

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IN SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH: CONCEPTS, APPROACHES AND APPLICATIONS

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Abstract

Research methodology plays a crucial role in social science research as it provides a systematic framework for identifying problems, collecting data, analysing findings, and drawing valid conclusions. A sound methodology ensures reliability, validity, and scientific rigor in the research process. This paper discusses the concept, significance, major approaches, and practical applications of research methodology in social science studies. It highlights qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method approaches along with tools such as sampling, questionnaire design, and data analysis techniques. The study emphasizes that the choice of methodology must align with the research problem and objectives for meaningful outcomes.

KEYWORDS:

Research
Methodology
Social Science
Research
Qualitative
Method
Quantitative
Method
Mixed Method

INTRODUCTION

Research is a systematic and scientific process of discovering new knowledge or verifying existing facts. In the field of social sciences, research methodology serves as the backbone of any investigation. It guides the researcher in selecting an appropriate design, methods of data collection, sampling techniques, and tools for analysis.

Methodology differs from methods. While methodology refers to the overall research framework and logic, methods are the specific tools such as surveys, interviews, and observations used for data collection.

In the present era, research methodology has gained immense importance due to the increasing demand for evidence-based studies in economics, education, sociology, and other disciplines.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the concept of research methodology.
2. To study the major approaches used in social science research.

3. To examine the significance of research design and sampling.
4. To analyse the role of data collection and interpretation.

MEANING OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study. It explains why a particular method or technique is used and how it helps in achieving the research objectives.

A good research methodology helps in:

- defining the research problem,
- formulating hypotheses,
- selecting tools,
- ensuring data accuracy,
- interpreting findings scientifically.

MAJOR APPROACHES OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Qualitative Research- Qualitative research focuses on understanding human behavior, attitudes, experiences, and perceptions. It is descriptive in nature.

Tools used:

- Interviews
- Focus group discussions
- Case studies
- Observation

This method is useful where in-depth understanding is required.

2. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Quantitative research deals with numerical data and statistical analysis.

Tools used:

- Surveys
- Structured questionnaires
- Statistical tests
- Graphs and tables

This approach is objective and useful for measuring relationships and patterns.

3. MIXED METHOD RESEARCH

Mixed methodology combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the problem.

For example, a researcher may use questionnaires for numerical data and interviews for opinions and experiences.

Research Design

Research design is the blueprint of the study. It outlines how the research will be conducted.

Types include:

- Descriptive design
- Exploratory design
- Experimental design
- Analytical design

A proper research design improves the quality and credibility of research findings.

Sampling Techniques

Sampling refers to selecting a representative group from the population.

Types of Sampling

- Random sampling
- Stratified sampling
- Purposive sampling
- Convenience sampling

Proper sampling ensures accuracy and generalizability.

Data Collection Methods

Data can be collected through:

Primary Data

- Questionnaire
- Interview
- Observation
- Schedule

Secondary Data

- Books
- Journals
- Government reports
- Research articles

Data Analysis

After data collection, the next step is analysis.

FOR QUANTITATIVE STUDIES:

- percentage analysis
- mean, median, mode
- correlation
- regression
- SPSS / Excel tools

For qualitative studies:

- thematic analysis
- content analysis
- narrative interpretation

Importance in Social Science Research

Research methodology helps researchers:

- improve objectivity,
- reduce bias,
- ensure reliability,
- support policy decisions,
- generate valid academic knowledge.

It is especially important in economics and education research where evidence-based conclusions are required.

CONCLUSION

Research methodology is the foundation of any scientific study. In social science research, it ensures that investigations are systematic, reliable, and valid. The choice between qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods depends upon the nature of the problem and objectives of the study. A strong methodology ultimately strengthens the credibility and usefulness of the research.

REFERENCES

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