

# Theory

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Research Methods Introduction To understand use statistics, one needs some little knowledge on research method. This is because statistics are data generated through intensive research for the users to crystallize own tangible and up to date information. Generally, statistics acts as a tool that helps in availing pertinent answers to the already devised research questions. Therefore, an understanding of research methodology facilitates the understanding of statistics. This essay seeks to avail information regarding research methods, approaches and the measurement of crime rates.

### Research Approaches

In conducting research, certain approaches may be required that embrace use of qualitative or quantitative data (Maxfield, & Babbie, 2012).

Quantitative data may be pertinent towards unveiling how repeatedly certain behaviors occur in a particular group. Qualitative data, in contrast, may be applicable in the desire to determine why certain individuals engage in a certain behavior (Maxfield, & Babbie, 2012). Certainly, the kind of approach selected will determine the research method used.

### Research Methods

Research methods or studies comprise of two major classifications; descriptive studies as well as analytical studies. Descriptive studies comprise of further divided into correlational research and surveys (Withrow, 2013).

Analytical studies, in contrast, include observational research and experimental research (Withrow, 2013).

#### 1. Descriptive Studies

##### Correlational Research

This research study examines the co-variation of variables. It can be

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accomplished through diverse methods that include empirical data collection. Normally, in this research the researcher does not manipulate anything, but only obtains data on variables (Vito, Kunselman, & Tewksbury, 2011).

### Surveys

It examines the relationship that exists amid a particular variable and other variables. It is done over a short time period or at one point in time (Vito, Kunselman, & Tewksbury, 2011). This study only provides a snapshot of the frequency at which an event/something happens, and other related characteristics of the event in a population over a short time period.

## 2. Analytical Studies

### Observational Research

Normally it includes several studies such as cohort studies, ethological studies, case control studies, and ethnographic studies among others.

Observational researches majorly focus on observation of a phenomena and recording whatever has been observed. Mostly these studies apply qualitative approaches (Withrow, 2013).

### Experimental Research

Normally they include true-experiments or quasi-experiments. True-experiments embrace experiments undertaken in cases where control is imposed over all variables except the variable under study (Ellis, Hartley, & Walsh, 2011). Often, imposing this control is easier in a laboratory setting. Quasi-experiments are also the same as true experiments though they use naturally pre-existing or formed groups (Ellis, Hartley, & Walsh, 2011). When the study focuses on naturally formed groups, then the variable studied is considered a subject variable. While, if it focuses on pre-existing groups,

then the influenced variable existing between the two groups becomes an independent variable.

#### Measurement of Crime

A crime can be defined as any action done in violation of a law, which forbids it and permits punishment for its commission. Therefore, crime may be considered an elemental dependent variable (Ellis, Hartley, & Walsh, 2011). Normally, the measurement of crime can be done using descriptive studies since the nature of crime can be described, the number of crimes can be counted, and the offenders and victims can be described. Generally, surveys and correlational research are the effective form of descriptive studies that can be used to measure crime (Ellis, Hartley, & Walsh, 2011). Additionally, crime at times may be an independent variable.

#### Data Sources for Crime Victimization

These data sources may include;

Surveys of people in the community considering their experiences to/of crime

Recorded statistics on administrative systems or rather administrative data

#### Administrative Data

This data on crime victimization may be derived from various sources such as police, community service agencies, and hospitals. It may include data on victims or causes of death (Withrow, 2013). Administrative data may be appropriate on crime victimization, however; it may be disadvantageous since incidences may never reach or receive the attention of the authorities. Additionally, the victim may by no means speak of this incidence to any other involved.

#### Survey Data

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Surveys of a people in a community offer a way of directly asking people about the experiences they have had of crime. Therefore, the rates of victimization from surveys normally are significantly greater than rates gained from administrative systems (Withrow, 2013).

### Measurement

Generally, the choice of data source used in crime measurement may assume the basis of understanding the facts source's purpose and the research methodology applied. Crime victimization survey and administrative crime data aid in informing users on matters regarding the extent and nature of crime victimization (Maxfield, & Babbie, 2012). Survey data is also essential in contextualizing of information from the administrative data. Alternatively, these two data sources helpful in testing alternative premises associated to criminal activity (Maxfield, & Babbie, 2012). Neither victimization surveys nor administrative statistics alone give inclusive information about crime; both are useful in tackling specific issues. Despite that, even within a specific data collection method (that is administrative or survey data) there exist variations between collections. Administrative collections may include limitations resulting from dissimilar practices between agencies that supply the relevant data (Vito, Kunselman, & Tewksbury, 2011). Surveys also may have limitations yielding from methodological discrepancies and alterations amid successive cycles.

### Conclusion

Certainly, for one to properly measure crime, they have to choose the most appropriate research method that can be used. This is of consequence for the research selected will ascertain results' accuracy (Vito, Kunselman, & Tewksbury, 2011). Actually, descriptive studies are suitable for measuring

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crimes, and the most appropriate type of descriptive study to use is surveys.

#### References

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