

Chapter 3 Theories and Methods

Topic 1 Quantitative Research Methods

Answers to QuickCheck Questions on page 173

1. Getting informed consent from participants may affect the results; the participants' experience should not be harmful, either during or after the experiment; one group should not be advantaged over another.
2. Because of the high level of control, an experiment can be replicated easily; it is an objective method; it produces quantitative data.
3. They both aim to test a hypothesis by manipulating one or more variables. Unlike the artificial laboratory environment, a field experiment takes place in natural surroundings.
4. Advantages might be: it may be used to study the past; there are no potential ethical problems; it does not involve an artificial situation. Disadvantages might be: there is less control possible; there is more potential for experimenter effect
5. The researcher prepares a limited range of possible answers from which the respondent chooses. They provide a clear focus to questions and can be easily analysed and fed into a computer.
6. Because there is usually no face-to-face contact and respondents may remain anonymous.
7. They are easy to replicate, as another researcher can repeat the research using exactly the same questions, and therefore the findings can be checked
8. For positivists, detachment means objectivity and no researcher bias; for interpretive sociologists, detachment means the researcher does not see things through the eyes of the respondent and therefore will not gain a full understanding.
9. Because they are measures that can be used in exactly the same way by different researchers.
10. They involve face-to-face situations and so response rates are likely to be higher; useful observations may be made of the person or place; call-backs can be used.
11. In a structured interview, closed questions may not fit the answers participants wish to give; there is no chance to explain questions or clarify answers; validity may be affected by the interaction situation; people may lie or exaggerate.
12. They are very representative; reliable; enable comparisons to be made between groups and over time; they provide information on a large scale that an individual researcher could not collect.
13. Registrations, official surveys and administrative records.
14. 'Hard' statistics are government statistics, often produced via registration and backed by a legal requirement, so they are likely to be complete. 'Soft' statistics are often produced by