For this purpose, two simple principles are necessary:

- Choosing what to measure is a necessary step in creating an effective survey instrument.
 - Ask what you want to know, not something else."
- Subject matter experts and key users should be involved in defining the survey's objectives in order to adhere to these two standards.

Step 3: An explanation of the fundamental ideas

Verifying that the respondents fully comprehend the survey's primary ideas is crucial to creating an effective questionnaire. As a result, consider the following query while creating your questionnaire:

- Do respondents have the same understanding of these subjects as I, the survey expert?

Using standard terminology and definitions as much as feasible is advised. Additionally, the questionnaire's concepts should be in line with those of other data collection tools that are frequently used for the subjects of the survey. This will make it easier to compare the data at the data analysis stage.

By conducting qualitative interviews with key clients, it may be possible to test the fundamental ideas and obtain a trustworthy response to this query. In particular, such an examination could enable:

- Check the responders' level of expertise on specific subjects.
- Check to see if respondents know the terms used in the surveys or if different approaches are required to convey the fundamental ideas.
- Make the reference periods more clear.
- Determine whether certain subjects are viewed as delicate.

4. Define the variables and create the plan for tabulation.

This stage is a critical one in the questionnaire design process because it gives the survey expert insight into how the questionnaire and questions should be constructed to meet the survey's goals. To achieve this, the expected output must be specified in terms of tables of variables, where:

- Clearly defined and unambiguous definitions of variables must be given
- domains of variables must be specified
- it is necessary to distinguish between variables that are directly measured
- those that are calculated in order to prevent asking questions that can be inferred from others.

Step 5: Selecting the method of data collection (including the languages used to administer the survey and the software used to gather and analyse the data) and monitoring the impact on the questionnaire.

Step 6: Create the questionnaire's initial draft

As the survey expert determines the questions' stuff and phrasing, the questionnaire starts to take shape at this point in the design process.

- The interview's flows (the order of questions)
- the questionnaire's structure (how to group questions)
- the questionnaire layout (interface and appearance).

In order to guarantee that the demands of the users are appropriately met while also taking into consideration the difficulties faced by the producer, it is crucial that user-producer meetings be held during this step to discuss and agree on the questionnaire's form and content.

Step 7: Examining the survey

The initial version of the questionnaire needs to go through a variety of testing procedures that can yield helpful recommendations for reevaluating the design stage, beginning with Step 3 (Definition of concepts).

Mock interviews and field pre-tests could be the first steps in this testing process. If resources are available, a representative pilot survey should be conducted. Since they are thoroughly covered in the publications cited in the bibliography, the most popular methods for testing the questionnaire are not covered in this handbook. It is important to note, nevertheless, that the kind and size of the pre-tests or pilot tests should be chosen based on a number of variables, such as time, the availability of resources, and the questionnaire's complexity.

Simple format of XYZ Village Poverty Assessment Questionnaire: Household Information

1.How many members are in your household?

Answer: _____

2.What is the approximate range of your household monthly income?

Answer: _____

3.What are the principal sources of income for your family? (Farming, labor, small business, government support, other)

Answer: _____

4.Employment & Education

Answer: _____

5.How many members in your household work?

Answer: _____

6.What is the nature of work done by the working members? (Agriculture, daily wage employment, government, private sector, self-employed)

Answer: _____

7. What is the most educated level among household members? (No schooling, primary, secondary, higher education)

Answer: _____

8. Housing & Living Conditions

9. What kind of house do you live in? (Mud, brick, concrete)

Answer: _____

10. Is your house connected to electricity?

Answer: _____

11. Where is drinking water obtained from? (Tap, well, borewell, river)

Answer: _____

12. Do you have access to a proper sanitation facility? (Toilet in home, shared toilet, no toilet)

Answer: _____

13. Health & Nutrition

Answer: _____

14. How often does your household receive medical check-ups?

Answer: _____

15. Do you have access to a health center within 5 km of your residence?

Answer: _____

16. How many meals does your household eat per day?

Answer: _____

17. Do you have access to healthy food such as vegetables, fruits, and dairy on a regular basis?

Answer: _____

18. Government Assistance & Social Support

19. Are you getting any government financial assistance or subsidies? If yes, what are they?

Answer: _____

20. Do your children get free school meals?

Answer: _____

21. Are you a member of any local support group or community assistance program?

Answer: _____

Scale Development

In research methodology, "scale development" refers to the process of formulating a series of statements or questions intended to measure a particular, unobservable construct (such as attitude, perception, or behaviour) by giving numerical values to responses. This ensures the validity and reliability of the measurement tool used to collect data for a study; in other words, it's the methodical development of a valid and reliable scale to precisely evaluate a given concept or attribute.

Particularly in the social sciences, psychology, and education, scale development is an essential component of research methodology. It entails developing tools that precisely quantify theoretical constructs, such as surveys or questionnaires. Typically, the procedure consists of the following steps:

1. **Conceptualisation:** Establish the concept that you wish to quantify. This calls both a specific definition and a thorough comprehension of the idea.
2. **Item Generation:** Create an extensive collection of questions or items that each reflect a distinct facet of the construct. Brainstorming meetings, expert consultations, and literature reviews can all help achieve this.
3. **Content validity:** Verify that the construct is sufficiently covered by the items. Expert reviews are frequently used to evaluate the products' comprehensiveness and relevancy.
4. **Pre-testing:** To find possible problems with the items, like unclear language or comprehension difficulties, do a pilot study with a small sample.
5. **Item Analysis:** Examine the pre-test answers to find items that need improvement, such as those with low variability or poor associations with the scale as a whole. These things could be changed or taken out.
6. **component Analysis:** To find underlying dimensions of the construct and make sure the items cluster together as expected, conduct exploratory and/or confirmatory component

analysis.

7. Reliability Testing: Use techniques such as Cronbach's alpha, test-retest reliability, or split-half reliability to evaluate the scale's consistency.

8. Validity Testing: Use a variety of techniques, such as construct validity, criterion-related validity, and convergent/divergent validity, to assess the scale's validity.

9. Finalisation: Make sure the scale is prepared for use in the primary study by refining it in light of the analyses.

Why is it important to develop scale?

- i. Ensures that data collection is accurate and consistent.
- ii. Makes it possible for academics to gauge abstract ideas (such environmental consciousness and AI trust).
- iii. Gives standardised techniques for cross-study comparability.

Properties of Measurement

- I. **Identity:** Identity refers to each value having a unique meaning.
- II. **Magnitude:** Magnitude means that the values have an ordered relationship to one another, so there is a specific order to the variables.
- III. **Equal intervals:** Equal intervals mean that data points along the scale are equal, so the difference between data points one and two will be the same as the difference between data points five and six.
- IV. **A minimum value of zero:** A minimum value of zero means the scale has a true zero point. Degrees, for example, can fall below zero and still have meaning. But if you weigh nothing, you don't exist.

Scales of measurement is how variables are defined and categorised.

Psychologist Stanley Stevens developed the four common scales

measurement: nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio. Each scale of measurement has properties that determine how to properly analyse the data. The properties evaluated are identity, magnitude, equal intervals and a minimum value of zero.

Types of Scale

- a. Nominal scale of measurement
- b. Ordinal scale of measurement
- c. Interval scale of measurement
- d. Ratio scale of measurement

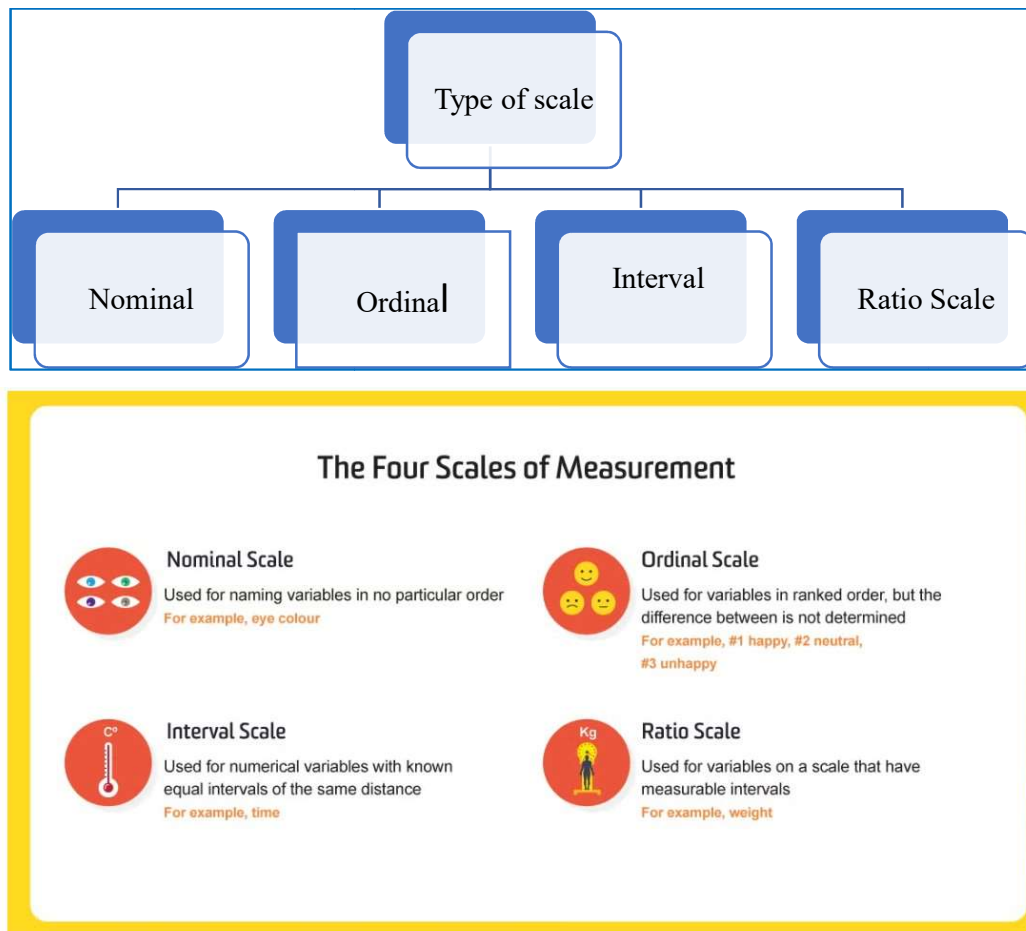


Fig 8.1: Scale of Measurement, Source: Google

a. Nominal scale of measurement: A nominal scale of measurement is a question whose answer can be classified into two or more categories, such as male or female, rich or poor, married or single, rural or urban, uneducated or educated, or Hindu or Muslim. But there is no ranking system for the categories. Classification scale is another name for nominal questions.

Nominal scale is the term for the qualitative scale that lacks order. Measure objects are categorised using the nominal scale into several groups, such as "Yes" or "No," "pass" or "fail." These grouped categories, such as the student's roll number, housing number, and phone number, are given numerical values. Nominal data is information gathered using a nominal measure scale.

b. Ordinal scale of measurement: In an ordinal question, the answers are arranged according to the categories' ranks. The order of the categories might be either first to last, greatest to least, or highest to lowest.

A survey or research question that asks respondents to rate or rank items in a particular order

without specifying the precise differences between the ranks is known as an ordinal question. Likert scales, preference rankings, and customer satisfaction surveys frequently use these questions.

For example: How satisfied are you with our service?

- a. Very Satisfied
- b. Satisfied
- c. Neutral
- d. Dissatisfied
- e. Very Dissatisfied

Unlike interval or ratio scales, ordinal questions establish a hierarchy but do not quantify the exact difference between responses. They are useful for measuring attitudes, preferences, and perceptions.

A qualitative scale with order is called an ordinal scale, it tells whether an object has more or less of characteristics than some other objects. It is a scale that does not measure values of the characteristics but indicates only the order or rank like 1st, 2nd, 3rd etc. Some examples are Ratings of hotels, restaurants, and movies. The data obtained using ordinal scale is termed as ordinal data.

c. Interval scale of measurement: The interval scale contains properties of nominal and ordered data, but the difference between data points can be quantified. This type of data shows both the order of the variables and the exact differences between the variables. They can be added to or subtracted from each other, but not multiplied or divided. For example, 40 degrees is not 20 degrees multiplied by two.

This scale is also characterised by the fact that the number zero is an existing variable. In the ordinal scale, zero means that the data does not exist. In the interval scale, zero has meaning – for example, if you measure degrees, zero has a temperature.

Data points on the interval scale have the same difference between them. The difference on the scale between 10 and 20 degrees is the same between 20 and 30 degrees. This scale is used to quantify the difference between variables, whereas the other two scales are used to describe qualitative values only. Other examples of interval scales include the year a car was made or the months of the year.

d. Ratio Scale: of measurement include properties from all four scales of measurement. The data is nominal and defined by an identity, can be classified in order, contains intervals and can be broken down into exact value. Weight, height and distance are all examples of ratio variables. Data in the ratio scale can be added, subtracted, divided and multiplied.

Ratio scales also differ from interval scales in that the scale has a 'true zero'. The number zero means that the data has no value point. An example of this is height or weight, as someone cannot be zero centimetres tall or weigh zero kilos – or be negative centimetres or negative kilos. Examples of the use of this scale are calculating shares or sales. Of all types of data on the scales of measurement, data scientists can do the most with ratio data points.

This is the highest degree of measurement and possesses all the four scale properties. Ratio scale shows the real quantity of variables. Ratio scales are quantitative with fixed or absolute zero. Data collected through ratio scales are called ratio data. Ratio is also a quantitative data which can be measured on a numerical scale but, in this case, the zero point is fixed and suggests the absence of what is being measured. Actually, if a scale possesses all the characteristics of an interval scale, and there is a true zero point, then it is referred to as a ratio scale.

Table: Examples of measurement scales

Nominal	Ordinal	Interval	Ratio
Gender	Ranks	Temperature	Weight
Bank a/c number	Feedback	Calendar dates	Salary
Roll Number	Rating of Movies	Latitude	Frequency of Buying a product
Phone number	Rating of hotels	Rating scale	Number of times one visit a bank
PAN number	Class of travel		

PILOT TESTING

Pilot testing in research is very important in making a study successful and valid. Pilot testing enables researchers to recognize and correct any possible problems or weaknesses in their research design, data collection tools, and processes. Through pilot testing, researchers can make improvements to their methods, enhance the quality of data gathered, and confirm that the study is effective and feasible.

What is Pilot Testing in Research?

Pilot testing in research study is a critical process where a small-scale version of a bigger study or project is conducted. 'Pilot' refers to the process of testing a plan, project, or experiment prior to putting it into operation on a grand scale. Pilot testing primarily serves to test the feasibility and validity of the research design, methods, and instruments.

Through a pilot test, researchers can identify any potential issues or challenges that might occur during the actual study. Pilot testing helps researchers to fine-tune their procedures, implement the necessary corrections, and ensure the problem-free conduct of the research study. Pilot testing gives a chance to examine the efficacy and comprehensibility of survey questions, interview protocols, data collection techniques, and data analysis procedures. Moreover, pilot testing assists in estimating the time, resources, and sample size needed for the main study.

The Purpose of Pilot Testing

Pilot testing in research has several significant functions. First, it assists in ascertaining the study protocol's feasibility and research design weaknesses. Through a small-scale test prior to the large-scale study, researchers are able to detect possible flaws and make appropriate adjustments to guarantee the success of the larger study.

Second, pilot testing gives researchers the chance to try out the procedures and methods scheduled for use in the larger study. Through pilot testing, the research approach can be perfected and verify that the methods used are best suited and work effectively in gathering the required data. Pilot testing offers the chance to spot any practical or logistical issues that might occur during the actual study.

Additionally, pilot testing allows researchers to obtain initial data about the study subjects and outcome variables. Such data can offer insight into the measured variables and inform researchers regarding sample size, data collection tools, and statistical analyses.

One significant function of pilot testing in research is to evaluate the validity and reliability of the research instruments and measures. Through pilot testing with a sample of participants, researchers are able to determine if the measures are correctly measuring the desired constructs and yielding repeatable results. This ensures validity and reliability of the data obtained in the full study.

Briefly, the main reason for pilot testing in research is to reduce potential risks and enhance the quality of the main study. It enables researchers to detect any issues or problems and rectify them prior to undertaking the full-scale study, thus enhancing the validity and reliability of the research findings.

Steps to Conduct Pilot Testing

1. Identify the purpose of the pilot testing in research study: It is crucial to define the purposes of the study before undertaking pilot testing. This will enable one to have an idea of the important data points to identify and assess while pilot testing.

2. Choose a representative sample: To carry out pilot testing in research, you must choose a representative sample from your target population. You have to employ the same sampling scheme as your parent study to obtain results that will be generalizable.
3. Prepare for pilot testing: After the sample has been chosen, you must prepare for pilot testing. This involves developing the test processes, making the required materials or instruments, and preparing the testing environment.
4. Perform the pilot testing: While doing the pilot testing, you will give the test or experiment to the targeted participants. Ensure you observe them well and take useful data for determining the appropriateness of the research technique.
5. Evaluate the pilot test results: Once pilot testing is done, you must evaluate the results. This means reviewing the data gathered, determining any problems or challenges faced during testing, and evaluating the overall performance of the research method.
6. Necessary adjustments: Depending on the pilot test results analysis, you can make adjustments to the research methodology. This involves changing the test processes, improving the materials or instruments used, or correcting any identified problems during the pilot testing.
7. Repeat pilot testing if necessary: In certain situations, repeating the pilot testing may be required to confirm that the changes have successfully resolved any problems or challenges. This process ensures ongoing improvement of the research design.
8. Record the pilot testing process: It is necessary to document the whole pilot testing process, from the aims, sample choice, test structure, data acquisition, analysis, and any revisions. This documentation will act as a reference in the future, as well as offering transparency and reproducibility.

Common Challenges in Pilot Testing

Pilot testing in research may also have its own challenges. These challenges can disrupt the collection of data accurately and can affect the success of the pilot study as a whole.

One of the most frequent problems in pilot testing in research is obtaining appropriate participants. It may be hard to find participants who fit the precise criteria for the study. This problem may result in a small sample size, which could restrict the generalizability of the results.

Another problem is the scarce resources used in pilot testing in research study. Researchers might have limitations of time, funds, or access to equipment or facilities that are needed. These research constraints will influence the quality and extent of the pilot study.

Furthermore, pilot testing in a research study can also reveal unexpected technical problems or flaws with the research tools. These may involve technical problems with the data collection equipment, questionnaires used in survey research, or experimental procedures. The detection and correction of such problems are necessary to provide guarantees for the validity and reliability of pilot study results.

