

Multicultural research methods in methodology



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Multicultural research methodologies are one of the newest research fields to be implemented in recent decades. Traditional research methodology has been established for centuries, and has a very orthodox view of things like norms, measurement instruments, sampling, and observation. Multicultural researchers quickly found out that applying these same factors to their own research was inappropriate; the field of multicultural research demanded a different perspective if any sort of useful and accurate findings were ever going to be issued.

Two areas where there is great difference between multicultural research and traditional research are measurement instruments and norms. In these two areas it is easy to demonstrate how traditional research has a much easier time being performed with the standard and well established concepts involving measurement instruments and norms. However, when a multicultural researcher attempts to answer a question or reinforce a hypothesis he or she will quickly find out that they must perform their research in a way that is very different from those in the traditional field.

Measurement instruments are an excellent place to begin looking at the way multicultural and traditional research methodologies contrast. As the world becomes increasingly globalized and corporations begin to operate in many different countries encompassing different and diverse cultures, there is a clear need for accurate multicultural research on a myriad of topics. Even simple surveys like product satisfaction are more difficult for a multicultural researcher.

Various countries and populaces simply have different viewpoints and this can cause entire research designs to have to be suited to specific nations, or even specific populations within those nations. For example, traditional researchers have found that it can be extremely difficult to get individuals in Latin America to participate in one of traditional researchers' more time honored measurement devices; the focus group. (Morrow, 231) In contrast, many American citizens are quite receptive to the idea of participating in a focus group, a well-established fact known to most multicultural as well as traditional researchers.

Those who are educated in multicultural research methods understand that Latin Americans have a very different point of view when it comes to how they value their time. For the average Latin American the idea of participating in a focus group is a waste of time that could be better spent doing almost anything else. The list of research measurement instruments that must be altered depending on the culture being sampled is almost endless.

Mail surveys, another common tactic employed by traditional researchers to gauge opinion on a host of different topics have been found to be very inefficient with Americans and many Westerners in general. (Morrow, 256) Multicultural researchers have found that, through careful studies, other cultures are much more receptive to mail surveys. The Japanese, for instance, are much more likely to complete and return a survey mailed to them in comparison to the average American household who would likely discard the survey as "junk mail". (Morrow, 257) This is not to suggest that either culture is wrong for their treatment of this particular research

instrument; rather, it simply highlights that people thousands of miles apart have vastly different cultural experiences that will shape their views on the importance of everything, including whether or not a mail survey is worth their time. An informed multicultural researcher would be wise to employ the mail survey when he or she is doing their work in Japan, just like a researcher working in the United States would achieve much better results by utilizing focus groups.

Traditional researchers might very well plod ahead and send out thousands of mail surveys to Americans, knowing that they will receive a small percentage back. However, if these researchers were to pay closer attention to the cultural aspect of the research, they would be able to conduct their inquiries in a more efficient way, both in terms of money spent and answers received. A second area that holds great potential as a way to compare and contrast multicultural and traditional research methodologies is norms.

Traditional researchers usually work with a well-established set of norms that rarely fluctuates. (Gottfried, 117) Multicultural researchers operate in a much different environment. For those looking to perform a study or experiment that focuses on the impact of culture, they must pay very close attention to the individuals who they are surveying and how the norms for those people can be very different from the norms of others sampled. An example of this would be a multicultural researcher attempting to study the public's view of single-payer healthcare, as many liberals have suggested is a good idea for implementation in the United States.

A researcher could ask a series of targeted questions to a group of Americans, but without considering their cultural leanings, the research

<https://assignbuster.com/multicultural-research-methods-in-methodology/>

would be inherently flawed. A fourth generation American of European descent will have rather “ mainstream” views of the topic, which will contrast greatly with a first generation Canadian immigrant. (Gottfried, 112) The cultural norms for each of these groups will be very different, which will end up in them answering the question differently or, even if they answer the same, for different reasons.

A traditional researcher would not pay very much attention to this issue, and would likely state that an American is an American, and that with a large enough sample size they would arrive at the correct diagnosis of the public’s point of view regarding the topic. Those who are involved with multicultural research know that by passing over the deep cultural divides that exist between most American citizens, the research would be virtually worthless. In conclusion, multicultural research and traditional research have much in common, but differ on some very important points.

Two of these points are the relevance of norms and measurement instruments. Multicultural researchers will work much harder to get a better understanding of their respondent’s culture before asking questions and conducting other research. This ensures that the reasons behind their answers are known, which equal a more comprehensive research design. Measurement tools and their impact differ between the two research methods as well. Multicultural researchers pay close attention to the culture they are sampling, and employ research instruments that are the most likely to garner results.

Traditional researchers are much more likely to use a blunt research tool, and use it over and over again until they achieve the necessary amount of responses. Both research methodologies have their place, and both will continue to benefit from the others perspective. Works Cited Morrow, Susan L. (2001) " Qualitative research methods for multicultural counseling: Handbook of multicultural counseling" Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications Gottfried, Paul Edward. (2002) " Multiculturalism and the Politics of Guilt: Toward a Secular Theocracy," University of Missouri