

Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches

Eighth Edition



Chapter 1

Why Do Research?

Learning Objectives

- 1.1 Explain how alternatives to social research are used for making decisions.
- 1.2 Describe the scientific approach to social research.
- 1.3 Differentiate between quantitative and qualitative approaches to social research.
- 1.4 Describe the steps in quantitative and qualitative research processes.
- 1.5 Summarize the applications of social research.

1.1 Alternatives to Social Science Research (1 of 2)

Objective: Explain how alternatives to social research are used for making decisions.

- Personal experience and common sense
 - Overgeneralization
 - Selective Observation and Confirmation Bias
 - Premature Closure
 - Halo Effect
 - False Consensus
 - Illusion of Explanatory Depth

1.1 Alternatives to Social Science Research (2 of 2)

- Knowledge From Experts and Authority
 - Someone in power says it is so.
- Knowledge Based on Popular and Media Messages
 - Most people are weak with regard to scientific literacy, geographic knowledge, and clear logical thinking.
- Knowledge Subordinated to Ideological Beliefs and Values
 - Scientists at government agencies are replaced by political appointees.

1.2 What Research Involves: A Scientific Approach (1 of 4)

Objective: Describe the scientific approach to social research.

- Science
 - Scientific research is about 500 years old.
 - People previously relied on oracles, mysticism, astrology, etc.
 - Three meanings to science
 - Author defines science as a system for producing knowledge and the body of knowledge that results from it

1.2 What Research Involves: A Scientific Approach (2 of 4)

- Pseudoscience, Junk Science and “Real” Science
 - Scientific Literacy
 - People who lack literacy in qualitative and quantitative science easily accept pseudoscience and make errors of judgment.
 - Only 25-28 percent of people in the U.S. are scientifically literate.
- The Scientific Community
 - A social institution of people, organizations, and roles, as well as a set of norms, behaviors, and attitudes.

1.2 What Research Involves: A Scientific Approach (3 of 4)

- The Scientific Community's Norms and Values
 - Universalism
 - Organized Skepticism
 - Disinterestedness
 - Communalism
 - Honesty
- Scientific Method, Attitude, and Orientation
 - A search for explanation may be a better description.

1.2 What Research Involves: A Scientific Approach (4 of 4)

- Communication in Science
 - Scholarly journal articles
 - Blind reviews
- Science as a Transformative Process
 - The research process transforms ideas, theories, guesses, or questions into a finished product.

1.3 Varieties of Social Research

Objective: Differentiate between quantitative and qualitative approaches to social research.

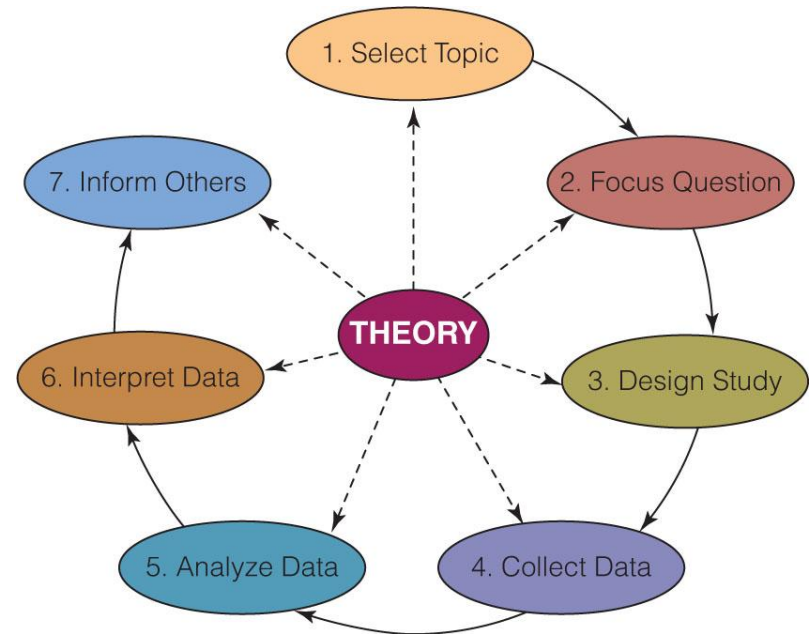
- Both quantitative and qualitative approaches use a variety of research techniques.
- Both approaches share core scientific principles.
- According to Ragin, the key features common to all qualitative methods can be seen when they are contrasted with quantitative methods.

1.4 Steps in the Research Process (1 of 2)

Objective: Describe the steps in quantitative and qualitative research processes.

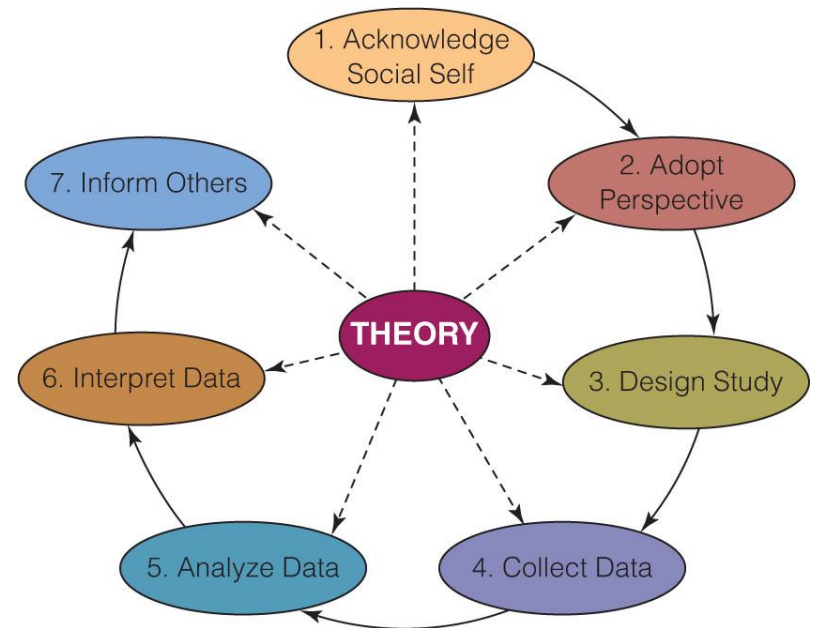
- Quantitative

1. Select a topic.
2. Focus the question.
3. Design the study.
4. Collect data.
5. Analyze data.
6. Interpret data.
7. Inform others



1.4 Steps in the Research Process (2 of 2)

- Qualitative
 1. Acknowledge self and context.
 2. Adopt a perspective.
 3. Design a study.
 4. Collect data.
 5. Analyze data.
 6. Interpret data.
 7. Inform others.



1.5 Why Learn How to Conduct Social Research?

Objective: Summarize the applications of social research.

- Advance knowledge of the social world in ways that avoid the failings on nonscientific methods.
- Improve decision-making
- Distinguish valuable research from bogus or poorly conducted studies, pseudoscience, or misused research.

Conclusion

- Social science research is for, about, and conducted by people.
- Social research is a human activity.
- Social researchers conduct research to discover new knowledge and to understand the social world.
- You will be enriched if you create a personal link between yourself and the research process.

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