

RESEARCH PARADIGM (Methodology)

Broadly two types of Research Model

Quantitative

Also known as Traditional, Positivist¹, Experimental or Empiricists

Qualitative

Constructivist, Naturalistic, Interpretive, Post-positivist or Postmodern² perspective
(Methodological pluralism)

Assumption	Question	Quantitative	Qualitative
Ontological (Nature of Reality)	What is the nature of Reality?	Reality is objective and singular, apart from the researcher	Reality is subjective and multiple as by participants in a study
Epistemological (Relationship to that being researched)	What is the relationship of the researcher to that researched?	Researcher is independent from that being researched	Researcher interacts with that being researched
Axiological (Role of Values)	What is the role of values	Value-free and unbiased	Value-laden and biased
Rhetorical (Use of language/words)	What is the language of research?	Formal, based on set definitions, impersonal voice, use of accepted quantitative words	Informal, evolving decision, personal voice, accepted qualitative words

¹ Positivism is the term used to describe an approach to the study of society that relies specifically on scientific evidence, such as experiments and statistics, to reveal a true nature of how society operates.

² Postmodernism relies on concrete experience over abstract principles, knowing always that the outcome of one's own experience will necessarily be fallible and relative, rather than certain and universal.

Methodological (Overall process of Research)	What is the Process of Research?	Deductive process; Cause and effect; Static Research design – categories isolated before study; Context free (independent) generalizations leading to predictions, explanation, and understanding’ Accurate and reliable through validity and reliability (testing)	Inductive process; mutual simultaneous shaping of factors; Emerging design-categories identified during research process; Context bound; Patterns and theories developed for understanding; Accurate and reliable through verification
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Research Techniques

Interview

- In qualitative interview only some questions and topics are predetermined. Many questions formulated during interview.
- Questions may be asked according to a flexible checklist or guide, and not from a formal questionnaire. This is semi structured interview.
- Interviewer is not just conversation. There are questions on experience, behaviour, on opinions or values, on feelings, on needs, knowledge and background data. There are presupposition questions and neutral questions, simulation questions etc. And questions may address past, present or future.
- Interviews are undertaken with individuals or groups and can be categorised:
 - a. **Individual:** With a sample of **purposely** selected respondents to obtain representative information. If the interview is a part of exploratory process, the sample should be as differentiated as possible. It quickly reveals a range of opinion, attitudes and strategies (men/women, rich / poor, different ethnic groups, religion, different age).
 - b. **Key Informants:** Aims to obtain special knowledge, they are not necessarily ‘leaders’. Outsiders with inside knowledge are often valuable key informants as they have other people’s knowledge, attitude and

practices besides their own. There is a risk of being misled by biased information.

- **Group interview/ Group discussion:** provides access of general community information. Large number difficult to manage. The sum is more than addition of individual replies.
- **Focus group interview/ Focus group discussion:** address a specific topic. Six to eight people who under the minimum guidance of a facilitator, discuss a particular topic in detail. It is indeed an interview and not a problem solving session.

Case Study

- The case study strategy provides opportunity to intensely investigate one case in depth rather than examining several cases simultaneously.
- The use of the case study is the preferred strategy when studying a real world issue, because it allows the researcher to maintain a holistic approach and provide meaningful characterizations of the real life situations.
- The case study can facilitate the investigation of a contemporary phenomenon in a real life context.
- A case study is unique and identifiable with clearly defined boundaries. In Forensic Science it can include practicing crime scene investigations.
- The case study strategy is useful when there exists a high level of interest and close proximity between the phenomenon under study and researcher.
- The researcher should use as many sources of information as possible to substantiate the validity of a case study as convergence of the inquiry methods usually provides reliable findings.
- Case studies, in which the researcher explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals.
- The case(s) are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time
- According to Yin (2003) a case study design should be considered when:
 - a. the focus of the study is to answer —how| and why| questions;
 - b. you cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study;
 - c. you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or
 - d. the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context.
- Both Stake (1995) and Yin (2003) base their approach to case study on a constructivist paradigm.

Ethnography

- Primary research tradition within anthropology
- Provides a framework for studying the meanings, patterns, and experiences of a defined cultural group in a holistic fashion
- Engaged in extensive fieldwork, often participating to the extent possible in the life of the culture under study
- Ethnography may be defined in terms of both as a process (method or fieldwork) and a product (outcomes of the processes or writings) (Barnard & Spencer, 2002).
- To understand context, complexity, and the politics of social processes ethnography were used as a process, in a truly qualitative sense (Warren, 2004).
- The primary aim of the ethnographic approach is to provide qualitative information of a sensitive issue that may not be unearthed in surveys or formal investigation.
- But the ethnographic data might be helpful to construct meaningful protocols of interviews or surveys of that population (Kane, 1998).
- Ethnography can be used for exploring the details of the experience, evaluating the relevance, observing patterns, considering phenomena through the cultural perspective, thick description (Morse & Richards, 2002) and classifications, parameters, etc observations.
- Thick description not only signifies rich descriptions of participants experiences of phenomena but also of the contexts in which those experiences occur.

Participant observation

- Participant observation, which is synonymous to ethnography to many scholars, involves holding the role of participant and observer, insider and outsider, in tension so as to ensure that one is close enough to see what is going on, but not so close to miss the wood for the trees (Das et al., 2014).
- The role has been variously described as the marginal native, professional stranger, self-reliant loner, and detached participant. Participant-observation is a global conception of the use of culturally and linguistically sensitive categories and interactions with the members of a society (Abramson & Herdt, 1990; Herdt & Stoller, 1990).

Research Ethics

- A set of prescriptive moral rules and behavioural codes relating to what is right or wrong, or appropriate and inappropriate.
- Concerned with universal moral principles and duties towards others.

Following Brewster Smith (2000)-



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