

Defining Research

Task1: Read the following definitions of research. What key words can you identify? Underline them.

What is Research?

- ▶ Research as 'a systematic investigation to find answers to a problem' Burns (1997:2)
- ▶ 'Research is a procedure by which we attempt to find systematically, and with the support of demonstrable fact, the answer to a question or the resolution of a problem'. Leedy (1989:5)
- ▶ The *Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary* defines it as:

(a) the systematic investigation into the study of materials, sources etc. in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions

(b) an endeavour to discover new or collate old facts etc. by the scientific study of a subject or by a course of critical investigation.

- ▶ 'The word research is composed of two syllables, re and search. The dictionary defines the former as a prefix meaning again, anew or over again and the latter as a verb meaning to examine closely and carefully, to test and try, or to probe. Together they form a noun describing a careful, systematic, patient study and investigation in some field of knowledge, undertaken to establish facts or principles'. Grinnell(1993: 4)
- ▶ 'Research is a structured inquiry that utilises acceptable scientific methodology to solve problems and creates new knowledge that is generally applicable'. Grinnell(1993: 4)
- ▶ 'Scientific methods consist of systematic observation, classification and interpretation of data. Now, obviously, this process is one in which nearly all people engage in the course of their daily lives. The main difference between our day-to-day generalisations and the conclusions usually recognised as scientific method lies in the degree of formality, rigorousness, verifiability and general validity of the latter'. Lundberg (1942: 5)

Task2: Write the definitions of the following words. Use your dictionary.

Systematic:

Investigation:

Methodology:

Task3: How is scientific research different from everyday life investigation?

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Task4: Read the statements and write 'true' or 'false'.

1-Research is a personal work based on one's feelings, opinions and ideas.

2-Research is a collection of long quotes or paragraphs copied from different sources from the Internet, books and articles.

3-Research is a mere summary of information found in different sources.

The Characteristics of Scientific Research

- ▶ **Generated by a question or a problem.**
- ▶ **Goal- oriented:** research needs to have clear statement of objectives and what is intended to be done to attain them.
- ▶ **Reiterative:** it is based on previous knowledge. This knowledge is expanded by the research work. A resolution a problem by a specific research will also give rise to new questions and problems.
- ▶ **Rigorous:** the procedures used to find answers to the research questions need to be relevant, appropriate, and justified.
- ▶ **Systematic:** research procedures need to follow logical sequence. They cannot be done haphazardly.
- ▶ **Valid and verifiable:** the findings and the conclusion of the research need to be correct and can be verified by the researcher and others in the field.
- ▶ **Empirical:** conclusions need to be based on evidence gathered from information collected from real life or from observation.
- ▶ **Critical:** doing research requires the ability to analyse, synthesise and evaluate information.