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**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**  
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**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Department of Humanities**

**Media and Communication Branch**

# **Research Methods and Techniques in Media and communication Sciences**

A pedagogical lectures for second-year Undergraduate students of Media and  
Communication.

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## **The third semester**

**Title of the Unit:** Methodology Teaching Unit

**Subject:** Research Methods and Techniques in Media and communication Sciences

### **Learning Objectives:**

- To become familiar with the most important research methods in general, and specifically in media and communication.
- To understand the key steps in constructing the theoretical framework for specialized scientific research.

### **Prerequisite Knowledge:**

- Methodological knowledge acquired in the two semesters of the common core (Fundamentals of Scientific Research and Major Methodological Approaches...).

### **Course Content:**

1. **Some Scientific Research Methods** (in general and specifically in media and communication sciences):
  - Historical Method
  - Descriptive Methods: Social Survey, Case Study, Content Analysis, Document Analysis...
  - Experimental Method
  - Comparative Method
2. **Steps in Constructing the Theoretical Framework for Scientific Research:**
  - Choosing a research topic
  - Selecting and formulating the research title
  - Defining the research problem
  - Hypotheses, questions, and variables
  - Concepts
  - Previous studies
  - Research perspective (theoretical background)

### **Evaluation Method:**

- Directed work grade: 50% + Exam: 50%

## **Introduction:**

This pedagogical publication (textbook, lectures) aims to introduce students to the methodologies and research techniques in the field of media and communication. It is tailored for second-year undergraduate students. At this level, students need to familiarize themselves with the various scientific methodologies that can be relied upon in their specialization, whether they are qualitative, quantitative, or applied methodologies. They also need to be equipped with various research techniques applied in media studies, enabling them to conduct scientific research using correct methods and techniques that ensure accurate scientific results.

The methodological foundation of research in media and communication sciences has not received significant attention compared to other social sciences such as sociology and psychology. Consequently, researchers in the field of media face many difficulties in their research activities due to the methodological subordination to social sciences over a long period of time, in terms of emergence and development. However, with the widespread influence of media and its clear impact on society, and the abundance of studies that delve deeper into media phenomena with all their elements, media and communication scholars are working on establishing methodological foundations based on specialized methodologies and techniques in this field. They rely on independent methodologies that are tailored to the requirements of media research.

Therefore, this booklet will address the most important of these methodologies and techniques by dividing it into two axes:

The first axis will cover lectures on the types of scientific methodologies, focusing on the scientific methodology in media and communication. This will include the historical methodology, descriptive methodology, social survey methodology, case study methodology, content analysis methodology, experimental methodology, comparative methodology, ethnographic methodology, semiotic methodology, as well as quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

As for the second axis, we will delve into the theoretical framework of scientific research and discuss the most important field procedures that students should follow, as well as how to extract the study results.

## **Lecture 1: The Scientific Method in Media and Communication**

Studying the subject of scientific research methodologies is an original or primary scientific issue for any media research or study, and until the significance of the term "research methodologies" in the field of media and communication becomes clear, it is necessary to define it and differentiate it from some similar or related terms such as the term "methodology." This will be clarified in the following elements:

### **1. Concept of the scientific method in media and communication**

#### **1.1 Definition of the scientific method**

##### **1.1.1 Definition of the method**

"It is the path leading to the discovery of truth in the sciences through a set of general rules that guide the mind and determine its processes until it reaches a known result." (Abd al-Rahman, 1977, p. 06) Maurice Auge describes the various uses of the word "method," where it can refer to the method of thinking in our conception of the world surrounding us, which may be either deductive or inductive... It can also refer to the method of conceiving and organizing research. (Maurice Auge, 2004, p. 89)

It is also defined as "a set of organized procedures and steps followed by the researcher in processing the subject under study in order to answer research questions and test hypotheses." (Bilgiz, 2006, p. 61)

The method represents half of knowledge, and science cannot do without it because it serves as the scientific compass that guides the researcher to grasp his goal of discovering the truth. It is preferable for the method used in discovering scientific truth to stem from an objective reading of the nature and characteristics of the reality studied so that its results truthfully reflect this reality.

### **1. Definition of Scientific Research**

Scientific research refers to the effort exerted by the researcher (investigation, exploration, verification, analysis, criticism, comparison) on a particular subject to discover and reach the truth, rather than to prove or affirm a certain matter in accordance with one's own views or biases. It is, therefore, a comprehensive and objective report, supported by evidence and references, free from any bias, presented by the researcher, especially the academic researcher, to a specialized committee for evaluation in order to obtain a specific academic

degree. Research presents a fundamental opportunity for the student researcher to demonstrate their intellectual presence in the field of science and knowledge, obtain the academic degree they aspire to, and establish their position alongside renowned researchers. (Bouhamla, 2017, p. 179)

Research is defined by various definitions, the most important of which are as follows:

- It is the organized and meticulous inquiry aimed at uncovering the truths of things and their interrelationships in order to develop or modify the current reality. (Abbadi, 1999, p. 4)
- It is a method of organized and meticulous inquiry used by the researcher to verify existing knowledge or discover new information or facts to address specific problems, using scientific methods and approaches. (Hajila, 2010, p. 20)
- Said Talle and others defined it as "organized intellectual activity aimed at increasing human capacity to control the scientific environment. Controlling the environment is a fundamental goal of science that can be achieved through scientific knowledge." (Talle, 2007, p. 36)
- Therefore, the majority of definitions of scientific research revolve around considering it as a means of organized and meticulous inquiry used by the researcher to discover new information and relationships, or to correct and modify existing information, or to comment on and support or refute a previous idea, using the steps of the scientific method.

Based on the previous definitions of scientific research, media research can be defined as follows: It is the organized investigation into a media subject, issue, phenomenon, or problem to uncover facts or theories related to the media or communication aspect, or to develop them.

Additionally, media studies or research in the field of media can be defined as "the organized scientific activity aimed at uncovering media phenomena and the facts related to the media phenomenon, its components, the relationships between them, its objectives, and the social contexts that interact with it to achieve these objectives, describing these facts, interpreting them, and anticipating trends in movement within it."

## **1.2. The concept of media can be defined as follows:**

In French, the term "Information" corresponds to the concept of media, which denotes the action of reporting, as described in the Russian dictionary (Zabadi, p.161).



In Arabic, media refers to informing others about something, indicating that the meaning of this term in both Arabic and French is the same, involving the process of informing others about specific information, which may include current events (Fouda, 1983, p.37).

J. Folliet defines media as the exchange of information, ideas, and opinions among individuals, as each individual seeks to achieve what they need from these ideas and opinions through possible methods and available means. Thus, he encapsulates the concept of media within the scope of the process of exchanging information among individuals, excluding the means by which this exchange occurs (F. Balle adds the element of means (equipment) to the definition of the same concept, which makes this process possible, especially in cases of exchanging this information over long distances between different parties.

### **1.3. The concept of communication can be defined as follows:**

In Arabic, communication refers to the connection between two things, indicating the relationship between them. In French, the word "communication" is derived from the Latin term "Communis," which means common, expressing the establishment of a shared message with another person or group (Raoul, 1934, p. 423). Accordingly, communication, according to the previous definition, involves both the sender and the receiver participating in a shared message.

