

# Expert Speak - Perspectives in Research

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## **Introduction:**

Research is a powerful way to understand what is known and delve in to explore the unknown. The source of inspiration comes from a genuine concern for the wellbeing of the society and how one can use one's knowledge to enhance it. The point is that one has to break the confidence heuristic, and base the research initiatives on scientific knowledge embedded in theoretical and empirical evidence. There are a variety of methods and approaches available to inquire about the research problem in question such as conflict or interpersonal interaction or feminism or community resilience. The social scientists try to understand the social phenomena through various methods of inquiry best suitable to investigate the problem. Efforts are devoted to explore the domain of interest and social significance as accurately and precisely as possible, by recording the data objectively so that it can be verified by another researcher as well. Research is a scientific approach to collect information and develop theories based on facts. It's like a Pandora's box, as we keep opening up new pieces of information, more keep surfacing up. The most integral component of pursuing research in social sciences and humanities is the genuine concern for humanity, a sense of sensitivity for the common man and empathy for those suffering and a need to contribute to the wellbeing of the society in creating a common good.

## **Qualitative vs quantitative approaches:**

The quantitative research approaches focus to gain an understanding of the various concerns in the social world by using techniques as experiments, surveys, correlational and descriptive methods. These methods provide an objective assessment of the behavior in quest in a quick and easy way. The data can be gathered via questionnaires, or scales or standardized psychological tests or through carefully designed experiments. There is an impressive growth in the adoption of experimental procedures in social sciences research. Different kinds of experimental designs systematically help to study phenomenon in laboratory or field settings controlling for extraneous sources of variation. The data through experimental method and surveys help to determine the cause

and effect relationships with more confidence and making conclusive predictions about the observed modes of behavior, emotions and cognition. Various tools of analysis as ANOVA, Regressions, MANOVA, Correlation etc. help the social scientists to make objective assessments of the data under observation. Though there are certain limitations while using experimental techniques for examining certain social issues, yet their importance cannot be undermined.

While the qualitative and mixed methods involve different kinds of challenges. The qualitative methods are very flexible in their approach unlike the quantitative methods where explicit criteria for data collection and analysis is laid down (Levitt, Bamberg, Creswell, Frost, Josselson and Suarez-Orozco,2018). Qualitative methods evaluate the subject of interest with a broadened perspective, using narratives (e.g., Bamberg, 2012),case study (e.g., Fishman & Messer, 2013), critical (e.g., Fine,2013), phenomenological (e.g., Giorgi, 2009), grounded theory (e.g., Charmaz, 2014), ethnographic (e.g., (Suzuki, Ahluwalia, Mattis, & Quizon, 2005),thematic analysis (e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2006) or other techniques to describe the subject matter in detail and search for an explanation within the cultural context. The qualitative methods are considered as non-scientific or systematic as the data is viewed form the subjective description of the experiences. The researcher draws inferences based upon the patterns of the observed phenomenon which informs their recommendations. The resources for drawing meaning are few yet detailed examinations of the contextualized descriptions which provide in-depth information about the characteristic in question. Unlike the quantitative approach where the researcher follows a structured design with the intention of verifying the hypotheses, the qualitative data is exposed to intense analysis in an attempt to explore the specificity with open mindedness and reflexivity. Since in qualitative approach the focus is on the context in which the behavior or social processes are examined, the positionality of the investigator with respect to time, place, relation and situation is quintessential. The context in which the investigator is situated is an important factor to be considered while interpreting the data.

Mixed methods integrate the data from qualitative inquiry and transforms it into numerical data for quantitative analysis. In fact it incorporates both quantitative and qualitative approaches to generate new perspective to research data with novel insights into the processes. There are many studies who have used mixed method designs in researches (Creswell & Clark, 2011) as convergent designs, exploratory sequential design or explanatory sequential designs. The research design aims to facilitate the goal of the research and mediates the selection of the research method for investigation.

### **Ethics in research:**

The goal of research is to explore the phenomenon, understand the context and develop a theoretical basis of explanation of the behavior as interpersonal communication, social discourse, social injustice, discrimination etc and facilitate an understanding of the psychological implications of the conduct. In this endeavor it is imperative that the researcher is sensitive to the psycho-social environment and the participants of the research. The designing and implementation of the research should be focused on ethical principles in various steps of planning, executing, data collection, analysis and sharing the findings. Researchers not only respect the members of the society or the population under investigation but also indulge in ethical practices to uphold their safety, confidentiality and respect to the core. Apart from informed consent, debriefing is an integral part of the research process. The methodological integrity can be gauged by the appropriateness of the procedures used in research and the significance of approach for enhancing the applicability of research goal. The onus of the reliability and validity of the research findings are based on the credibility of the researcher. Following ethical guidelines for pursuing research, as data collection, evaluation and dissemination of the findings plays an integral role in providing authentic information that is beneficial for the cognitive science in the psycho -social domain. The reviewers of the journal face a great deal of challenge while reviewing the content of the manuscripts, the way the information is reported, and analysis is appropriate to the goal of the research study. Their recommendations help to standardize the presentation of the research ideas in a constructive manner, following APA standardization in publication of the research findings in an organized manner.

This journal provides a scientific platform to feature scholarly works of current research in social issues and humanities. Its a great initiative to improve access to the research endeavors across disciplines in India as well as globally. The publication will highlight the relevance of psychological research in a variety of issues in the social, psychological, cultural domain, such as gender diversity, social wellbeing, discrimination, health, social justice, adjustment, group behavior, social cohesion to name a few. The journal will cover a broad range of areas pertaining to social science research. There will be ample opportunity for research ideas in progress, research summaries, complete empirical papers about the status of research so far. Further the journal will feature articles using qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods so that the reader can gain as much as possible form various perspectives in pursuing research.

### **Future of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities:**

Pursuing research in social sciences and humanities is a very sensitive matter and utmost precautions are to be taken to carefully design the research study, decide on the procedures, selection of tools and sample under investigation. Reflecting on the appropriateness of the research methods and critical appraisal of the procedure will help to overcome any systematic deficiencies that malign the research practices. For a researcher it is important to evaluate the research progress and look for gaps that need to be focused upon. Instead of randomly adopting methods because they are popular or easy, the approach should be to develop novel paradigms of approaching the research subject. Applying knowledge from the previous researches, adequately introspecting the way ahead with a multidisciplinary approach and encouraging interaction with policy makers would enable in solving the major problems that ail our society today. Apart from conducting research authentically, it is also important to publish it so that the knowledge can reach out globally for the benefit of mankind.

I must congratulate the efforts of G D Goenka University in bringing out this Journal on Perspectives in Social Science and Humanities Research online bi-annually. It is a wonderful opportunity for young researchers to share their finding with the other academicians and scholars and reaching out to make a difference.

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