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QUESTIONS

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

Research methods are broadly classified as **Qualitative** and **Quantitative**. Both methods have distinctive properties and data collection methods.

1. Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative research is a method that collects data using conversational methods. Participants are asked open-ended questions. The responses collected are essentially non-numerical. This method not only helps a researcher understand what participants think but also why they think in a particular way.

Types of qualitative methods include:

- Interviews:

This is usually carried out in person i.e. one-to-one but can also be administered by telephone or using more advance computer technology such as Skype. Sometimes they are held in the interviewee's home, sometimes at a more neutral place. The interviewer (which is not necessarily the researcher) could adopt a formal or informal approach, either letting the interviewee speak freely about a particular issue or asking specific pre-determined questions. This will have been decided in advance and depend on the approach used by the researchers. A semi-structured approach would enable the interviewee to speak relatively freely, at the same time allowing the researcher to ensure that certain issues were covered.

When conducting the interview, the researcher might have a check list or a form to record answers. This might even take the form of a questionnaire. Taking notes can interfere with the flow of the conversation, particularly in less structured interviews. Also, it is difficult to pay attention to the non-verbal aspects of communication and to remember everything that was

said and the way it was said.

During this time the researcher collects as many meaningful answers as possible from the participants to draw inferences. Consequently, it can be helpful for the researchers to have some kind of additional record of the interview such as an audio or video recording. They should of course obtain permission before recording an interview.

- Focus Groups:

Focus groups are small groups comprising of around 6-10 participants who are usually experts in the subject matter. A moderator is assigned to a focus group who facilitates the discussion amongst the group members. A moderator's experience in conducting the focus group plays an important role. An experienced moderator can probe the participants by asking the correct questions that will help them collect a sizable amount of information related to the research.

- Ethnographic Research:

Ethnographic research is an in-depth form of research where people are observed in their natural environment without This method is demanding due to the necessity of a researcher entering a natural environment of other people. Geographic locations can be a constraint as well. Instead of conducting interviews, a researcher experiences the normal setting and daily life of a group of people.

- Text Analysis:

Text analysis is a little different from other qualitative methods as it is used to analyze social constructs by decoding words through any available form of documentation. The researcher studies and understands the context in which the documents are written and then tries to draw meaningful inferences from it. Researchers today follow activities on a social media platform to try and understand patterns of thoughts.

- Case Study:

Case study research is used to study an organization or an entity. This method is one of the most valuable options for modern. This type of research is used in fields like the education sector, philosophical studies, and psychological studies. This method involves a deep dive into ongoing research and collecting data. Case studies have a very narrow focus which results in detailed descriptive data which is unique to the case(s) studied. Nevertheless, it can be useful in clinical settings and may even challenge existing theories and practices in other domains.

2. Quantitative Research Methods

Quantitative methods deal with numbers and measurable forms. It uses a systematic way of investigating events or data. It is used to answer questions in terms of justifying relationships with measurable variables to either explain, predict, or control a phenomenon. There are three methods that are often used by researchers:

- Survey research:

It involves collecting information, usually from fairly large groups of people, by means of questionnaires but other techniques such as interviews or telephoning may also be used.

There are different types of survey. The most straightforward type (the “one shot survey”) 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. Once the researcher receives responses, they summarize them to tabulate meaningful findings and data.

- Descriptive research:

Descriptive research is a method which identifies the characteristics of an observed phenomenon and collects more information. This method is designed to depict the participants in a very systematic and accurate manner. In simple words, descriptive research is all about describing the phenomenon, observing it, and drawing conclusions from it.

- Correlational research:

Correlational research examines the relationship between two or more variables. Consider a researcher is studying a correlation between cancer and married women have a negative correlation with cancer. In this example, there are two variables: cancer and married women. When we say negative correlation, it means women who are married are less likely to develop cancer. However, it doesn't mean that marriage directly avoids cancer.

Experiments

People who take part in research involving experiments might be asked to complete various tests to measure their cognitive abilities (e.g. word recall, attention, concentration, reasoning ability etc.) usually verbally, on paper or by computer. The results of different groups are then compared. The study might include an intervention such as a training programme, some kind of social activity, the introduction of a change in the person's living environment (e.g. different lighting, background noise, different care routine) or different forms of interaction (e.g. linked to physical contact, conversation, eye contact, interaction time etc.). Often the interaction will be followed by some kind of test (as mentioned above), sometimes before and

after the intervention. In other cases, the person may be asked to complete a questionnaire (e.g. about his/her feelings, level of satisfaction or general well-being).

Some studies are just based on one group (within-group design). The researchers might be interested in observing people's reactions or behaviour before and after a certain intervention (e.g. a training programme). However, in most cases, there are at least two groups (a between-subjects design). One of the groups 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 intervention. Alternatively, the two groups might differ in some important way and it is that difference that is of interest to the researchers.