The British Encyclopedia defines communication as a method of exchanging meanings between individuals through a recognized system of signals. The Al-Mawrid Dictionary defines communication as the exchange of ideas, opinions, and information through speech, writing, or signs, whether in the form of gestures, audible vibrations, or wired or wireless audiovisual signals.

The Collins Encyclopedia defines communication as "entering into a relationship with another party or parties," which is the same definition provided by the Larousse Encyclopedia for the term, stating "to be in a special or official relationship with one or more parties" (Pierre, 1960, p. 52).

Regardless of the diversity of definitions for the term "communication," its concept always lies in the reciprocal relationship between two or more parties. It is the relationship between a sender and a receiver who participate in the exchange of meanings using a specific system of signs and symbols, understood by both parties.

From the aforementioned definitions, we find that the scientific methodology in the field of media and communication encompasses the fundamental research interests that should be investigated and inferred from topics and variables in this field, using various scientific methods and research tools.

Because, as Conant represented, science is a "series of interconnected and continuous mental concepts and visionary projects resulting from the processes of observation and experimentation," and that knowledge subjected to a process of investigation, induction, and scientific proof within its objective framework, we can apply this process to the field of research. This is due to the various intellectual efforts that have converged with their diverse scientific backgrounds to establish the foundations of what was later termed media and communication science, which has become a separate and self-standing discipline (Mustafa, 2003, p. 4).

## **2. Characteristics of the Scientific Method in Media and Communication**

The scientific method in media and communication is characterized by several features, including:

**2.1. Originality:** This implies that the researcher seeks to reach new scientific ideas of scientific significance, being independent in their thinking and closely connected to reality. Originality also highlights the renewal of the topic's idea, title, presentation method, and approach to addressing it, along with reinforcing ideas with up-to-date references. Originality can also manifest through local examples used by the researcher, as well as the results, recommendations, and solutions derived from the environment in which the researcher operates and proposes for addressing the problem.

**2.2. Methodology:** This means that it is not merely accumulating information, data, and evidence, or expending effort, time, and money without a structured framework. A scientifically characterized research progresses from one stage to another, using the scientific method and its techniques. The methodological aspect allows another researcher to verify the results, assess their accuracy, and evaluate their scientific validity.

**2.3. Scientific Integrity:** Media research requires complete neutrality from the researcher. They have no right to distort or alter any information or to plagiarize the efforts of others and attribute them to themselves. Scientific integrity is among the noble virtues of humanity that should be embraced by everyone, particularly researchers. Among the requirements of

scientific integrity is preserving the rights of others by referencing the sources from which the researcher obtained their information and mentioning all the data about the references used.

**2.4. Objectivity:** This means that the researcher must rid themselves of anything that could distort the scientific truth they have reached, such as personal biases, inclinations, or material desires. The aim of research is to attain truth, and the researcher's role is to present this truth and the methods used to reach it without bias.

**2.5. Dynamism:** Scientific research entails constant renewal and continuous replacement of old knowledge with new knowledge. The strongest laws of science and its data have endured for centuries and have been modified or replaced.

### **3. The Stages of the Scientific Method in Media and Communication**

It goes through two fundamental stages, as outlined by Ben Merseli (2013, p. 27).

#### **3.1. Philosophical Stage:**

The main starting point for any philosophical stage necessarily relies on the presence of significant accumulated knowledge. This leads us to face an inevitable challenge in dealing with the nature of subjects since it provides us with a level of cognitive maturity that opens our thinking to more complex topics. This difficulty in using various research tools and scientific methodologies available leads us to enter a philosophical stage. In this stage, as Ahmed Ben Merseli suggests, we work on identifying basic and new interests by forming general concepts and rethinking the basic assumptions known, as well as research methodologies and tools used in collecting information.

It is worth noting in this stage that this evolutionary model, as Ahmed Ben Merseli confirms, has been present in the efforts of all sciences, regardless of their types. However, it was applied to research in media and communication sciences, especially concerning human research that dealt with human activities in general. This was done by Aristotle (384-322 BC) when he attempted to explain the process of communication between individuals and groups in his book "The Art of Rhetoric."

**3.2. The experimental stage:** The transition of media and communication sciences to the experimental stage is attributed to the shift of scientific research in the social and human sciences from the philosophical stage, which relied on intellectual contemplation, intuition, and speculation, to the experimental stage (Ben Merseli, 2013, p. 27).

This transition of social sciences to the experimental stage was prompted by the emergence of the industrial revolution and the growth of large urban societies, which led to various social problems and issues requiring research and study. Following the application of experimental methodologies in the field of social sciences, the experimental stage of media and communication research began around 1930, led by the political scientist and communication scholar Harold Dwight Lasswell. Lasswell's pioneering work involved the analysis of the content of propaganda messages using content analysis methods, which brought about a qualitative shift in research methods in this field, laying the groundwork for subsequent exemplary efforts.

In the experimental stage, what researchers agreed upon during the philosophical stage is tested, and then its accuracy or correctness is determined through the application of scientific research tools and methodologies that provide information and facts. If new, accurate, and valid results are obtained, the researcher in this stage can formulate new scientific theories that enrich the research perspectives. However, these new results will present the researcher with the same problem encountered in the philosophical stage, namely the inadequacy of available tools and methodologies to address the new subjects of study and research. Because theory itself represents an accumulation of knowledge, reaching the formulation of theories implies advancement in thinking and striving to address more complex subjects. When the available methodologies and tools prove inadequate to address the resulting complex issues, the researcher returns to the philosophical stage to reconsider everything previously defined, but with richer knowledge compared to before (Malvin, 2002, p. 23).

#### **4. Goals of the Scientific Approach in Media and Communication**

Media research, like other social and humanistic research, aims to achieve several goals, albeit with varying degrees of precision compared to natural science research. These goals include:

**4.1. Describing Phenomena:** Media studies aim to describe media phenomena, their relationships, trends, and the driving factors behind them. This involves examining the interrelationships between these elements and their mutual effects within the broader framework of the general social context.

**4.2. Analyzing Phenomena:** This involves understanding how media phenomena occur, including the process of deconstructing complex media phenomena, understanding them at a

partial level, reconstructing them, and comprehending them at a holistic level, while also recognizing the different stages of their development.

**4.3. Interpretation:** This involves answering the question: Why did it happen? In other words, identifying the variables and factors that produced the media phenomenon, as described earlier, and placing them within the larger framework of relationships in order to reach generalizations and theories. It essentially combines most of the details of the phenomenon into one logical framework.

**4.4. Evaluation, Control, and Adjustment:** This refers to controlling some of the fundamental factors and variables that cause the phenomenon to occur if desired, or preventing its occurrence if undesired.

**4.5. Prediction:** This means the ability to forecast the movement of the media phenomenon and the associated facts, formulating preliminary interpretations of the trends of the media phenomenon. Prediction involves answering the question: What will happen in the future? In other words, envisioning the outcomes that could occur if the researcher applies the laws discovered to new phenomena, situations, and events. Prediction is subject to varying degrees of probability because media phenomena, like other social phenomena, are influenced by many complex factors, not just one or two.

