

## **Difference Between Research Methods and Research Methodology**

Research Methods and Research Methodology are two terms that are often confused as one and the same when strictly speaking they are not so as they have many differences between them. One of the primary differences between them is that research methodology explains the methods by which you may proceed with your research. On the other hand, research methods are the methods by which the research is conducted into a specific subject or a topic.

### **Research Methodology**

Research can be defined as “an activity that involves finding out, in a more or less systematic way, things you did not know” (Walliman and Walliman, 2011, p.7). “Methodology is the philosophical framework within which the research is conducted or the foundation upon which the research is based” (Brown, 2006).

Research methodology is **the science of systematically solving a research problem**. Often recognised as how a research is to be done scientifically, research methodology involves the learning of the various techniques we can use in the conduct of research such as the conduct of tests, experiments, surveys and critical studies. These methods have been properly tested and utilised and, therefore, each one has a logic behind them. Research methodology aims at the employment of the correct procedures to find out solutions and paves the way for research methods to be conducted properly. Research methodology is the guidebook of research and is a science in itself.

Taking for example the subject matter, ‘employment of figures of speech in English literature,’ research methodology will involve the study about the tools of research, collation of various manuscripts related to the topic, techniques involved in the critical edition of these manuscripts and the like.

Methodology is the study of how research is done, how we find out about things, and how knowledge is gained. In other words, methodology is about the principles that guide our

research practices. Methodology therefore explains why we're using certain methods or tools in our research.

McGregor and Murnane (2010, p. 2) write,

*The word methodology comprises two nouns: method and ology, which means a branch of knowledge; hence, methodology is a branch of knowledge that deals with the general principles or axioms of the generation of new knowledge. It refers to the rationale and the philosophical assumptions that underlie any natural, social or human science study, whether articulated or not. Simply put, methodology refers to how each of logic, reality, values and what counts as knowledge inform research."*

Research Methodology chapter of a research describes research methods, approaches and designs in detail highlighting those used throughout the study, justifying my choice through describing advantages and disadvantages of each approach and design taking into account their practical applicability to our research.

O'Leary (2004, p.85) describes methodology as the framework which is associated with a particular set of paradigmatic assumptions that we will use to conduct our research. Allan and Randy (2005) insist that when conducting a research methodology should meet the following two criteria:

Firstly, the methodology should be the most appropriate to achieve objectives of the research.

Secondly, it should be made possible to replicate the methodology used in other researches of the same nature

The differences between objectivist and subjectivist dimensions are presented by Cohen et al (2007) as taken from Greenfield (1975) in the following manner:

<b>Dimensions of comparison</b>	<b>Objectivist</b>	<b>Subjectivist</b>
<b>Philosophical basis</b>	Realism – the world exists and can be studied as it is	Idealism – the world exists, but is studied differently by different people
<b>Role of social science</b>	Exploring universal laws of the society and the behaviour of people within it	Exploring how the world is interpreted by different people
<b>Basic units of social reality</b>	Society or organisation(s)	Individuals
<b>Comprehension methods</b>	Studying the type and nature of various relationships that allow the collectivity to exist	Studying subjective meanings that individuals impose upon their actions
<b>Theory</b>	A rational construction that has been proposed by researchers in order to explain the human behaviour	Sets of meanings used by individuals in order to interpret their world and behaviour
<b>Research</b>	Validation of theory through experimentation or quasi-experimentation	Looking for meaningful relationships and establishing the consequences of actions
<b>Methodology</b>	The use of quantitative analysis and mathematical methods	The analysis and interpretation of reality
<b>Society</b>	Is managed by a set of general values, rules and regulations	Is managed on the basis of values possessed by people with power

The most comprehensive information regarding vital aspects of methodology is provided by Jackson (2011) that can be summarised in the following table:

Goal met	Research methods	Advantages/disadvantages
<i>Description</i>	Observational method Case study method Survey method	Allows description of behaviour(s) Does not support reliable predictions Does not support cause-and-effect explanations
<i>Prediction</i>	Correlational method Quasi-experimental method	Allows description of behaviour(s) Supports reliable predictions from one variable to another Does not support cause-and-effect explanations
<i>Explanation</i>	Experimental method	Allows description of behaviour(s) Supports reliable predictions from one variable to another Supports cause-and-effect explanations

Source: (Jackson, 2011)

## Research Methods

Research methods can be defined as the **various ways and means of conducting a research that involve the conduct of experiments, tests, surveys and the like**. It can be said that research methods aim at finding solutions to research problems. There are many types of research methods. For example, exploratory research which helps define and identify a problem. Then, empirical research, which uses empirical evidence to test the feasibility of a solution. Constructive research aims at testing theories in turn, proposing solutions to a query. Research methods can be further broken down to four categories such as Descriptive research, which involves research vs analytical data; Applied research, which deals with research vs basic research; Quantitative research, which involves research vs quantitative; Conceptual research dealing with empirical research.

## Research Methods vs Research Methodology

- Connection to Research:
- Research methodology is rooted in the existence of the methods. Research methods are in the primary line of conducting the research.
- Use:

- Research methodology explains what and how appropriate certain means and methods will be to a certain subject.
- Research methods consist of the techniques that allow studies and experiments to be successfully initiated, performed and concluded.
- Stages of Research Involved:
- Research methodologies are employed at the beginning of the experiment to explain the purpose of the chosen methods and how they will serve its function.
- Research methods are more useful during the latter part of a research or an experiment since they are being utilized for conclusions to be appropriately made.

In conclusion, one can say while research methodology is a multidimensional subject, research methods constitute a part of the broad term of research methodology.

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