

THE RESEARCH PROCESS



Research Process

- ▶ Usually treated as sequentially defined steps. Nevertheless:
- ▶ Completion of each step before going to next is not required.
- ▶ Idea of sequence is useful for developing a research project.
- ▶ Variation in the number of steps

1. Broad Problem Area

- ▶ General area of study (Organization).
- ▶ Specific issues that need to be focused in the broad area.
- ▶ Problem currently existing in an organization (sexual harassment).
- ▶ Areas that a manager believes to be improved (policy improvement).
- ▶ Conceptual issue (harassment).
- ▶ Research questions to be answered empirically.

2. Preliminary Data Collection

- ▶ Part of exploratory research
- ▶ Search for published data and studies.
- ▶ Seek out informants
- ▶ Focus group discussions

3. Problem Definition

- ▶ Translate the broad issue into a research question.
- ▶ Management dilemma into management question – symptoms of the problem.
Productivity decline. Demand for daycare facilities

4.Theoretical Framework

- ▶ Consultation – identification of variables, make logical relationships, delineation of framework.
- ▶ Components of theoretical framework already discussed.

5. Generation of Hypotheses

- ▶ Derive the hypotheses from the theoretical framework.

6. Research Design

- ▶ Master plan for collecting and analyzing the data.
- ▶ Specify the sources of information and the techniques to be used in the study.
- ▶ Broadly 6 methods – surveys, experiments, observations, communication analysis, case study, focus group discussions. Secondary data analysis.

Determine the method to be used

- ▶ Objectives of the research, data sources, urgency of the decision, cost of obtaining the data will determine the method.

Surveys

- ▶ The most common method of generating primary data.
- ▶ Sample of people using questionnaire.
- ▶ Questionnaire an essential tool.
- ▶ Contact the respondents in person, by telephone, by mail, on the internet.
- ▶ Each of these techniques has advantages and disadvantages.
- ▶ Choose the most appropriate one.

Experiments

- ▶ Establish cause and effect relationship.
- ▶ Manipulating X affects on Y.
- ▶ Productivity affected by rewards.
- ▶ Controlled conditions – isolate causal factors – control external factors.
- ▶ Lab experiments and field experiments.

Observation techniques

- ▶ Non participant and participant.

Communication analysis



- ▶ Analyzing the content of text.
- ▶ Content refers to words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes, messages.
- ▶ Text is anything written, visual, or spoken
- ▶ Books, newspapers, advertisements, speeches, official documents, photographs, films, articles of clothing, works of art.

Case study

- ▶ In-depth analysis of a unit.
- ▶ Clinical analysis in retrospect.
- ▶ Multiple sources of information – history, consulting written records.

Focus group discussions

- ▶ Discussion of an issue by 6-12 persons assisted by a moderator.
- ▶ Useful in exploratory research. Supplements the quantitative information.

No one method is best

- ▶ Researchers evaluate and select the most appropriate method.

7. Data collection, data processing and analysis

- ▶ Integral part of research design.
- ▶ Variety of ways. Field and lab.
- ▶ Interviews, questionnaires, observation.
- ▶ Data processing – editing, coding, computer entries, tabulation.

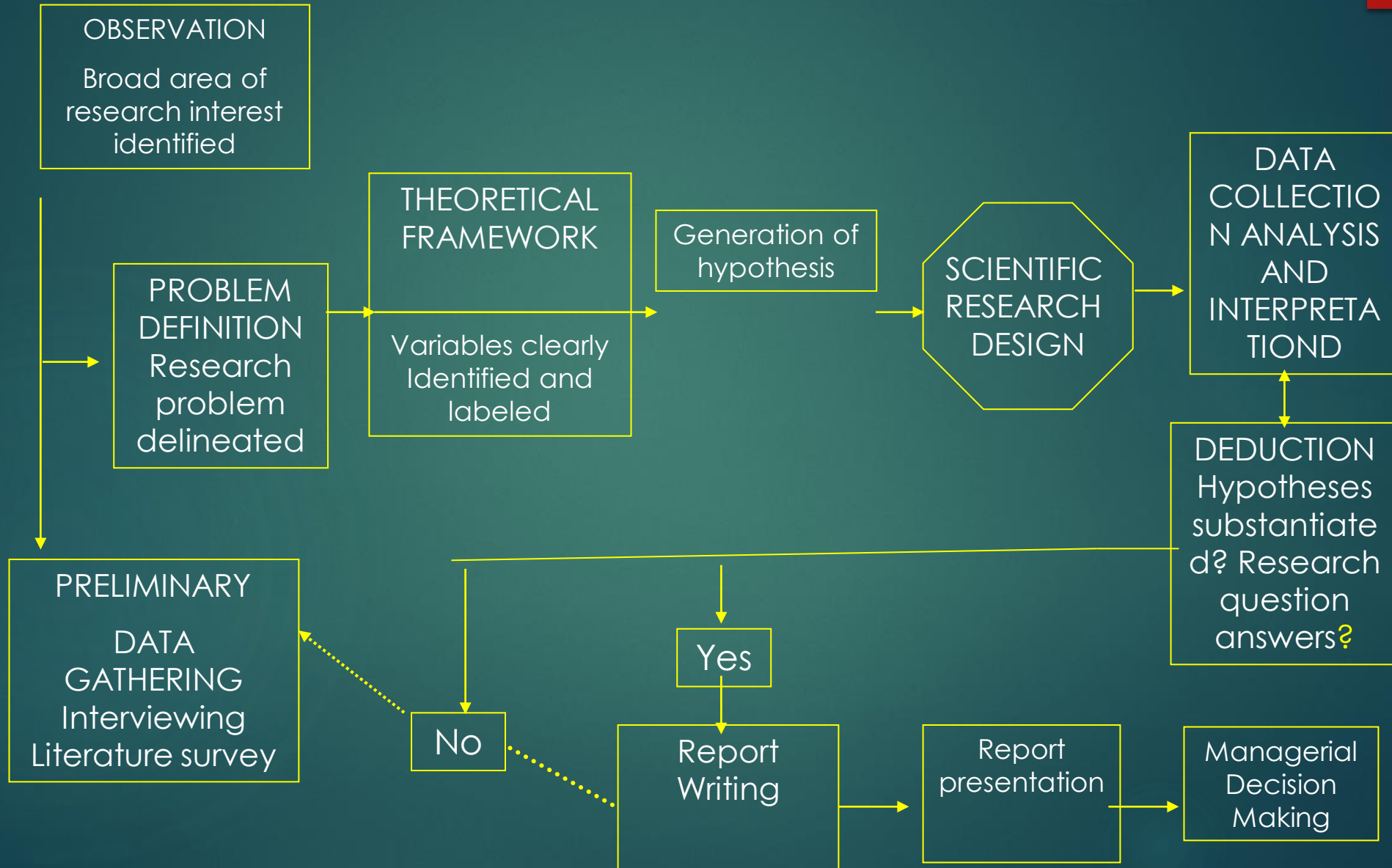
8. Testing the Hypotheses

- ▶ Interpretation of data.
- ▶ Testing the hypotheses.
- ▶ Finding solutions to problems of organization or society.
- ▶ Making recommendations

9. Report Writing

- ▶ Communicating the research findings.
- ▶ Report is technical. Managers are selective readers. Interested only in recommendations.
- ▶ Historical document.
- ▶ Academic purpose – dissertations. Specific format. Writing of research papers

The Research Process



STEPS IN SOCIOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

