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Assignment

Explain the various research methods and how they can be applied.

Answer

A research method is a systemic plan for conducting research. Qualitative and quantitative research methods which include experiments, survey research, participant observation, and secondary research are used in research.

Types of Research Methods

1. Interview: This interview is conducted with one participant at a given point in time. In one-to-one interviews, a researcher is required to prepare questions in advance and only ask the most important questions to the participant. This type of interview lasts anywhere between 20 minutes to 1 hour and during this time the researcher is required to collect as many reasonable answers as possible from the participants to draw inferences.
2. Experiments: An experiment is a research method for investigating cause and effect under highly controlled conditions. When conducting an experiment, researcher will test a hypothesis. A hypothesis is a statement of how two or more variable are related. Participants who take part in research involving experiments might be asked to complete various tests to measure their cognitive abilities such as; attention, reasoning ability, concentration, word recall, etc. The results of different groups are then compared. The aim of these tests is not to judge people or measure intelligence, but look for links between performance and other factors. The study might include intervention such as a training programme, or the introduction of a change in the person's living environment (e.g. background noise, different lighting, different care routine) or different forms of interaction (e.g. linked to physical contact, interaction time etc). The interaction will often be followed by a test, sometimes before and after the intervention. Some studies are within-group design study based on one group. The researchers might be interested in observing people's behaviours or reaction before and after a certain intervention (e.g. a training programme). However, in most cases, there are two groups (a between-subjects design). One of the group serves as a control group and is not exposed to the intervention. This is quite similar to the procedure in clinical trials whereby one group does not receive the experimental drug. This enables researchers to compare the two groups and determine the impact of the

interaction. Alternatively, the two groups might differ in some way and this difference is of interest to the researchers.

3. **Ethnological Research:** Ethnological research is a detailed and in-depth form of research where individuals are observed in their natural environment. This method is demanding due to the necessity of the researcher to enter the natural environment of other people and geographical locations can sometimes be a constraint as well. The researcher experiences the normal setting and daily life of a group of people instead of conducting interviews.
4. **Case Study:** Case study research is used to study an organization or entity, and this method is one of the most valuable options for modern research. This type of research is used in fields such as philosophical studies, psychological studies, and the education sector. This method involves a deep dive into ongoing research and the collection of data.
5. **Focus Groups:** Focus groups are small groups of around 6-10 participants who are usually experts in a subject matter. A moderator is assigned to a focus group who facilitates the discussion between group members, and who has an important role in conducting the focus group due to experience. An experienced moderator can make inquiries from the participants by asking valid questions that will help to collect a large amount of information related to the research.
6. **Text Analysis:** Text analysis is used to analyze social constructs by decoding words through any available form of documentation. The researcher is required to study and comprehend the context in which the documents are written and then try to get significant inferences from it. Researchers these days follow activities on social media platforms to try and comprehend thought patterns.
7. **Descriptive Research:** Descriptive research is a method which identifies the characteristics of an observed phenomenon and collects large amounts of information. This method is used to depict the participants in a systemic and accurate manner. Descriptive research is about observation from a phenomenon, and drawing conclusions from it.
8. **Survey Research:** Surveys involve collecting information, usually from fairly large groups of people. The purpose of survey research is to acquire knowledge about a large population by the development of a survey. In this method, the researcher designs a survey with the most relevant survey questions and distributes the survey. Once responses are received, the researcher summarizes them and tabulates meaningful findings and data. There are different types of survey. The most straightforward type is the “one shot survey” which is administered to a sample of people at a set point in time. Another type is the “before and after survey” which people complete before a major event or experience and then again afterwards. Surveys are usually designed to produce relatively short answers, rather than extensive responses.
9. **Questionnaires:** Questionnaires are a good way to obtain information from a large number of people. The people are required to take their time, think about it and come back to the questionnaire later. Participants can state their views and

feelings about the particular subject matter privately without worrying about the possible reaction of the researcher. The individuals should be encouraged to answer the questions honestly in order to avoid the researcher from drawing false conclusions from their study. Questionnaires contain multiple choice questions, attitude scales, open-ended questions and closed questions.

10. Participant Observation: Participant observation is the most widely used strategy for the collection of qualitative data. Participant observation is a research method in which investigators systematically observe people in their routine activities. Fieldwork makes most participant observation exploratory and descriptive and has very few hard and fast rules. Unlike other research methods, participant observation may be a lengthy process. In fact, the researcher may be required to stay in the field for weeks or even months.

From a scientific point of view, participant observation lacks scientific rigor because it depends on the viewpoint of a single person. However, its personal approach is also its strength-an observant researcher can often gain important insight into people's behaviour that a survey or interview cannot obtain.

Observation can be overt or covert as well.