



THE CSS POINT
Yes We Can Do It!

Social Research (Complete)

Agha Zohaib Khan

What is Research?

- ▶ Research is the systematic process of collecting and analysing information (data) in order to increase our understanding of the phenomenon with which we are concerned or interested.
- ▶ Research involves three main stages:
 - planning**
 - data collection**
 - analysis.**

Research Process

- Originates with a question or problem.
- Requires a clear articulation of a goal.
- Follows a specific plan of procedure.
- Usually divides the principle problems into more manageable sub-problems (hypotheses), which guide the research.
- Accepts certain critical assumptions.
- Requires collection and interpretation of data to answer original research question.



What is Social Research

- ▶ It is research involving social scientific methods, theories and concepts, which can enhance our understanding of the social processes and problems encountered by individuals and groups in society.
- ▶ Social research is the scientific study of society. More specifically, social research examines a society's attitudes, assumptions, beliefs, trends, stratifications and rules.
- ▶ It is conducted by sociologists, psychologists, economists, political scientists and anthropologists.

Social Research is the Scientific Process

- ▶ It involves the systematic collection of methods to produce knowledge.
- ▶ It is objective.
- ▶ It can tell you things you do not expect.
- ▶ It consists of theory and observation.
- ▶ Sometimes called 'soft sciences' because their subject matter (humans) are hard to measure precisely.
- ▶ It is an empirical research – i.e. facts are assumed to exist prior to the theories that explain them.

Types of Research

- ▶ Ranjit Kumar classified the social research from three perspectives.
 1. Application of Research Study
 2. Objectives in understanding the research.
 3. Inquiry Mode employed