For example, when studying the phenomenon of the television's impact on children's behavior, it is difficult to attribute this phenomenon solely to television, as there are many factors influencing children's behavior. However, through the introduction of statistical methods and the use of validity and reliability criteria, media research has been able to predict the future of the phenomenon. Additionally, it has led to the development of multiple theories, some of which are beginning to stabilize, especially those theories related to the role of communication media and their effects.

## **5. Sources of Media and Communication Research**

Media and communication research has evolved from a rich heritage of diverse scientific disciplines to address the changing conditions of communication in modern society. The first two chapters assess the contributions of the humanities and social sciences, the primary sources of theoretical concepts and analytical procedures. (Jensen, 2002, p 13)

- **Media and Communication:** The primary focus is on technological media, analyzed as communication tools, drawing on concepts from both oral and literate traditions. As

media are studied within their social and cultural contexts, research questions from sociology and anthropology have proven relevant to media studies. Additionally, the definitions of 'media' and 'communication' are being reexamined in light of computer-mediated communication.

- **Humanities and Social Sciences:** The modern humanities trace their origins to the early nineteenth century, while the social sciences emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, separating from other human sciences. Throughout this time, the two fields have interacted and influenced each other, culminating in the formation of media studies post-1945.
- **Field or Discipline?:** There is ongoing debate about whether these contributions have sufficiently merged to form a traditional discipline with defined subject matter and methods, as well as established institutional status. Various chapters explore this question, with Chapter 16 focusing on the role of media studies in society.
- **Convergence:** While the disciplinary status remains open, the volume highlights an ongoing convergence between humanistic and social-scientific approaches over recent decades, detailing the elements and stages of this process and suggesting potential directions for future research.

## **Lecture 2: Historical Methodology**

The historical methodology focuses on studying events that occurred in the past, as well as studying media and communication phenomena and linking them to their historical context. Many research topics in the field of media and communication cannot be studied in isolation from the historical circumstances that led to their emergence or influenced their development and change over different periods of time until they reached their current state. Therefore, in this lecture, we will discuss the historical methodology and its uses in the field of media and communication.

### **1. Definition of Historical Methodology:**

The word "history" in Arabic is derived from the triliteral verb "أرخ" which means timing the document, i.e., determining the time of its issuance. Therefore, the word "تاريخ" (history) has two meanings according to Ibn Khaldun: The first is apparent, which is limited to news about days, nations, and events from the first and second centuries. The second is internal, which involves examining and analyzing beings and their principles, understanding the details of events, and deeply understanding their causes.

In scientific research, the concept of history involves the process of retrieving past events to the present, through examining the various material evidence left by these events. History is therefore the present's reflection on the past, and according to Mohamed Ziane Omar, it is the source of all sciences, as it allows us to understand the stages of development of human knowledge in areas such as religion, literature, politics, economics, and so on (Ibrahim, 2010, p. 73).

As for the historical methodology, it is the method used in studying events that belong to the realm of the past. Thus, the researcher Maurice Aymard defined this methodology as the reconstruction of the past, based primarily on the examination of events from documents and archives. Like any other methodology, it relies on specific research steps (Wael, 2007, p. 6).

From the definitions presented, it is evident that researchers have linked the concept of history and its methodology to the study of the past and its events. This leads us to the question: Is history merely the study of temporally ended phenomena, or does it have relevance to the present? Answering this question leads us to consider the remarks made by researcher Zuqlan Rabaidat and his colleagues in this regard. They emphasized the connection of the historical methodology to the study of the past and its events, along with the examination of present

phenomena in terms of their circumstances of emergence, stages of development, and factors shaping them in their current form.

Thus, the historical methodology also entails the study of phenomena belonging to the present, with the aim of identifying aspects that have extensions in the past, in order to clarify them (Abayyat, 1999, p. 74). Researchers unanimously agree that the historical methodology is fundamentally aimed at studying history, with the goal of understanding the present and predicting the future. This is because the present is an extension of the past and a launchpad towards the future. No nation can build its present from scratch; rather, it must rely on the experiences and knowledge left by its ancestors, which serve as the foundational basis for constructing the present and looking towards the future. Therefore, studying history is not only beneficial in the historical domain but also in other scientific fields such as media and communication sciences.

## **2-Characteristics of the Historical Method:**

- The historical methodology relies on information and data from primary and secondary sources, primarily documents, records, and historical documents, along with associated artifacts, landmarks, and reliable witnesses.
- Researchers employing the historical method require intensive effort to verify the objectivity of historical data and ensure the credibility of both primary and secondary sources.
- This methodology is based on the hypothesis of confirming causal relationships between the past and the present, as well as the trends of phenomena and events in the future.
- The historical method focuses on documents, records, and documents in terms of study, analysis, and critique, along with associated historical facts and their interpretation to understand the past and utilize it to comprehend ongoing events and predict their future trends.
- The historical method differs from the discipline of history, as history studies human actions and experiences in the past and the material and moral effects resulting from them by retrieving past phenomena and events, verifying them, and conceptualizing their sequences. On the other hand, historical research methodology studies records and documents as a means for researchers to better understand events and phenomena and utilize them to comprehend the present and speculate about the future.



- This methodology relies on numerous pieces of evidence enabling researchers to provide all possible records and documents, including historical records, reports, eyewitness memoirs, encyclopedias, biographies, studies, research, scientific references, geological remains, archaeological remnants, and newspaper reports.
- Some question the utility of historical research and its classification as a scientific research methodology. They base their arguments on several justifications, including the difficulty of generalizing the results of historical research due to the uncontrollable or uncontrollable factors of past events, lack of confidence in the observations of researchers or eyewitnesses, the impossibility of assuming their objectivity, and the researcher's intervention in completing historical gaps lacking documents or records through personal interpretations and conclusions.
- Some argue that the historical research method rises to the level of scientific research methods. They base this argument on several justifications, including the fact that the researcher formulates a set of questions or hypotheses, collects information and data, analyzes them to test the validity of the hypotheses, and arrives at specific conclusions. (Abdullah, 2009, p. 115).

### **3. Steps of the Historical Method**

Using the historical method, like other methodologies, relies on specific research steps that must be followed. These steps, as outlined by Ben Merseli (2013, p. 27), include:

#### **3.1. Selecting and defining the research problem:**

Choosing and defining the research problem is the fundamental step in conducting research. It allows the researcher to identify the field to which it belongs, then specify what should be studied and how to achieve any scientific purpose, among other steps that we have discussed in detail previously in our presentation of the basic steps for conducting research. There is no need to repeat them here.

#### **3.2. Gathering Historical Material:**

As previously mentioned, historical research involves collecting material evidence related to past events, such as official records, government files, various documents, artifacts, newspapers, magazines, eyewitness testimonies, personal memoirs of individuals who played

significant roles in events, and previous scholarly studies on the subject. The researcher, in gathering historical material, encounters two types of documentary sources:

- **Primary Sources:** These are documents directly related to the subject matter, such as artifacts and documents. For example, in studying the history of radio broadcasting from its inception to the present day, the simple tools used in its early days, such as microphones, audio recording devices, and sound mixing tables, are primary sources (artifacts) for the researcher. Additionally, documents explaining and interpreting radio broadcasting in its early stages, authored by specialists at the time, are also primary sources.