In addition, pilot testing of research can bring to light issues of implementing the study protocol. This can include challenges in adhering to the scheduled procedures, coordinating with participants, or coordinating the logistics of the study. These implementation issues can affect the feasibility and practicality of the research project.

Finally, pilot studies have the limitation of not being able to show problems unique to implementing the study at a full scale. Pilot testing might give rich information, but it might not give all the intricacies and issues that could occur in performing the actual research on a wider scale.

Examples of Pilot Testing in Research

1: **Economic Achievement Test:**In an economic success study, a pilot test was administered to examine the validity and reliability of the economic success test instrument. The researcher chose a limited number of participants and administered the test to them. Results of the pilot test assisted the researcher in finding out any problem with the test instrument and made necessary corrections prior to carrying out the full study.

2: **Questionnaire Development:**Researchers normally pilot test a questionnaire before doing a large-scale survey to see if it can work effectively. They choose a small number and give them the questionnaire. Through the pilot test, they identify any questions that are confusing or ambiguous and the problems in administering the survey. Depending on feedback from the pilot test, the researchers can adjust the questionnaire for improvement before passing it to the general population.

3: **Feasibility Study:**In a feasibility study, researchers pilot test to evaluate the feasibility of their research study. For instance, if a researcher intends to examine the effect of a new teaching strategy on student performance, they might pilot test in a small class. Pilot testing aids in determining whether the research design and methodology are feasible and whether any changes are required prior to carrying out the full-scale study.

4: **Testing an Interview Protocol:**In creating an interview guide for qualitative studies, pilot testing is important to establish the viability of the questions and the logical sequence of the interview. Researchers choose a few participants and give mock interviews to pilot test the

questions' clarity and pertinence. Pilot testing ensures that the questions are refined and are able to get from the participants what is desired.

5: Methods of Data Collection: Pilot testing is also employed to test various data collection techniques. In a study assessing the efficacy of online questionnaires versus face-to-face interviews, researchers can implement a pilot test with both methods on a limited sample size. Pilot testing enables researchers to determine which technique produces more reliable and accurate data so that they can make an educated choice regarding the data collection method for the main study.

8.4 SUMMARY

Questionnaire design is an important research process that entails the formulation of effective questions, the development of suitable scales for measurement, and pilot testing to guarantee accuracy and reliability. The question types used in a questionnaire may be varied, ranging from open-ended questions for elaborative responses to closed-ended questions for organized data collection. Creation of scales like Likert scales or semantic differential scales is required in order to quantify responses and provide measurable findings. Pilot testing is a crucial phase in which the questionnaire is tried on a pilot sample in order to locate ambiguities, gauge clarity, and modify the structure prior to the collection of data on a full scale. Through the integration of well-crafted questions, thoughtfully constructed scales, and comprehensive pilot testing, researchers can guarantee that their survey effectively captures valid and trustworthy data, ensuring the success of their study.

8.5 GLOSSARY

Questionnaire: A questionnaire is a data gathering tool used in research technique that consists of a systematic sequence of questions or prompts intended to gather information from respondents regarding their beliefs, actions, or personal traits. Both quantitative and qualitative data are gathered using it. Surveys frequently include questionnaires, which can be given in person, by mail, or online.

Survey: Survey research is the process of gathering data on a population by posing questions to them and examining the answers.

Pilot Testing: Pilot testing, which entails carrying out a scaled-down version of a bigger study or project, is a crucial phase in research studies. A "pilot" is an experiment, initiative, or concept that is tested before being carried out on a wider scale. Assessing the viability and validity of the research design, procedures, and tools is the primary goal of pilot testing.

Scale Development: The methodical process of creating, evaluating, and improving a measurement tool to evaluate a particular construct—such as attitudes, perceptions, or behaviours—is known as scale development. It guarantees that the scale is valid (it measures what it is supposed to measure) and reliable (it measures consistently).

Nominal Scale: A nominal scale of measurement is a question whose answer can be classified into two or more categories, such as male or female, rich or poor, married or single, rural or urban, uneducated or educated, or Hindu or Muslim. But there is no ranking system for the categories. Classification scale is another name for nominal questions.

Ordinal Scale: Ordinal measuring scale: An ordinal inquiry is one in which the answers are arranged according to the categories' ranks. The order of the categories might be either first to last, greatest to least, or highest to lowest.

8.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Do you know that Pilot testing entails carrying out a scaled-down version of a bigger study or project, is a crucial phase in research studies.

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8.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

Long Questions

1. How is questionnaire design? Write about it in detail.
2. Write about the scale development and pilot testing in detail.

Short Questions

1. What is a questionnaire? Explain it in brief.
2. What is the difference between a questionnaire and a survey?
3. What are the characteristics of a good questionnaire? Write about it in brief.
4. Write the steps of questionnaire design.
5. Write the steps of the scale development process.
6. Explain the different types of scale.
7. What is pilot testing and why is it important in research methodology?
8. What is the purpose of pilot testing in research methodology?

MCQ's

1. Which of the following is the correct definition of pilot testing.
 - a. A pre-test or a pilot study is undertaken to check the suitability of the questionnaire as a whole.
 - b. The first draft is given to one or two experts/ colleagues for scrutiny and suggestions for changes.
 - c. Testing of aeroplane is known as pilot testing.
 - d. None of the above
2. Which of the following is a characteristics of pilot testing?
 - a. Clarity
 - b. Specificity
 - c. Pilot Testing
 - d. All of the above
3. Open ended questionnaire is also known as
 - a. Fixed choice questions
 - b. Free choice questions
 - c. Unstructured

- d. Structured
4. Close ended questionnaire is also known as
- a. Ratio Scale
 - b. Nominal Scale
 - c. Structured
 - d. Unstructured
5. A questionnaire that offers no scope for any respondent's own view is called:
- a. Closed-ended.
 - b. Schedule
 - c. Open-ended
 - d. Unstructured
6. What is the term for data that comes from the original source?
- a. Secondary
 - b. Primary
 - c. Secondary and primary
 - d. All of the above
7. Which of the following alternatives best exemplifies primary data?
- a. Journal
 - b. Book
 - c. Census Report
 - d. Newspaper
8. The questionnaire is completed by
- a. Respondent
 - b. Everybody
 - c. Enumerator
 - d. None of the above
9. The main purpose of research in education is to _____
- a. Increase social status of an individual
 - b. Increase job prospects of an individual
 - c. Help in the personal growth of an individual
 - d. Help the candidate become an eminent educationist
10. The primary goal of educational research is to _____.
- a. Enhance a person's social standing,
 - b. Improve their employment opportunities,

- c. Aid in their personal development
- d. Assist them in becoming a distinguished educator.

Answer) 1.a, 2. d, 3.c, 4.c, 5.a, 6.b, 7.c, 8.a, 9.c, 10.c

UNIT 9: INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES: STRUCTURED, SEMI-STRUCTURED, UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

9.1 OBJECTIVES

9.2 INTRODUCTION

9.3 INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES: STRUCTURED, SEMI-STRUCTURED, UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

9.4 SUMMARY

9.5 GLOSSARY

9.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

9.7 REFERENCES

9.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

9.1 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, learners will be able to:

- Learners can define the most important features of structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews.
- Learners can distinguish between the three types of interview techniques.
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of each type of interview in different research situations.
- Use the correct interview techniques according to the research aims and target group.
- Create effective questions for structured and semi-structured interviews to facilitate effective data collection.
- Examine qualitative answers from various interview formats to derive meaningful insights.

9.2 INTRODUCTION

Qualitative research is an indispensable tool for gaining deep insights into human experiences, behaviours, and perceptions. Among its many methods, interviews stand out as one of the most effective approaches for collecting nuanced data. By engaging directly with individuals, researchers can explore thoughts, emotions, and lived experiences in a way that surveys and other quantitative methods cannot fully capture.

The success of an interview-based study largely depends on selecting the appropriate approach, as different methods—structured, semi-structured, and unstructured—offer varying levels of flexibility and depth. Structured interviews follow a predetermined set of questions, ensuring consistency across multiple respondents and allowing for easier comparison of responses. Semi-structured interviews provide a balance between structure and adaptability, enabling researchers to explore key topics while allowing participants the freedom to express themselves in a natural conversation. Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, offer the highest level of flexibility, focusing on open-ended discussions that encourage detailed storytelling and deeper insights.

This unit simplifies these techniques, guiding learners in choosing the right method based on their research objectives. It also equips them with the skills to conduct effective interviews, fostering meaningful interactions that provide valuable perspectives on people's thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Understanding the strengths and limitations of each interview style empowers researchers to gather rich, reliable data and enhance the quality of their studies.

9.3 INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES: STRUCTURED, SEMI-STRUCTURED, UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

One qualitative research method that uses questioning to gather data is the interview. Two or more people participate in interviews, with the interviewer being one of them.

Interviews are a qualitative research method that entails "conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation." There are several types of interviews, often differentiated by their level of structure.

Interviews are commonly used in market research, social science, and ethnographic research.

Importance of Choosing the Right Interview Type

Selecting the appropriate type of interview can greatly influence the quality and type of data collected, aligning closely with research objectives. This selection impacts the depth of responses, the flexibility of the conversation, and the comparability of data across participants.

Types Of Interviews Techniques

There are several types of interviews techniques, often differentiated by their level of structure.

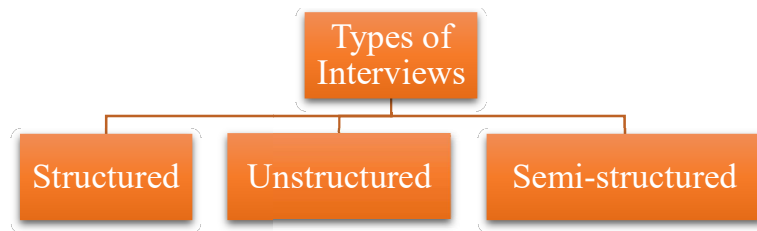
1. Structured v/s Unstructured
2. Standardised v/s Unstandardised
3. Individual v/s Group
4. Self-administered v/s Other -administered
5. Unique v/s Panel
6. Hard v/s Soft
7. Personal v/s non-personal
8. Other types i. Focused, ii. telephone, iii. computer

1. Structured Interviews v/s Unstructured

Structured Interviews: First used by Francis Galton in the 1870s, this interview have fixed, predefined questions with specific response options. They are called structured as they come with a set of close-ended questions, where the answers are already jotted down by the surveyor. The respondent has to only pick ones that they agree with the most.

Structured interviews are highly organized and follow a strict script of predetermined questions in a fixed order. The interviewer does not deviate from the script, ensuring that

each interview is conducted in exactly the same way. This method is highly standardized, which simplifies analysis and comparison across a large number of respondents.



Example: A market research company conducts structured interviews to gauge consumer satisfaction with a new product. Interviewers ask each participant the same series of questions:

1. How satisfied are you with the product on a scale of 1 to 10?
2. Would you recommend this product to a friend? Yes or No?
3. What is the most appealing feature of this product?

These questions are asked in this order to all participants, ensuring that responses are directly comparable.

Characteristics

- **Pre-planned questions:** The identical questions are posed to each interviewee.
- **Fixed question order:** Each participant sees the questions in the same order.
- **No flexibility:** The interviewer is not allowed to stray from the script.

Advantages:

- **Easy to compare responses:** Since everyone answers the same set of questions, it becomes simpler to analyze and compare their responses. For instance, in a customer feedback survey, structured interviews help businesses quickly gather information from many people and spot common patterns or trends.
- **Quick and simple to conduct:** These interviews don't take much time, making them efficient for large studies that require many responses. This is especially useful for things like election surveys, where gathering a lot of opinions in a short time is important.

Disadvantages

- **Lack of depth in responses:** The rigid format prevents interviewers from exploring interesting or unexpected responses that might reveal more detailed insights. For instance, if a participant hints at a unique use case for a product, the structured format does not allow the interviewer to delve further into this potentially valuable insight.

- **No flexibility for unexpected insights:** When an interviewee's response suggests a new avenue of inquiry that could yield important findings, the structured interview format does not permit exploration outside the predetermined questions, potentially overlooking critical data.
- **Limited Responses:** Sometimes, less is not more. If you're looking for deep insights and an expansive understanding of respondents' answers, you might be better served by unstructured questions. You might also miss out on great insights if respondents are limited in the opinions and insights they can share.

When to Use

Structured interviews are best used in situations where the research aim is to gather significant quantities of similar data among a large sample. This approach is especially applied for quantitative studies where consistency and efficiency are imperative.

Examples of Appropriate Use Cases:

1. **Market Research:** Businesses use structured interviews to quickly collect customer opinions about a product. This helps them compare things like satisfaction, likelihood of purchase, and brand awareness among different groups of people.
2. **Employee Surveys:** Companies conduct structured interviews to measure how satisfied their employees are and to get feedback on workplace policies in a consistent way across all departments.
3. **Public Opinion Polling:** In political and social studies, structured interviews allow researchers to gather people's views on specific topics in a fair and uniform manner, ensuring everyone answers the same set of questions the same way.

Types of Structured Questions

Structured questions can appear in many forms, including:

1. **Multiple-Choice Questions:** Respondents may select one or more answers.

Ex: From the following list of social media platforms, please select each platform you use to promote your events.

2. **Single-Choice Questions:** Respondents may select only one answer.

Ex: Which event format do you most prefer?

3. **Dichotomous Questions:** Respondents must choose between two options, such as "yes or no" or "true or false."

Ex: True or false: Hybrid events are the best of both worlds.

4. **Ordinal Scale Questions:** Respondents must rank a list of options (in order of preference, importance, likelihood, etc.)

Ex: Please rank the following event locations in order of preference.

5. Interval Scale Questions: Respondents must rate their level of agreement or disagreement, typically on a scale of 1 to 5 or 1 to 7, using terms like “strongly agree,” “neither agree nor disagree,” etc.

Ex: How strongly do you agree with the statement, “I made many valuable contacts during this event.” (Answers range from strongly agree to strongly disagree.)

6. Semantic Differential Questions: Though the name is complicated, the questions aren’t. Respondents are asked to rate a concept, experience, etc. using opposing adjectives, such as good/bad or happy/sad.

Ex: How likely are you to recommend this event to others? (Answers could include: definitely would recommend, likely, uncertain, unlikely, would not recommend.)

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are a mix of structured and unstructured interviews. They use both pre-planned and flexible questions, giving interviewers the freedom to ask follow-up questions based on the interviewee's answers. This method is not as strict as structured interviews, but it still keeps enough consistency to allow for comparisons and data analysis if needed.

Example: A doctoral student uses semi-structured interviews for a thesis on workplace culture. The interview starts with several fixed questions to establish a baseline:

1. Describe your daily responsibilities at work.
2. How do you describe the management style here?

Following these questions, the interviewer takes the opportunity to probe deeper based on the participant’s responses, such as asking about specific incidents that illustrate the management style or how those responsibilities affect their perception of their workplace.

Characteristics

- The interviewer can exercise considerable discretion by combining planned and impromptu questions.
- Adaptable question sequence: The questions can be rearranged to suit the pace of the discussion.

Advantages

- **Balance structure and depth:** Semi-structured interviews allow for comparison while also diving deeper into specific topics. For example, a researcher might ask

everyone about their healthcare experiences but explore details when someone mentions an unusual situation.

- **Flexibility to explore new topics:** If a participant talks about an important event during the interview, the interviewer can adjust questions to gather more useful information.

Disadvantages

- **Needs skilled interviewers:** The interviewer must know when to ask deeper questions and when to keep the discussion on track, especially for sensitive topics where care and empathy are needed.
- **Complex analysis:** Since the data includes both structured and unstructured responses, analyzing it takes more time and requires advanced techniques to understand and summarize the information.

When to Use

When researchers need to strike a compromise between gathering similar data and having the freedom to go deeper into subjects, semi-structured interviews are perfect. When conducting mixed-methods research that calls for both quantitative and qualitative insights, this approach works well.

Examples of Appropriate Use Cases:

- **Academic Research:** Used to study social topics like identity or culture, allowing researchers to ask deeper questions as new insights come up.
- **Customer Development:** Startups and businesses use semi-structured interviews to learn about customer needs while also discovering unexpected feedback that can help improve products.
- **Healthcare Research:** Helps researchers understand both general healthcare outcomes and personal patient experiences with treatments or services.

Unstructured Interviews(Open Ended)

Unstructured Interviews: These are conversational interviews that don't follow a set format and heavily rely on the interviewee's comments to generate questions on the spot. The interview is quite flexible and changes based on the interviewee's interests and answers, much like a genuine discussion. This approach is perfect for delving into delicate or complicated topics where depth of knowledge and comprehension are more important than comparability.

Example: To learn about local customs, an anthropologist conducting fieldwork in a far-flung community conducts unstructured interviews. Open-ended questions such as "Can you tell me about an important tradition in your community?" start conversations. Because the following questions are totally based on the interviewee's responses, the anthropologist can obtain a comprehensive, nuanced understanding of cultural behaviours without imposing any preconceived ideas.

Characteristics

- There are no preset questions; instead, the interviewee's answers guide the conversation.
- Conversation-driven: The interview's course is determined by the conversation's flow.

Advantages

- **In-depth data collection:** This format is ideal for collecting detailed and nuanced information. For example, in a study exploring patient experiences with chronic illness, unstructured interviews can uncover deeply personal and contextual factors affecting their health care decisions.
- **Highly flexible and responsive:** The interviewer can respond in real-time to the direction of the conversation, pursuing interesting and relevant tangents as they arise, which can lead to discoveries that were not anticipated at the outset of the research.

Disadvantages

- **Time-consuming:** These interviews often last longer and require more extensive preparation and analysis due to their depth and breadth. Planning and reviewing such interviews in studies where each participant's narrative is unique can be particularly resource-intensive.
- **Difficult to compare data across interviews:** The lack of a standard structure makes it challenging to directly compare data across different interviews, as each conversation can vary significantly in focus and content, complicating the synthesis of findings across multiple participants.

When to Use

Unstructured interviews are best used in qualitative research where in-depth, nuanced understanding is more critical than the ability to generalize findings across a larger population. This format is particularly suited for exploratory studies where predefined notions might limit the scope of discovery.

Examples of Appropriate Use Cases:

1. **Ethnographic Studies:** These involve researchers living among study participants to gain an intimate understanding of social and cultural processes.

2. Psychological Case Studies: Unstructured interviews are a useful tool in clinical psychology for gaining in-depth knowledge about a patient's experiences and mental health conditions.

3. Exploratory Business Research: Unstructured interviews might provide previously unknown insights into consumer behaviour and needs for companies establishing new product categories or entering new markets.

