



ACTION RESEARCH
SESSION 3.5
DESIGNING
SURVEY RESEARCH
FOR ASSESSING
THE SITUATION

The background features a stylized map of Australia with a green-to-purple gradient. Various educational icons are scattered around the map, including a graduation cap, a microscope, a family silhouette, a hand, an open book, a laptop, a puzzle piece, and a house.

(STAGE 1 OF THE ACTION RESEARCH FRAMEWORK)



Objectives

At the end of the session, teachers should be able to:

- 1 define what survey research is and what role it plays in conducting Action Research;
- 2 differentiate types of survey research; and
- 3 plan a survey research as preliminary step for “Assessing the situation” (stage 1 of the Action Research framework) prior to Action Research.



Key Understandings

- 1 Survey Research, as a preliminary investigative tool, is used to determine thoughts, opinions, and feelings about a situation and/or a possible intervention or treatment that the teacher-investigator is thinking of implementing.
- 2 Surveys may either be longitudinal or cross-sectional. In longitudinal surveys, data are collected from participants across a period of time, say for two quarters or for an entire year. In cross-sectional surveys, data are collected at about the same time, and only one time, from participants representing different age or grade levels.
- 3 Questionnaire is a tool that contains a predefined series of questions used to collect information from individuals.

Materials

- LCD projector
- laptops (about three to be used by the groups for the task under Application)
- marking pens
- small sheets of paper
- metacards



- manila paper for group output for the task under Application
- masking tape
- copies of the short questionnaire about Action Research under Activity
- copies of “Coding for Questionnaire” to be distributed per group
- poster showing the “Coding for Questionnaire”



TIME ALLOTMENT

120 minutes/ 2 hours



References

Fraenkel, Jack R. and Norman E. Wallen. (1990) 2003. How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

Anonymous. n.d. “Survey Research and Questionnaires.” Research Connections (website). Accessed May 12, 2018. <https://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/datamethods/survey.jsp>

Introduction

Begin the learning session by saying: “Good _____, everyone. How are you all today? Welcome to today’s LAC session. We will be discussing the last research design, which we can use in “Assessing the situation,” stage 1 of the Action Research framework. In the past four sessions, we discussed the two major Action Research designs, which are experimental and qualitative

designs. After that, we learned about two research designs that can be used in “Assessing the situation,” namely, causal-comparative and correlational research designs.

You will recall that Action Research involves the implementation of an intervention or treatment. We identified two research designs that can be used for this purpose—the experimental and the qualitative research designs.” Ask the participants the following questions.

- Can anyone tell me what is the unique characteristic of experimental research design? (manipulation of the independent variable to see its effect on a dependent variable)
- Do you also recall the three types of experiments and how they differ? (Pre-experiments have only manipulation of the independent variable; Quasi-experiments have manipulation of the independent variable and a control group, but no randomization of participants; True experiments have manipulation of the independent variable, a control group, and randomization of participants)
- What makes qualitative research different from experiments? (The data come in the form of descriptions and narratives to answer questions of “how,” “what,” and “why.”)
- Do you also remember the types of qualitative research? (case study, ethnographic study, and phenomenological study)

Proceed with your opening spiel by saying: “You will also recall that prior to implementing Action Research, we may need to “Assess the situation,” stage 1 of the Action Research framework. For this reason, we also discussed two other research designs, the causal-comparative and the correlational research designs.” Ask the following questions.

- Does anyone remember the main features of causal-comparative research? (It examines the possible causes of an observed effect, after the cause has already occurred.)
- What is an example of a causal-comparative research? (effect of Preschool education on school readiness for new Kindergarten pupils)
- What is the objective of correlational research? (It examines the relationships between variables, without necessarily identifying which one is the cause and which one is the effect.)

Finalize your opening spiel by saying: “Today, we will be adding a third research design to causal-comparative and correlational as another approach to “Assessing the situation.” This is the survey research design.

At the end of this session, you are expected to be able to describe what survey research is and what role it plays in conducting Action Research; enumerate different types of survey research; and plan a survey research as preliminary step for ‘Assessing the situation’ prior to Action Research. With your cooperation and active participation, let us try to accomplish these during our two-hour session today.”

Activity (5 minutes)

As a way of introducing the topic for the day, ask the participants to answer the following short questionnaire about Action Research. Have them accomplish the questionnaire in about 3 minutes. Pass the questionnaire quickly to the participants. After 3 minutes, ask everyone to return the completed questionnaire to you.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON ACTION RESEARCH

Instructions: Put a check mark (✓) in the space corresponding to the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement.

SA- Strongly Agree
 A- Agree
 N- Neutral
 D- Disagree
 SD- Strongly Disagree

PART I		ID NO. _____				
	STATEMENT	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Action Research should involve the implementation of an intervention.					
2	There is manipulation of variables in survey research.					
3	Dissemination of results is part of the research process.					

4	Statistical analysis is more credible than qualitative analysis.					
5	Science requires that quantitative data be collected.					
Gender: ___ Male ___ Female					Age: _____	

PART II		ID NO. _____				
	STATEMENT	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I feel confident about doing Action Research.					
2	I know what Action Research Topic I should pursue.					
3	There are many things I don't know about Action Research.					
4	If I can avoid it, I will not engage in Action Research.					
5	I am excited to start my own Action Research.					
Gender: ___ Male ___ Female		Age: _____				

PART III		ID NO. _____				
	STATEMENT	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I believe I have the time to do my own Action Research.					