- **Secondary Sources:** These are documents indirectly related to the studied subject, containing ideas, opinions, and positions regarding it from scholars. For instance, in our study of the aforementioned topic (the history of radio broadcasting from its inception to the present day), by collecting various publications where authors addressed the topic, we obtain secondary sources. These secondary sources allow us to identify the primary sources relied upon by the authors in their preparation, while also providing insights into the perspectives of others on the subject.

One important aspect to consider during the process of gathering historical information on the subject at hand is the use of index card system in recording bibliographic information for each reference. These index cards are typically 75 cm by 125 cm in size, made of smooth cardboard suitable for writing. The data is recorded according to the following arrangement:

1. Author's name and surname in a separate line.
2. In the following line: the title of the source, translator (if applicable), volume, edition, publisher, place of publication, year of publication, size, and finally, a note indicating: "Refer to specific pages for research, by recording the first and last pages."

Historical research, which often involves studying past events indirectly, is more susceptible to fabrication, forgery, and errors compared to other types of research. This is because researchers often rely on materials that do not directly represent the mentioned event.

Furthermore, historical materials that have been preserved for a long time in museums, libraries, and archives are prone to damage and corruption. Therefore, when researchers collect historical material for their research, they must first ensure the integrity of these materials, checking for any forgery or misattribution to the researched event.

This process involves subjecting these materials to critique at two levels:

- **External Critique Level:** The purpose of external critique of historical documents is to ensure their temporal relevance to the studied event. This involves examining the language used, the style of writing, the material composition, and ensuring they are free from additions, alterations, or events that occurred after the period under study. It also involves assessing the author's qualifications or political responsibility at the time of creation, determining if they were competent or politically influential enough to produce the document in the form it exists.

- **Internal Critique Level:** This level of critique focuses on the content of historical documents, scrutinizing every word to ensure the accuracy of the information they convey and the reliability of the sources used to gather them. These sources may include firsthand observations by the author of the event, or accounts obtained from other parties involved.

### **3.3. Research Plan:**

The researcher gathers documents related to their historical research, subjecting them to critical analysis at both levels mentioned earlier to ensure their direct relevance to the research questions or hypotheses. They proceed to execute their research plan, utilizing the information and data from these documents to address the various aspects of the problem or hypotheses raised.

### **3.4. Conclusion and Findings:**

This section marks the culmination of the research process. The researcher must clearly indicate the conclusions reached in their study, based on the outlined objectives. This may involve presenting new information not previously discovered by others, or correcting errors made by previous researchers who studied the topic.

## **4. Goals of Historical Methodology**

Historical research does not stop at the occurrence of the past in studying phenomena; rather, it continues its study until it reaches implications that contribute to understanding the present and predicting the future. This is attributed to (Mohamed, 1982, p.126).

- The historical method contributes to uncovering the true origins of scientific theories and principles, understanding the circumstances of their emergence, and establishing links between them and current phenomena.

- It seeks to investigate the problems faced by humanity in various areas of life in the past, their causes, and the methods used to overcome them or the obstacles that prevented finding solutions.

Here, we see that the historical method is one of the oldest and most important methodologies in scientific research in various disciplines because it digs into accurate scientific facts and traces their historical stages step by step. It enables the researcher to provide accurate information free from doubt and error, aiding in understanding the present and predicting the future as well.

## **5. Its Applications and Uses in Media Studies**

The historical method can be applied in studying media outlets and the developments they have undergone since their inception until today. The phenomenon of media is a product of contemporary civilization and the result of the invention of printing, along with the practice of mass journalism on a wide scale. Additionally, its growth occurred in an era where documentation sciences evolved, and specialized archival centers proliferated for preserving and maintaining media materials from deterioration and disappearance (Salah al-Din, 2003, p.133). Therefore, the use of the historical method in media and communication research does not pose the same intensity of problem as before, as the media phenomenon is present with its extensions in the recent past, and its material evidence is available in quantity and quality, making the research task relatively straightforward.

Indeed, the development of historical research methods and the diversity of its various techniques have greatly contributed to overcoming the difficulties mentioned earlier. In this regard, we observe a division in historical writing concerning the approach to past events, leading to types such as archaeological history. In archaeological history, researchers study various aspects of life (political, economic, military, etc.) of ancient civilizations, based on the artifacts, inscriptions, and other remnants left behind by these civilizations.

## **6. Weaknesses of the Historical Method**

- One of the main drawbacks of the historical method is its inability to generalize results, due to the unique nature of historical events that are unlikely to repeat with the same exact details. The historical method lacks the capability to apply the scientific method in the analysis of the subject matter. There might be bias in the transmission of events through the historical method.
- Another drawback is the difficulty in determining the relationship between the causes of a phenomenon and its subsequent outcomes, which makes it challenging to verify its hypotheses. Historical sources may be susceptible to loss or manipulation, leading to

falsification of facts. Moreover, the quality of historical data may not always be suitable for the intended research purposes.

- Multiple assumptions in historical studies can arise from the inability to interpret events objectively, as historical events are often intertwined, complex, and difficult to link to a single cause.
- The historical method relies on indirect observation, which may hinder the researcher's ability to accurately verify and scrutinize the information for its accuracy and authenticity.
- Unlike scientific experimentation, the historical method primarily relies on artifacts and historical records as its main source of knowledge, limiting the researcher's ability to retrieve and control phenomena or influence them.
- The knowledge obtained through the application of the historical method may lack precision from a modern scientific standpoint, as it is often incomplete and based on partial evidence.

In conclusion, despite its drawbacks, the historical method plays a significant role in gathering and obtaining information related to the past, enabling us to understand the present and predict the future of the studied media phenomenon.

### **Lecture 3: The Descriptive Method**

The descriptive method is considered one of the most common methodologies in the field of media and communication, and it is the most widely used. This is because it relies on several techniques and methods that enable the study of media phenomena. Through this lecture, we will learn more about the characteristics, importance, and uses of this method in the field of media and communication.

#### **1. Definition of the Descriptive Method:**

Description, in language, is the conveyance of an image of the external or internal world through words. Scientific description mentions the characteristics of an object, explains it, and identifies the circumstances and relationships between the facts, as well as common practices, beliefs, and attitudes among individuals and groups. Description is the observation of the condition of anything, whether it is a physical description or a statement of the material and spiritual characteristics of group members. (Belkhayr, 2013, p. 112)

The descriptive method relies on a detailed focus on description, where a specific phenomenon is studied based on its current state, unlike the historical method, which studies a specific phenomenon that occurred in the past.

The descriptive method is also defined as: "A scientific methodical way of describing a phenomenon through collecting, classifying, arranging, presenting, analyzing, interpreting, justifying, and integrating theoretical data and field data in order to reach scientific results, employed in social policies with the aim of reforming various social situations." (Ammar, 2009, p. 139)

#### **2. Steps of the Descriptive Method:**

The descriptive approach, as one of the scientific research methods, follows the main steps (Raja, 2000, p. 191):

- **Recognizing the Problem:** This involves identifying and gathering data that help in defining the problem and ensuring its actual existence.
- **Identifying Characteristics:** This step involves determining the features and characteristics of the phenomenon or problem and understanding its unclear aspects for further study.

