

Introducing Research Methods

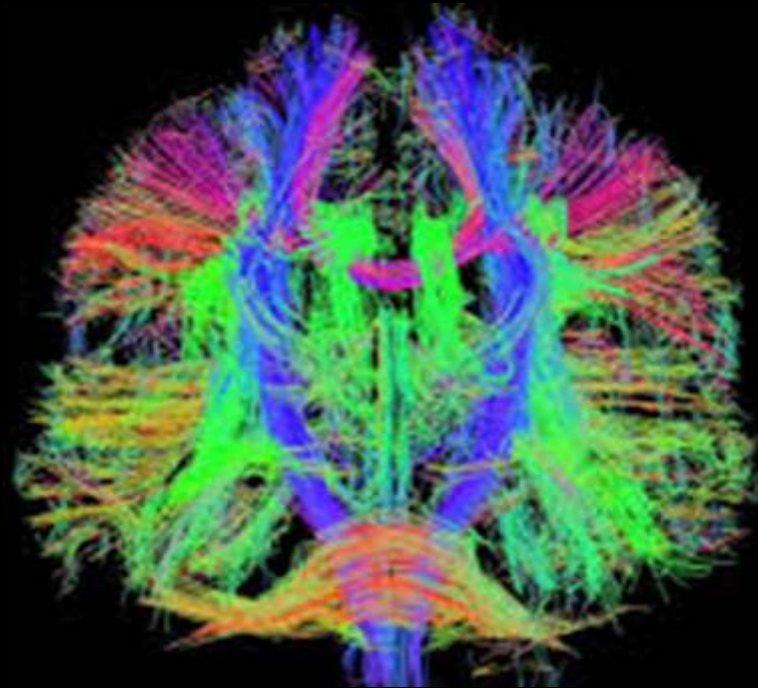
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Session Overview

- Introduction
- Where to start
- Types of Research
- Requirements
- Considerations
- Issues
- Any Questions?



Where do I start?

- Research begins with an observation that leads to a question



- The researcher may then look at previous research literature / contact others in a similar position to see if anyone has offered an explanation and whether there are any alternative explanations.



You want to know:

Which toys in the Nursery children prefer to play with.

How to meet the needs of grandparents with custodial responsibility.

The best way of teaching children their times tables.

The impact of visiting Forest School

Whether opening hours should change



How would you find out?

Quantitative and Qualitative Research

Quantitative Research is concerned with discovering “facts”.

- Data is collected by measuring things (*quantities*).
- The research produces numerical information that can be analysed to produce descriptive statistics or inferential statistics.
- Quantitative research may use experiments where the researcher manipulates the situation, observations or closed questions (yes and no answers)

Quantitative research

Which toys Nursery children prefer

The best way of teaching children their times tables

Whether opening hours should change



Every baby
knows the

scientific method!



Qualitative research

- Gathers mainly descriptive data
- Is usually conducted with individuals or small groups
- Aims to discover how people feel or think
- It often uses open-ended questions or unstructured interviews



Quantitative and Qualitative



Qualitative research

- How to meet the needs of custodial grandparents
- Which toys Nursery children prefer
- The best way of teaching children their times tables



Advantages and disadvantages

Quantitative

- Advantages

- Disadvantages

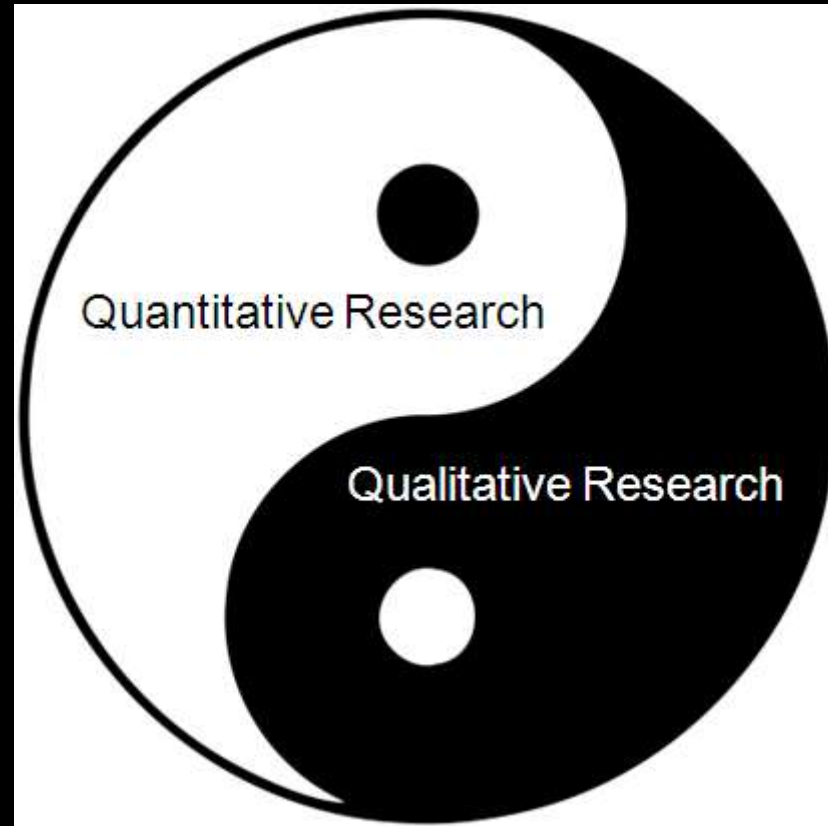
Qualitative

- Advantages

- Disadvantages

Hmmm....

Mixed Methods!



Ethical Standards in Research

Researchers must weigh up the potential benefits of the research against any potential risks to participants.

British psychologists have to abide by the strict guidelines produced by the BPS. Universities have their own codes and all research has to be approved by the Ethics Committee.

Researchers must demonstrate

- Competence
- Responsibility
- Integrity
- Respect



Consent

According to ethical standards, participants must give informed consent saying that they have been told about:

- The purpose of the study
- The study's potential benefits and risks
- Their right to withdraw
- Confidentiality



Are there any groups for whom this presents particular issues? How could they be overcome?

Deception

Latane and Darley (1968) staged a famous experiment in which students were told they were participating in a discussion about student issues.



Some students were alone, others were in groups.

The experiment was actually about how being in a group diminishes the sense of responsibility.

The interviewer pretended to have a seizure. 85% of lone students went to report the seizure but only 31% of those in groups did so.

Research Validity

Have you really researched what you set out to research?

- Are your methods appropriate to your participants?
- Are they appropriate to your research question?
- Is there any possibility that other factors influenced outcomes?
- Are there any other potential explanations?



Some threats to validity

- Demand Characteristics
- Placebo Effect
- Experimenter Expectancy Effect
- Generalizing findings
- Wrongly attributing causation



Any Questions?