In brief, we can say that, Structured interviews have predetermined questions asked in a predetermined order, Unstructured interviews are more free-flowing, and Semi-structured interviews fall in between.

Comparative Overview

Interview Type	Pre-determined Questions	Flexibility	Depth of Data	Comparability
Structured	Yes	Low	Low	High
Semi-Structured	Partial	Medium	High	Medium
Unstructured	No	High	Very High	Low

2. Standardized vs. Unstandardized Interview Techniques

Standardized Interviews: These follow a fixed set of questions asked in the same way to all participants. They ensure consistency, making it easier to compare responses and analyze data. They are commonly used in surveys, polls, and studies requiring structured data collection.

Unstandardized Interviews: These are more flexible and allow interviewers to adjust questions based on the conversation. They provide deeper insights, especially when exploring complex topics, but can be harder to compare across different interviews.

The choice between the two depends on the research goals—standardized interviews are ideal for data comparison, while unstandardized interviews help uncover detailed individual perspectives.

3. Individual vs. Group Interview Techniques in Research Methodology

Individual Interviews: One-on-one interviews allow for in-depth discussions, where the interviewer can focus entirely on one person's experiences, thoughts, and insights. They are useful for gathering personal opinions, exploring sensitive topics, and gaining detailed responses.

Group Interviews: These involve multiple participants discussing topics together. They help generate diverse perspectives, encourage interaction, and can reveal shared opinions or disagreements. Group interviews, such as focus groups, are useful for studying social dynamics or collective viewpoints.

The choice depends on the research goal—individual interviews work best for deep personal insights, while group interviews offer broader perspectives and interaction-driven data.

4. Self-Administered vs. Other-Administered Interviews

Self-Administered Interviews:

In this approach, the respondent is provided with a list of questions along with clear instructions on how to answer them. They independently fill in their responses on an interview form, without direct interaction with an interviewer. This method is commonly used in surveys conducted via printed questionnaires, online forms, or email responses.

Key Features:

- **Convenience:** Respondents can complete the interview at their own pace.
- **Reduced Interviewer Influence:** Eliminates the possibility of interviewer bias, as answers are not influenced by questioning style or tone.
- **Cost-Effective:** Requires fewer resources since interviewers are not needed to conduct the sessions.
- **Limited Clarification:** If respondents have doubts, they cannot seek immediate clarification, which may affect response accuracy.

Common Use Cases:

- Large-scale surveys (e.g., customer feedback, employee satisfaction polls).
- Market research studies where standard responses are required.
- Social research involving anonymous responses to sensitive topics.

Other-Administered Interviews:

In this format, an interviewer personally asks the questions and records the responses on the interview form. These interviews can be conducted face-to-face, over the phone, or via video calls, ensuring a more interactive approach to data collection.

Key Features:

- **Interactivity:** The interviewer can engage with respondents, ensuring they understand the questions correctly.
- **Clarifications & Probing:** Interviewers can explain questions, probe for deeper insights, and clarify vague responses.

- **Higher Accuracy:** Responses tend to be more complete and accurate due to direct interaction.
- **Potential Bias:** Responses may be influenced by the interviewer's phrasing or tone.

Common Use Cases:

- In-depth research requiring detailed explanations (e.g., healthcare studies, academic research).
- Surveys where respondents might need guidance to complete complex questions.
- Studies involving people with limited literacy, where an interviewer helps record answers.

5.Unique v/s Panel interviews

Unique Interview: This is a single-session interview where all necessary information is gathered in one sitting. However, if additional details are required, the interviewer can reach out to the respondent again.

Panel Interview: In this method, data is collected from the same group of participants multiple times at set intervals. This helps track changes in responses over time.

6. Soft v/s hard interviews

Soft Interview: In this approach, the interviewer plays a supportive role, guiding respondents without exerting pressure. The focus is on creating a comfortable environment, allowing participants to express their thoughts freely. This method is often used in qualitative research where open-ended responses are valued.

Hard Interview: This technique is more forceful, resembling an interrogation. The interviewer actively challenges the validity and completeness of responses, sometimes warning respondents against dishonesty or pressuring them to provide answers when they hesitate.

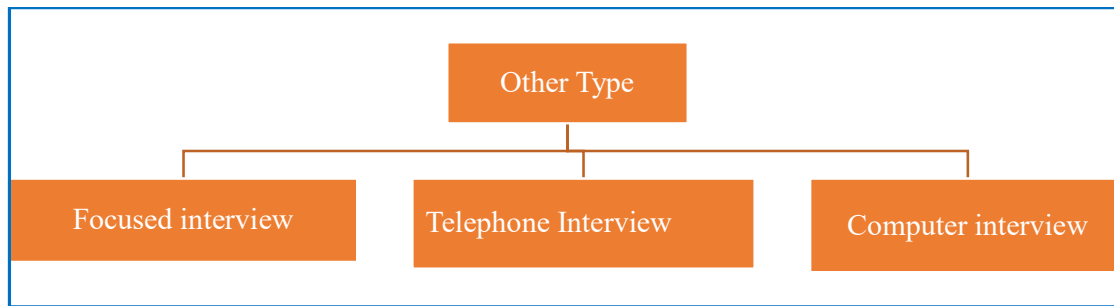
Hard interviews are more common in quantitative research, where precise and definitive responses are required for analysis.

7.Personal v/s Non-personal interviews

Personal Interviews: These involve direct, face-to-face interaction between the interviewer and the respondent. This setup allows for better communication, observation of body language, and immediate clarification of answers. Personal interviews are often used in detailed research, job interviews, and investigative studies.

Non-Personal Interviews: In this approach, the interaction happens remotely through telephone, computer, or other digital platforms without physical presence. These interviews are efficient for large-scale data collection, surveys, and cases where face-to-face interaction isn't feasible.

8. Other type interview techniques:



i. **Focused Interview:** A focused interview is designed to concentrate on a specific topic or shared experience among respondents. In this type of interview, all participants have been exposed to the same situation, ensuring consistency in responses. For example, if researchers are studying the impact of a riot, they would interview individuals who were present, asking targeted questions about their experiences. This approach allows for a deep understanding of a particular event or issue while maintaining a structured framework for analysis.

ii. **Telephonic interview:** Telephonic interviews are widely used in Western countries and are gradually becoming more common in urban areas of India. This method allows interviewers to quickly gather public opinions on important issues without requiring face-to-face interaction. Media professionals, such as those from newspapers, radio, and television, frequently use telephone interviews to assess public reactions to events like budget announcements, election results, rising fuel prices, communal disturbances, and increasing crime rates. This approach is efficient for obtaining timely feedback and gauging societal perspectives on critical matters.

iii. **Computer interview:** A computer interview is conducted using digital technology, where responses are recorded and processed through computers instead of traditional face-to-face or telephonic methods. In India, this approach is limited to those who have access to computers and the internet, which is why it is not widely adopted. However, as technology becomes more accessible, computer-based interviews are gradually gaining popularity, especially in urban areas and industries that rely on digital communication.

Conditions for a Successful Interview

Conducting an interview may seem straightforward, but ensuring its effectiveness requires addressing key challenges related to adequacy, reliability, and validity. Interviewers vary in skill and approach, respondents have different levels of ability and motivation, and the interview content may affect the feasibility of obtaining accurate data. Gardner (1965) identified three essential conditions for a successful interview:

Accessibility: The respondent must understand what is being asked and be willing to share information. However, certain factors—like lack of knowledge, memory lapses, emotional stress, or poorly framed questions—can hinder their ability to provide answers.

Understanding: The respondent must grasp the significance of the research, the expectations of the interview, and the meaning of the concepts and terms used. If they do not fully understand, their answers may be irrelevant or inaccurate.

Motivation: Respondents need encouragement to provide both information and accurate details. Fears about consequences, embarrassment about not knowing an answer, distrust of the interviewer, or a lack of interest in the topic can decrease motivation. The interviewer must create a comfortable and trustworthy environment to minimize these issues.

By ensuring accessibility, understanding, and motivation, interviewers can improve the quality and reliability of their collected data. Let me know if you need further clarification!

The Interviewer: An interviewer plays a crucial role in the data collection process, and three key aspects must be considered:

1. **Task:** Since the interviewer is central to the interview technique, their responsibilities are vital. Any failure to perform their duties correctly can negatively impact the accuracy and reliability of the collected data.
2. **Qualities:** An effective interviewer should possess essential personal traits such as honesty, interest in the subject, accuracy in recording responses, adaptability to different situations, a calm and professional temperament, intelligence, and a suitable educational background. These qualities help in conducting meaningful and unbiased interviews.
3. **Training:** Some organizations emphasize thorough training before sending interviewers into the field, ensuring they understand the research objectives, key issues, and sampling methods. Others prefer to provide only brief instructions before assigning them tasks. Proper training helps interviewers conduct interviews efficiently and gather high-quality data.

Relationship Between the Interviewer and the Respondent:

A successful interview depends not only on the questions asked but also on the relationship between the interviewer and the respondent. This relationship should foster trust, understanding, and cooperation, ensuring the interviewee feels comfortable sharing accurate information.

Key aspects of this relationship include:

- a. **Developing Trust:** The interviewer must create a positive and effective bond with the respondent to encourage open communication.
- b. **Professional Attitude:** They should ask questions politely, avoiding arrogance or an overly casual or overly fashionable appearance, as this can affect credibility.
- c. **Respectful Approach:** The interviewer should never patronize the respondent or show disbelief in their answers. Instead, they should listen attentively and respond neutrally.
- d. **Encouraging Responses:** Prompting respondents with possible answers can help them express their thoughts more easily.

Probing for More Information: The interviewer should ask follow-up questions to gain deeper insights, ensuring comprehensive data collection.

Merits/Limitations of Interview

Interviews are widely used for data collection due to their ability to gather detailed and direct information. However, while they offer several advantages, they also come with certain limitations.

Merits of Interviews: Gordon (1969) identified five key benefits of using interviews in research:

- i. **Quick Information:** Data can be collected rapidly.
- ii. **Proper Interpretation:** Respondents can clarify and understand questions better.
- iii. **Flexibility:** Interviewers can adapt questions based on responses.
- iv. **Validity Check:** The accuracy of responses can be evaluated during the conversation.
- v. **Control:** Interviewers can manage the flow and context of questions to maintain focus.

Additionally, interviews provide several other advantages:

- a. **High Response Rate:** Since interviews involve direct interaction, respondents are more likely to answer.
- b. **In-Depth Probing:** Allows interviewers to ask follow-up questions for richer insights.
- c. **Building Rapport:** Personal interaction helps gain respondents' trust and confidence.
- d. **Clarifying Doubts:** Interviewers can explain difficult terms or questions, reducing confusion.
- e. **Easy Administration:** No need for respondents to be highly educated or familiar with complex questionnaires.
- f. **Observing Non-Verbal Cues:** Interviewers can assess body language and emotions.

- g. Ensuring Completeness: Responses are properly recorded, ensuring complete data collection.

Limitations of Interviews: While interviews are a valuable method of data collection, they have certain challenges:

Possibility of False or Incomplete Information: Respondents may hide details or provide incorrect answers due to concerns about their identity.

Cost and Time: Conducting interviews is more expensive and time-consuming compared to questionnaires.

- I. Influence of Mood and Availability: A respondent's mood affects the quality of responses. If they are tired or in a hurry, they may not provide thoughtful answers.
- II. Inconsistency in Responses: Different interviewers might receive varied answers, especially in unstructured interviews. Additionally, the interviewer's interpretation may impact how responses are recorded.
- III. Limited Anonymity: Since interviews involve direct interaction, respondents may feel less anonymous, affecting their willingness to share honest opinions.
- IV. Less Effective for Sensitive Topics: Some subjects may be difficult for respondents to discuss openly, making interviews less suitable for sensitive research.
- V. Despite these limitations, interviews remain a crucial tool for gathering rich and detailed data when conducted carefully.

Comparison of advantages of three methods of data collection

S.No.	Element	Questionnaire	Schedule	Interview
1.	Cost	more expensive	somewhat expensive	less expensive
2.	Speed	poor	high	higher
3.	Anonymity	higher	high	low
4.	Interviewer's bias	low	high	low
5.	Need for motivation	low	high	higher
6.	Rapport with respondent	low	high	higher

Source: Research Methods, Ram Ahuja

Practical Tips for Conducting Interviews

- Preparation: Investigate the subject, prepare questions, and create an appropriate setting.
- Building Rapport: Establish trust, define the interview purpose, and participate actively.
- Effective Questioning: Apply lucid, impartial, and open-ended questions for substantive answers.

- Managing Flow: Maintain the discussion topic while providing elasticity for insights.
- Handling Challenges: Confront hesitation, steer away from unconnected topics, and exercise patience.
- Recording & Analysis: Record points, note salient features, and evaluate answers objectively.

9.4 SUMMARY

Interview methods are important in research, assisting in collecting important information from respondents. There are three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews. A structured interview has a strict agenda where all the respondents are presented with the same identical questions in the same sequence, making it systematic and simple to compare answers. This type of methodology is commonly applied in surveys and research that need to have standardized data gathering. Semi-structured interviews, however, incorporate pre-formulated questions but with the freedom to pose follow-up inquiries depending on how the interviewee answers. This process enables researchers to investigate things in more detail while some comparability is still kept, so it's a choice for studies where both structured data and in-depth responses are needed. Unstructured interviews are the most adaptable form, with free flow of conversation without a specific set of questions. This technique allows the interviewer to change questions in line with the discussion, with rich and detailed information, though comparisons are less easy to make. Every type of interview caters to different research requirements—structured interviews provide consistency, semi-structured interviews a balance between structure and depth, and unstructured interviews a free flow to explore topics. It relies on the extent of flexibility needed in collecting information and the type of study.

9.5 GLOSSARY

Questionnaire: A questionnaire is a research tool used to gather information from a group of respondents. It consists of a series of questions or other "prompts."

Schedule: The schedule is only a set of questions that appear to be required in order to test the hypothesis. A schedule is a structured set of questions on a certain subject that are asked by an interviewer who has extensively researched the subject. The most crucial tool is the schedule. It is comparable to a survey. It is completed by the researcher and administered by the researcher in person. The schedule doesn't have to be visually appealing because it is

presented in person. Questionnaire preparation approaches are also used while creating an interview schedule.

Interview: Asking questions is a key component of the qualitative research approach known as an interview. Two or more people participate in interviews, with the interviewer being one of them.

Respondent: A respondent is a person who answers questions in a research study, survey, or interview. In response to the interviewer's or researcher's questions, they offer their thoughts, experiences, or insights. Respondents are essential to the data collection process because they assist researchers in compiling material for analysis and decision-making.

Interviewer: In order to gather information from the respondent, the person conducting the interview, known as the interviewer, is in charge of asking questions and directing the discussion. Whether for research, hiring, journalism, or surveys, they are essential in making sure the interview is organised, understandable, and productive. An effective interviewer actively listens, poses pertinent follow-up questions, and fosters an atmosphere that encourages truthful and insightful answers.

Interviewee: The individual being interviewed and responding to the interviewer's questions is known as the interviewee. They offer perceptions, thoughts, or personal accounts pertaining to the interview subject. Their answers aid in the collection of pertinent data by investigators, journalists, employers, and researchers. To guarantee a fruitful conversation, a well-prepared interviewee speaks clearly, maintains confidence, and gives honest and considered responses.

9.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Do you know that Francis Galton in the 1870's used the structured interview for the first time.

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9.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

Long Questions

1. Write about the different types of interview techniques in detail?
2. Write about the structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews technique?

Short Questions.

1. Explain the structured interview technique.
2. Describe the unstructured interview technique.
3. What are the characteristics and advantages of the structured interview technique?
4. Give the examples of structured interview techniques.
5. Explain the following interview technique.
 - a. standardised vs. unstandardised
 - b. Individual vs Group
 - c. Unique v/s Panel
 - d. Hard v/s Soft
6. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the unstructured interview technique?
7. What are the merits/limitations of different interview techniques?
8. Explain the following terms:
 - a. Respondent
 - b. Interviewer
 - c. Schedule
 - d. Questionnaire

MCQ's

1. What is a questionnaire primarily used for?
 - a. Conducting face-to-face interviews
 - b. Gathering information through a set of questions

- c. Observing respondent behaviour
 - d. Recording non-verbal responses
2. Who is responsible for asking questions and guiding the discussion in an interview?
- a. Respondent
 - b. Interviewee
 - c. Interviewer
 - d. Researcher
3. Which of the following best describes an interviewee?
- a. The person conducting the interview
 - b. The individual responding to the interviewer's questions
 - c. The one who prepares the interview schedule
 - d. A researcher collecting data
4. What is the main difference between a schedule and a questionnaire?
- a. A schedule is administered by a researcher in person, whereas a questionnaire is typically self-administered
 - b. A schedule contains open-ended questions, while a questionnaire has only closed-ended questions
 - c. A questionnaire is always visually appealing, while a schedule must be attractive
 - d. A schedule is only used in quantitative research, while a questionnaire is used in qualitative research
5. What is the primary role of a respondent in an interview?
- a. Conducting the interview
 - b. Asking questions
 - c. Providing answers and sharing insights
 - d. Preparing the interview questions
6. Which of the following is not an advantage of interviews as a data collection method?
- a. High response rate
 - b. Flexibility in questioning
 - c. Complete anonymity for respondents
 - d. Ability to observe non-verbal cues
7. What is one key benefit of in-depth probing during interviews?
- a. It guarantees quick responses from the interviewee
 - b. It allows interviewers to gather more detailed insights
 - c. It prevents respondents from changing their answers

- d. It eliminates the need for follow-up questions
8. What is a key characteristic of a structured interview?
- a. The interviewer modifies questions based on responses
 - b. The interview follows a strict script with predefined questions
 - c. Respondents provide open-ended answers
 - d. The interview is conducted informally without a set order
9. Which of the following is not type of interview technique?
- a. Structured v/s Unstructured
 - b. Standardised v/s Unstandardised
 - c. Individual v/s Group
 - d. Self-admin v/s Other -administered
10. Who first used structured interviews in the 1870s?
- a. Sigmund Freud
 - b. Francis Galton
 - c. Karl Marx
 - d. Charles Darwin

ANSWER) 1.b, 2.c, 3.b, 4.a, 5.c, 6.c, 7.b, 8.b, 9.d, 10.b

**UNIT-10 OBSERVATION METHODS: PARTICIPANT
OBSERVATION, SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION**

10.1. OBJECTIVES

10.2. INTRODUCTION

10.3. MEANING AND DEFINITION

10.4. PLANNING AND PROCESS OF OBSERVATION

10.5. RECORDING OF DATA

10.6. TYPES

10.6.1 Participant Observation

10.6.2 Systematic Observation

10.7. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

10.8. SUMMARY

10.9. GLOSSORY

10.10. ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

10.11. REFERENCES

10.12. TERMINAL QUESTIONS

10.1. OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to understand:

- Understand the observation method in research.
 - Identify and differentiate types of observation.
 - Learn how to plan and conduct observational studies.
 - Record and analyze observational data.
 - Know the advantages and limitations of observation.
-

10.2. INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we will explore the concept of observation as a key method of data collection in research. Observation involves systematically watching and recording behaviors, events, or conditions to gather meaningful insights. You will learn about the purpose and importance of observation, its key characteristics, and the various types of observation methods used in research. Understanding these methods will help in choosing the right observational technique depending on the research goals and context.