- **Formulating Questions or Hypotheses:** Based on the identified problem and characteristics, questions or hypotheses are formulated to guide the study.

- **Determining Variables:** This involves identifying the variables related to the problem and understanding the nature of the relationships between these variables.

- **Identifying the Type and Nature of Required Information.**

- **Identifying the Study Population and Selecting the Sample for the Study,** along with specifying the sample size and the method of selection.

- **Choosing Data Collection Methods and Preparing them.**

- **Establishing Clear Rules for Data Classification** that are suitable for the study's purpose, capable of highlighting similarities, differences, or meaningful relationships.

- **Standardizing Data Collection Methods.**

- **Making Objective Observations** in an organized and precise manner.

- **Describing, Analyzing, and Interpreting the Results** in Clear and Specific Terms.

(Qasim, 1999, p. 58)

### **3-Objective of the Descriptive Method**

Descriptive research aims to describe specific phenomena, events, or things and gather facts, information, and observations about them. It involves describing the circumstances specific to them and reporting their current state as they exist in reality. Descriptive research encompasses various subtypes, including survey studies, case studies, and developmental studies. In many cases, descriptive research goes beyond mere description or descriptive diagnosis; it also focuses on reporting what things and phenomena should be like, based on certain values or standards, and proposing steps or methods that can be followed to achieve the desired outcome in light of these standards or values. These types of research are called normative or evaluative research. Various methods and tools, such as observation, interviews, tests, surveys, and rating scales, are used for collecting data and information in descriptive research.

Understanding the nature of descriptive research becomes easier when individuals first acquire some information about the various research steps and the diverse methods used in data collection and expression, as well as the general types under which studies can be

classified. Researchers in descriptive studies do not merely present personal beliefs or data derived from superficial observations. Rather, as in any research, they carefully:

- Examine the problematic situation.
- Identify their problem and formulate their hypotheses.
- Record the assumptions on which their hypotheses and procedures are based.
- Select appropriate subjects and suitable source materials.
- Choose methods for data collection or preparation.
- Establish rules for classifying data characterized by clarity, relevance to the study's purpose, and the ability to highlight similarities, differences, or meaningful relationships.
- Regulate methods of data collection.
- Make objective observations selected in an organized and distinct manner with precision.
- Describe their results, analyze them, and interpret them in clear, specific terms. Researchers strive for more than mere description; they are not, or should not be, merely tabulators or schedulers. Competent researchers gather evidence based on a hypothesis or theory, carefully tabulate and summarize data, then analyze it deeply in an attempt to draw meaningful generalizations that contribute to the advancement of knowledge.

#### **4. Characteristics of the Descriptive Method in Research and its Foundations**

The descriptive method is characterized by several features, as follows: (Ammar, 2009, p. 140)

- Providing information and facts about the current reality of the phenomenon.
- Clarifying the relationship between different phenomena and the relationship within the phenomenon itself.
- Assisting in predicting the future of the phenomenon itself.

Researchers believe that descriptive research is based on five main foundations:

- The ability to utilize various tools for obtaining accurate and clear data, such as observation, interviews, surveys, document analysis, and records, either individually or through accompanying tools.



- Descriptive research primarily aims to describe and quantify the characteristics of the researched phenomena. There may be differences in the level of work in such studies, with some merely describing the phenomenon quantitatively or qualitatively without studying the causes that led to the emergence of the problem or phenomenon under investigation.
- Descriptive studies rely on selecting representative samples from the community from which they are taken, in order to save effort, time, and other research costs.
- It is essential to abstract during descriptive research to distinguish the characteristics and features of the phenomenon under investigation, especially since phenomena in the field of social sciences are characterized by significant complexity and interdependence.
- Since generalization is a necessary requirement for descriptive studies in order to extract judgments that apply to various categories constituting the phenomenon under study, it is essential to classify things, events, or phenomena based on a specific criterion.

## **5. Applications and Uses in Media Studies**

The descriptive method focuses on mentioning the characteristics and features of the described phenomenon, event, or behavior, expressed quantitatively or qualitatively precisely. Its applications in behavioral studies are extensive, and in the field of media studies, its uses vary and encompass all branches of media. Descriptive methodology finds wide application in media studies, especially theoretical studies that rely on the case study approach. Examples include research on mass media journalism on a wide scale, and studies in the field of documentation sciences within specialized archive centers dedicated to preserving and maintaining media materials from damage and disappearance. Descriptive studies also encompass theoretical, thematic, or interpretive scopes.

## **6. Drawbacks**

- The researcher may rely on inaccurate or unconfirmed data and information from unreliable sources.
- The researcher may introduce a level of subjectivity in their data collection, leading them to favor certain sources that provide them with desired information, thus departing from objectivity.

- The desire for specific information may cause the researcher to deviate from objectivity.

- Information in descriptive studies is often collected from multiple individuals, so the data collection process is influenced by the diversity of individuals collecting it and their different methods.

- Hypotheses in descriptive research are often substantiated through observation, reducing the researcher's ability to make the correct decision regarding the most plausible hypothesis.

- The predictive capability of descriptive research, especially in the field of artificial intelligence, remains limited due to the difficulty and complexity of behavioral phenomena and their rapid changes over time and place.

- All these criticisms do not diminish the value of the descriptive method in the field of artificial intelligence; however, it alone is not sufficient to cover all types and areas of media studies.

## **Lecture 4: Social Survey Methodology:**

The survey method is considered one of the most prominent methodologies used in media research to obtain data and information targeting the same scientific phenomenon. This method is defined by the set of phenomena under study, which includes several variables constituting the research community over a sufficient period. The aim is to form the basic foundation of data and information in the specialized field. Through this lecture, we aim to introduce students to this methodology and its applications in the field of media and communication.

### **1. Definition of Social Survey**

In Arabic, "survey" implies passing one's hand over a liquid or stained object to remove its dust, dirt, or other materials, revealing its true nature to others. In scientific research, surveying refers to understanding the studied phenomenon in its natural context, by conducting an inventory (surveying information) related to its basic components, as well as its internal and external relationships.

The survey method, known in French as "La Methode Denquete," refers to the scientific investigation method used by researchers to study a specific situation through the examination of evidence, experiments, and documents constituting its natural state, in order to gather data and information relevant to the purpose.

The researcher Obaidat defined the survey method as the desired scientific approach. It involves collecting information and data about the studied phenomenon in order to understand its current situation, strengths, and weaknesses.

On the other hand, researcher Mohammed Zian Omar defined the survey method as the study of a phenomenon in its natural state, without any intervention by the researcher, meaning the study of the phenomenon under natural and non-artificial conditions.

According to the previous definitions of the survey method, it can be described as a scientific method that enables the researcher to understand the studied phenomenon, including its components and prevailing relationships, as it exists in reality and within its natural, non-artificial conditions, through the collection of relevant information and data.

The survey method is also defined by many researchers, such as Mahmoud Fouda and Abdul Rahman Saleh Abdullah, as a descriptive method. This involves describing a specific

phenomenon present in the current situation, analyzing its characteristics, and the influencing factors.

