

Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches

by John W. Creswell
(3rd ed.; Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2009, 251 pages)

Given the increased use of qualitative and mixed methods, and the continued use of quantitative methods, Creswell's third edition of *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* is most timely. He not only compares and contrasts these approaches but also promotes a framework, a process, and strategies for the design and conduct of research in the human and social sciences. The book has two parts. The four chapters that make up Part 1, "Preliminary Considerations," describe the basic elements of a research undertaking, such as philosophical assumptions, the literature review, the use of theory, and the writing style and ethics. The six chapters in Part 2, "Designing Research," elaborate on the design components of research, such as the introduction, the research purpose, research questions and problems, and methods and procedures for data collection and analysis.

Chapter 1, "The Selection of a Research Design," advances the framework for research design, including philosophical world views (e.g., post-positivism, constructivism, advocacy/participatory, and pragmatism), research methods (i.e., qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods), and strategies of inquiry within each paradigm (i.e., grounded theory, non/experimental designs, and transformative). The chapter ends with a discussion of the criteria for selecting the research design and problem, noting that the researcher's personal experience and the target audiences of the research are significant considerations.

The importance of a researchable topic, the review and use of the literature, steps in conducting a literature review, criteria for using the literature related to each research paradigm, and a literature map as an organizing framework are discussed in chapter 2, "Review of the Literature," while

chapter 3, "The Use of Theory," defines and outlines the uses and placement of theory (or theoretical frameworks, or patterns, and/or naturalistic generalizations) in each of the three research paradigms and the procedures for identifying theory. The last chapter in this part, chapter 4, "Writing Strategies and Ethical Considerations," offers an overall structure for writing proposals for qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods, as well as for effective writing practices and strategies and for ethical issues in research proposals.

The first chapter in Part 2, Chapter 5, "The Introduction," begins by addressing the components of designing the research proposal. The composition and writing of a scholarly introduction are then described; the differences in the introduction for each of the three research strategies of inquiry are explored; a social science deficiency model (i.e., the introduction discusses deficiencies in the literature and past research) for writing an introduction is advanced; and, finally, the use of the deficiency model is illustrated. Chapter 6, "The Purpose Statement," follows up with a discussion of the reasons for developing a purpose statement, important principles to use in its design, and examples of good models for designing a purpose statement for each research strategy of inquiry. Identifying research questions and hypotheses and the signposts for a study are discussed in Chapter 7, "Research Questions and Hypotheses," as are principles for designing and scripts for writing research questions and hypotheses in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research.

The final three chapters present the essential steps and procedures for developing and writing quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research. Chapter 8, "Quantitative Methods," focuses on surveys and experimental designs, including population and sample, instrumentation, variables, experimental procedures, data analysis, and interpretation of results. Chapter 9, "Qualitative Procedures," examines different philosophical assumptions; variations in strategies of inquiry; the role of the researcher; and steps in data collection, analysis, and interpretation. It also includes a discussion of an ethnographic exemplar. Chapter 10, "Mixed Methods Procedures," extends the threads introduced in earlier chapters on mixed methods to a discussion on the philosophical assumptions of a pragmatic philosophy. It does so by outlining mixed-methods modes of inquiry; by advancing the use of multiple forms of data-collection, data-analysis, and data-validation procedures and report-presentation structures; and by discussing examples of mixed-methods procedures.

Albeit not a detailed method text, this book presents an up-to-date window into the field of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research. It covers a range of topics in each of these fields, for example: common research strategies of inquiry, such as surveys and non/experiments, in quantitative

research; phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, case studies, and narrative research in qualitative designs; and concurrent, sequential, and transformative procedures in mixed-methods research. This comprehensive text will be of value to both beginners and more-experienced researchers for several reasons. In addition to providing an overview of the key elements in a research proposal, an extensive reference list, numerous examples and excellent illustrations, and a glossary of terms, each chapter in the book has helpful research tips and samples, writing exercises, a chapter summary, and both current and additional resources. Graduate students in the human and social sciences, practitioners and researchers with an interest in conducting research and writing research articles for scholarly journals, faculty members who teach research-methods courses, and members of practicum, thesis, and dissertation committees will find this book to be of interest.

Atlanta Sloane-Seale, University of Manitoba