The term observational research is used to refer to several different types of non-experimental studies in which behavior is systematically observed and recorded. The goal of observational research is to describe a variable or set of variables. More generally, the goal is to obtain a snapshot of specific characteristics of an individual, group, or setting. As described previously, observational research is non-experimental because nothing is manipulated or controlled, and as such we cannot arrive at causal conclusions using this approach. The data that are collected in observational research studies are often qualitative in nature but they may also be quantitative or both (mixed-methods). There are several different types of observational research designs that will be described below.

Observation is a fundamental method of research used to gather data and gain insights into various phenomena. The observation method of research is a powerful tool used to systematically gather data by observing and documenting behaviors, events, or phenomena in a natural setting. It offers researchers a firsthand glimpse into real-time occurrences, allowing for authentic and unfiltered information collection. By carefully watching and recording what is observed, researchers can gain valuable insights, generate new knowledge, and draw meaningful

conclusions about various aspects of human behavior, social dynamics, and natural occurrences. The observation method is widely employed in social sciences, anthropology, psychology, and more, offering a holistic and context-rich understanding of the subject under study.

10.3. MEANING AND DEFINITION

Observation methods refer to a non-experimental research approach in which the behaviors, interactions, and events related to the subject of interest are systematically observed and recorded without manipulating the environment or subjects. The core objective is to gain descriptive insight into specific characteristics of individuals, groups, or settings. This method is particularly valuable for capturing real-time data that is authentic and unfiltered, making it a crucial tool in fields such as social sciences, psychology, and anthropology. Observational research can be either qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods, offering both exploratory and explanatory perspectives. Importantly, since nothing is manipulated, it does not allow for causal conclusions but helps in understanding natural behaviors and phenomena.

Lindzey Gardner (1975) defined it as the "selection, provocation, recording, and encoding of behaviors and settings related to organisms in situ" (naturalistic settings or familiar environments) that align with empirical objectives. In this context, selection emphasizes the importance of observation and the editing process that occurs before, during, and after observations. Provocation implies that while observers do not disrupt natural settings, they might introduce minor adjustments to enhance clarity. Recording involves documenting the observed incidents or events for later analysis. Encoding refers to the simplification of these records.

Participant and systematic observation are two key types of observational methods. In participant observation, the researcher actively engages with the group being studied, blending into the social context to gain a deeper, insider perspective of the group's culture, behavior, and beliefs. This method can be disguised or undisguised and is effective for uncovering information that may be inaccessible to external observers. Systematic observation, on the other hand, follows a structured approach to collecting data by observing behaviors in a predefined setting, often with protocols and tools to minimize bias. Both methods emphasize real-time, naturalistic data collection but vary in the level of researcher involvement and structure.

i) Purpose

The aim of observation is to:

- **To Describe Behavior and Phenomena:** The goal of observational research is to describe a variable or set of variables. It aims to obtain a snapshot of specific characteristics of individuals, groups, or settings.
- **To Gain Authentic and Real-Time Data:** Observation provides researchers with a firsthand glimpse into real-time occurrences, enabling the collection of authentic and unfiltered information.
- **To Understand Human Behavior and Social Dynamics:** Through systematic observation, researchers can gain insights into human behavior, social interactions, and natural events in their real-life contexts.
- **To Collect Qualitative and Quantitative Data:** Observational research often collects qualitative data, but it can also involve quantitative or mixed-method data to analyze behaviors and events.
- **To Study Subjects in Natural Settings:** It allows for the observation of subjects in their everyday environment, which helps understand behaviors as they naturally occur.
- **To Inform Further Research:** Observational studies often serve as a foundation for further research, such as larger-scale clinical trials or experimental studies.
- **To Minimize Bias and Enhance Validity:** By directly observing behavior rather than relying on self-reporting, observational methods reduce recall bias and provide more valid data.
- **To Discover Unexpected Phenomena:** Observation can lead to the discovery of nuances, patterns, or behaviors that may not be anticipated by structured surveys or interviews.

ii) Characteristics

- **Non-Experimental Nature:** Observation involves no manipulation or control of variables. Researchers do not interfere with the natural course of events.
- **Real-Time Data Collection:** Observation allows for the collection of authentic, real-time data as events unfold naturally, ensuring high data validity.
- **Qualitative and/or Quantitative:** The method can yield qualitative insights (like behavioral patterns) or quantitative data (like frequency of behavior), or a mix of both.
- **Contextual Understanding:** Observation provides a holistic and context-rich understanding of human behavior, social dynamics, and environments.

- **Natural Setting:** Observations are typically conducted in natural environments rather than in controlled experimental settings.
- **Objectivity and Systematic Recording:** Researchers are expected to observe without bias, using structured protocols to record behaviors or events systematically.
- **Exploratory and Explanatory Uses:** Useful for exploring new areas of research or explaining existing patterns and behaviors.
- **Minimization of Self-Reporting Bias:** Since behaviors are directly observed, there's less dependence on participants' self-reporting, reducing the risk of bias or inaccuracy.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Ethical issues such as informed consent and privacy are crucial, especially in disguised observations or sensitive settings.
- **Time and Resource Intensive:** Observational studies may require significant time, planning, and resources including trained personnel and data tools.

10.4. PLANNING AND PROCESS OF OBSERVATION

Observation is a structured method of data collection that involves systematically watching and recording behaviors, events, or phenomena as they naturally occur. To ensure its effectiveness and reliability, careful planning and execution are crucial. The process can be outlined in several key steps:

i) Defining the Research Objective

The first and most crucial step is to clearly define the purpose and goals of the observation. The researcher must determine what specific behaviors or phenomena they want to observe and formulate relevant research questions to guide the study.

ii) Determining the Variables

Once the objective is set, researchers identify the key variables or behaviors that are to be observed. These should be directly aligned with the research goals and must be capable of yielding meaningful and analyzable data.

iii) Choosing the Observation Setting

Selecting the appropriate setting is essential for gathering relevant data. The chosen environment must be accessible, ethically appropriate, and contextually relevant to the research topic. It should also support natural behavior to avoid artificiality.

iv) Developing Observation Protocols

Researchers create a detailed observation plan, including guidelines, techniques, and criteria for conducting observations. This protocol defines:

- The type of observation (e.g., participant or non-participant)
- Methods of data collection (e.g., notes, recordings)
- Timing and frequency of observations
- Specific instructions for observers

v) Conducting the Observation

With the protocol in place, researchers begin the actual observation process. This involves carefully watching the subjects and documenting findings objectively and accurately, avoiding interference or bias.

vi) Recording and Analyzing Data

The collected data must be systematically recorded, labeled, and securely stored. After data collection, analysis is performed using appropriate qualitative or quantitative methods to extract insights and draw conclusions aligned with the research objectives.

10.5. TYPES

Observation is a key method of data collection in research, and it can be classified into several types based on the approach and setting. Structured observation involves predefined categories to systematically record behavior, often used in experimental or field studies for precise data collection. In contrast, unstructured observation is more flexible and exploratory, where the researcher does not use fixed categories, allowing for a broader understanding of behaviors in natural settings. Participant observation requires the researcher to actively engage with the group being studied, offering deep insights into their activities and interactions, while non-participant observation involves observing from a distance without direct involvement, sometimes without the subjects' awareness (disguised observation). Direct observation means the researcher witnesses and records events as they occur, whereas indirect observation relies on tools like cameras or on physical traces left behind. Lastly, in covert observation, the subjects are unaware of being observed, maintaining natural behavior, whereas in overt observation, they are informed, which may influence how they act. Each type of observation offers unique advantages depending on the research goals and ethical considerations.

10.5.1. Participant Observation

Participant observation is a qualitative research method in which the researcher immerses themselves in the group or phenomenon being studied, assuming dual roles as both a participant and an observer. This approach enables the researcher to actively engage with the group while simultaneously observing and analyzing their behavior, language, and customs. By integrating into the group, the researcher gains close access, which helps to deepen their understanding of the social dynamics and underlying factors that influence the group's actions.

For participant observation to be effective, the researcher must strike a balance between participation and observation. To be accepted within the group, researchers often begin covertly, introducing themselves in a way that allows them to integrate without revealing their true intentions of data collection. The researcher's involvement allows them to observe group activities from the inside, learning the language, customs, and behaviors firsthand. The close proximity to the group enables the collection of rich, detailed data through observations and interactions, which can be further validated by direct engagement and interviews.

A key challenge in participant observation is maintaining the group's ignorance of the researcher's role. If the group becomes aware that they are being studied, they may alter their behavior, which could affect the accuracy of the data. Thus, the researcher must adopt a role within the group that appears natural and unobtrusive, ensuring that the group behaves as it normally would. The period of observation is often extended over several months to ensure thorough data collection and a comprehensive understanding of the group's functioning.

This research method is particularly useful in studying societal structures and behaviors in natural settings. It is commonly used in fields such as sociology, anthropology, and social sciences, especially when researching groups like tribal communities, agricultural workers, industrial employees, or prison inmates. However, participant observation is underutilized in certain areas, such as in the study of library users, where researchers typically rely on questionnaires rather than immersive observation.

While participant observation provides valuable insights, it also has its challenges. As the researcher becomes more involved with the group, emotional connections may form, potentially affecting the objectivity of the data. The researcher might become too sympathetic or too close to the group, leading to biased interpretations or overlooking certain behaviors.

Moreover, the emotional involvement could cloud judgment and influence the analysis of the group's actions. Additionally, gathering data from groups that are hostile or in conflict with each other can be difficult, requiring careful consideration of the researcher's level of participation and relationship with the group.

Despite these challenges, participant observation remains a powerful research tool. It allows researchers to gather information that might be difficult to obtain through other methods, such as surveys or interviews. However, it has limitations, including the risk of the researcher becoming too familiar with the group's behavior, emotional involvement skewing the results, and the difficulty of observing illegal activities or events that are difficult to monitor in detail.

In contrast, non-participant observation involves a clear separation between the researcher and the group. The researcher observes the group without participating in its activities, but this can lead to the group altering its behavior due to the observer's presence. Non-participant observation can be useful when participation would compromise data integrity, such as in studying illegal activities. A hybrid approach, quasi-participant observation, combines elements of both methods, allowing the researcher to adapt based on the specific research context.

10.5.2. Systematic Observation

Systematic observation is a highly structured and methodical approach to observational research that focuses on observing and recording behaviors or phenomena in a controlled and predefined framework. This approach is particularly useful for gathering quantitative data on natural behaviors and occurrences in their authentic settings. Unlike experimental studies, which involve manipulating variables, systematic observational studies are non-intrusive and aim to collect data without external interference. The main objective is to document behaviors or events in a reliable, consistent, and unbiased manner, ensuring that the research findings are both valid and reproducible.

The core element of systematic observation is the use of a predefined coding system. In this system, one or more trained observers record the target behaviors using structured categories, which helps reduce observer bias and increases the reliability of the data. These coding systems can be numerical or categorical, depending on the nature of the behavior being studied. The observers are typically well-trained through extensive sessions to become familiar

with the observation categories and ensure consistency in their data recording. This training process plays a critical role in minimizing bias and enhancing the validity of the data collection.

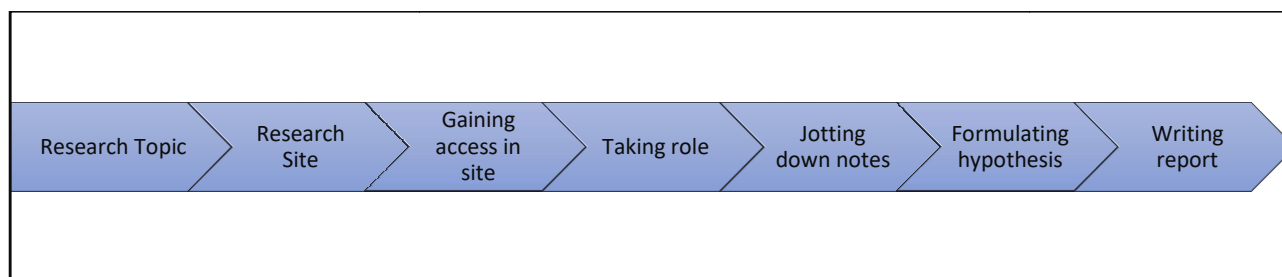
Observations in systematic studies can be conducted in real-time, or the recorded events can be observed and coded at a later time. This flexibility allows researchers to gather data in various settings, whether through direct observation, video recordings, or even through one-way mirrors in certain environments. The rigor of this method allows researchers to test hypotheses or evaluate practices by comparing observations in a consistent and structured manner. The data collected can be quantifiable, enabling researchers to uncover patterns, trends, or relationships within the observed behaviors.

In contrast to unstructured observation, where narrative or qualitative accounts are recorded without predefined categories, systematic observation is more structured and follows specific procedures for data collection. This structured approach makes the findings of systematic observation more replicable and reliable. Researchers can ensure that their observations adhere to a logical framework, which is crucial for testing hypotheses and drawing valid conclusions.

Systematic observation is widely used in various fields, such as psychology, sociology, education, and medicine. It provides valuable insights into human behavior and interactions without the need for experimental manipulation, which may not always be ethical or feasible. This method is especially beneficial when studying complex human behaviors in real-world settings, where external manipulation could alter the natural course of events. By carefully defining objectives, using standardized tools, and employing a structured observation plan, researchers can gather meaningful data that contributes to the understanding of human phenomena.

10.6. PROCESS OF OBSERVATION

One of the most notable features of observational fieldwork is the lack of uniform operating procedures. Each culture possesses unique traits, which impose varying requirements on researchers. Because observation entails delicate human interaction, it cannot be simplified into a straightforward set of methods. Nevertheless, some academics have attempted to outline the path that fieldwork observers should take.



Source: After Ahuja, 2009

10.7. RECORDING OF DATA

Recording data during observation is a critical step in the research process. It ensures that the behaviors, events, or phenomena being observed are documented accurately and systematically for further analysis. Below are the key elements involved in recording data in observational research:

- **Timely Documentation:** Data should be recorded promptly during or immediately after the observation to preserve accuracy and detail. Delayed recording increases the risk of missing or misremembering important aspects.
- **Structured Format:** Use structured observation protocols or checklists, which outline specific behaviors or events to be recorded. This ensures consistency across observations and observers.
- **Descriptive Notes:** Observers often take detailed field notes describing what they see and hear. These notes may include direct quotes, physical actions, emotional expressions, and environmental context.
- **Use of Technology:** Audio or video recordings, photographs, or digital entry devices can be used to supplement written notes and provide a more comprehensive record of the observation.
- **Organization:** Data should be organized systematically—categorized by themes, behaviors, settings, or time periods. Labeling and indexing data can facilitate easier retrieval and analysis later.
- **Maintaining Objectivity:** Observers must strive to be objective, avoiding interpretations or assumptions in the initial recording phase. Only observable facts and actions should be documented.

- **Ethical Practices:** Respect for privacy and confidentiality must be maintained. Participants should be informed about the methods of data recording, and informed consent should be obtained, especially if recordings are made.
- **Data Storage:** Observational data must be stored securely to maintain confidentiality and integrity. Proper data management protocols should be followed, including backups and restricted access.
- **Analysis Preparation:** Once recorded, observational data is prepared for analysis using coding, categorization, or statistical methods, depending on whether the data is qualitative, quantitative, or mixed.

10.8. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF OBSERVATIONAL STUDIES

10.8.1. Advantages

- **Accurate Behavior Representation:** Observes behavior directly in natural settings, ensuring authentic data without relying on self-reports.
- **Reliable Data:** Real-world data tends to be more dependable than data collected in controlled environments.
- **Precision through Interaction:** Casual, unstructured interactions provide more precise insights into behavior.
- **Effective for Non-Verbal Groups:** Ideal for studying individuals who cannot express themselves clearly, such as children or animals.
- **Comprehensive Event Examination:** Observing the entire event offers a deeper understanding of all aspects.
- **Detecting Deceptive Responses:** Easier to notice when individuals hide their true responses or intentions.
- **Useful with Reluctant Participants:** Effective when respondents are hesitant to participate directly.
- **Capturing Emotional Responses:** Enables the observation of emotional reactions, although it can be costly.
- **Contextual Understanding:** Provides insights into the broader setting and context of behaviors.

10.8.2. Disadvantages

- **Not Suitable for Historical Events:** Ineffective for studying events that have already occurred.
- **Challenging to Study Opinions:** Internal attitudes and opinions are difficult to observe directly.
- **Instability of Conditions:** Natural settings are unpredictable, making consistent data collection challenging.
- **Difficult to Quantify:** Observational data may not always fit into numerical or predefined categories.
- **Gaining Access to the Group:** Accessing and being accepted by the group can be time-consuming and difficult.
- **Limited Sample Size:** Observational research often works with smaller, non-representative samples.
- **Waiting for Events:** Certain events must occur before data can be collected, causing delays.
- **Time-Consuming and Expensive:** The process requires significant time and financial resources.
- **Challenges in Large Social Environments:** Difficult to implement on a large scale without established protocols.
- **Lack of Control Measures:** The observer cannot manipulate variables, limiting experimental control.
- **Private or Illegal Behaviors:** Some behaviors, like criminal acts, are inherently private and difficult to observe.
- **Observer Bias:** The quality of data can be affected by the observer's skills, biases, and familiarity with the group.

10.9. SUMMARY

Observation is a fundamental research method used to systematically gather data by observing and documenting behaviors, events, or phenomena in a natural setting. It offers a firsthand glimpse into real-time occurrences, allowing for authentic and unfiltered data collection. Observation methods are non-experimental and aim to describe variables or

characteristics of individuals, groups, or settings without manipulation. The data collected can be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods. Participant observation involves the researcher actively engaging with the group being studied to gain an insider perspective, while systematic observation follows a structured approach with predefined protocols to minimize bias. Planning an observational study involves defining objectives, determining variables, choosing the setting, developing protocols, conducting the observation, and recording and analyzing data. Advantages of observational studies include accurate behavior representation, reliable real-world data, and contextual understanding. Disadvantages include the inability to study historical events, difficulty in quantifying data, and potential observer bias.

