

Course: 05

Exploratory research

Exploratory research is a method used to study problems that are not clearly defined or understood. It is important for researchers to clearly understand their research problem before attempting to answer it in order to determine whether the topic is worth studying. This helps ensure that time and resources will not be spent studying problems that are not relevant, valid, or feasible for research. Exploratory research is not used to obtain data to answer a research question, but rather to provide deeper context to a question. It can be seen as the foundation for other types of research.

Exploratory Research Methods There are two main methods of exploratory research: **primary methods and secondary methods.**

Primary Research Methods

This involves collecting data directly from subjects who may be individuals or a group of people.

Here are different primary research methods used in exploratory research:

Observations: Observational research involves collecting data by observing subjects without doing anything to influence their behavior.

Interviews: One-on-one interviews between an interviewer and a subject can provide the researcher with in-depth qualitative information about the research problem.

Focus groups: A focus group is a small group of carefully selected participants who have certain common characteristics. Their reactions, responses and conversations are studied to gain an in-depth understanding of a research problem.

Surveys: Surveys consist of collecting information using questionnaires containing a set of questions concerning the subject studied.

Secondary research methods

This involves collecting information using already existing data. Here are different secondary research methods used in exploratory research:

Case studies:

A case study is a detailed examination of a particular case in a real-world setting. This secondary data source allows researchers to analyze existing cases regarding the research problem they are studying.

Literature: Literature research involves collecting data from sources such as newspapers, magazines, online sources, library books, government documents, articles, annual reports, public records, and statistics.

Online Sources: A large amount of information is available on the Internet on almost any subject. It is one of the fastest ways to gather information in a cost-effective manner. However, it may also contain a lot of unreliable information. Therefore, when using this method of data collection, researchers must verify the authenticity and reliability of the sources they refer to.

Steps for Conducting Exploratory Research

As exploratory research tends to be a flexible, unstructured form of research, there are no clearly defined steps for conducting it. The following steps simply describe the general approach taken during exploratory research

Describe the problem: The first step is to clearly identify the research problem. In this step, you need to study the relevant secondary data available on your problem. You can even collect primary data by conducting surveys or interviews to understand the relevance and validity of the topic.

Create a hypothesis: Use the research you have done so far to form a hypothesis.

Conduct further research: Exploratory research provides the ground for further research. In this step, you need to determine whether the research problem being studied is true. You also need to determine how feasible it is to investigate your research problem and whether the potential outcome of the study is worth the resources and time that will need to be invested.