Analysis (10 minutes)

Process the participants' answers to the questionnaire by asking them the following guide questions.

- 1 What was the questionnaire about? (It was an assessment of one's knowledge, attitude, and opinion about one's capability for Action Research.)
- 2 What was the format of the questionnaire? (It follows Likert scale format.)
- 3 Do you think that by having you answer the questionnaire, I was able to already conduct a research? (Yes, a survey research was conducted using the questionnaire.)
- 4 What do you think was my research question? ("What are the knowledge, attitudes, opinions, and feelings of the teacher-participants about Action Research?")



- 5 Was there manipulation of some independent variable in this survey research? (No, there was no manipulation of any independent variable.)
- 6 How would you now describe what survey research is? (It is a description of a large group of participants about a specific characteristic.)

Abstraction (30 minutes)

UNDERSTANDING SURVEY RESEARCH

Survey research refers to a type of research design characterized by collection of data by asking individuals questions either in person, on paper, or by phone or online. Its purpose is to describe a population on a particular characteristic. However, it is rare that a population is studied; often, a sample is taken from the population. Thus, survey research seeks to collect information from a sample of participants representing a population to portray them along certain traits such as abilities, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and/or knowledge of a particular topic. Eliciting information about these traits is often undertaken through asking questions. The answers of the participants resulting from these questions constitute the data for the survey research.

TYPES OF SURVEYS

There are two major types of survey research: cross-sectional survey and longitudinal survey. In the context of education, cross-sectional survey describes different populations of learners based on samples taken from different age groups or school levels at one single time. Longitudinal survey describes a population of learners by studying several samples from the population for a period of time.

There are three designs for longitudinal survey: trend, cohort, and panel.

- 1 Trend Study. Different samples from a general population (e.g., Grade 7 students) whose members change across time are examined at different points in time.
- 2 Cohort Study. Different samples from one specific population (e.g., Grade 7, batch 2018–2019) whose members do not change are appraised at different points in time.
- 3 Panel Study. The same sample of individuals is assessed at different times over the course of the research.

Survey research is not suitable for the implementation of any intervention or treatment because there is no manipulation of any independent variable. However, it is useful in

ACTION RESEARCH

“Assessing the situation” (stage 1 of the Action Research Framework), as a preliminary investigation prior to the conduct of Action Research. Some examples of Survey Research Questions are:

- “What are pupils’ perceptions of discipline problems in the classroom?”
- “What are the opinions of Grade 12 students on their practicum experiences?”

SAMPLING IN SURVEY RESEARCH

The focus of study in survey research is called the “unit of analysis.” If the focus is an individual learner, the unit of analysis is “student” or “pupil.” If the focus is an entire class, the unit of analysis is “class” or “group.”

As in other types of research, the group of persons from whom the participants in survey research are taken is called the target population. Random sampling procedure is strongly recommended for survey research so that the results can be generalized to the target population.

The recommended sample size for survey research is large, preferably close to one hundred ($n = 100$), if possible. However, for survey research as preliminary tool for Action Research (Assessment of the situation), sampling may be purposive and the sample size may be smaller than what is generally required.

DATA COLLECTION

Data for survey research can be collected (1) through direct administration of a questionnaire to a group, (2) through mail or email, or (3) through face-to-face or telephone interview. Each of these modes of administration has its own advantages and disadvantages. These will be explained in detail in our LAC sessions on data collection methods.

For practical purposes, data collection for survey research can be undertaken in large groups (by class) or small groups in the classroom. A special training is necessary if using telephone and face-to-face interviews as methods for collecting data. Most questions in survey research are closed-ended, to facilitate the analysis of data, especially if it involves a large sample size.



DATA ANALYSIS IN SURVEY RESEARCH

Data analysis for survey research usually involves frequencies and percentages for each item. Graphs are also the preferred ways of displaying them.

Descriptive statistics such as mode, mean, and standard deviation are also computed whenever applicable. For example, these are easily computed for survey research questionnaires that use rating scales.

NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR:

Mention also ethical considerations as mentioned in the first LAC session and previous sessions.



Application (30 Minutes)

Lead the participants in putting into practice what they have learned so far about survey research. The idea is they want to find out about the characteristics of their class as a preliminary study prior to the introduction of an intervention. Using the following table, ask them to prepare a plan for a survey research on these characteristics. Have them write their plan on the manila paper provided. Give them 20 minutes to do this task. After 20 minutes, ask each group to present their output.

1. Survey research question
2. Sampling procedure and sample size

3. Data collection method (with details and/or sample items)
4. Data analysis to answer research question
5. Sample (or prototype) tables showing results of the survey research

Closing (10 Minutes)

End the learning session by saying: “Good job, everyone! We have just completed our series of LAC sessions on research designs. We have discussed five research designs. We already identified experimental and qualitative research designs as appropriate Action Research designs when implementing an intervention or treatment to solve a problem or issue in our classrooms. In addition, we also named causal-comparative, correlational, and survey research designs as suitable approaches for “Assessing the situation” (stage 1 of the Action Research framework) prior to an Action Research. I hope that our discussions have so far enlightened you about designing Action Research or a preliminary research prior to it. Allow me to end our session today by quoting Margaret Mead, an American cultural anthropologist:

‘Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.’

—Margaret Mead

See you all in our next LAC session for another interesting discussion. Take note that our topic will be data collection methods. Thank you and goodbye.”



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