10.10. GLOSSARY

1. **Observation method:** A research technique involving the systematic watching and recording of behaviors or events as they occur naturally.
2. **Participant observation:** A method where the researcher immerses themselves in the group being studied to observe behaviors from an insider's perspective.
3. **Systematic observation:** A structured method of observation where specific behaviors are recorded using a consistent procedure or checklist.
4. **Qualitative data:** Non-numerical information that captures meanings, descriptions, and concepts, often gathered through interviews or open-ended questions.
5. **Quantitative data:** Numerical data that can be measured and analyzed statistically to identify patterns or relationships.
6. **Natural settings:** Environments where behavior occurs organically without any manipulation or control by the researcher.
7. **Human behavior:** The range of actions and mannerisms exhibited by individuals or groups in response to stimuli or social influences.
8. **Data collection:** The process of gathering information or evidence for research through various methods such as surveys, interviews, or observations.
9. **Non-experimental research:** A research method where the researcher does not manipulate variables but observes and analyzes relationships as they naturally occur.
10. **Social dynamics:** The patterns and processes of change and interaction among individuals and groups within a society.

10.11. ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What is the primary goal of observational research?

- A. To establish causal relationships
- B. To manipulate variables in controlled settings
- C. To describe variables in their natural settings
- D. To conduct surveys and interviews

Answer: C.

2. Which of the following is a key characteristic of observation methods?

- A. Experimental control
- B. Use of manipulated variables
- C. Non-experimental nature
- D. Reliance on participant self-reports

Answer: C.

3. In participant observation, the researcher:

- A. Remains completely detached from the group
- B. Actively engages with the group being studied
- C. Only observes through video recordings
- D. Uses structured coding protocols

Answer: B

4. Systematic observation is best described as:

- A. A structured approach with predefined categories
- B. An unstructured narrative approach
- C. Random observations without protocol
- D. Observations based on emotional intuition

Answer: A

5. Which is NOT an advantage of observational studies?

- A. Real-time data collection
- B. Ability to manipulate variables

- C. Accurate representation of natural behavior
- D. Contextual understanding of phenomena

Answer: B

6. Which method is particularly useful for studying groups like tribal communities or prison inmates?

- A. Systematic observation
- B. Participant observation
- C. Experimental observation
- D. Case study method

Answer: B

7. What is a key limitation of observation methods?

- A. Inability to observe non-verbal behavior
- B. Inability to gather qualitative data
- C. Difficulty in studying historical events
- D. Complete objectivity guaranteed

Answer: C

8. Which tool is commonly used in systematic observation to reduce bias?

- A. Open-ended interviews
- B. Unstructured notes
- C. Participant diaries
- D. Predefined coding system

Answer: D

9. The dual role of a researcher in participant observation can lead to:

- A. Enhanced experimental control
- B. Complete neutrality
- C. Emotional involvement and bias
- D. Quantitative data collection only

Answer: C

10. What ethical issue is especially critical in disguised observation?

- A. Cost of equipment
- B. Informed consent
- C. Observer fatigue
- D. Structured protocol design

Answer: B

10.12. REFERENCES

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10.13. TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Explain the concept of observation as a method of data collection in research. Why is it considered fundamental in the social sciences?
2. Describe the key differences between participant observation and systematic observation. In what contexts might each be more suitable?
3. What are the essential steps involved in planning an observational study? Explain the importance of each step.
4. Discuss the ethical considerations involved in observational research. Why is informed consent especially crucial in disguised observations?
5. Explain how data is recorded during observational research. What tools and techniques ensure accuracy and objectivity in recording?
6. What are the advantages of using observational methods in research? Give examples to support your answer.
7. Highlight the limitations of observation methods. How can these limitations affect the validity of research findings?
8. Define systematic observation and explain how it helps in reducing observer bias. What role does a coding system play in this process?
9. Why is participant observation particularly effective in studying social groups? Discuss the challenges a researcher might face while using this method.
10. How does observation contribute to both qualitative and quantitative research? Give examples of how each type of data might be collected

BLOCK -4: EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

UNIT-11BASICS OF EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH: INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENDENT VARIABLES, CONTROL GROUP, RANDOMIZATION, LABORATORY VS. FIELD EXPERIMENT

11.1 OBJECTIVES

11.2 INTRODUCTION

11.3 INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

11.4 DEPENDENT VARIABLE

11.5 CONTROL GROUP

11.6 EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

11.7 RANDOMIZATION

11.8 TYPES OF EXPERIMENTAL SETTINGS

11.8.1. Laboratory Experiments

11.8.2. Field Experiments

11.8.3. Laboratory vs Field Experiments

11.9 SUMMARY

11.10GLOSSARY

11.11ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

11.12REFERENCES

11.13TERMINAL QUESTIONS

11.1 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, the learner will be able to:

- Define experimental research and explain its significance in establishing cause-and-effect relationships.
- Distinguish between independent and dependent variables and describe their roles in experimental design.
- Identify and explain the purpose of control and experimental groups in research.
- Understand the importance of randomization in ensuring validity and minimizing bias in experiments.
- Compare and contrast laboratory and field experiments, highlighting their merits and limitations in various research contexts.

11.2 INTRODUCTION

Experimental research is a fundamental approach in scientific inquiry that focuses on identifying cause-and-effect relationships between variables. It involves the deliberate manipulation of one or more independent variables to observe their impact on dependent variables, all while controlling extraneous influences. This unit introduces the core concepts and components of experimental research, including independent and dependent variables, control and experimental groups, randomization techniques, and different experimental settings such as laboratory and field experiments. By exploring these elements, learners gain a comprehensive understanding of how experimental research is structured and conducted. The unit also highlights the strengths and limitations of the method, particularly within the context of social sciences where controlling human behavior and environmental variables can be challenging. Ultimately, this foundational knowledge equips students and researchers with the tools to design, analyze, and evaluate experiments critically, thereby contributing to the advancement of scientific knowledge across disciplines.

11.3 Experimental Research

Experimental research is a systematic and scientific approach that investigates cause-and-effect relationships between variables. In this method, researchers deliberately manipulate one or more independent variables to observe the impact on dependent variables while controlling extraneous factors. The primary aim is to establish a clear causal link, distinguishing experimental research from other observational methods that may only suggest correlations.

This approach is fundamental across various fields such as physical sciences, psychology, education, and medicine. Historically, experimental research gained prominence in physical sciences, where controlled laboratory settings allowed precise manipulation and measurement. Social sciences initially faced challenges due to the complexities of human behavior and environmental variables, but advances in methodology have expanded experimental applications in these fields as well.

A well-designed experiment involves key elements: selection of variables, formulation of hypotheses, assignment of subjects to control and experimental groups, manipulation of the independent variable, and measurement of changes in the dependent variable. Randomization is crucial to ensure groups are comparable and to minimize biases. The independent variable, also known as the causal or treatment variable, is intentionally changed, while the dependent variable, or outcome, reflects the effects of these changes.

Definition and Purpose

Experimental research is a systematic method where one or more independent variables are deliberately manipulated to observe their effect on one or more dependent variables, while controlling extraneous factors. The primary objective of this method is to establish a clear cause-and-effect relationship between variables.

According to Festinger, "The essence of experiment may be described as observing the effect on a dependent variable of the manipulation of an independent variable." Similarly, Greenwood defines an experiment as "the proof of a hypothesis which seeks to link two factors into a causal relationship through the study of contrasting situations controlled on all factors except the one of interest." Bedekar adds that experimental research involves controlled observation of successive events to explore causal connections.

The foundation of experimental research lies in the law of the single variable, as described by John Stuart Mill in his "Methods of Experimental Inquiry" (1846). Mill outlined five fundamental rules: the method of agreement, the method of difference, the joint method, the method of residues, and the method of concomitant variations. These methods guided early experimental designs and remain influential today.

The primary aim of experimental research is to validate hypotheses about cause-and-effect relationships. By manipulating an independent variable under controlled conditions, researchers aim to isolate and study its direct impact on a dependent variable. Effective experimentation requires that only one factor is varied at a time, while all other conditions remain constant, allowing a clear observation of the independent variable's effects.

In scientific studies, experimental research is crucial because it provides a strong foundation for establishing causality. It is considered one of the most reliable methods for confirming or disproving scientific theories. While experimentation originated mainly in the physical sciences—where controlled laboratory conditions are easier to create—it has increasingly been adapted for use in social sciences, aided by technological advances and statistical methods.

The experimental method emphasizes control, manipulation, observation, and replication. It provides a clear mechanism for testing theories, allowing researchers to either confirm or reject hypotheses based on observed data. Experiments can identify necessary and sufficient conditions for an event to occur, helping build scientific laws and theories.

Although experimentation faces challenges in social sciences due to the complexity of human behavior and social phenomena, it remains a powerful tool. Experiments can be adapted to natural settings or modified through quasi-experimental designs when true control is difficult.

Significance of Experimental Research in Scientific Studies

Experimental research is fundamental for establishing cause-and-effect relationships, making it vital in scientific studies. It provides high internal validity by systematically manipulating independent variables and observing their effects on dependent variables under controlled conditions. This method ensures that conclusions drawn are based on evidence rather than assumptions. According to Webster's Dictionary, experimentation is essential for proving hypotheses, discovering unknown principles, and testing suggested truths. Greenwood further emphasizes that experiments connect two factors through controlled contrasting situations,

isolating the causal relationship. Widely used in physical sciences like physics, chemistry, and medicine, experimental research allows researchers to manipulate one or more variables and measure their outcomes precisely. By controlling extraneous factors, this approach enhances the accuracy, reliability, and replicability of results, thereby supporting innovation and informed decision-making. Overall, experimental research serves as the cornerstone for advancing scientific knowledge and validating theoretical frameworks.

- **Establishing Causality:** Experimental research is crucial for identifying cause-and-effect relationships by manipulating independent variables and observing changes in dependent variables.
- **Controlling Variables:** It allows for precise control over extraneous variables, reducing alternative explanations and increasing the validity of conclusions.
- **Providing Reliable and Valid Results:** Through structured methodologies and randomization, experimental research ensures minimized errors and biases, making findings reliable, replicable, and generalizable.
- **Informing Decision-Making:** Experimental research provides empirical evidence to guide critical decisions in areas such as product testing, marketing strategies, and operational improvements.
- **Driving Innovation:** Systematic experimentation helps test new ideas and interventions, facilitating the discovery and scaling of successful innovations.

Different Types of Experimental Research

- **Pre-experimental designs**, which lack rigorous controls,
- **True experimental designs**, with random assignment and control groups ensuring robust results,
- **Quasi-experimental designs**, used when randomization is not feasible, relying on statistical controls to infer causality.

Experimental research is essential for hypothesis testing, policy formulation, and innovations in practice. It provides reliable, replicable, and generalizable results, making it the "gold standard" in scientific inquiry. Despite its strengths, it has limitations such as ethical

concerns, high costs, time demands, and sometimes reduced applicability to real-world scenarios due to artificial conditions.

Ultimately, experimental research is indispensable for advancing knowledge by systematically uncovering causal relationships, informing decisions, and validating theoretical frameworks. Its rigorous design principles continue to shape the development of science and practice across disciplines.

Merits of Experimental Method

Experimental method resembles scientific method in many respects. Therefore efforts are being made to make more and more use of this method. Main merits of experimental method are given below:

1. **Problem Solving and Accuracy:** Scientific problems, the appropriateness of techniques, and data accuracy cannot be determined by reasoning alone; experimentation is necessary for their resolution.
2. **Establishing Cause and Effect:** Experimental methods are particularly effective in clearly establishing cause-and-effect relationships. Unlike other methods that only measure associations, experimentation can definitively identify which variable is the cause and which is the effect.
3. **Precision and Accuracy:** Experimental research allows for precise manipulation of the variable under study, ensuring that only the manipulated variable affects the outcome, while other factors remain constant. This helps in determining the specific effects of varying stimuli.
4. **Hypothesis Testing:** Experimental methods are ideal for testing hypotheses. While causal observations can help formulate hypotheses, only experimental methods can verify them.
5. **Verification:** The conclusions derived from experimental methods are open to verification at any time, ensuring reliability and transparency.
6. **Universal Application:** Laws developed through experimentation tend to have universal applicability, though in social sciences, complete universality is rare.
7. **Prediction Accuracy:** Experimental methods allow for accurate predictions based on the results of controlled studies.

Disadvantages of Experimental Research

1. **Ethical Concerns:** Experimental research, especially with human participants, raises ethical issues. Manipulating variables that could harm or stress participants is generally prohibited, and ethical guidelines may limit the scope of the research.
2. **Artificial Settings:** Experiments are often conducted in controlled laboratory environments, which may not reflect real-world conditions. This limits external validity, as the results may not always be applicable outside the laboratory.
3. **High Costs and Time Consumption:** Experimental research can be expensive and time-consuming due to the need for specialized equipment, controlled conditions, and large sample sizes. Designing and analyzing the study also requires significant time and resources.
4. **Practical and Logistical Constraints:** Some variables or phenomena cannot be manipulated in a lab setting. Complex, large-scale, or long-term processes, such as environmental or societal changes, are impractical to study through experiments.
5. **Participant Behavior and Bias:** Participants' awareness of being observed (the Hawthorne effect) can alter their behavior, leading to biased results. Additionally, ethical concerns may arise in experiments using control groups, particularly if participants are denied beneficial treatments.

Experimental Method in Social Sciences

In social sciences, conducting experiments is more challenging compared to physical sciences due to the difficulty in replicating controlled laboratory conditions. Unlike physical experiments, which can be repeated under consistent conditions, social science experiments face the issue of observing human behavior in a laboratory setting. While true experimentation may be limited, advancements in statistical methods have significantly improved social science research.

Experimental research is considered the "gold standard" for examining cause-and-effect relationships. It involves manipulating independent variables, randomly assigning subjects to treatment groups, and observing the outcomes. Laboratory experiments offer high internal validity (causality) but may lack external validity (generalizability) due to artificial settings.

Field experiments, conducted in real-world environments, offer both internal and external validity, though they are harder to execute because controlling extraneous variables is more difficult.

Research designs are categorized into true experimental designs, which require random assignment, and quasi-experimental designs, which do not. Non-experimental research, such as surveys or observational studies, lacks treatment manipulation and random assignment but still provides valuable insights.

11.4 INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT VARIABLE

In research, variables are characteristics or conditions that can take on different values, such as height, age, temperature, or test scores. Researchers manipulate or measure these variables to examine cause-and-effect relationships. There are two primary types of variables: independent and dependent. Independent variables are the conditions or characteristics that the experimenter manipulates or controls to assess their impact on the dependent variables. They represent the cause or factor being tested in relation to the observed phenomena. On the other hand, dependent variables are the outcomes or characteristics that change in response to alterations in the independent variables. They represent the effect or result that the researcher is attempting to measure or observe. Essentially, the independent variable is what is changed by the researcher, while the dependent variable reflects the changes that occur as a result, making the relationship between them key to establishing cause-and-effect conclusions in research.

Example: Imagine you design a study to test whether the amount of sleep a person gets affects their ability to concentrate. The independent variable in this study would be the amount of sleep participants receive, which you manipulate by having one group sleep for 4 hours and another group sleep for 8 hours. The dependent variable would be the participants' concentration levels, measured by their performance on a concentration test. You would compare the test scores of the two groups to see if the amount of sleep has any effect on their ability to focus and concentrate. In this case, the amount of sleep is the cause (independent variable), and concentration levels are the effect (dependent variable).

11.4.1 *Independent Variable*

An independent variable is a factor that a researcher manipulates or varies in an experimental study to explore its effects. It is called "independent" because it is not influenced by any other variables within the study. In educational research, independent variables could include a particular teaching method, type of teaching material, rewards, duration of exposure to a condition, or inherent attributes like sex or intelligence level. The dependent variable, on the other hand, represents the outcomes or changes that are measured as a result of the manipulation of the independent variable.

Independent variables can be classified into two types: treatment variables and organismic (or attribute) variables. Treatment variables are those that the experimenter actively manipulates and to which participants are assigned. Organismic variables are characteristics that cannot be altered by the researcher, such as age, sex, race, and intelligence level. These characteristics are inherent, but the researcher may choose to study them in relation to the research question. For example, the question of whether 8-year-old girls outperform 8-year-old boys in reading achievement would involve an organismic variable (sex), where the teaching procedure is the same for both groups, with no manipulation of the independent variable related to teaching.

Independent variables are also called:

- Explanatory variables (they explain an event or outcome)
- Predictor variables (they can be used to predict the value of a dependent variable)
- Right-hand-side variables (they appear on the right-hand side of a regression equation).

These terms are especially used in statistics, where you estimate the extent to which an independent variable change can explain or predict changes in the dependent variable

Independent variables in research can be classified into two main types: experimental independent variables and subject variables.

- 1. Experimental Independent Variables:** These are variables that researchers can directly manipulate to observe their effects on the dependent variable. In experiments, the independent variable is applied at different levels to assess how varying it influences the outcomes. Researchers might use two levels to check if the independent variable has any effect or multiple

levels to explore its full impact. A true experiment involves random assignment, where participants are randomly assigned to different levels of the independent variable. This process helps control for participant characteristics, ensuring that any changes in the dependent variable are solely due to the manipulation of the independent variable, thus improving the reliability of the results.

- 2. Subject Variables:** These are characteristics of participants that cannot be manipulated by researchers but vary across individuals. Examples include gender, ethnicity, race, income, and education. Since these are inherent characteristics, researchers cannot randomly assign them to participants. Instead, they use quasi-experimental designs, where different groups of participants with varying subject characteristics are compared. However, this method carries the risk of research biases such as selection bias and sampling bias because of the lack of random assignment. Despite these limitations, subject variables are still treated as independent variables in studies that aim to examine their effects.

11.4.2 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is the condition or characteristic that changes, appears, or disappears as a result of the manipulation of the independent variable. It is also referred to as the criterion variable or predicted variable and is typically symbolized by the letter Y. The dependent variable could be a test score, the number of errors made, or the speed at which a task is performed. The symbol Y represents the dependent variable both before and after the manipulation of the independent variable (X).

The dependent variable is essentially the outcome that researchers are interested in measuring, as it "depends" on the changes made to the independent variable. After manipulating the independent variable, the researcher records the changes in the dependent variable, which are then analyzed statistically. These analyses help determine whether and to what extent the independent variable affects the dependent variable.

