

Data Collection Methods and Process

Methods of Data Collection

- Must choose the appropriate technique
- Data-collection techniques
 - Survey
 - Interview
 - Observation
 - Unobtrusive means

Survey Method

- Interviews and self-completing questionnaires
- Mail or direct distribution, email or website link, in person or on telephone

Interviews

- Interaction between two individuals where one wants to obtain recognizable responses to specific questions
- Three types: structured, unstructured, and in-depth
- Conducted in person or by telephone

Observation/Field Research

- Direct collection of data
- Maintain accuracy by recording the observations

Unobtrusive Data Collection

- Subjects are unaware of being studied and study is not observational
- No researcher interaction or involvement

**Data Collection
Methods and Process**

Process of Data Collection

Measurement

- The process of observing and recording the observations that are collected as part of a research effort

Parts of Measurement Process

Begin with a concept

-You cannot observe or measure unless you know what you are looking for.

- Constraint: Terms we use do not have direct empirical referents - We must rely on indirect evidence to test their existence. For example, violence.

Conceptualization

-It is a process of assigning a conceptual definition to your research concepts - For example what does the word violence mean for this study?

Operationalization

-The process of bringing variables to the empirical world where they can be manipulated or controlled.

For example, violence can be operationalized as follows.

1. I am often mad at people for very little or no provocation.
2. My way of resolving conflict is to physically attack.
3. When my feelings are hurt, I consider no physical response as too extreme etc.

Validity and Reliability of Measures

Validity

- Is the research measuring what it says it is measuring?

Internal versus External Validity

Internal Validity- Theoretical and Methodological integrity of the study itself (Design).

External Validity- Generalizability of the study findings to other samples and populations.

Reliability

- The consistency or repeatability of a measure
- The degree to which a measure would give you the same result over and over, assuming the phenomenon being measured is not changing.


