

Research Methods Week 2 Quiz
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1) One philosophy of research suggests there are many ways of knowing. These “many ways of knowing” are often summarized into two categories. Please name two advantages and two disadvantages of both Qualitative Research and Quantitative Research methods (40 pts)

Advantages of Qualitative Research Methods: There are several advantages of the qualitative method of research. One advantage is that the results of the study can be more compelling and deep since it is communicated using words or pictures such as from the result of interviews. The picture of the study is more complete. Another advantage is that the researcher does not have to know exactly what he or she is looking for ahead of time. Instead, a plan for the study, or design, can sort of develop as the study unfolds.

Disadvantages of Qualitative Research Methods: One disadvantage of qualitative research is that it can be time consuming to gather. It is less able to be generalized as well. Also, it is reliant upon the researcher alone to gather this information and so the researcher can become consumed with or tied up in the results of the study. A negative may be that the researcher may not be able to be as objective as desired.

Advantages of Quantitative Research Methods: One advantage of the quantitative method of research is that everything is gathered through survey studies of one type or another and put into the form of numbers. Numbers are exact, therefore results can theoretically be more easily found and can be generalized. In this type of study, one can classify and count study results more easily. Also, using statistical methods, we can see results more accurately and less subjectively.

Disadvantages of Quantitative Research Methods: One disadvantage of the quantitative method of research is that the researcher has to develop the design or the surveys ahead of time and know exactly what they are looking for. So, a lot of time needs to be put into this preparation of the study. So, there must be a definitive explanation of the questions for the research. The other disadvantage here is that though statistics, numbers and tools like this are more specific and

efficient, the study may miss the details of the actual organization, or population, being considered for the study. These types of details could be better gathered through a qualitative study such as interviews.

2) For the study you are currently planning, Identify: (20 pts)

Your population, and please estimate its size in a numeric value.

Your anticipated sample size. The total population of my survey will be approximately 25 individuals. I want to interview all 25 staff members of this large church I am studying to accurately gather information on all of the staff. So, this will be a census type study so that I do not leave anyone out of this research since to take a small sample, it would have to be too small to get an accurate result. To explain this, our text talks about needing to have a population 20 times the small sample size. The staff is too small to be able to use a small sample like that. I plan to use a comparative study against other national surveys on similar Christian non-profit organizations for my study.

The uniqueness of your research subjects/individuals. My research is on a large church with a relatively small staff made up of several pastors, several directors of various programs, and several administrative type employees. There are also staff who run an entire counseling center which is connected to the church, but it could be argued is somewhat separate to the organization itself. There will be a discrepancy, I would think, between high level employees' and lower level employees' responses to the study. My research also looks into comparing the volunteer outside governing board, which vies with the top staff leaders for the power to set the direction for the organization, and I believe causes conflict between those two leadership groups.

The specific variable(s) that is the focus of your research/project. My variables for my project are the health of an organization and employee morale. So, the hypothesis that I am working to test is whether the health of an organization affects employee morale. The concepts or factors that I believe connect these two variables are a) whether an organization has a clear vision or mission, b) the level of integrity of the leaders of that organization, and c) whether or not clearly defined roles are given to the employees of this nonprofit organization.

3) As indicated in our text in Chapters 2 & 4, please indicate at least three potential errors of sampling (20 pts)

A potential sampling error is ...a random sampling error. A random sampling would be something like when there is a discrepancy between the population for the study and statistics being used. The population needs to be large enough for the statistics being used so that there is small bias and small variability in the study.

A potential sampling error is ...bad sampling methods. This is what it sounds like, just a bad selection of methods or designs for research. This error includes using convenience surveys or volunteer response surveys. In both cases, the researcher is going to get a higher bias and a large amount of variability in the study, so the results will be more difficult to read.

A potential sampling error is ...errors of undercoverage. This is an error where people that should have been included in the study are not for one reason or another. They may be overlooked, or just unknown. This is where a whole group of individuals are just left out. For instance, young, or poor populations are often not covered in studies. Other examples might be those in jail or in the armed services serving overseas. I think it could include those who are in nursing homes or are mentally disabled.

A potential sampling error is.... a non-sampling error such as a nonresponse. A non-sampling error such as a nonresponse error as to do with when someone, or a group of individuals (a person or a household), does not respond to the survey though they had been selected for a sample. This usually happens because the individual was not able to be reached, or because the individual refuses to respond. Interestingly, it is known that city-dwellers are more typically the types that will refuse to cooperate with a survey or study. These types of nonsampling errors can even happen with census type surveys.

4) What is a potential “sampling error problem” that you will need to be especially careful to avoid as it relates to your research / project? Why? (5pts) I will conduct a census type study for my research. There will be two surveys to that same group. So, I will attempt to include everyone on the staff in the study. However, I could easily end up having a sampling error of undercoverage. I want 100 percent participation, but I may not get that if someone refuses to complete the study. This could happen if someone is on sabbatical while I am conducting the study for instance, and doesn't want to participate, or if someone does not believe that they really will have confidentiality by completing the survey. I believe that this would be the case of the administrative staff where skewing the results happens because people may think they need to

answer in such a way that protects their jobs while they may deeply hold a negative view on some aspect of working for the church.

Of the ‘sampling problems listed about (and within the text) you should be able to identify potential problems unique to your study (5pts). I believe there could be a sampling problem that I may have to overcome. This could be the problem of just bad sampling methods. It is possible that I am making a mistake by sampling the entire staff of the church, for instance. The reason is that the opinions of the pastors of the church and other directors may vary greatly from those that are in administration and janitorial positions within the church. I may have to overcome that by making sure I ask a question on the surveys about the person’s on the staff. I should then be able to analyze the answers to see how much they differ. Another way I would like to overcome this sampling problem with surveys, I would like to conduct an interview with someone from every level of the staff. This type of qualitative study of interviewing various staff, could help to understand the dynamics that are going on with the organization’s employee population and may help me understand better the specific staff issues.

5) According to Chapter Three in our text, there are two common types of errors when estimating the results of research: Bias & Variability. What do you need to do to: (10 pts) ... Reduce the bias in your study? I want to make sure I am sampling from a wide range of respondents since it is such a small group. So, to do this for my study, I believe I will have to complete a full census. Anything less than a full study for my research would skew the results, I believe.

... Reduce the variability in your study? To reduce the variability of the study, I need to grow my study to a larger group of respondents. Since my sample size is very small, but represents the whole staff, I will have to use comparable studies to see if the data I gather is above, below or at normal for this type of organization. I believe this comparative study could help me get the results I need to test my hypothesis.