e of the inquiry mode

Types of Research From the viewpoint of

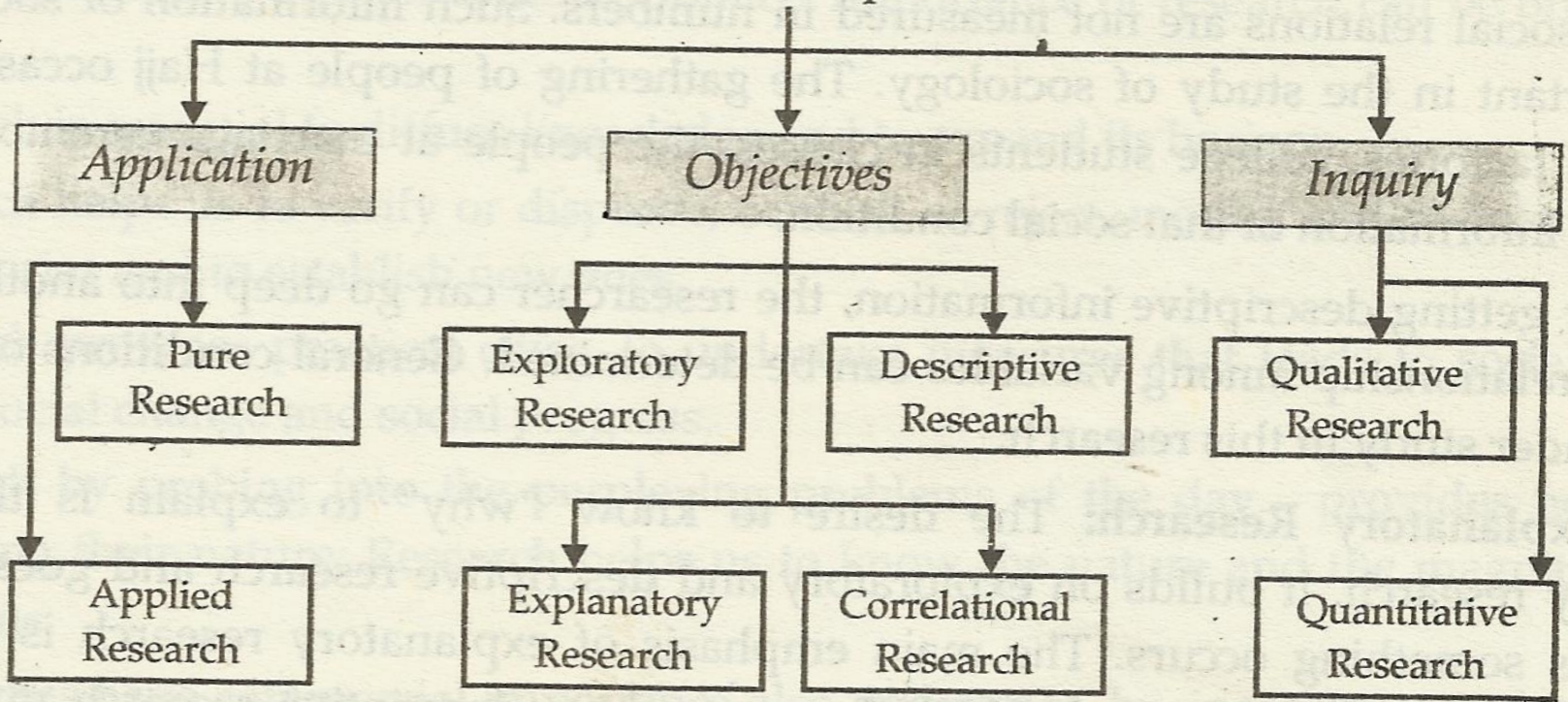


Fig. 3.1: Types of research from three perspectives.

Importance and Uses of Social Research



Salient Features of Good Research

- ▶ The objectives of a good research are very much clear and precise in nature. It is known to both to the researcher as well as reader.
- ▶ The research questions are properly phrased in good research. The scope, importance and limitation of the study are clearly defined.
- ▶ A good research is extremely based on the review of the relevant literature and grounded theory.
- ▶ Methodology is also one of the important factors in deciding the fate of research. Well-articulated methodology, keeping in view of the requirement of the study, is the guarantee of the reliability and validity of the facts.