## **2. The characteristics of the social survey**

The characteristics of the social survey method are still a subject of debate among specialists in the social sciences regarding its importance. Some believe that the information obtained through social surveys is of little value and significance for social research. On the other hand, another group believes that social surveys are the only method through which sociologists can gather reliable data. Despite this divergence in views among social scientists regarding the importance of social surveys, it ultimately depends on the accuracy of the results and analysis achieved through this method.

As social surveys have several distinguishing characteristics, we mention the following: (Khalil, 2007, p. 46)

- 1- Social survey is a purposeful process aimed at achieving limited goals set by the researcher.
- 2- Social survey does not rely on a single method of data collection but utilizes various methods and tools, which may include personal experience, simple observation, structured observation, questionnaires, personal interviews, and various types of tests.
- 3- Social research can be broad or narrow in scope; it may span geographically to cover several countries or be limited to a single town. Data collection may involve the entire public for study, or it may be limited to a carefully selected sample from the public. Data collection may cover a vast number of fields or factors or focus on a few selected fields and factors, depending on the purpose of the survey.
- 4- Social survey is not merely a census or inventory of what already exists or a mere description of present conditions; it goes beyond that to other processes involving analysis, interpretation, comparison of present situations with some standards, drawing conclusions, and generalizing recommendations that guide future reformative applications.

Thus, one of the most important characteristics of social survey is not just an inventory of what already exists but an analytical process of understanding the surrounding circumstances and the essential, internal, or auxiliary elements that, by their presence or absence, result in a change in the outcome.

Types of social surveys vary based on the researcher's chosen basis, whether they are social surveys or social studies. They are divided into (Al-Hamdani, 2006, p. 124):

**1- General Social Surveys.**

**2- Specialized Social Surveys.**

**3. Objectives of Social Survey Methodology**

The debate among experts in the social sciences about the importance of social surveys remains ongoing. Some argue that the information obtained and collected through social surveys is valueless and of little importance to social research. Others see it as the only way for a sociologist to gather reliable data. Despite this difference and variation in perspectives among sociologists regarding the objectives of social surveys, it is contingent upon the accuracy of the results and analysis achieved when following this method.

The objectives of social surveys can be summarized as follows (Al-Hamdani, 2006, p. 124):

1- Theoretical Benefit: Social surveys are used by researchers after conducting studies on the phenomenon under study. They aim to collect facts about the phenomenon, analyze them, and reach generalizations. Sometimes, survey studies are used to verify the validity of hypotheses.

2- Continuous Utilization in Existing Social Studies: Social surveys are always beneficial in existing social studies by refreshing their scope and impact on society. They help assess individuals' awareness of social issues and understand the available and anticipated solutions to these problems.

3- Utilization in State-Level Planning: Survey research is utilized in developing state-level plans to identify the desires, preferences, and needs of individuals and groups within the community.

**4. Steps of Social Survey Methodology**

Since the survey method is primarily associated with accurately depicting the studied phenomenon from various comprehensive angles, by focusing on collecting information and data and presenting them to readers, this type of study requires a distinct scientific design compared to historical and experimental studies. The researcher must consider the research requirements mentioned when conducting such studies.

The design of survey research begins with (Ben Mersli, 2013, p. 283):

- Identifying and precisely defining the information and data we want to survey, specifically at the level of posing the problem and outlining the intended objectives.
- Developing an execution plan, which includes identifying the research community, its geographical scope, and the timeframe for completion.
- Regulating the process of information gathering by explaining the scientific reasons behind the researcher's choice of specific research tools.
- Clarifying the point of analysis of information and data quantitatively and statistically, and interpreting their relevance to the research.
- Arriving at the final conclusions.

In conclusion, when conducting survey studies, which often serve as depictions of the studied phenomenon, researchers must pay attention to the research steps. This enables them to accurately depict the phenomenon by collecting comprehensive and precise information and data and presenting them effectively to the reader. This process is akin to the work of a painter expressing a specific subject with a brush. To give his painting a powerful depiction, he must choose suitable lines and colors, and carefully blend and mix them together.

## **5. Applications and Uses in Media Studies**

The extensive use of the survey method for phenomena in its various fields has made it an applicable methodology. It relies either on surveying all the units comprising the research community, which is comprehensive and exclusive, or on surveying a part (a representative sample), which in this case constitutes a sample survey.

Moreover, the survey method may either survey all aspects of the studied phenomenon, including its constituent elements and prevailing relationships (a general survey), or focus on one aspect of the phenomenon (a specific survey). Additionally, when employed in surveying field phenomena, it becomes a field survey. Conversely, if it aims to survey the phenomenon desk-based through a collection of documents, it is a documentary survey.

Since the survey method is based on depicting, analyzing, and interpreting phenomena within their current context and natural conditions, it is considered one of the fundamental methodologies for descriptive studies, as mentioned earlier. It has been widely used in various fields, including media and communication research, particularly in areas such as public

opinion surveys. These aim to fieldily understand the opinions, ideas, attitudes, values, concepts, motivations, beliefs, impressions, and various influences of a specific audience.

Additionally, in content analysis, the survey method is employed to analyze materials published in the media to understand the presented topics and how they are delivered to readers. It is also used in audience research to identify the distinctive characteristics of a specific audience by collecting information and data useful in preparing media programs tailored to their preferences.

Furthermore, in audience measurement studies, the survey method is utilized to measure the impact of media content on its audience, assessing the extent of its influence. Additionally, it is applied in media industry research to understand various activities related to broadcasting, publishing, distribution, advertising, and the artistic, managerial, administrative, financial, and social work processes of media professionals. (Ben Mersli, 2013, p. 283)

**6. Its drawbacks can be summarized as follows:** (Al-Hamdani, 2006, p. 130)

- The social survey method is designed to focus or emphasize specific issues, which may make it a weak tool for obtaining or delving into the studied phenomenon.
- Weakness and scarcity of data and information, especially when relying on questionnaires due to non-return or non-response to the surveys.
- The legitimacy of generalization, especially in specialized surveys confined to a small geographic area compared to the study population as a whole, particularly in the field of media and communication.
- Survey studies tend to focus more on inclusivity than depth. Researchers conducting social surveys often focus on studying people's opinions and declared positions without analyzing or delving into the factors leading to these differing opinions.
- Another drawback of social surveys is the researcher's error in sample selection. If a mistake occurs in sample selection, it will affect the entire survey, impacting the interpretation of the data. Any interpretation of the available data in this survey must be based on this sampling error and the resulting chance.
- The presence of bias in distributing the questionnaire, whether it is bias from the researcher or the respondent.

## **Lecture 5: Case Study Method**

The case study method is considered one of the methodologies used by researchers in the field of media and communication to study specific cases, whether individual or group, and delve deeper into them by addressing all aspects and understanding their characteristics in detail. Through this lecture, students will become acquainted with the case study method and its applications in the field of media and communication.

### **1-Definition of the Case Study Method**

In Arabic, the word "حالة" (halah) means the condition or state of something, whether it's a person, an animal, an object, or an organization, referring to its specific situation and the interactions surrounding it (Al-Jawhari, 2008, p.163). This term corresponds to "Le Cas" in French, which signifies the situation or condition of something. Therefore, in scientific research, the term "Etude de Cas" is used in French to denote the in-depth study of a specific individual case.

