
Social Research

Nature, Types
and
Scientific Method

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Nature of Social Research

- ❖ Research that draws on the social sciences for conceptual and theoretical inspiration
- ❖ Motivated by development and change in society (such as rise in worries about security or binge-drinking)
- ❖ It employs social scientific ideas to illuminate those changes
- ❖ Unlike natural sciences, social sciences lack the power of exact prediction- irregular nature of human behaviour
- ❖ Cause and effect are difficult to be segregated

Types of Social Research

Descriptive Vs Analytical

- ❖ Descriptive research- surveys and fact finding studies; to describe the state of affairs as it exists at present; also called *Ex post facto research*; researcher has no control over the variables, he/she can only report what is happening; cause and effect
- ❖ Analytical research- researcher has to use facts or information already available, analyse these facts to make critical evaluation of the material

Types

Applied Vs Fundamental

- ❖ Applied Research- finding a solution for an immediate problem
- ❖ Fundamental Research- pure or basic type; concerned with generalisations and with the formulation of a theory; gathering knowledge for knowledge sake

Types

Qualitative Vs Quantitative

- ❖ Qualitative- concerned with phenomena relating to quality; discovering the underlying motives and desires; understanding why it happens- explaining in words
- ❖ Quantitative- based on the measurement of quantity or amount; applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity- numbers

Types

Conceptual Vs Empirical

- ❖ Conceptual research- related to abstract ideas or theory- to develop new concepts or theories or to reinterpret existing ones
- ❖ Empirical- relies on experience and observation; data based research; coming up with conclusions capable of being verified; first hand information at their sources

One-time research or Longitudinal research; field-setting research or laboratory research; historical research, conclusion oriented research etc..

SCIENTIFIC METHOD

“there is no short-cut to truth, no way to gain a knowledge of the universe except through the gate way of scientific method”

-Karl Pearson

- ❖ Social research is based on scientific method
- ❖ A systematic step-by-step procedure following logical process of reasoning
- ❖ Rigorous, impersonal mode of procedure dictated by the demands of logic and objective procedure
- ❖ Objective- logical- systematic method

Two Elements of Scientific Method

- ❖ **Procedural Component-** Observation , hypothesis and verification are the three procedural components
- ❖ **Personal Components-** resourcefulness, ability, attitude and other skill sets that the researcher needs to possess

Basic Features

- ❖ It relies on Empirical Evidence
- ❖ It utilises relevant Concepts
- ❖ It is committed to only objective considerations
- ❖ It presuppose ethical neutrality
- ❖ Results in probabilistic predictions
- ❖ Its methodology is made known to all concerned for critical scrutiny are for use in testing the conclusions through replication
- ❖ Logical Reasoning Process- Induction(IPG) & Deduction (DGP)

However, whether human behaviour can be categorised, studied and analysed scientifically is highly debatable!!!