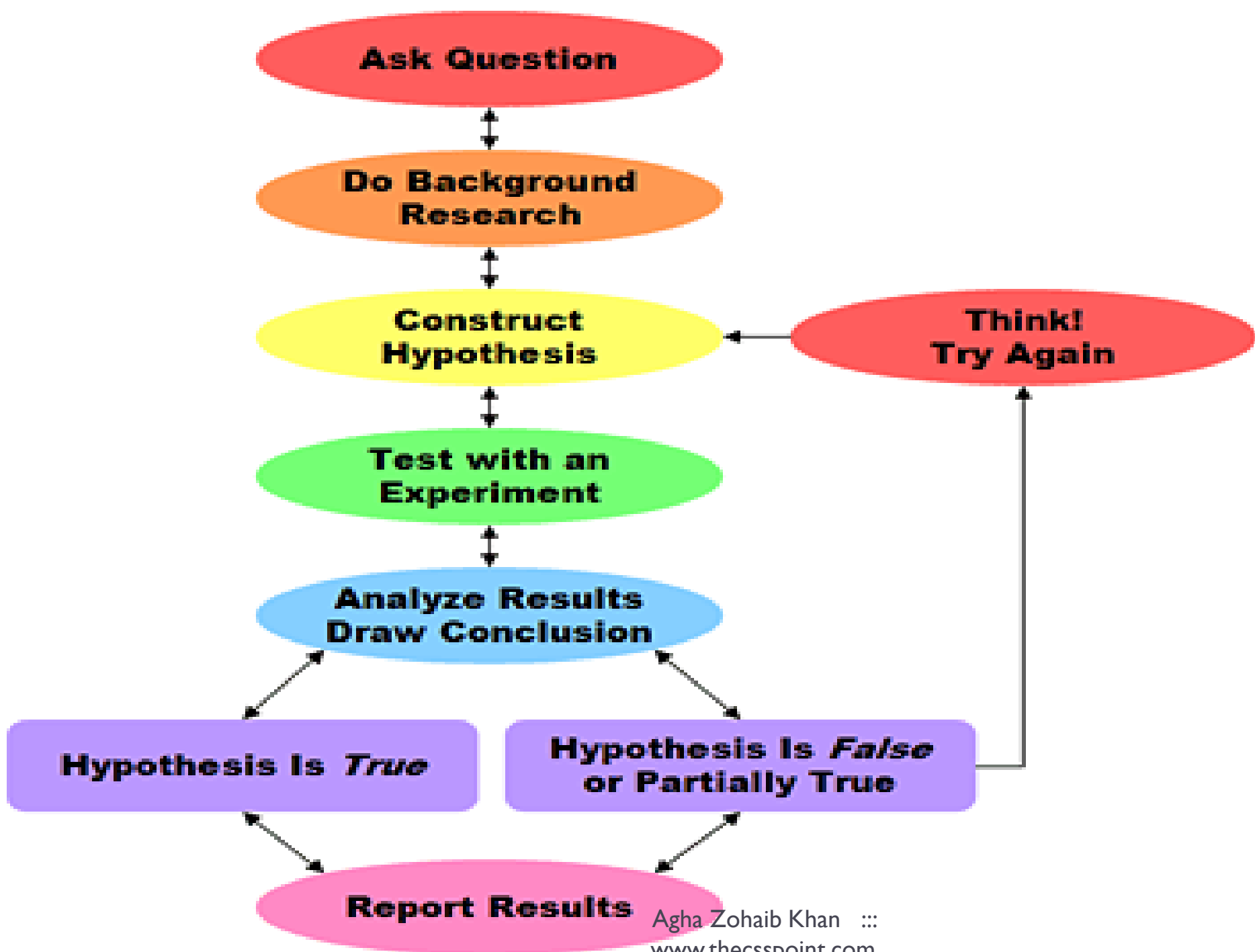
Salient Features of Good Research

- ▶ So a good research must possess an excellent complete research route (methodology).
- ▶ In good research, steps of data collection, coding, analyzing and interpreting are done with extra care and objectively.
- ▶ A good research has the ability of generalization to the homogenous population, and can also be replicated.
- ▶ In good research, facts are fairly presented to the reader instead of twisting it for gaining particular results.
- ▶ Objectives of the study are the key target of a research and a good research is always conducted in the view of the object of the study.

Process of Social Research

1. Select and define topic
2. Review the literature
3. Develop key questions to ask (Hypothesis)
4. Assess requirements for study (Limitation)
5. Consider ethical issues
6. Select a research methodology
7. Collect the data
8. Interpret the findings
9. State conclusions
10. Publish the findings





Sociological Research: Designs

- ▶ Sociologists use many different designs and methods to study society and social behavior. Most sociological research involves ethnography, or “field work” designed to depict the characteristics of a population as fully as possible.
- ▶ Three popular social research designs (models) are
- ▶ **Cross-sectional**, in which scientists study a number of individuals of different ages who have the same trait or characteristic of interest at a single time
- ▶ **Longitudinal**, in which scientists study the same individuals or society repeatedly over a specified period of time
- ▶ **Cross-sequential**, in which scientists test individuals in a cross-sectional sample more than once over a specified period of time

Sociological Research: Methods

- ▶ Seven of the most popular sociological research methods (procedures) are the

1. Case study

2. Survey

3. Interviews

4. Observational

5. Correlational

6. experimental

7. cross-cultural

Case Study

- ▶ In case study research, an investigator studies an individual or small group of individuals with an unusual condition or situation.
- ▶ Case studies are typically clinical in scope.
- ▶ The investigator sometimes uses self-report measures to acquire quantifiable data on the subject.
- ▶ A comprehensive case study, including a long-term follow-up, can last months or years.
- ▶ On the positive side, case studies obtain useful information about individuals and small groups.
- ▶ On the negative side, they tend to apply only to individuals with similar characteristics rather than to the general population.
- ▶ The high likelihood of the investigator's biases affecting subjects' responses limits the generalizability of this method.

Survey

- ▶ Survey research involves interviewing or administering questionnaires, or written surveys, to large numbers of people.
- ▶ The investigator analyzes the data obtained from surveys to learn about similarities, differences, and trends.
- ▶ He or she then makes predictions about the population being studied.
- ▶ Advantages include obtaining information from a large number of respondents, conducting personal interviews at a time convenient for respondents, and acquiring data as inexpensively as possible.
- ▶ “Mail-in” surveys have the added advantage of ensuring anonymity and thus prompting respondents to answer questions truthfully.

Survey

- ▶ Disadvantages of survey research include volunteer bias, interviewer bias, and distortion.
- ▶ Volunteer bias occurs when a sample of volunteers is not representative of the general population.
- ▶ Subjects who are willing to talk about certain topics may answer surveys differently than those who are not willing to talk.
- ▶ Interviewer bias occurs when an interviewer's expectations or insignificant gestures (for example, smiling) inadvertently influence a subject's responses one way or the other.
- ▶ Distortion occurs when a subject does not respond to questions honestly.