Regardless of the nature of the case, whether it's an individual, a group, a political entity, an economic entity, or a media institution, case study is the in-depth exploration of individual cases within their surrounding context. As mentioned by Mohammed Ziane Omar, it's assumed that every case subject to study interacts within a specific context, and therefore, understanding the meanings and importance of the researched aspects cannot be fully comprehended without considering the context in which the case operates (Ziane, 1987, p.46).

Case studies can take various forms depending on their focus on individual cases in different temporal contexts. They can be historical studies when examining individual cases from the past. They can also be survey studies when addressing present situations through description and analysis of individual cases. Furthermore, they can be experimental studies when researchers subject the components of the case to a series of experimental tests to obtain scientific results for future research endeavors.

### **2. Objectives of the Case Study Method:**

The objective of case studies is to conduct in-depth research within a social framework, where the dimensions and scopes are determined by the nature of the case under study, whether it's an individual, an institution, a community, etc. In other words, the focus lies in comprehensively understanding the overall context and treating the particulars in terms of



their structural and functional relationships with the whole entity they encompass. (Samia, 2021, pp. 223-224).

This means that the objective of case study research in social research is to conduct intensive studies of a limited number of representative cases instead of collecting data on a few aspects of a large number of social phenomena with more limited dimensions. Case studies give greater importance to qualitative factors.

The case study method is employed in social research to gather data about a social phenomenon or a specific unit, classify and analyze it, and arrive at generalizations. The researcher presents a report containing the results without directly addressing the problem.

A case study should encompass a significant amount of information about individuals, groups, and events with which the individual interacts and the nature of their relationships with them. Data should come from various sources; researchers may conduct interviews or surveys and ask participants to recall past experiences and current desires. Additionally, studying personal documents like diaries and letters, conducting various social and psychological measurements, collecting data from relatives, friends, and analyzing records from schools and various social institutions are also methods used to gather data.

Sharan Miriam outlined four fundamental characteristics of case study research:

- **Specificity:** Case studies focus on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon, making them a good method for studying practical problems from real life.
- **Descriptiveness:** The ultimate results of a case study are a detailed description of the subject under study.
- **Illuminating:** Case studies help people understand what has been studied. New interpretations, new perspectives, new meanings, and new insights are all goals of case study research.
- **Inductive:** Most case studies rely on inductive reasoning or inference. Principles and generalizations emerge from examining the data. Many case studies attempt to discover new relationships rather than verifying existing hypotheses. Additionally, Borg and Gall (2005) mentioned the following characteristics of case study:
- **Study of specific examples:** The purpose of a case study is to shed light on a specific phenomenon that includes a set of processes, events, individuals, or other important aspects for researchers.

- In-depth study of the case: Case studies involve gathering a large amount of data about the case or cases under study, chosen to represent the phenomenon. This data can be verbal statements, images, material objects, or even some quantitative data. Data is usually collected over an extended period using various data collection methods.
- According to Jerome Kirk and Marc Miller (1986), qualitative research involves observing people in their natural environments and interacting with them using their language and conditions.
- Following this definition, case study research necessarily entails fieldwork, where researchers interact with participants in their natural settings.
- Case studies aim to represent the perspectives of both participants and researchers. They seek to understand a complex phenomenon as experienced by those involved. In other words, researchers must view the phenomenon from the perspective of its individuals.

The steps of the case study methodology are essentially the same as those known in the application of any other methodology. They begin with identifying the problem of the case under investigation. Here, it is important to note something significant: that the researcher, when studying a unique case, finds no difficulty in choosing it as a research topic. However, if the research is related to studying a case representing a group of similar cases, the matter differs, and the choice of the topic is posed sharply in this way: which case among these cases is more worthy of study, considering the objective representation of its counterparts in terms of the results obtained? Here, the researcher must consider, in making this choice, considerations that involve ensuring that this process is not done randomly or arbitrarily.

Through thorough examination of the general community from which the case or cases to be investigated will be chosen, this process is carried out with complete scientific clarity, with the assistance of previous studies conducted within the researched scientific framework, and with the expertise of specialized professors.

After the researcher has successfully identified the problem of his research case in accordance with the scientific conditions mentioned in this book regarding the point of analysis, he proceeds to collect information. This information should not be limited to superficial aspects of the phenomenon under investigation; rather, it should provide a comprehensive

understanding that sheds light on it in a deep and holistic manner, encompassing all its situations and events.

Upon completing the data collection process, whether through examining the subjects using established scientific methods and tools in this regard or through analyzing documents relevant to the researched case, the researcher subjects this information to analysis and interpretation in order to arrive at the conclusions outlined in the research.

At the end of our research on the case study method, it is important to note that many researchers have several reservations regarding the scientific results obtained in this type of study. These reservations stem from the fact that the information gathered cannot be generalized to other cases or to larger communities beyond the studied case.

The results obtained in case studies are heavily influenced by the researcher's personal factors, such as individual perspectives, personal impressions, limited experience, and personal opinions. Therefore, many researchers conducting this type of study advise maintaining scientific integrity and constant vigilance to avoid being unduly influenced by personal biases when using various scientific measurements applied in such studies today.

The results obtained in case study research are related to individual cases and do not represent a scientifically accurate sample of the original population according to established rules for sample selection. Consequently, these results cannot be applied to the entire community to which they belong. In order to lend greater scientific credibility to these results, researchers in this regard believe that researchers should not rush to choose the case they are studying in the original community. This is because it may lead to selecting a non-representative case for similar cases in this community. To avoid this, a thorough study of its various aspects is necessary. (Morse, 2014, p. 218)

The results obtained in case study research cannot be generalized to other cases within the original community because they are associated with the study of specific cases with unique circumstances. The researcher can only address these cases within the framework of their distinct nature. Therefore, the results derived from such studies are valid within the confines of these specific circumstances, and they cannot be generalized to other cases distinguished by their unique characteristics.

In conclusion, it can be said that researchers' reliance on the case study method in scientific research has been made under specific objective conditions primarily linked to the unique

nature that distinguishes the phenomenon under study from other phenomena. These objective conditions have prompted many researchers to warn against generalizing the results obtained in this type of study, as mentioned earlier.

### **5. Applications and Uses in Media Studies:**

The use of the case study method in researching media phenomena is highly beneficial. It provides valuable information about specific cases encountered by media professionals in their activities. Thanks to this method, they can overcome difficulties in understanding certain specific cases that cannot be researched except through conducting such studies.

### **6. Drawbacks:**

- A significant deficiency in scientific rigor in many case studies.
- Case studies typically take a long time to conduct, and sometimes produce a large amount of data that is difficult to summarize.
- The results apply only to the unit of study and do not allow for generalizations.
- The research cannot be replicated.
- Limited access to the field and to personal and self-information, which form the basis of case study research. (Taher, 2011, p. 83)

## **Lecture 6: Experimental Method**

The experimental method is considered one of the least utilized methodologies in the field of media and communication, due to the difficulty of its application in studying media phenomena. Nevertheless, there are many researchers who have specifically relied on it to study causal relationships between media variables or between them and other variables in society. Therefore, through this lecture, we have decided to introduce students to this method and its applications in the field of media and communication.

