

STEPS OF RESEARCH PROCESS

1



Identification & Formulation of the Research Problem



2



Review of Literature & Conceptual/Theoretical Framework



3



Formulation of Hypothesis / Propositions



4



Research Design & Methodology



5



Data Collection / Execution of the Study



6



Data Processing, Analysis & Interpretation



7



Conclusions, Findings & Recommendations



8



Report Writing, Presentation & Dissemination

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STEPS OF RESEARCH PROCESS

Steps

Explanation

1

Identification & Formulation of the Research Problem

Select and define the research problem, narrow the topic, identify the research gap and state objectives or research questions.

2

Review of Literature & Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

Search, evaluate and synthesise existing literature to identify what is known or unknown and develop the conceptual base.

3

Formulation of Hypothesis / Propositions

Frame a testable prediction or proposition and specify the expected relationships/ differences among variables.

4

Research Design & Methodology

Decide the approach, design, method, population, sampling plan, tools or instruments, procedures and ethical safeguards.

5

Data Collection / Execution of the Study

Implement the design and collect primary or secondary data using the selected methods and instruments.

6

Data Processing, Analysis & Interpretation

Prepare, organise and analyse the data using appropriate statistical or qualitative procedures and interpret the findings.

7

Conclusions, Findings & Recommendations

Draw evidence-based conclusions, relate findings to the objectives or hypothesis, and discuss implications, limitations and recommendations.

8

Report Writing, Presentation & Dissemination

Organise the final report, thesis or article and communicate the findings through publication, presentation or other scholarly means.

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WHICH STEP? MAPPING

Exam Cue / Concept	Correct Step
- Research problem - Research question - Objectives	Step 1
- Research gap - Previous studies - Theoretical framework - Conceptual framework	Step 2
- Hypothesis - Null hypothesis	Step 3
- Operational definition of variables - Choice of qualitative/quantitative/mixed approach - Experimental / survey / case study / ethnography design - Population / sampling frame / sample / sampling technique - Sampling bias / selection bias - Questionnaire / interview schedule / observation schedule - Pilot study / pre-testing of tool - Informed consent / confidentiality / anonymity / risk minimisation	Step 4
- Primary data collection - Secondary data	Step 5
- Coding / editing / classification / tabulation - Statistical test / thematic analysis / qualitative coding - Interpretation of findings	Step 6
- Conclusion - Implications - Limitations	Step 7
- References / bibliography / report structure - Publication / conference presentation / dissemination	Step 8

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METHOD $\neq$ STEP: A CRITICAL UGC NET DISTINCTION

Concept	What it is	Where it fits in 8 Steps
Quantitative research	Research approach based on numerical measurement and statistical analysis.	Step 4
Qualitative research	Research approach to understand meanings, experiences and contexts.	Step 4
Mixed-methods research	Combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches.	Step 4
Survey	Method/design using questionnaires to collect data from a large group.	Step 4; implemented in Step 5
Experiment	Method/design to study cause-effect relationships under controlled conditions.	Step 4; implemented in Step 5
Case study	In-depth study of a single case or a small number of cases.	Step 4
Ethnography	Qualitative methodology to study people and cultures in natural settings.	Step 4
Historical research	Approach/method using past records and documents to study phenomena.	Step 4
Random sampling	Probability sampling technique where every unit has an equal chance of selection.	Step 4
Stratified sampling	Probability sampling technique dividing the population into strata.	Step 4
Purposive sampling	Non-probability sampling technique based on specific purpose or criteria.	Step 4
Snowball sampling	Non-probability sampling technique using referrals to reach participants.	Step 4
Sampling bias	Systematic error in selection of sample leading to unrepresentative results.	Step 4
Questionnaire	Structured set of questions as a data-collection instrument.	Designed in Step 4; used in Step 5
Interview	Data-collection method using oral questions and responses.	Planned in Step 4; conducted in Step 5
Observation	Data-collection method involving systematic observation.	Planned in Step 4; conducted in Step 5
Content analysis	Analysis method for systematic analysis of documents, texts or media.	Step 6

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ORDER-BASED MCQ MASTER RULES

Rule 1 **Problem** comes before **literature review**, and literature review normally informs the final research question/gap.

Rule 2 **Hypothesis** comes after the problem/literature foundation and before testing/analysis.

Rule 3 **Research design** comes before actual data collection.

Rule 4 **Sampling** is a methodological/design decision; selecting respondents is part of execution.

Rule 5 **Data** must be collected before it can be analysed.

Rule 6 **Analysis** precedes **interpretation**; **interpretation** precedes **final conclusions**.

Rule 7 **Reporting/dissemination** comes after findings and conclusions.

Rule 8 **Ethics** is embedded across the process; in an 8-step exam framework, place it chiefly under **Step 4** rather than inventing a separate step.

Rule 9 **Bias** is not automatically a 'step'. Identify the source:

- **sampling/selection bias** → **Step 4**
- **measurement/instrument bias** → **Step 4–5**
- **researcher/observer bias** → design/data-collection/interpretive stages depending on context.

Rule 10 If an option mixes a **method** with a **process stage**, classify the method by its function in the study.

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