By examining the data, researchers can estimate how much the variation in the independent variable drives changes in the dependent variable. This allows them to make predictions about how much the dependent variable will change in response to further variations in the independent variable.

In statistics, dependent variables are also called:

- Response variables (they respond to a change in another variable)

- Outcome variables (they represent the outcome you want to measure)
- Left-hand-side variables (they appear on the left-hand side of a regression equation)

11.5 Control Group vs Experimental Group

An experiment typically involves comparing the effects of a specific treatment against another treatment or no treatment at all. In a basic experimental design, there are two main groups: the experimental group and the control group.

The control group does not receive the treatment being tested. It either remains unexposed to the independent variable (X) or is exposed to a different version of it for comparison. The purpose of the control group is to provide a baseline, allowing researchers to observe and compare any changes in the experimental group. The experimental group, in contrast, is exposed to the independent variable, and the changes observed in this group are compared with those in the control group to determine the treatment's effect.

In some experiments, researchers must control for psychological effects that may arise from participants knowing they are part of a study. For instance, the placebo effect can occur when participants feel better simply because they believe they are receiving treatment. To address this, researchers use placebos—harmless, inactive substances that mimic the actual treatment. By comparing outcomes in the placebo group and the experimental group, researchers can isolate the true impact of the treatment.

The Hawthorne effect, discovered in the 1930s at the Western Electric Company's Hawthorne plant, refers to changes in participants' behavior when they are aware they are being observed. This effect, similar to the placebo effect, highlights how awareness of participation can influence the results of an experiment. To minimize these effects, researchers often use placebos or other strategies.

Some experiments may involve multiple experimental groups receiving different levels of treatment. For example, in medical research, different dosages of a medication might be tested across several groups to assess how each dosage affects the outcomes. Similarly, in educational research, different teaching methods or class sizes might be tested on various groups of students to determine which condition produces the best results.

The primary aim of experiments is to isolate the impact of the independent variable (the treatment) on the dependent variable (the outcome). To ensure valid conclusions, researchers

must control for other factors, maintaining consistency across all groups. Random assignment of participants to either the control or experimental group helps eliminate bias and ensures that the groups are as similar as possible at the start of the experiment. This allows researchers to confidently attribute any differences in outcomes to the experimental treatment rather than other uncontrolled factors.

11.5.1 Control Group

A control group consists of participants who do not receive any experimental treatment, serving as a comparison group. The participants in the control group are matched as closely as possible to those in the experimental group in terms of factors such as age, gender, social class, ethnicity, etc. The key difference between the control and experimental groups is that the control group is not exposed to the independent variable, which is the factor believed to cause changes in the behavior being investigated.

Researchers compare the responses of the control group to those of the experimental group to isolate the impact of the independent variable. The control group plays a critical role in the experiment by serving as a baseline. This allows researchers to observe the effects of changes in the independent variable and strengthens the validity of their conclusions. Without a control group, it would be difficult to determine whether the treatment or intervention had a real effect on the experimental group.

The presence of a control group is essential for ensuring the internal validity of a study, making it possible to confidently attribute any differences to the independent variable. Without a control group, the researcher cannot rule out other factors that might influence the results.

Example: To test a new medication for ADHD, one group would receive the new medication (experimental group), and another group would receive a placebo (control group). The placebo group serves as the control group to isolate the effects of the new medication.

Types of Control Groups:

- **Positive Control Group:** This group produces a known response or the desired effect. It is used to confirm the validity of the experiment. For example, when testing a new medication, an already commercially available medication might serve as the positive control to ensure the test's success.

- **Negative Control Group:** This group does not produce the desired outcome and is used to ensure no response occurs due to the treatment. A placebo is often used as a negative control to confirm that no external factors are influencing the results.

11.5.2 Experimental Group

The experimental group is the group exposed to the independent variable, meaning they receive the treatment or intervention being tested. The experimental group consists of participants who are subjected to the specific manipulation of the independent variable. By comparing the responses of this group to the control group, researchers can determine whether the independent variable had any impact on the participants.

At least one control group and one experimental group are required in any experiment. However, an experiment can include multiple experimental groups, each exposed to different conditions of the independent variable. This allows researchers to test varying levels or types of the independent variable and compare their effects on the dependent variable, both within the experimental groups and in comparison to the control group.

Example: In a study to examine if different types of music affect focus while studying, participants are randomly assigned to one of three groups: one group listens to music with lyrics, another group listens to music without lyrics, and the third group listens to no music at all. The group that listens to no music is the control group, while the groups listening to music (with or without lyrics) are the experimental groups.

11.6 RANDOMIZATION

In the theory of sampling, testing the significance of differences between two samples often involves replicating an experiment, which allows for statistical comparison. However, the validity of any experimental test hinges upon adherence to certain underlying principles. One of the most fundamental principles in experimental design is the assumption that the errors of observation are independently distributed. This can be achieved through random sampling and assignment, ensuring that subjects are selected and assigned to treatments without bias. Randomization allows for the assumption of independent errors, although it does not guarantee this independence. Additionally, while the effects of spatial and temporal adjacency cannot

always be quantified, randomization minimizes these effects, making it an essential technique in experimental research.

In some instances, complete randomization may not be feasible or economically practical. In such cases, a judicious combination of randomization and systematic, non-random designs may offer a more pragmatic solution. Randomization refers to the process of selecting and assigning participants to experimental and control groups purely by chance, ensuring that each subject has an equal opportunity to be assigned to any treatment condition, including both experimental and control groups. For example, when assigning subjects to two groups, a coin toss might be used, while for more than two groups, a random number table or dice may be employed.

The primary advantage of randomization lies in its ability to eliminate systematic bias and minimize the influence of extraneous variables. It operates on the principle that the differences between groups should result solely from random chance, a concept grounded in probability theory. These differences, known as sampling error or error variance, can be quantified by the researcher. In contrast, experimental variance refers to differences in the dependent variable that can be attributed to the independent variable under investigation. The significance of an experiment is determined by comparing experimental variance with error variance. If the observed differences between the experimental and control groups are too large to be attributed solely to error variance, they are considered to be the result of the experimental manipulation.

According to Kerlinger (1978), randomization is a structured process by which subjects, treatments, or groups are assigned in a manner that ensures each member of the population has an equal probability of being selected. This mechanism ensures that distinguishing characteristics such as gender, intelligence, or political affiliation are distributed across experimental and control groups, leading to more balanced and representative sample groups over time.

Randomization is not an arbitrary or haphazard procedure; rather, it is a methodical and scientific approach. For instance, in an experiment comparing the effectiveness of conventional teaching methods versus programmed instruction in teaching algebra, randomization can be used to assign subjects to two groups: one group exposed to the conventional method and the other to the programmed instruction. The researcher may assign serial numbers to subjects and use a random number table to ensure that participants are allocated to the appropriate group without

bias. Furthermore, randomization can be applied to other aspects of the experiment, such as the assignment of teachers, classrooms, and equipment.

By conducting appropriate statistical analyses, the researcher can determine whether the differences observed in student achievement are sufficiently large to be considered statistically significant, rather than due to random sampling error. Randomization allows researchers to assume that the groups are comparable at the outset of the experiment, not only with respect to the dependent variable but also with regard to potential extraneous variables. As Ary et al. (1972) assert, randomization ensures that both known and unknown extraneous variables are accounted for, providing greater confidence in the validity of the study's results. Therefore, randomization plays a critical role in maintaining the internal validity of experimental research and in drawing reliable conclusions from experimental data.

11.7 TYPES OF EXPERIMENTAL SETTINGS

An experiment can be defined as a controlled method of investigating natural phenomena, wherein human intervention is deliberately employed to induce a change, differentiating it from passive observation of facts in their natural context. This definition leads to the distinction between two primary types of experimentation: laboratory experiments and field experiments.

11.8.1. Laboratory Experiments

A laboratory experiment is an investigation conducted in a specially designed setting created for the purpose of the experiment. In this controlled environment, the researcher manipulates an independent variable and observes its effects on a dependent variable, while attempting to keep other variables constant.

Purpose of Laboratory Experiments

The primary purposes of laboratory experiments include:

- Discovering causal relationships under conditions where external variables are controlled.
- Testing predictions derived from theories and prior research.
- Refining and validating theories by subjecting them to empirical scrutiny.

Users of Laboratory Experiments

Laboratory experiments are widely used in both the physical and social sciences. While experimentation in social sciences may present unique challenges, it remains a valuable method

for investigating a variety of phenomena, including studies on information-seeking behavior, document usage, and other behavioral patterns.

Merits of Laboratory Experiments

Laboratory experiments offer several advantages, such as:

- Complete control over extraneous variables, allowing for a more precise study of cause-and-effect relationships.
- The ability to manipulate one or more independent variables and study their effects on dependent variables.
- High specificity in defining and operationalizing variables, which enhances the clarity of the research focus.
- The potential to yield precise, replicable results, contributing to the reliability and validity of findings.

Demerits of Laboratory Experiments

Despite its advantages, laboratory experimentation has notable limitations:

- Weakness of the independent variable: Since laboratory environments are artificial, the manipulation of the independent variable may not always elicit strong effects, potentially limiting the relevance of the results.
- Limited flexibility: The highly structured nature of laboratory experiments can reduce the flexibility of the research design, making it less adaptable to unforeseen circumstances or variables.
- Limited external validity: The artificiality of the laboratory setting means that the results cannot always be generalized to real-world situations, where additional extraneous factors may influence the outcomes.

11.8.2. Filed Experimentsatory

A field experiment is a type of experiment conducted in a real-life setting, where the researcher manipulates an independent variable to observe its effects. Unlike laboratory experiments, which are conducted in controlled environments, field experiments offer less control over extraneous variables, as it is difficult to predict and control all the factors in a natural setting.

Uses of Field Experiments

Field experiments are particularly useful for:

- **Testing theories** in real-world settings.
- **Solving practical social problems**, such as improving work culture, enhancing productivity, or increasing efficiency in professional performance.
- Studying **social action programs** and understanding their impact.

A field experiment can be more effective if preceded by a field study, which provides a comprehensive understanding of the setting and the variables at play.

Merits of Field Experiments

Field experiments offer several advantages:

- **Stronger effects of independent variables:** Since field experiments take place in real-life settings, the variables studied often have a more pronounced impact compared to laboratory settings, where artificial conditions may weaken the variable's effects.
- **Relevance to social influence and processes:** Field experiments are particularly useful for studying social influences, processes, and changes in real-world contexts, offering insights into how individuals and groups behave in their natural environments.
- **Suitability for studying complex social phenomena:** Field experiments are ideal for investigating complex social situations that involve multiple interrelated variables, allowing researchers to study social processes in their entirety.

Demerits of Field Experiments

However, field experiments also have some limitations:

- **Practical challenges in manipulating variables and randomization:** In real-life settings, it is often difficult to manipulate independent variables and ensure proper randomization, making it harder to isolate the effects of the independent variable.
- **Lack of precision:** Unlike laboratory experiments, field experiments cannot achieve the same level of precision in measurement, as real-world environments introduce more variability and uncontrolled factors.

11.8 SUMMARY

Experimental research is a systematic approach that investigates cause-and-effect relationships between variables by manipulating independent variables and observing their impact on dependent variables while controlling extraneous factors. It aims to establish clear

causal links and is fundamental across various fields. Key elements of a well-designed experiment include selection of variables, formulation of hypotheses, assignment of subjects to control and experimental groups, manipulation of the independent variable, and measurement of changes in the dependent variable. Randomization is crucial to ensure groups are comparable and minimize biases.

Independent variables are factors that researchers manipulate or vary to explore their effects, while dependent variables are the outcomes or changes measured as a result of the manipulation. Control groups do not receive the experimental treatment and serve as a comparison, while experimental groups are exposed to the independent variable. Randomization is the process of selecting and assigning participants to groups purely by chance, eliminating systematic bias and minimizing the influence of extraneous variables.

Experiments can be conducted in laboratory settings, which offer complete control over extraneous variables, or in field settings, which provide real-life contexts but less control. Laboratory experiments are useful for discovering causal relationships, testing predictions, and refining theories, while field experiments are suitable for testing theories in real-world settings, solving practical problems, and studying social phenomena.

11.9 GLOSSARY

1. **Experimental research:** A scientific approach involving manipulating variables to study cause-and-effect relationships under controlled conditions.
2. **Independent variable:** The factor manipulated or changed by the researcher in an experiment to observe its effect on the dependent variable.
3. **Dependent variable:** The outcome or result measured in an experiment, which is influenced by changes in the independent variable.
4. **Control group:** A group in an experiment that does not receive the experimental treatment, used as a baseline for comparison.
5. **Experimental group:** The group in an experiment that receives the treatment or independent variable, allowing researchers to observe its effects.
6. **Randomization:** The process of randomly assigning participants to different experimental conditions to reduce bias.
7. **Laboratory experiments:** A controlled environment where experiments are conducted under standardized conditions to minimize external influences.

8. **Field experiments:** Studies conducted in real-world settings to test causal relationships between variables, enhancing external validity but facing challenges with controlling extraneous variables. Examples include testing marketing strategies and evaluating policy interventions.
9. **Hypothesis testing:** A statistical method for making inferences about populations, involving formulating hypotheses, choosing significance levels, collecting data, calculating test statistics, and interpreting results. It guides decision-making and supports scientific inquiry.
10. **Research design:** A framework for conducting research, including key elements such as research questions, methodology, data collection, and analysis plans. It can be experimental, quasi-experimental, or non-experimental, depending on the research objectives and constraints.

11.10 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What is the main goal of experimental research?

- A. To describe behavior
- B. To observe natural settings
- C. To establish cause-and-effect relationships
- D. To collect demographic data

Answer: C

2. Which variable is deliberately manipulated in an experiment?

- A. Dependent variable
- B. Control variable
- C. Independent variable
- D. Extraneous variable

Answer: C

3. What is the dependent variable?

- A. The variable that is kept constant
- B. The manipulated variable
- C. The outcome measured in the experiment

- D. The group not receiving treatment

Answer: C

4. What is the purpose of the control group in an experiment?

- A. To ensure manipulation
- B. To receive double treatment
- C. To serve as a baseline for comparison
- D. To receive the independent variable

Answer: C

5. Randomization in experiments is used to:

- A. Assign treatments based on preference
- B. Eliminate experimental variance
- C. Reduce bias and ensure comparability
- D. Measure test accuracy

Answer: C

6. Which of the following is a subject variable?

- A. Teaching method
- B. Type of textbook
- C. Gender
- D. Reward system

Answer: C

7. Laboratory experiments offer:

- A. Greater external validity
- B. High control over extraneous variables
- C. More real-world applicability
- D. Less precision

Answer: B

8. Field experiments are conducted in:

- A. Classroom
- B. A real-life setting
- C. A simulated environment
- D. A laboratory

Answer: B

9. What type of research lacks random assignment and uses statistical controls?

- A. True experimental
- B. Pre-experimental
- C. Quasi-experimental
- D. Survey

Answer: C

10. Which of the following is not an advantage of the experimental method?

- A. Verification
- B. Prediction accuracy
- C. Artificial settings
- D. Cause-and-effect establishment

Answer: C

11. Which group receives the treatment or manipulation in an experiment?

- A. Control group
- B. Random group
- C. Sample group
- D. Experimental group

Answer: D

12. What is a major disadvantage of field experiments?

- A. No manipulation of variables
- B. High control over variables
- C. Difficulty in controlling extraneous variables

D. Lack of practical relevance

Answer: C

13. According to Kerlinger, randomization ensures:

- A. Unequal distribution of characteristics
- B. Systematic assignment
- C. Equal probability of selection
- D. Elimination of dependent variables

Answer: C

14. In statistical terms, the dependent variable is also known as:

- A. Predictor variable
- B. Left-hand-side variable
- C. Treatment variable
- D. Independent variable

Answer: B

15. Which method did John Stuart Mill propose for experimental inquiry?

- A. Theoretical modeling
- B. Survey analysis
- C. Method of agreement and difference
- D. Data mining

Answer: C

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11.12 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Explain the concept of experimental research. How does it differ from other research methods in terms of establishing causal relationships between variables? Illustrate your answer with examples.
2. Describe the roles of independent and dependent variables in experimental research. How are these variables identified and manipulated in the context of a controlled study? Provide relevant examples.
3. What is randomization in experimental research? Discuss its significance, advantages, and limitations. How does it contribute to the internal validity of an experiment?
4. Compare and contrast laboratory experiments and field experiments. What are the merits and demerits of each, and in what contexts are they best suited for use in social science research?
5. Define and explain the functions of control and experimental groups in a typical experimental research design. Why is the use of a control group critical for establishing causality?

6. Discuss the different types of experimental research designs—pre-experimental, true experimental, and quasi-experimental. What are their respective strengths and weaknesses, and when should each be used?
7. Examine the significance of hypothesis testing in experimental research. How does the experimental method contribute to the development and verification of scientific theories?
8. What ethical considerations must researchers keep in mind when conducting experimental research, especially in the social sciences? How can issues like the placebo effect and the Hawthorne effect influence research outcomes?
9. Discuss the role of extraneous variables in experimental research. What strategies can researchers use to control these variables and ensure the reliability of their findings?
10. Evaluate the contribution of experimental research to scientific progress. How has this method been applied effectively across disciplines such as education, medicine, and psychology to drive innovation and inform policy?

***UNIT-12 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS,
QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS, AND SOFTWARE TOOLS
FOR DATA ANALYSIS: SPSS, R, PYTHON***

12.1 OBJECTIVES

12.2 INTRODUCTION

12.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD

12.4 QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

12.5 SOFTWARE TOOLS FOR DATA ANALYSIS

12.6 SUMMARY

12.7 GLOSSARY

12.8 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

12.9 REFERENCES

12.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

12.1 OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

- Explore the fundamental themes and strategies of qualitative inquiry.
 - Learn common techniques used in quantitative data analysis.
 - Familiarize with SPSS, R, and Python as tools for statistical analysis.
 - Identify the strengths and limitations of each software tool.
 - Develop the ability to choose suitable tools and methods based on research needs.
-

12.2 INTRODUCTION

In the evolving landscape of research, the ability to understand, analyze, and interpret data is fundamental across disciplines. This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of two major paradigms in research methodology—qualitative and quantitative—along with the software tools that support data analysis in each. Qualitative research methods are primarily concerned with exploring human behavior, experiences, and social contexts through non-numerical data. These methods prioritize depth, meaning, and context, making them especially valuable in disciplines such as sociology, education, and health sciences. In contrast, quantitative research relies on numerical data and statistical techniques to test hypotheses, identify patterns, and make generalizable conclusions.

