

# Research paper on research design

[Sociology](#), [Population](#)



## **Causal Design**

The research on offenders and empathy will employ the research design of causal design. This is because the research is an explanatory research with a focus on the why question. For instance, it is quite often to link lack of empathy with crime or in that case with offenders. Thus, say to examine the trends of crimes in relation to empathy among the offenders as well among the non-offenders. It is then quite usual to develop an explanation why crime rate increase among inhuman or empathy-less individuals, why crime is less among empathetic individuals. Additionally, why are some crimes more common on a particular gender than the other gender as well as why crime is more prevalent in a particular age or age group (Dooley, 1997).

The research design developed to is often determined by two fundamental principal. That is whether a research is an explanatory or a descriptive one (Dooley, 1997). For instance, in this case, we want to answer or explain why most individual who are empathy-less likely to commit offend or a crime. This implies that we need to have instincts about why this happens or why should it be so. It may happen that we may have a number of possible incompatible instincts and thus we may need to collect data or information that will lead to identifying the best empirically workable instinct to phenomenon. To answer the why question we ought to develop a causal explanation and thus the causal research design for this research (Mahoney, 1987). The causal research design is based on the fact that a particular phenomenon, say y is affected by another phenomena or factor, say x. For instance, in our research we say that lack of empathy affects the probability of offending. It is quite important to understand that why adapting to this

type of a research design that the causal explanation itself can either be simple or a complex one. A simple causal explanation is the one with a single independent variable affecting a dependable variable. In a complex causal explanation the one independent variable, affects a dependable variable, which in turn affects another dependable variable, hence the whole process becomes a chain ((Mahoney, 1987).

Generally, the causality studies as may be generally referred to as a phenomenon that follows the conditional statement of the form, “ if X exist, then Y exist”. Our research topic fits well in this statement since, if individuals who lack empathy exist then people who are prone to offending or committing crime exist. This is because crimes such as murder, rape and kidnapping among others are committed by mercy-less individuals who may be argued to have no empathy and hence can do anything. This type of a research is therefore used to measure the impact a particular change or phenomenon has on an existing assumption or a norm. In our study, this is the impact of empathy on offending. It is important to note that most of the social sciences employ causal explanations reflecting on the test of the hypothesis. This is simply because a causal effect arises when there is a variation of a phenomenon, usually referred to as independent variable that then leads to a variation to another phenomenon, which is then referred to as dependent variable (Mahoney, 1987).

There are certain conditions that have to be fulfilled when determining causality. One of these is empirical association. This implies that a valid reasoning should be deduced from the finding of an association based on the independent variable and on the dependent variable. The second condition

the research needs to fulfill is the appropriate time order. This has the implication that for us to make a conclusion that causation is involved between the variables, we must first of all identify that the variation in the dependent variable occurred after the variation of the independent variable. The third condition that must be met is that of non-spuriousness. The meaning of this is that the relationship that exists between the independent and the dependent variable does not occur as a result of the variation of a third variable. (Fuchs & Turner, 1986).

### **Advantages of the causal design Research**

The causal design research method has a number of advantages. One of these is that the causal research design is able to assist the researchers to identify and understand why things in the world as well as individuals operate the way they do. This is possible through proving the causal relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable and through the elimination of other possibilities. The second advantage is that causal design of research creates a sense of confidence that the findings are valid. This is due to the systematic selection of subjects as well as the equity of the variable being compared. The third advantage to this type of research design is that it makes it possible for replication. This implies that the findings attained during the process of researching can be used on a number of other different researches (Mahoney, 1987)..

### **Disadvantages of Causal Design Research Method**

Despite the advantages that go along with the causal research design, there are also a number of its shortcomings. One of the shortcomings to this

research design is that it can only be employed to relationships that are casual and not all relationships are causal. This is a shortcoming to this research design since a possibility may also arise through coincidence that two unrelated circumstances may appear to be related. Another shortcoming to this research design is that it is usually difficult to conclude causal relationships. This is because the social environment is full of a variety of confounding and extraneous variables. This therefore implies that there is a possibility of the causality being inferred and hence never proven. Another demerit to this type of research design is that if two variables have a correlation, then the cause must first come before the effect. This is a major shortcoming to this research design since when two variables are causally related it might be sometimes difficult to identify the variable that comes before the other. This then makes it difficult to identify the variable which independent and which variable is the dependent one. In other words, the variable that causes the other effect to occur (Mahoney, 1987)..

## **Sampling Strategy**

Usually during the process of researching, the researchers cannot have gain access to all persons within the population of their study. Instead, they collect data from a sample of the population and eventually use the observations from these samples to represent the entire population (Sudman, 1976). In this research, the sampling strategy to be employed is the convenience non-probability sampling strategy. Non-probability sampling research strategy refers to the sampling in which the samples of the population are selected in regard to their availability. This implies that the samples are selected because of volunteering or because of the researchers'

own selection or judgments (Fowler, 1984). In this study, the researchers will select the representative sample of their own convenience as well as consider representative samples from volunteers. However, the selected representative samples will bear in mind the demographic composition of the entire population in terms of age, sex, level of education as well social class within the society.