Interviews

- ▶ Interviews are a systematic way of talking and listening to people and are another way to collect data from individuals through conversations.
- ▶ The researcher or the interviewer often uses open questions.
- ▶ Data is collected from the interviewee.
- ▶ The interviewee or respondent is the primary data for the study.
- ▶ Interviewers that have been properly trained, and play the proper role of the interviewers along with well-designed questions can conduct a good interview

Types of Interviews

- ▶ There are many types of interviews, which include:
 - ▶ • structured interviews,
 - ▶ • semi-structured interviews,
 - ▶ • unstructured interviews,
 - ▶ • non-directive interview.

▶ **Advantages of using an Interview**

1. If the respondent lacks reading skills to answer a questionnaire.
2. Are useful for untangling complex topics.
3. The Interviewer can probe deeper into a response given by an interviewee.
4. Interviews produce a higher response rate.
5. Flexibility

Disadvantages of using an Interview

- The interviewer can affect the data if he/she is not consistent.
- It is very time consuming.
- It is not used for a large number of people.
- The Interviewer may be biased and ask closed questions.

Observational

- ▶ Observational research involves directly observing subjects' reactions, either in a laboratory (called laboratory observation) or in a natural setting (called naturalistic observation).
- ▶ Observational research reduces the possibility that subjects will not give totally honest accounts of the experiences, not take the study seriously, fail to remember, or feel embarrassed.
- ▶ Observational research has limitations, however. Subject bias is common, because volunteer subjects may not be representative of the general public.
- ▶ Individuals who agree to observation and monitoring may function differently than those who do not. They may also function differently in a laboratory setting than they do in other settings.

Types of Observational

- ▶ Non-Controlled Participants Observations
- ▶ Non-Controlled Non-Participants Observations
- ▶ Systematic Controlled Observations

Correlational

- ▶ A correlation is a relationship between two variables (or “factors that change”).
- ▶ These factors can be characteristics, attitudes, behaviors, or events.
- ▶ Correlational research attempts to determine if a relationship exists between the two variables, and the degree of that relationship.
- ▶ A social researcher can use case studies, surveys, interviews, and observational research to discover correlations.
- ▶ Correlations are either positive (to +1.0), negative (to -1.0), or nonexistent (0.0).
- ▶ In a positive correlation, the values of the variables increase or decrease (“co-vary”) together.
- ▶ In a negative correlation, one variable increases as the other decreases.
- ▶ In a nonexistent correlation, no relationship exists between the variables.

Correlational

- ▶ Correlational data do not indicate cause-and-effect relationships.
- ▶ When a correlation exists, changes in the value of one variable reflect changes in the value of the other.
- ▶ The correlation does not imply that one variable causes the other, only that both variables somehow relate to one another.
- ▶ To study the effects that variables have on each other, an investigator must conduct an experiment.

Experimental research

- ▶ Experimental research attempts to determine how and why something happens.
- ▶ Experimental research tests the way in which an independent variable (the factor that the scientist manipulates) affects a dependent variable (the factor that the scientist observes).
- ▶ A number of factors can affect the outcome of any type of experimental research.
- ▶ One is finding samples that are random and representative of the population being studied.
- ▶ Another is experimenter bias, in which the researcher's expectations about what should or should not happen in the study sway the results.

cross-cultural research

- ▶ Sensitivity to others' norms, folkways, values, mores, attitudes, customs, and practices necessitates knowledge of other societies and cultures.
- ▶ Sociologists may conduct cross-cultural research, or research designed to reveal variations across different groups of people. Most cross-cultural research involves survey, direct observation, and participant observation methods of research.
- ▶ Participant observation requires that an “observer” become a member of his or her subjects' community.
- ▶ An advantage of this method of research is the opportunity it provides to study what actually occurs within a community, and then consider that information within the political, economic, social, and religious systems of that community.

-
- ▶ Cross-cultural research demonstrates that Western cultural standards do not necessarily apply to other societies. What may be “normal” or acceptable for one group may be “abnormal” or unacceptable for another.