

Book Review

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

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The book *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* by Creswell (2014) covers three approaches— qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. This educational book is informative and illustrative and is equally beneficial for students, teachers and researchers. Readers should have basic knowledge of research for better understanding of this book. There are two parts of the book. Part 1 (chapter 1-4) consists of steps for developing research proposal and part II (chapter 5-10) explains how to develop a research proposal or write a research report. A summary is given at the end of every chapter that helps the reader to recapitulate the ideas. Moreover, writing exercises and suggested readings at the end of every chapter are useful for the readers.

Chapter 1 opens with -- definition of research approaches and the author gives his opinion that selection of a research approach is based on the nature of the research problem, researchers' experience and the audience of the study. The author defines qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research. A distinction is made between quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The author believes that interest in qualitative research increased in the latter half of the 20th century. The worldviews, Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012) and Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) call them paradigms, have been explained. Sometimes, the use of language becomes too philosophical and technical. This is probably because the author had to explain some technical terms.

Chapter 2 is about the review of the literature. The chapter starts with the identification of the research topic and argues that literature review has central position in research. The author suggests where to place literature review in a study. This chapter is a good guide for novice researchers as it suggests how to review literature, locate a research study in existing body of literature and find a gap in previous research. As expected, this chapter is very descriptive. Some good data bases are suggested by the author in this chapter. The idea of forming a literature map is practical and useful. However, some more explanation and examples on how to review previous studies would have been helpful for readers.

Chapter 3 'the use of theory' gives a complete definition of 'theory' and its use and forms in quantitative research. The explanation of relationship of variables in visual diagrams is really helpful for new researchers. The chapter gives a step by step procedure to write a theoretical perspective. The chapter explicitly deals with the use of theory in quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods and transformative worldviews or paradigms. Different types of variables used in quantitative research have been elucidated in this chapter. However, a new researcher needs some more examples and illustrations in comprehending the variables.

Chapter 4 'writing strategies and ethical considerations' deals with the ethical issues, the structure of a proposal and writing strategies. Different formats for writing a research proposal are presented in detail. These include quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research. Some basic ideas are discussed in this chapter about designing the sections of a proposal and some writing tips are suggested that can be instrumental in writing a research proposal. Ethical issues in qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research are explained in detail. A short summary at the end of the chapter well elaborates key suggestions for writing a research proposal.

Chapter 5 highlights the importance of writing an introduction to a proposal and suggests how an abstract is

written in a research study. The five components of an introduction are all that a new researcher needs to start with. The chapter also suggests how a research problem is written and gap can be found in the previous studies. The gap, termed as ‘deficiencies in the literature’ has been illustrated with examples. The chapter also highlights the significance of introduction in a quantitative study. However, some more examples of introduction, gap and significance of qualitative and mixed method studies may have been helpful for the reader.

Chapter 6 advocates the importance of purpose statement and its place in a journal or a dissertation. Some basic features of purpose statements in qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research are underlined. The idea of providing scripts of the three major designs can be helpful for researchers in different fields. The author emphasizes the need of explaining the variables in quantitative and mixed methods research. The language used in this chapter is easy to comprehend.

Chapter 7 discusses research questions and hypotheses. It explains how research questions are designed in a quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research. The author suggests different question words used in quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods study. Scripts and examples have been provided for writing qualitative and quantitative research questions. Though there is no script for writing mixed method questions, an example has been provided for a mixed methods two-phase study.

Chapter 8 deals with quantitative methods. The chapter focuses on fundamental steps in a survey or an experiment in a quantitative research proposal. A checklist of questions has been provided for readers for designing a survey and an experimental research. Survey designs and experimental designs have been discussed in detail with a brief explanation of population and sample selection. A detailed description of a survey and an experimental study is given with some suggestions of how to use the needed instrument. The writer has rightly given just the basics of different experimental designs, otherwise, it would have been difficult to provide details of every design. The chapter, however, discusses many practical considerations for a researcher that may not be comprehensible for a new researcher.

Chapter 9 discusses qualitative methods. The characteristics of qualitative research are given in detail. The author suggests some tips of a qualitative research design and explains the researcher’s role in it. Data collection procedures in qualitative research have been divided into four basic types— qualitative observation, qualitative interviews, qualitative documents and qualitative audio and visual materials. Qualitative data collection types, options, advantages and limitations have been provided in a table that makes it easy to comprehend. There is a lot to learn about reliability and validity of qualitative research for a new researcher. Six-step data analysis process in qualitative research is explained and illustrated with the help of a figure. However, it needs the reader to have some know-how of the qualitative research.

Chapter 10 deals with mixed methods approach. Mixed methods approach is described in detail and types of mixed methods research designs are illustrated with figures in brief. More elaborated diagrams might have been more helpful for readers. Important factors and practical considerations for choosing a mixed methods design have been discussed in detail. Convergent parallel mixed methods design, explanatory sequential mixed methods design, exploratory sequential mixed methods design and transformative designs have been explained with examples. A brief summary is given at the end.

In general, the book is well written and organized. It is informative, illustrative, and practical. It is useful for researchers of different fields. After reading the book, new researchers, who might consider research a daunting task, may be able to carry out their research independently.

References

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