

# **Day One: Preliminary Considerations in Constructing a Proposal**

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# **Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods: A Recap**

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# Points of departure

- ❑ **Some key concepts:**
    - **Ontology** – concerned with articulating the nature and structure of the world
    - **Epistemology** – concerned with the nature of human knowledge
    - **Methodology** – concerned with principles and procedures of inquiry
    - **Paradigm (interpretive framework)** – net of epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises that guide research actions
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# Quantitative Research

- ❑ **Ontological - Existence of objective, absolute truths; Operational definitions and rational explanations based on deductive logic**
  - ❑ **Epistemological - Inquiry can be objective (value free); disagreements between observers due to errors**
  - ❑ **Methodological – focus on deduction; Generality as a means for testing truth; Notions of internal and external validity**
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# Qualitative Research

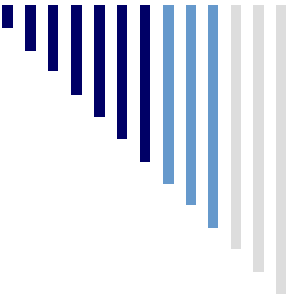
- ❑ **Ontological - Reality is local and specific; constructions cannot be absolutely true or correct (but can be less sophisticated or informed);**
  - ❑ **Epistemological - Reality actively constructed rather than discovered; Researcher and object of study inherently dependent; Multiple interpretations can be equally valid**
  - ❑ **Methodological - Focus on induction; Relative lack of emphasis on generality**
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# Positioning in the debate

- ❑ **The purist - Qualitative and quantitative methods are incompatible (grounded in different ontologic and epistemologic assumptions)**
  - ❑ **The situationalist - Both approaches have merit for answering different types of research question; Advocate mono-method studies but accept the two approaches as complementary**
  - ❑ **The pragmatist - Advocate mixed-method approaches, through technical eclecticism or theoretical integration**
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# **Implications of Different Research Approaches**

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# Quantitative Methods

- ❑ **Sampling**
  - ❑ **Data Collection Methods**
    - Operationalisation
    - Measurement issues: Reliability & Validity
  - ❑ **Research Designs**
    - Between-Case Experimental Designs
    - Within-Case Experimental Designs
    - Survey and Correlational Designs
    - Causal-Comparative Designs
  - ❑ **Data Analysis**
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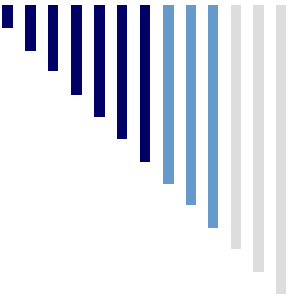




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# Qualitative Methods

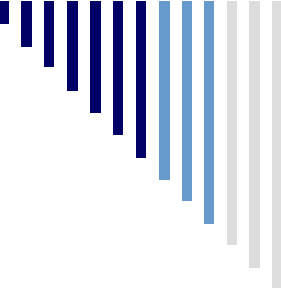
- ❑ **Sampling**
  - ❑ **Data Collection Methods**
    - Interviews
    - Focus groups
    - Archival records
    - Direct observation
  - ❑ **Research Designs**
  - ❑ **Data Analysis**
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# **Deciding on Your Research Approach**

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- ❑ **Where do your questions come from?**
    - Professional orientation
    - Previous literature & Theory
    - Empirical pilot data
  - ❑ **Nature of the question:**
    - How much do you already know about the area?
    - Can you meaningfully quantify the responses?
    - Is the focus on deduction or induction?
  - ❑ **Practical issues:**
    - Sampling issues
    - Ethical issues
    - Your own strength profile
    - Your goals in completing the program
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# **Major Components of a Research Proposal**

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## **1. Title and Abstract**

- Concise but thorough and coherent statement of the topic or problem to be addressed in the study**

## **2. Background**

- “Set the scene” for your proposal**
  - Provide a thorough summary of previous empirical and theoretical work in the area**
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## **4. Study Rationale and Aims/Questions**

- Provide a point of focus for the proposal**
  - Overview of the research design and procedures you used, and establish how these will yield results that add to our current understanding of the problem**
  - Provide a smooth, orderly transition from the conclusions reached in the review to the proposed methods**
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## **5. Method**

- Describe the procedures, research techniques and methods you propose to use to address the questions posed**
  - Discuss the resources and approaches to analysis of data to be employed**
  - Discuss issues such as conformity to ethical principles and practical issues such as access**
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