To effectively analyze data within these paradigms, researchers often turn to specialized software tools. This chapter highlights three of the most widely used tools in modern research: SPSS, R, and Python. Each tool offers unique features suited to different research needs, from user-friendly interfaces in SPSS to the statistical depth of R and the flexibility of Python for machine learning and large-scale data analysis. By integrating methodological foundations with practical tools, this chapter equips researchers with the knowledge to select and apply appropriate techniques for their data-driven inquiries.

In today's data-rich environment, proficiency in both research paradigms and analytic tools enhances a researcher's adaptability and effectiveness. Understanding the strengths and limitations of each method is essential for designing robust studies and drawing meaningful conclusions. As interdisciplinary research becomes more common, the ability to navigate between qualitative insights and quantitative rigor is increasingly valued across academic and professional settings.

12.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative research methods are used to explore and understand human behavior, emotions, experiences, and social interactions through non-numerical data. Rooted in the phenomenological paradigm, qualitative research seeks to answer the “what” and “why” of human perspectives in natural settings. Unlike quantitative methods, which are grounded in statistical analysis, qualitative research emphasizes context, meaning, and interpretation.

This approach is commonly used in disciplines such as education, sociology, anthropology, and health sciences. It provides deep insights into complex phenomena that cannot be measured numerically. Data collection in qualitative research typically involves in-depth interviews, direct observation, and analysis of written documents, capturing participants' voices, actions, and environments.

THEMES OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Patton (2002) proposes 12 themes that inculcate qualitative research. These themes are summarized in Table 8.1 and are what makes the various qualitative research methods both distinct from quantitative methods and similar to each other. Although not all qualitative methods are consistent with all 12 themes, they all have most of these themes in common. At the same time, quantitative methods, based on the logic-positivistic paradigm, do not adhere to any of these themes. The 12 themes are divided into 3 categories: design strategies, data collection and fieldwork strategies, and analysis strategies.

TABLE- 12.1

Themes of Qualitative Inquiry

Design Strategies	
1. Naturalistic inquiry	Examining real-world scenarios as they naturally develop; not manipulating or controlling; being receptive to whatever comes up (without preset limitations on results).
2. Flexibility in Emergent Design	Being flexible enough to modify research as knowledge grows and/or circumstances alter; the researcher stays away from strict designs that render them unresponsive and follows new avenues for investigation as they become available

3. Purposeful sampling	People, organizations, communities, cultures, events, and critical incidents are examples of cases chosen for study because they are "information rich" and illuminating, meaning they provide practical manifestations of the phenomenon of interest. Therefore, sampling aims to provide insight into the phenomenon rather than empirical generalization from a sample to a population.
Data Collection and Fieldwork Strategies	
4. Qualitative data	Case studies, in-depth investigation, observations that provide rich, detailed descriptions, interviews that provide direct quotes about people's individual viewpoints and experiences, and meticulous document evaluation.
5. Personal experience and engagement	The researcher has direct contact with and gets close to the people, situation, and phenomenon under study; the researcher's personal experiences and insights are an important part of the inquiry and critical to understanding the phenomenon
6. Empathic neutrality and mindfulness	In observation, an empathic attitude entails being totally present (mindfulness); in interviewing, it aims for vicarious comprehension without passing judgment (neutrality) by demonstrating openness, sensitivity, respect, awareness, and responsiveness.
7. Dynamic systems	Regardless of whether the focus is on a person, an organization, a community, or an entire culture, process-oriented thinking views change as constant; as such, it is aware of and sensitive to the dynamics of systems and situations.
Analysis Strategies	
8. Unique case orientation	Assumes that every instance is distinct and exceptional; the initial level of analysis involves accurately describing, honoring, and documenting the specifics of each case under study; Following from and reliant on the caliber of individual case studies is cross-instance analysis.
9. Inductive analysis and creative synthesis	Immersion in the data's nuances and particular to find significant themes, patterns, and linkages; it starts with exploration and progresses to confirmation; it is led by analytical principles rather than laws; and it concludes with a creative synthesis.

10. Holistic perspective	The whole phenomenon under study is understood as a complex system that is more than the sum of its parts; focus on complex interdependencies and system dynamics that cannot meaningfully be reduced to a few discrete variables and linear, cause-effect relationships
11. Context sensitivity	Places findings in a social, historical, and temporal context; careful about, even dubious of, the possibility or meaningfulness of generalizations across time and space; emphasizes instead careful comparative case analyses and extrapolating patterns for possible transferability and adaptation in new settings.
12. Voice, perspective, and reflexivity	A credible voice conveys authenticity and trustworthiness; complete objectivity is impossible, and pure subjectivity undermines credibility. Therefore, the researcher's focus becomes balancing understanding and portraying the world authentically in all its complexity while being self-analytical, politically aware, and reflexive in consciousness. The qualitative analyst owns and is reflective about his or her own voice and perspective.

Source: M. Q. Patton. Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, ©2002, Exhibit 2.1, pp. 40-41. Used with permission of Sage Publications.

KEY QUALITATIVE METHODS INCLUDE:

- **Case Studies:** In-depth examinations of a single instance, group, or phenomenon using multiple data sources.
- **Interviews:** Structured, semi-structured, or unstructured conversations aimed at capturing individual experiences and viewpoints.
- **Focus Groups:** Group discussions that elicit collective perspectives on a topic.
- **Ethnography:** Immersive research where the researcher observes and participates in the daily lives of a community.
- **Grounded Theory:** An inductive method that generates theory from data through iterative coding and analysis.

Qualitative data is typically textual or visual, and its analysis involves techniques such as:

- **Thematic Analysis:** Identifying recurring patterns or themes.
- **Content Analysis:** Systematically examining word usage and frequency.
- **Narrative Analysis:** Studying stories and personal accounts.

- **Discourse Analysis:** Understanding how language shapes meaning in context.

Tools such as **NVivo**, **ATLAS.ti**, and **MAXQDA** support the organization, coding, and interpretation of large qualitative datasets, helping researchers uncover deeper insights efficiently. Additionally, qualitative research recognizes the importance of researcher reflexivity and participant interaction, acknowledging that the researcher's presence and perspective can influence findings. Validity in qualitative research is addressed not by eliminating bias, but by transparently examining it.

In summary, qualitative research methods provide a flexible, context-rich framework for understanding the complexities of human experiences and are an essential counterpart to quantitative methods in modern research.

12.4 QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of data means studying the organized material in order to discover inherent facts. The data are studied from as many angles as possible to explore the new facts. Analysis requires an alert, flexible and open-mind. It is worthwhile to prepare a plan of analysis before the actual collection of data. Good, Barr and Scates (1941, pp. 599-601) suggest four helpful modes to get started on analyzing the gathered data:

1. To think in terms of significant tables that the data permit.
2. To examine carefully the statement of the problem and earlier analysis and to study the original records of the data.
3. To get away from the data and to think about the problem in layman's terms, or to actually discuss that problem with others.
4. To attack the data by making various statistical calculations.

The exploratory modes may prove very helpful in the analysis of data of any research study and no similarities, differences, trends and significant factors would go unnoticed by the researcher.

Statistical techniques have contributed greatly in gathering, organizing, analyzing and interpreting numerical data. The processing of numerical data through statistics calls for competence in the use of statistical methods and for understanding of concepts that underline their development and their application. The researcher must know the strengths and the weaknesses of the statistical methods which he uses so that he may not mislead or be mislead by such methods.

QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

Quantitative data analysis typically involves various statistical techniques, including:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Summarize and describe the features of a dataset. Common measures include mean, median, mode, standard deviation, variance, and frequency distributions.
- **Inferential Statistics:** Help draw conclusions about a population based on a sample. Techniques include hypothesis testing, confidence intervals, t-tests, ANOVA (analysis of variance), and chi-square tests.
- **Regression Analysis:** Used to examine relationships between variables. Linear regression models the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables.
- **Factor Analysis:** Identifies underlying factors that explain the patterns of correlations among multiple observed variables.
- **Multivariate Analysis:** Techniques like MANOVA (Multivariate Analysis of Variance) or multiple regressions analyze the relationships between more than two variables simultaneously.

12.5 SOFTWARE TOOLS FOR DATA ANALYSIS

Software tools are indispensable for conducting quantitative data analysis. Tools like **SPSS**, **R**, and **Python** offer researchers the ability to perform sophisticated statistical analysis, visualize data, and produce detailed reports. Each of these tools has its own strengths, making them suitable for different types of data analysis.

1. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences)

SPSS is one of the most widely used software packages for statistical analysis, particularly in the social sciences. It is user-friendly and has a graphical interface, making it accessible to researchers with little programming experience. SPSS is used a lot in Social Sciences, like economics and psychology. It is popular in Universities and in the academy. It is relatively easy to use and popular among practitioners. It has a graphical user interface. It is strong in analyzing survey datasets.

SPSS stands for Statistical Package for Social Sciences. SPSS was developed in 1968 at the University of Stanford. SPSS was bought by IBM in 2009.

SPSS has built its most popular statistical tests, like ANOVA and linear regressions. So it's very easy and fast to use if you want to run a common statistical test. The output is detailed and the plots are visually appealing.

Features:

- **Data Management:** SPSS allows users to manage large datasets, clean data, and perform preliminary data analysis.
- **Statistical Analysis:** It offers a comprehensive set of statistical tools, including t-tests, ANOVA, regression analysis, and non-parametric tests.
- **Visualization:** SPSS can generate a wide variety of charts and graphs, such as histograms, scatter plots, and box plots.
- **Ease of Use:** The point-and-click interface makes it easy to perform statistical tests without the need for coding.

Applications:

- SPSS is commonly used in social sciences, market research, health research, and education.

2. R

R is a powerful open-source programming language and software environment for statistical computing and data visualization. It is particularly favored for its flexibility and the ability to handle complex statistical analyses and large datasets. It's a programming language that was created specifically for statistics. The first version of R was released in 2000 at the University of Auckland. Because R was created in the academic, it's excellent in prediction and explanatory side of statistics. It's free and has a good and rich library ecosystem. For example, ggplot2 is praised for its graphics and considered by a lot of people better and simpler than Python graphical libraries. R can import datasets from SAS, SPSS, and others. R can also connect to other data sources, like SQL and No SQL datasets.

Features:

- **Statistical Analysis:** R provides advanced statistical techniques, including machine learning algorithms, time-series analysis, and Bayesian statistics.
- **Data Visualization:** R has extensive libraries for creating publication-quality graphics, including ggplot2, which allows for highly customizable visualizations.

- **Packages and Libraries:** The R ecosystem has thousands of specialized packages for different types of data analysis, including dplyr for data manipulation, tidyr for tidying data, and shiny for interactive web applications.
- **Open Source:** As an open-source tool, R is free to use and has an active community of users and developers contributing to its growth.

Applications:

- R is widely used in academia, research, and data science for tasks ranging from basic statistical analysis to complex machine learning models.

3. PYTHON

Python is a versatile programming language that has gained significant traction in the data science community due to its simplicity and extensive libraries for data analysis and machine learning. Of this list, Python is the only programming language not created specifically for statistics. Python was developed by a guy who wanted to create an easy to learn a general-purpose programming language. Because it's easy to learn and free, Python gained a lot of adoption in several fields. Also, programmers created a lot of libraries for Python, including some that can be used for statistics, like Pandas, Numpy and Matplotlib. Python statistical features are excellent in prediction.

Python can handle large datasets with ease. Also, Python is used in production environments. Because it has very good libraries for image processing, data mining and machine learning, Python is growing fast and outperforms the other tools in these fields.

Features:

- **Libraries for Data Analysis:** Python has libraries like **NumPy** for numerical computing, **Pandas** for data manipulation, **SciPy** for scientific computing, and **Stats Models** for statistical modeling.
- **Machine Learning:** Python supports machine learning through libraries like **scikit-learn**, **Tensor Flow**, and **Keras** for building predictive models.
- **Visualization:** Python's **Matplotlib** and **Seaborn** libraries enable researchers to create high-quality visualizations of their data.
- **Flexibility:** Python is more flexible than R or SPSS and is used in a variety of domains, including web development, automation, and data science.

Applications:

- Python is commonly used for data analysis, machine learning, web development, automation, and more. Its versatility and ease of use make it a popular choice for both beginners and experts.

COMPARING SPSS, R, AND PYTHON

While SPSS, R, and Python are all excellent tools for data analysis, each has its own set of advantages and limitations, and the choice of tool often depends on the researcher's needs and familiarity.

- **SPSS** is ideal for beginners who need a user-friendly interface and are primarily conducting traditional statistical analyses. Its graphical interface and point-and-click options make it easy for non-programmers to use.
- **R** is preferred for users who need advanced statistical analysis, data visualization, and the flexibility of open-source software. It is particularly powerful in academia and research, where specialized statistical techniques are required.
- **Python** is a versatile tool used across many domains, and it is especially popular among data scientists and machine learning practitioners. It is more flexible than both SPSS and R, but it may require more programming expertise.

TABLE- 12.2**Comparing SPSS, R, and Python**

FEATURE	SPSS	R	PYTHON
Website	SPSS	R Project	Python
Developed By	IBM	R Foundation for Statistical Computing	Python Software Foundation
License	Proprietary	Open-source	Open-source
Ease of Use	Easy to use with a graphical user interface	Steep learning curve, command-line interface	Moderate learning curve, versatile programming language
Statistical Functions	Wide range of built-in statistical functions	Extensive range of statistical packages and functions	Wide range of statistical libraries and packages
Data	Graphical interface	Powerful data	Powerful data

Manipulation	for data manipulation	manipulation capabilities using packages	manipulation capabilities using libraries like pandas
Visualization	Graphical interface for creating charts and graphs	Extensive graphing capabilities using packages	Extensive visualization libraries like matplotlib, seaborn, and plotly
Machine Learning	Limited support for reproducibility	Excellent support for reproducible research	Good support for reproducibility through Jupyter Notebooks and virtual environments
Reproducibility	Large user community, extensive documentation and online resources	Large and active community, extensive resources	Massive user community across various domains, extensive resources and libraries
Community and Resources	Paid software with different licensing options	Free and open-source	Free and open-source
Cost	Limited support for reproducibility	Excellent support for reproducible research	Good support for reproducibility through Jupyter Notebooks and virtual environments

Source: Compiled from IBM SPSS Statistics, The R Project for Statistical Computing, and Python.org documentation (2024).

12.6 SUMMARY

This chapter provides an integrated overview of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, highlighting their distinct purposes, data collection techniques, and analytical approaches. Qualitative research is rooted in the phenomenological paradigm and emphasizes understanding human experiences, behaviors, and social interactions through rich, non-numerical data. Key methods such as interviews, case studies, ethnography, and thematic analysis are discussed, along with Patton's 12 foundational themes that guide qualitative inquiry. In contrast, quantitative research focuses on numerical data and employs statistical techniques such as

descriptive statistics, inferential analysis, regression, and multivariate methods to uncover patterns and test hypotheses.

The chapter also examines three widely used software tools for data analysis: SPSS, R, and Python. SPSS offers a user-friendly, graphical interface ideal for traditional statistical testing in the social sciences. R is an open-source tool with extensive capabilities in statistical modeling and data visualization, commonly used in academic and research settings. Python stands out for its versatility, scalability, and powerful libraries for data science, machine learning, and automation. A comparative analysis helps readers understand when and how to use each tool based on research goals and technical proficiency. In summary, this chapter equips readers with foundational knowledge of both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, while also introducing practical tools that support modern data analysis across disciplines.

12.7 GLOSSARY

1. **Quantitative Research** – A research method involving numerical data and statistical analysis to identify patterns, test hypotheses, and make generalizations.
2. **Phenomenological Paradigm** – A philosophical approach in qualitative research focused on exploring how individuals perceive and experience phenomena.
3. **Naturalistic Inquiry** – Studying real-world situations as they naturally unfold without manipulation or control by the researcher.
4. **Thematic Analysis** – A method of analyzing qualitative data by identifying, organizing, and interpreting recurring themes or patterns.
5. **Purposeful Sampling** – Selecting information-rich cases that provide deep insight into a specific phenomenon rather than aiming for representativeness.
6. **Inductive Analysis** – A data analysis process that builds theory or meaning from the bottom up, based on patterns emerging from the data.
7. **Reflexivity** – The practice of researchers reflecting on their own influence, biases, and assumptions during the research process.
8. **Descriptive Statistics** – Statistical techniques used to summarize and describe the basic features of a dataset, such as mean, median, and standard deviation.
9. **Inferential Statistics** – Techniques that allow researchers to make conclusions or inferences about a population based on a sample.

10. **Regression Analysis** – A statistical method for modeling the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables.
11. **ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)** – A statistical technique used to compare the means of three or more groups to see if at least one differs significantly.
12. **SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences)** – A widely-used software tool for conducting statistical analysis, especially in the social sciences.
13. **R** – An open-source programming language and environment designed for statistical computing and data visualization.
14. **Python** – A general-purpose programming language popular in data science due to its simplicity and powerful data analysis libraries.
15. **NVivo** – Qualitative data analysis software used to organize, code, and interpret textual and visual data.
16. **MAXQDA** – A software tool for qualitative and mixed-methods data analysis that supports coding and visualization of data.

12.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Qualitative research focuses on exploring human experiences and behaviors through non-numerical data (such as interviews and observations), while quantitative research uses numerical data and statistical methods to identify patterns and test hypotheses.
- Two common data collection methods in qualitative research are in-depth interviews and participant observation.
- Regression analysis is used to examine the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables, helping to understand and predict outcomes.
- SPSS is a user-friendly, point-and-click software often used by beginners for traditional statistical analysis, while R is a programming language with advanced statistical capabilities, requiring more programming knowledge but offering greater flexibility.
- Researcher reflexivity involves being aware of and reflecting on the researcher's influence, biases, and perspectives during the research process, ensuring the authenticity and credibility of the findings.

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12.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

Long Questions

1. Explain in detail the differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods, including the types of data collected, analysis techniques, and applications.
2. Compare and contrast SPSS, R, and Python as software tools for data analysis, detailing their strengths, weaknesses, applications, and which type of research each is most suitable for.
3. Discuss the role of software tools (SPSS, R, and Python) in modern research, highlighting their impact on data analysis, reproducibility, and research efficiency.

Short Questions

1. What is qualitative research primarily focused on?
2. What is the main difference between qualitative and quantitative research?
3. What is the primary purpose of descriptive statistics?
4. What does the term 'reflexivity' mean in qualitative research?
5. What are the advantages of using SPSS for data analysis?

