SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH PROCESS

Steps to a successful research paper.

1. Formulate a research question
2. Develop a hypothesis
3. Select a research method
4. Define a sample group
5. Write research paper
FORMULATE A RESEARCH QUESTION

- A research question establishes the purpose of the research.
- Before you decide on your topic, do preliminary research to make sure there is sufficient sources for you to investigate.
- Two basic types of questions:
  - DESCRIPTION – observations of what happens
  - EXPLANATION – requires analysis to determine how & why things happen.

TYPES OF SOURCES

Primary source
- Information that you have collected.

Secondary source
- Peer-reviewed papers that others have written.
VALIDITY OF SOURCES

- For secondary research, use the CRAAP test.

CRAAP TEST

- Authority: Does the source have credit? Is it kosher? Who wrote it? Who published it? Was it sponsored by someone with a hidden agenda?
- Accuracy: Is it true? Does it include evidence or statistics? Did anyone check it? Sometimes this is known as "peer review."
- Purpose: Why does this information exist? To sell? To teach? To entertain?
- Currency: Is it recent? Has it been updated? Newer information is generally better.
- Relevance: Does it relate to your work? Or were you just getting a bit desperate to find something? Think about who the intended audience was for the source. And what kind of written material it is.
DEVELOPING A HYPOTHESIS

- Just like a science experiment, a **hypothesis** is a possible answer to your research question.
- It must be in the form of an “*if... then...*” statement.
- Define your **variables**.
  - Independent variable – the one you change
  - Dependent variable – “depends” on the independent variable.

RESEARCH METHODS

**Quantitative**

- Data is collected from a large group. The results are statistically analyzed.

**Qualitative**

- Detailed information is collected from a few individuals. Case studies help provide reasons why people act the way they do.
QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

- Experiments
- Surveys
- Content analysis
- Secondary analysis

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

- Observations
- Participant observation
- Interviews
**SAMPLE GROUP**

- **Sample group** = the population that will be the subjects of your research.
- **Experimental group** = subjects from the sample group that you are applying your independent variable to.
- **Control group** = subjects from the sample group that you are NOT applying your independent variable to.

**WRITING RESEARCH PAPERS**

There are 2 major types of research papers:

- Research **Essays** – use secondary sources to provide evidence for your thesis.
- Research **Reports** – use primary sources to present the results of an original investigation. Must describe your methods for peer-review & replication.
RESEARCH REPORT FORMAT

- Title
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Methods
  - Sample group
  - Instruments
  - Procedure
- Results
- Discussion
- References

Citations & references! Use the APA-format.

- Purdue OWL
- Citations are “in-text.” Simon (1945) posited that
- Reference list (bibliography) for all citations is included at the end of your research essay/report.

HOMEWORK

Propose 2 original investigations you would be interested in conducting. Include:

- Your hypothesis
- Independent & dependent variables
- Sample group description (age, sex, etc.)
- Research method - which tool(s)?