

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology section sometimes causes great difficulty to both experienced and inexperienced researchers as there is a very broad diversity of methodologies available to the researcher. This is the most important part of the research proposal and your dissertation/thesis as the methodology used to collect your information and data can make or break your study. Before you begin, you should study the various kinds of research methodologies you could use to conduct your research. You should choose or design a method that you can consider appropriate to your work. Any research methodology should comply with the requirements of reliability, validity and feasibility. Whatever research methodology you choose for your research project must generate the best possible results. As a postgraduate student you are required to find a good method and to convince your reader that it is good. If your method is good, half your battle is won.

The research methodology should explain in detail to your reader exactly how you plan to conduct your research to find answers to the research question for example: What experiments will you run and how? What kinds of data will you collect, how will you collect it, who will you collect it from, and how will you go about analysing it once you have it? It is imperative that these methods are correctly and effectively utilized as this is primarily what the student must master, in the case of a master's qualification. In the case of a doctoral qualification, the research methods must be used and applied in a way that confidence is instilled in the contribution that is made to the field of research.

During the research process the student will use and apply the various research methods identified. The research methodology should focus on the research process and the kinds of tools and procedures to be used. The research methodology should focus on the individual steps in the research process and the objective procedures to be followed.

Note 13:

The research methodology used to collect your information can make or break your study. Document all procedures used during the application of the research methodology.

When choosing your research methodology you should ask the following questions?

- Is this methodology valid? Will this methodology provide the kind of information, data and statistics that I need?
- Is this methodology feasible? Will I manage to carry out this methodology with the samples concerned in the time available? Some things just take longer to do than others. Will I manage to finish my research using the methodology I have chosen?

- Does it measure what it is supposed to measure?
- Is this methodology reliable? Is this methodology explained clearly enough so that someone else could follow the description and repeat the research by using this methodology.