Multiple Choice Questions

1. **Which of the following is NOT typically used in qualitative data collection?**
 - a) Structured surveys
 - b) In-depth interviews
 - c) Focus groups
 - d) Observations
 - **Answer: a) Structured surveys**
2. **Which software is primarily known for being user-friendly and often used for basic statistical analysis in the social sciences?**
 - a) R
 - b) SPSS
 - c) Python
 - d) MATLAB
 - **Answer: b) SPSS**
3. **Which of the following methods is commonly associated with qualitative research?**

- a) Regression analysis
 - b) Thematic analysis
 - c) ANOVA
 - d) Factor analysis
 - **Answer: b) Thematic analysis**
4. **Which of the following techniques is a key feature of quantitative research?**
- a) Thematic analysis
 - b) Narrative analysis
 - c) Hypothesis testing
 - d) Case study analysis
 - **Answer: c) Hypothesis testing**
5. **Which software tool is open-source and known for its flexibility and extensive data visualization capabilities?**
- a) SPSS
 - b) R
 - c) SAS
 - d) Excel
 - **Answer: b) R**
6. **Which qualitative research method involves studying a culture by immersing oneself in a community's daily life?**
- a) Grounded theory
 - b) Ethnography
 - c) Focus groups
 - d) Case study
 - **Answer: b) Ethnography**
7. **Which feature distinguishes R from SPSS?**
- a) R is open-source and highly customizable
 - b) SPSS is preferred for large datasets
 - c) R has no visualization capabilities
 - d) SPSS supports machine learning algorithms
 - **Answer: a) R is open-source and highly customizable**

8. Which of the following is NOT a common use for Python in data analysis?
- a) Data visualization
 - b) Machine learning
 - c) Statistical analysis
 - d) Survey design
 - **Answer:** d) Survey design
9. Which qualitative research method involves collecting detailed personal accounts from individuals?
- a) Focus groups
 - b) Case studies
 - c) Interviews
 - d) Surveys
 - **Answer:** c) Interviews
10. Which of the following is a key feature of SPSS?
- a) Command-line interface
 - b) Extensive programming libraries
 - c) Point-and-click user interface
 - d) Open-source access
 - **Answer:** c) Point-and-click user interface
11. Which method is used to study personal experiences and stories in qualitative research?
- a) Thematic analysis
 - b) Narrative analysis
 - c) Regression analysis
 - d) Cluster analysis
 - **Answer:** b) Narrative analysis
12. Which of the following software tools is most suitable for advanced machine learning and big data applications?
- a) SPSS
 - b) R
 - c) Python

- d) SAS
- **Answer:** c) Python

UNIT-13 RESEARCH ETHICS AND REPORTING: ETHICAL PRINCIPLES IN RESEARCH CONDUCT: INFORMED CONSENT, CONFIDENTIALITY, INTEGRITY. WRITING RESEARCH REPORTS: STRUCTURE, FORMATTING, CITATION STYLES

13.1 OBJECTIVES

13.2 INTRODUCTION

13.3 RESEARCH ETHICS

13.4 ETHICAL PRINCIPLES IN RESEARCH

13.5 WRITING RESEARCH REPORTS

13.6 SUMMARY

13.7 GLOSSARY

13.8 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

13.9 REFERENCES

13.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

13.1 OBJECTIVES

- Understand the meaning and importance of research ethics.
- Identify core ethical principles in research.
- Recognize the role of ethics committees in research approval.
- Explain the concept and process of informed consent.
- Recognize the ethical treatment of research participants.
- Apply ethical principles to real-life research scenarios.

13.2 INTRODUCTION

Ethics lie at the heart of responsible research. Whether in the natural sciences, social sciences, or humanities, researchers must uphold ethical standards to ensure the dignity, rights, and welfare of those involved in or affected by their work. Research is not just about collecting and analyzing data—it is a process that demands integrity, transparency, and accountability at every stage. This chapter explores the core ethical principles that guide ethical research conduct, particularly focusing on informed consent, confidentiality, and research integrity. These principles help protect participants, build public trust, and ensure that findings are credible and valuable. In addition to ethical conduct, the way research is reported plays a crucial role in how it is understood, evaluated, and applied by others. A well-structured, clearly formatted, and properly cited research report reflects professionalism and academic rigor. The chapter also outlines best practices in report writing, including the typical structure of research reports, formatting guidelines, and commonly used citation styles such as APA and MLA. Together, ethical principles and reporting standards form the foundation of quality research that is both responsible and impactful.

As research continues to evolve in an increasingly digital and globalized world, adhering to ethical norms and effective reporting becomes even more critical. Misconduct or poor communication can compromise the value of research and lead to serious consequences. By embracing ethical awareness and strong writing practices, researchers contribute not only to academic knowledge but also to societal progress and informed decision-making.

13.3 RESEARCH ETHICS

The ideas and criteria that govern the design, conduct, management, use, and dissemination of any research involving sentient beings—that is, humans and animals—are known as research ethics. In these guidelines, "research" is defined broadly to include work done as part of Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) mandates that focus on particular efforts (intervention, policy, program), as well as diagnostic and exploratory investigations of social issues of interest.

- Ethics are the set of rules that govern our expectations of our own and others' behavior.
- Research ethics are the set of ethical guidelines that guides us on how scientific research should be conducted and disseminated.
- Research ethics govern the standards of conduct for scientific researchers It is the guideline for responsibly conducting the research.
- Research that implicates human subjects or contributors rears distinctive and multifaceted ethical, legitimate, communal and administrative concerns.
- Research ethics is unambiguously concerned in the examination of ethical issues that are upraised when individuals are involved as participants in the study.
- Research ethics committee/Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviews whether the research is ethical enough or not to protect the rights, dignity and welfare of the respondents.

13.4 ETHICAL PRINCIPLES IN RESEARCH

According to the ESRC, there are six fundamental principles for doing ethical research:

1. Research should strive to minimize risk and harm while maximizing benefits for individuals and society;
2. The rights and dignity of individuals and groups should be respected;
3. Research should be carried out with integrity and transparency;
4. Lines of responsibility and accountability should be clearly defined;
5. Participation should, whenever possible, be voluntary and properly informed;
6. And research independence should be preserved, with conflicts of interest being declared where they cannot be avoided.

Additionally, in keeping with Oxfam's goal of a world free from poverty and acknowledging the privileged position of trust and authority that Oxfam has in connection to the people it serves, ethical research needs to:

- oppose any kind of abuse, exploitation, intimidation, harassment, or discrimination; and
- In no manner permit the misuse of power positions or unequal power dynamics.

The standards and procedures outlined in these guidelines must be followed at every stage of the research project lifecycle to guarantee that these principles inform any study carried out by or for Oxfam.

1. INFORMED CONSENT

The foundation of any ethical study involving human subjects is informed consent. It refers to the process through which individuals voluntarily agree to participate in a study, fully understanding the nature, purpose, potential risks, and benefits of their involvement. Informed consent means that a person knowingly, voluntarily and intelligently gives consent to participate in a research. Informed consent is related to the autonomous right of the individual to participate in the research. Informing the participant about the research objective, their role, benefits/harms (if any) etc.

- **Transparency:** Participants must be given clear and comprehensive information about the study.
- **Voluntariness:** Participation should be entirely voluntary, without coercion or pressure.
- **Right to Withdraw:** Participants should be allowed to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- **Documentation:** Often, a signed consent form is used to confirm that consent has been obtained.

Informed consent respects the autonomy of participants and ensures that their participation is based on an informed decision.

2. CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality involves protecting the privacy of participants and the information they provide. It ensures that personal data is not disclosed without permission and is used solely for the purposes agreed upon.

- **Anonymization:** Removing or altering identifying details in data records.
- **Secure Storage:** Using passwords, encryption, or locked storage for data.
- **Access Control:** Limiting who can view or handle confidential information.
- **Ethical Reporting:** Presenting data in a way that individuals cannot be identified, even indirectly.

Maintaining confidentiality builds trust with participants and protects them from potential harm resulting from misuse of their data. There are some key points for confidentiality.

- Protecting confidential information, personnel records. It includes information such as
- Introduction and objective of the research
- Purpose of the discussion
- Procedure of the research
- Anticipated advantages, benefits/harm from the research (if any)
- Use of research
- Their role in research
- Right to refuse or withdraw
- Methods which will be used to protect anonymity and confidentiality of the participant
- Freedom to not answer any question/withdraw from the research
- Who to contact if the participant needs additional information about the research.

3. *INTEGRITY*

Integrity in research refers to the honesty and accuracy with which research is conducted and reported. It includes:

- **Honest Data Handling:** Avoiding fabrication, falsification, or manipulation of data.
- **Proper Attribution:** Giving credit to sources, collaborators, and contributors.
- **Fair Representation:** Presenting results objectively, even if they contradict the hypothesis or expected outcome.
- **Transparency:** Disclosing limitations, funding sources, and potential conflicts of interest..

Research integrity involves maintaining honesty, transparency, and accountability throughout the research process. It is essential for producing valid, reliable, and trustworthy knowledge.

13.5 WRITING RESEARCH REPORTS

The last phase of the journey in social survey is writing of the report. The researcher is obliged to report his study on its completion. After the collected data has been analyzed, interpreted and various generalizations have been drawn the report has to be prepared in a form which is easily understood and assessed. Report writing is thus the end product of a research activity.

Report writing is a technical activity which requires considerable thought, effort, patience, skill and penetration and an overall approach to the problem, data and analysis as well as firm control over language and greater objectivity. Considerable amount of planning and preparation is necessary for organizing and writing the report. In fact a report is not a complete description of what has been actually done during the period of investigation, but it is only a brief statement of significant facts that are necessary for understanding the generalizations drawn by the researcher. A report is merely an exposition of the question asked, the techniques used to answer it and the answers which were finally developed.

1. STRUCTURE OF A RESEARCH REPORT

For the purposes of presentation of a research report, several style manuals are available which provide guidance to the researcher as to the specific rules on style and format to be followed in reporting findings of his research. Some universities, research organizations or journal boards have established their own format to which their theses, dissertations or research papers must conform, but all formats are somewhat similar to the following outline which comprises three main sections:

PRELIMINARY SECTION

1. **Title page** – Displays the report's title, author, institution, and date.
2. **Preface, including acknowledgements (if necessary)** – Introduces the report and credits those who supported the work.
3. **Table of contents** – Lists sections and page numbers for easy navigation.
4. **List of tables (if any)** – Provides titles and locations of tables in the report.
5. **List of figures, maps or illustrations (if any)** – Lists visuals with titles and page references.

BODY OF THE REPORT OR TEXT***(a) Introduction***

1. **Statement and definition of the problem** – Clearly describes the issue being studied.
2. **Analysis of previous research** – Summarizes earlier studies related to the topic.
3. **Relation of present problem to theoretical position of previous research** – Connects the current study to existing theories.
4. **Statement of specific research objectives** – Outlines what the research aims to achieve.
5. **Significance of the problem** – Explains why the study is important.
6. **Delimitations of the study** – Defines the boundaries and scope of the research.
7. **Assumptions underlying research questions or hypotheses** – States accepted beliefs taken as true for the study.
8. **Statement of research questions or hypotheses** – Lists the questions or predictions guiding the research.
9. **Operational definition of important terms** – Defines key terms as used in the study.

(b) Design of the Study

1. **Procedures employed** – Describes how the research was carried out.
2. **Sources of data** – Identifies where the data came from.
3. **Data gathering instruments** – Lists tools used to collect data (e.g., surveys, interviews).
4. **Sampling and methods of gathering data** – Explains how participants were selected and data was collected.

(c) Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

1. **Text** – Discusses and interprets findings in written form.
2. **Tables (if any)** – Presents numerical data in organized table format within the text.
3. **Figures (if any)** – Visual representations (charts, graphs) included within the text.

(d) Summary and Conclusions

1. **Brief restatement of problem and procedures** – Recaps the issue studied and methods used.
2. **Principal findings and conclusions with their practical implications (if any)** – Summarizes main results and their possible uses.
3. **Suggestions for further research** – Recommends areas for future studies.

OTHER SECTIONS

1. **Bibliography** – Lists sources cited in the report.
2. **Appendix** – Provides supplementary material like raw data or questionnaires.

2. FORMATTING OF A RESEARCH REPORT

Format refers to the general pattern of organization and arrangement of the re-port. The number and types of headings and subheadings to be included in the report are determined by the format used. Although formats may vary in terms of specific headings included, research reports generally follow a format that parallels the steps involved in conducting a study. For example, one format might call for a discussion section and another format might require a summary, conclusions, and recommendations section (or both), but all formats require a section in which the results of the study are discussed and interpreted. All research reports also include a condensed description of the study, whether it is a summary of a dissertation or an abstract of a journal article. Formatting ensures that the report is professional and easy to read. Common formatting guidelines include:

- **Margins:** Typically 1 inch on all sides.
- **Font and Size:** Often Times New Roman or Arial, size 12.
- **Line Spacing:** Usually 1.5 or double-spaced for readability.
- **Headings and Subheadings:** Used to organize content and improve flow.
- **Page Numbering:** Essential for navigation and referencing.

Universities or journals may have specific formatting requirements that researchers must follow strictly.

3. CITATION STYLES

Citation is essential for giving credit to original authors and avoiding plagiarism. Common citation styles include:

- **APA (American Psychological Association):** Used in social sciences. Emphasizes author-date format (e.g., Smith, 2020).
- **MLA (Modern Language Association):** Often used in humanities. Uses author-page number format (e.g., Smith 123).
- **Chicago Style:** Offers both author-date and footnote systems, used in history and other fields.
- **Harvard Style:** Similar to APA, commonly used in business and education.

Each style has specific rules for in-text citations and reference lists. Consistency in citation style throughout the report is crucial.

13.6 SUMMARY

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of research ethics, emphasizing its crucial role in guiding responsible, respectful, and transparent research practices. Research ethics refers to the principles and standards that govern how studies involving humans and animals should be designed, conducted, and reported. Key ethical considerations include obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and maintaining integrity throughout the research process. The chapter outlines six core ethical principles—such as minimizing harm, ensuring voluntary participation, and maintaining accountability—and highlights the role of Research Ethics Committees or Institutional Review Boards in protecting participants' rights. It also addresses practical elements like data protection, proper citation, and honest reporting. Overall, the chapter reinforces that ethical research not only protects individuals but also enhances the credibility and impact of the research itself.

13.7 GLOSSARY

- **Research Ethics** – A set of principles that guide the responsible design, conduct, and reporting of research involving humans or animals.
- **Informed Consent** – The voluntary agreement of a participant to take part in research after being fully informed of its purpose, risks, and benefits.
- **Confidentiality** – The obligation to protect participants' private information and ensure it is not disclosed without permission.
- **Integrity** – The practice of conducting research honestly, transparently, and without fabrication or manipulation of data.
- **Ethical Principles** – Fundamental values such as respect, beneficence, justice, and accountability that underpin ethical research.
- **Anonymization** – The process of removing identifying information from data to protect participants' identities.
- **Voluntariness** – The principle that participation in research must be free from coercion or undue influence.

- **Right to Withdraw** – The participant's freedom to leave the study at any time without penalty or consequence.
- **Institutional Review Board (IRB)** – A committee that reviews research proposals to ensure they meet ethical standards and protect participants.
- **Transparency** – Openly disclosing research intentions, funding sources, limitations, and potential conflicts of interest.
- **Accountability** – The researcher's responsibility to answer for the ethical and scientific quality of their work.
- **Data Protection** – Measures taken to securely store and manage research data to prevent unauthorized access or misuse.

13.8 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Research ethics are principles and guidelines that govern the design, conduct, and dissemination of research involving sentient beings.
- Informed consent is the process where participants voluntarily agree to participate in research after understanding its nature, risks, and benefits.
- Confidentiality ensures that personal information of participants is protected and only used for the agreed purposes.
- Integrity ensures honesty, transparency, and accuracy in data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- A research report summarizes and communicates the study's objectives, methods, findings, and conclusions in a structured format.

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13.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

Long Questions

1. What is research ethics? Explain the concept of informed consent and discuss its importance in ethical research.
2. Explain the structure and format of a research report. Discuss the purpose of each section.
3. What is the role of confidentiality in research, and how can researchers ensure it is maintained?
4. What are the key elements to consider while formatting a research report? Discuss the importance of consistency in formatting, citation styles, and the use of appropriate headings and subheadings in enhancing the readability and professional presentation of research findings.

Short Questions

1. What is meant by research ethics?
2. Define informed consent in the context of research.
3. List any three core principles of research ethics.
4. What is the role of an Institutional Review Board (IRB)?
5. How does confidentiality protect research participants?
5. Why is integrity important in conducting and reporting research?
6. Discuss the process and importance of writing a research report.

Multiple Choice Questions

1. **What is the primary purpose of research ethics?**
 - A. To increase publication rates
 - B. To reduce costs of research
 - C. To guide responsible and respectful research practices
 - D. To make research faster
2. **Which of the following is a key principle of research ethics?**
 - A. Speed of data collection
 - B. Transparency
 - C. Profit maximization
 - D. Popularity of findings

Answer: B

3. **What does 'informed consent' mean in research?**
 - A. Participants are forced to join the study
 - B. Participants are unaware of the study purpose
 - C. Participants voluntarily agree after being fully informed
 - D. Participants only sign a paper without knowing details

Answer: C

4. **Which term describes protecting participants' private data?**
 - A. Consent
 - B. Plagiarism
 - C. Confidentiality

D. Transparency

Answer: C

5. Which principle ensures participants can leave the study at any time?

A. Coercion

B. Anonymity

C. Integrity

D. Right to withdraw

Answer: D

6. What is the role of an Institutional Review Board (IRB)?

A. Funding research

B. Writing research papers

C. Reviewing ethical aspects of research proposals

D. Publishing journals

Answer: C

7. Anonymization refers to:

A. Paying participants anonymously

B. Assigning nicknames to researchers

C. Removing identifying details from data

D. Filing data with government agencies

Answer: C

8. Integrity in research involves:

A. Hiding negative results

B. Honesty and transparency

C. Copying data from others

D. Manipulating outcomes

Answer: B

9. Which of the following is a violation of research ethics?

A. Obtaining informed consent

B. Fabricating data

C. Respecting participant privacy

D. Reporting limitations

Answer: B

10. Confidential information should be stored:

A. On public forums

B. In unlocked drawers

C. Securely with restricted access

D. With participants' families

Answer: C

11. A signed form showing a participant agrees to be part of a study is called:

A. A withdrawal letter

B. A survey sheet

C. A consent form

D. A feedback form

Answer: C

12. Why is ethical research reporting important?

A. To please sponsors

B. To improve academic rankings

C. To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of findings

D. To reduce time spent on analysis

Answer: C



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