Resources for Chapter 4

A selection of examples of research using fixed, flexible and multi-strategy designs

Fixed designs


the use of sunbeds and the attitude towards tanning in children using a questionnaire survey in two schools in a mixed urban part of Merseyside, U K.


**Flexible designs**


they distinguish bullying from situations where a manager is simply operating as a ‘tough boss.’ In-depth interviews were conducted with HR practitioners working in the United States, and followed a semi-structured format. The data were analyzed based on grounded theory methodology, using constant comparative analysis.


football's black market, with a particular emphasis on ticket touting (scalping), fakery, forgery, and the murky independent travel business.


**Multiple-strategy (mixed method) designs**


Farmer, J., & Knapp, D. (2008). Interpretation programs at a historic preservation site: a mixed methods study of long-term impact. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 2*(4), 340-361. doi:10.1177/1558689808321026. A mixed methods research approach used to uncover and explore both the immediate impacts of the experience as well as the long-term information that was retained 6 months following attendance of the short duration program, using pre- and post-questionnaires, in-depth and informal interviewing, observations, and the synthesis of qualitative and quantitative data.


combination of ethnographic interviews and observation, health questionnaires and collection of demographic information. Discusses the advantages and pitfalls of this triangulation approach.

O’Donnell, A., Lutfey, K. E., Marceau, L. D., & McKinlay, J. B. (2007). Using focus groups to improve the validity of cross-national survey research: a study of physician decision making. *Qualitative Health Research, 17*(7), 971-981. doi:10.1177/1049732307305257. Adds a post hoc qualitative component (focus groups) to a survey. Focus groups were also used in the formulation of the survey instrument.


Walker, M., Whyatt, D., Pooley, C., Davies, G., Coulton, P., & Bamford, W. (2009). Talk, technologies and teenagers: Understanding the school journey using a mixed-methods approach. *Children’s Geographies, 7*(2), 107-122. doi:10.1080/14733280902798829. A project which set out to capture the movements and to consider the wellbeing of 30 teenagers on their journeys to and from school. A mobile phone linked to a GPS receiver was used to automatically log travel patterns whilst the respondents added ‘blog’ images and text about how they felt on the journey. Follow up interviews further explored the data.
Annotated references to further reading for chapter 4 (p.78)


Gorard, S. (2013). *Research design: Creating robust approaches for the social sciences*. London: Sage. Highly recommended as the book which covers all the bases on research design in a very clear short text. Follows the approach that your research questions determine the design.


Mason, J. & Dale, A. (2010). *Understanding social research: Thinking creatively about method*. London: Sage. Sets out a range of current developments in the field of social research, encouraging readers to consider ways of learning from different approaches and perspectives to make their own research richer, more insightful and more rewarding. A highly practical guide which also seeks to draw readers outside their methodological comfort zones.
