

Research Methods in Human Sciences

Human Sources : Relationships, Social Processes

- Combination of methods while doing research with humans
- People are inaccurate reporters of their own behavior, not conscious about misrepresentation of self
- Approach data collection - 5 Ws
- Comparable sites for research
- Learning to listen with human participants
- Good sample size
- Important of layout the questionnaire process
- Keep questionnaires as simple as possible, reasonably broad and unambiguous
- Phrased respectfully and not personally intrusive topics
- MCQs -> decent replies (options should not be mutually exclusive)
- Qualitative + quantitative questions
- Interviews - face-to-face -> advantages and disadvantages
- Changing questions according to response
- Homework - since many people don't say things they don't think are relevant
- Word association, hierarchy, etc in the region of research
- Associate events , eg : before the time of Gandhi, etc
- Precise information in precise settings, really good insights in informal ; therefore remain open ; be empathetic to the needs to the person you are questioning
- Establishing trust
- History of your life - ask for better understanding
- Focus groups (hand-picked and 6-12 people ; similar groups) + self-assessment questionnaires
- Entry and exit tickets - views before and after the discussion
- Participatory research - live with people for an extended amount of time
- Combination of data to realise that bias might be implicit and you won't understand unless you explore from different angles

Data Sources : Numbers

- Evidence
- Bad use of data that is collected
- Cherry picking of data - most common problem when doing research ; mostly unconscious - pick those bits which suit your hypothesis or theory or more of those and fewer of those going against - incomplete data of a particular sort (intent put in the collection of data to reach a particular goal) - incomplete because there is an intent to misrepresent - deliberately incomplete (deliberate could be conscious or unconscious)+
- Confirmation bias fallacy - when you are doing an inductive research and you start with a hypothesis, you look at data that confirm your biases
- Insufficient data

- Question of originality and the question of following of herd
- Types of data collected
- Huge amounts of data - cherry picking, confirmation and selection bias (pressure to do this)
- Less amount of data - very basic data also leads to cherry picking and fallacies
- Confirmation bias is in the outcome/the theory
- Cherry picking leads to confirmation bias
- Cherry picking - easy to access (attraction) ; easy to clean up and annotate
- Cherry picking data is often preceded by building a bibliography which caters to your predilections, your methodological and ideological tilt
- Bibliography - academic intellectual foundation for cherry picking ; hides this bad evidence - pushes you in a certain direction
- You have a certain bias, you confirm it to your bibliography, to your literature survey which builds your hypothesis which directs you towards certain data
- Method of contestation in public life = politics ; identify a weak point in your opponent ; the weakest link the argument and build argument in but in research, look for the strongest argument in the opposition picture and then "yet, my theory..."
- Common error - insufficient data when researchers start their generalizations, theory-building, analysis ; often it is bonafide mistake
- Cherry picking is prior to the event whereas insufficient happens during analysis or after event
- When insufficient -> re-collect or re-calibrate - lower your significance bounds (rethink your research question)
- Then you say gaps in data for so and so reasons which then weaken our hypothesis and generalizations in whatever manner (list them) - reality ; re-collect - expectation
- Don't jump to conclusions in case of insufficient data - weakens research
- Too much data - data noise (without good tools) ; too little - cherry picking
- Lack of originality is also a shade of plagiarism
- Derivative research

Data Source : Correlations

- Fallacies
- Ad hominem - directed against person instead of the argument ; argument is reduced to what the person is
- Straw Man fallacy - building something up to attack it - easier to demolish the opposition's argument and push ours ; exaggerates the opposition's argument and uses it as the claim of the opposition and then attacks it
- Steel Man (opposite of straw man) - makes your argument more stronger than the opposition's ; enables you to position your argument well - your argument is based on the opposition's - it is both complementary and oppositional
- Faulty authority fallacy - mentioning an authority and giving it a credible amount of authority without showing your research actually has a link to that authority

- In this fallacy, importance of references, citations become essential
- 4th fallacy - Mistake people make that correlations somehow equal causation (know it is not self-evident) ; needs to be argued out independently
- 5th fallacy - to make an appeal to tradition, social pride (tradition and pride) ; pride of society, culture or disciplinary
- Common knowledge need not be cited but assumptions are problematic
- Methodological nationalism (fallacy)
- Error - determinism - a very strong argument for path dependence - the past and present dictate the future entirely and necessarily by the laws through which they work, that is, every human can be explained by laws just like physics or chemistry ; there are no exceptions, if yes then it means that we don't know the laws entirely
- Earlier - Divine laws have already decided what we are going to do - we are predesigned
- Now causal determinism = determinism implies social events and structures can be entirely explained
- Error because there is no one cause ; there are multiple causes and antecedent conditions and they are all interacting with each other
- Cultural, historical, geographic, economic, gender, caste, etc determinism - range of determinism and we assume an inevitability in it
- Conceptual stretching - earlier known as concept misinformation - a concept stretched to accommodate different concepts/systems ; stretched beyond original meanings
- Therefore, breakdown the attributes of the concept ; primary, secondary, attributes following primary, secondary, etc. define concept to demarcate it from other concepts

Design a Research Project

- Research Project
- Reading to show bonafide research
- Overlap - debates, archives/sources/data, publishing
- Literature review - basis of your research - survey of significant literature on the theme/area/topic
- Identify the research gap - undiscovered part of the field