

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

- Different techniques and approaches are adopted by researchers in various disciplines of social sciences to carry out research. However basic logic of scientific methodology is the same.
- Therefore generic models have been developed which can be applied to a number of disciplines in social sciences.
- Doing research involves a process or a series of linked activities moving from beginning to end or an order of basic phases.
- For beginners' it is useful to work through steps of research process though with experience one can change it.
- The process is not rigid absolutely but there is a sense in which it will be weakened or made more difficult if the first steps are not executed carefully.
- Nevertheless, the practice shows that you can start research from anywhere and even work simultaneously on some of these steps.

STEPS INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

- The research process begins with a researcher selecting a TOPIC- a general area of study or issue.
- The researcher then narrows down or FOCUSES the topic into a specific research question that is to be addressed in the study.
- When learning about a topic and narrowing down the focus, the researcher usually reviews past research or the LITERATURE, on a topic or question.
- The next step involves making decisions about the many practical details of doing (DESIGN) the research.
- Now the researcher is ready to GATHER THE DATA or evidence.
- Once the data has been collected, the next step is to manipulate or ANALYSE THE DATA to see any patterns that emerge.
- The patterns or evidence help the researcher give meaning to or INTERPRET the data.

- Finally the researcher INFORMS OTHERS by writing a report that describes the background to the study, how he/she conducted it, and what he/she discovered

STEPS IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

1. Choose Topic
2. Focus Research Question
3. Literature Review
4. Research Design
5. Collect Data
6. Analyze Data
7. Interpret Data
8. Research Report
9. Inform Others

THE HOUR-GLASS NOTION OF RESEARCH PROCESS

1. Begin with Broad Questions
2. Narrow Down, Focus in
3. Operationalize
4. Observe
5. Analyze Data
6. Reach Conclusions
7. Generalize Back to Questions