It should be noted that the research will adapt to the non- probability convenience sampling strategy despite its shortcoming because of time factor as well as cost factor. It therefore follows that the researchers are quite familiar with the shortcoming of this sampling strategy, which arise as a result of nonrandom manner of selection of sample representatives. This in turn results to denying some member or portions of the population a chance to participate in the research (Fowler, 1984). However, through the consideration of the demographic composition of the population to be studied the effect of this problem will be nullified. The bigger shortcoming to the research by employing this research sampling strategy is therefore that the research will lack a way of evaluating or a method of calculating how well the selected samples represent the entire population of study (Sudman, 1976). However, as initially mention, due to time and cost factors the research will have to employ this sampling strategy. Additionally, in order to reduce the sampling error the research will aim at collecting data from large sample of representative of the population of study.

The research will therefore collect data from offenders as well as from non-offenders bearing the demographic composition of the total population of study. The demographic composition to be considered in selection of the

sample representative to the research will entail of age, sex, level of education as well social class within the society. The research will therefore collect sample representative from prisons, schools, colleges, various public as well non-public professional occupations, organizations as well as from families. The data collected from these representative samples is expected to be useful in the final documentation of that particular phenomenon or characteristic that occurs or is prevalent within a particular group and additionally, depict that not all the members of the said group the manifest the particular trait in consideration (Bradburn & Sudman, 1988).

### **Data collection**

Data collection refers to the process by which information on both the independent variables and the dependent variables are gathered and measured from the sample representatives. It is important to note that this should be done in a systematically established manner with the aim of responding to the test hypotheses, the research question at the same time evaluating the outcomes. It is also important to note that the research data should be properly collected to avoid ending up with a misleading research findings. This implies that to avoid erroneous research results, selection of appropriate data collection method or instruments is of paramount importance (Seidman, 1991).

This research will collect data using interviews and questionnaires. This is because both questionnaires and interviews are the most reliable method as well instrument of data collection in the discipline of social science. An interview in a research refers to the encounter between the respondent and the researcher from which the latter asks the former some questions

concerning the topic of the research. Using interview the respondent who is the sample representing the entire population provides the much needed raw data through answering the questions asked by the researcher. The researcher collects the raw data provided by the respondent using the best instrument of data collection at his or her disposal. The raw data concerning the research is analyzed and evaluated by the researcher in the later stages of the research and the findings of the research deduced ((Ackroyd & Hughes 1983). This implies that “ carrying out a survey requires more preparation than just selecting a sample and working out an interview schedule” (Peil et al. 1985, p, 130). Questionnaires refer to a set of question in a sheet form that is issued to the respondent or to the research sample representatives of the population of study to fill. They also provide the raw data for final analysis by the researchers. Using these two methods as well as instruments of data collection, the two variables, which is empathy being the independent variable and offenders being the dependent variable will be evaluated. This implies that the research will aim at determining the correlation that exists between empathy and the likelihood of committing a crime. It should also be understood that the effect of lack of or possession of empathy is the determining factor that the study will be collecting data on to evaluate its effect the likelihood of committing an offense.

During the research process, the questionnaires will be distributed to the various research respondents bearing in mind the demographic composition of the population of study. The demographic composition to be considered in selection of the sample representative to the research will entail of age, sex, level of education as well social class within the society. The research will



therefore collect sample representative from prisons, schools, colleges, various public as well non-public professional occupations, organizations as well as from families. This implies that the samples of the questionnaires will be distributed to individuals who are serving jail terms, to school pupils, to college students, as well to those working on the various fields. The research questionnaires will be collected from the respondent within the duration of two weeks after the date of issuing. The research questionnaire will contain multiple choices questions regarding the variables of research study that is empathy as the independent variable and the likelihood of offending as the dependent variable of the research. For instance, the questionnaire will have questions that will aim at predicting the level of empathy of the survey respondent. The level of empathy will finally be analyzed from the tabulation what the respondent will have filled as very weak, weak, good or excellent. The questionnaire will also comprise of questions regarding the respondent's affinity to commit a felony or an offense. Through the analysis of the finding of each respondent, a correlation between empathy and the likelihood of committing an offence will be deduced.

In other areas, the researchers will aim at conducting a one on one interview with the respondent of the research. The respondent will be assessed of the level of empathy through responding to similar questions as to those from the questionnaires. Data collection during the interviewing process will be through recording using the recording medium. The data will additionally, be tabulated and analysed in a similar version to that of the data collection using questionnaires

## **Disadvantages to questionnaires and interviews**

One of the major shortcoming to both questionnaire and interview method of data collection is that the respondents may refuse to participate. This particularly is so when the respondent fails to talk to respond to the researchers or when the respondent to the questionnaire form destroys the form. On the other hand the respondent may give distorted information about himself thus collecting inaccurate data and hence an erroneous research findings. Language barrier may also pose a bigger challenge to these methods of data collection.

## **Ethical issues considerations that may affect the design, implementation or reporting of your research**

Ethical issues may arise in the process of the data collection as well on the management of the data. For instance, in the process of collecting the information or data from the research respondents as well as on the process of reporting the results of the research findings. The major issues that are anticipated to arise include the method of storing and reporting the finding. For instance, a person who may have committed an offence that went unnoticed may require to be protected through the observation of confidentiality as well as requesting for anonymity. This implies the researchers should collect the data from the respondent in a professional way ensuring that respondents are not affected unfairly after the evaluation activities.

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