

Difference Between Hypothesis and Research Question

Main Difference – Hypothesis vs Research Question

Research question and hypothesis are the foundations of a research study. Formulating the research question or developing the hypothesis can help you to decide on the approach of the research. A research question is the question the research study sets out to answer. Hypothesis is the statement the research study sets out to prove or disprove. The main difference between hypothesis and research question is that hypothesis is predictive in nature whereas research question is inquisitive in nature.

What is a Hypothesis?

A hypothesis is a prediction about the relationship between two or more variables. It can be described as an educated guess about what happens in an experiment. Researchers usually tend to use hypotheses when significant knowledge is already available on the subject. The hypothesis is based on this existing knowledge. After the hypothesis is developed, the researcher can develop data, analyze and use them to support or negate the hypothesis.

Not all studies have hypotheses. They are usually used in experimental quantitative research studies. They are useful in testing a specific theory or model. A complete hypothesis always includes the variables, population and the predicted relationship between the variables. The main disadvantage of hypotheses is that their tendency to blind a researcher to unexpected results.

What is a Research Question?

A research question is the question a research study sets to answer. However, a research study can have more than one research question. The research methodologies, tools used to collect data, etc. all depend on the research question.

Research questions are often used in qualitative research, which seek to answer open-ended questions. But they can also be used in quantitative studies. Research questions can be used instead of hypotheses when there is little previous research on the subject. Research questions allow the researcher to conduct more open-ended queries, and a wide range of results can be reported.

A properly constructed research question should always be clear and concise. It should include the variables, population and the topic being studied.

Difference Between Hypothesis and Research Question

1. Definition

Hypothesis is a tentative prediction about the relationship between two or more variables.

Research Question is the question a research study sets to answer.

2. Nature

Hypothesis is predictive in nature.

Research Question is inquisitive in nature.



3. Existing Research

Hypothesis can be used if there is significant knowledge or previous research on this subject.
Research Question can be used if there is little previous research on the subject.

4. Quantitative vs Qualitative

Hypothesis is mainly used in experimental quantitative studies.
Research Question can be used in both quantitative and qualitative studies.

5. Outcomes

Hypothesis doesn't allow a wide range of outcomes.
Research Question allows a wide range of outcomes.