### **1-Definition of the Experimental Method**

The experimental method is considered one of the best scientific research methodologies because it primarily relies on scientific experimentation, providing a practical opportunity to discover facts and formulate laws through these experiments. The experimental method has ancient roots in human history, dating back to the earliest interactions of humans with nature. Through observation and experimentation, humans have been able to surpass their previous understanding. Initially focused on adapting and harnessing nature to control the planet, humans now explore space to uncover its mysteries. Therefore, it can be said that one of the most important research methodologies for humans is the experimental method because it has aided in their evolution and the construction of their civilization through observation, experimentation, and the attainment of accurate results, as well as understanding peaceful ways to deal with phenomena and interpret them. (Khaled, 2003, p. 61)

Hence, it can be concluded that the experimental method has been crucial for human development, allowing for advancements in civilization through observation, experimentation, and the attainment of accurate results, as well as understanding peaceful ways to deal with phenomena and interpret them. (Belkhayr, 2013, p. 133).

Undoubtedly, the experimental method in scientific research has undergone several stages of evolution, much like human civilization. While early humans used this method without realizing it, it has now become a fully developed methodology, primarily relying on scientific principles. The value of the experimental method is evident in both pure and applied sciences.

Experimental research involves deliberate and controlled changes to the specified conditions of the phenomenon or event under study. It entails observing the effects resulting from these changes in the phenomenon or event. This observation occurs under controlled conditions to test hypotheses and determine causality. By controlled conditions, it means introducing the experimental variable into the phenomenon and controlling the effects of other variables. In essence, experimentation is used to test hypotheses or prove them through experimentation.

## **2-Characteristics of the Experimental Method:**

Each educational method has its characteristics that give it its distinctiveness and highlight it among other methods. The content of the experimental method has a set of characteristics that distinguish it. Among the most important characteristics of the experimental method are (Rahim, 2008, p. 85):

- The experimental method reflects in the content of scientific research the frequent use by the researcher of a pattern of multifaceted questions that require interpretative information to answer them.

- The study community in the experimental method is subjected to experiments conducted by the researcher through the experimental method by examining this community. Under the conditions the researcher wants to obtain information about the study community through those circumstances.

- The experimental method relies on a comprehensive and thorough explanation of all that is used in the content of scientific research, including study tools and others, because the information provided by the experimental method is evidence.

- The experimental method follows a pre-existing mechanism. For example, if the researcher wants to obtain information about the community by exposing it to certain pressures, the researcher specifies the mechanism of the existence of these conditions before preparing the content of the scientific research.

- The experimental method does not suffice with just conducting the experiment. Rather, the researcher using the experimental method will find that he is analyzing and interpreting every step he takes.

- Flexibility is one of the most important characteristics of the experimental method, as the content of scientific research leaves room for information that can be taken and modified in the future, such as information about a social situation in the context of a specific population percentage that may increase in the future.

### **3-Objectives of the Experimental Method**

#### **4. Steps of the Experimental Method**

The experimental method is often the final form of research conducted in the research process and is considered a conclusive study. The following outlines the general steps required to successfully complete the experimental method. (Massad, 2007, p. 66)

- Define your research topic, the question surrounding it, and its variables.
- Formulate a specific research question.
- Gather all available literature and other resources on this topic.
- Conduct secondary research on the topic and initial research through surveys.
- If the topic involves research you have already started, such as exploratory, descriptive, correlational, or causal research, gather the facts you already have and organize them.
- Consider how these facts relate to your question and align with the secondary research you conducted.
- After your initial study, formulate a hypothesis.
- Design a controlled experiment.
- First, identify any dependent/independent variable(s) (if not included in the experiment).
- Determine the extent of variation in the independent variable.
- In the experiment, manipulate the independent variable(s).
- Measure the dependent variable(s) while studying the independent variable(s) concurrently.
- Ensure control over potential confounding variables.
- Assign subjects to specific experimental treatment groups.
- Consider the study's sample size; a larger study group creates statistical significance.
- Randomly assign your subjects to "treatment" groups so that each receives a different level of "treatment."
- Utilize a control group, which receives no manipulation. This shows how individuals tested behave without any experimental intervention.

- There are two types of group allocation designs:
- Completely Randomized Design vs. Blocked Randomized Design.
- Completely Randomized Design: Each subject is randomly assigned to treatment.
- Blocked Randomized Design: Also known as stratified random design, where individuals are first grouped based on a common characteristic, then assigned treatments within their groups randomly.
- Independent Measures Design vs. Repeated Measures Design.
- Independent Measures: Individuals receive only one level of the experimental treatment.
- Repeated Measures Design: Each subject receives all experimental treatments sequentially, with their responses measured. Also refers to measuring the effect of the treatment over time.
- Continue experimenting with the variables as needed, conducting measurements, and documenting observations.

## **5. applications and uses in media studies**

The first application of the experimental method was in the natural sciences, where its use was initially facilitated due to researchers dealing with material elements that could be easily subjected to testing without significant opposition. The researcher's interaction with discrete material variables in applying the experimental method gives them significant control over them with extreme precision. This is facilitated by the ability to measure the extension of material elements according to desired methods using highly sophisticated instruments and devices, ensuring the accuracy and objectivity of the results to a remarkable degree.

Faced with the remarkable successes achieved by the experimental method in natural science research during the 18th century, researchers in the social sciences began considering its application to studies of human behavior to measure various influences. The first initiative in this direction was led by the French scientist Claude Bernard, who emphasized the researcher's role as an observer rather than a controller of experimental events. This led to what we commonly encounter as experimental-recorded studies, where the researcher merely measures the effects occurring in the studied situation without controlling the variables. This approach is often seen in cases where the researcher is already aware of a specific action occurring, such as changes in the program of a media institution or the implementation of a new media program. In such cases, the researcher's role is limited to recording the effects of the changes observed in the studied situation, without actively controlling the variables being



investigated. The term "experimental-recorded research" was coined to distinguish this type of research from other experimental studies, highlighting its key feature of pre-existing knowledge of a specific factor being introduced or removed from the phenomenon under study, similar to what occurs in experimental case studies, where the researcher personally oversees the introduction or removal of the experimental variable from the studied field.

### **1. Drawbacks of the Experimental Method**

- It entails a significant amount of resources, time, and money, making it challenging to execute.
- It can lead to artificial environments when researchers unintentionally manipulate variables as a means to replicate real-world scenarios.
- It is susceptible to methodological flaws, in addition to other errors that cannot always be anticipated.
- Flawed experiments may require researchers to restart their experiments to avoid incorrect calculations or measuring results from artificial scenarios or other errors.
- Some variables cannot be manipulated, and some forms of research experiments are highly impractical to conduct.
- Measuring human responses in experimental research can be challenging.
- The results of experimental research are not descriptive.
- It carries significant risks and may have ethical implications that cannot be ignored. (Naji, 2003, p. 12)

## **Lecture 7: Content Analysis and Document Method**

Content analysis is considered one of the most important methodologies used in analyzing and studying media content, whether written, audio, or audio-visual. It relies on various techniques and methods that help researchers uncover the different formulas and symbols that describe media content. In this lecture, we will delve deeper into understanding this methodology and its applications in the field of media and communication.

### **1-Definition of Content Analysis Method:**

Content analysis refers to the process of dissecting and simplifying the meanings and ideas present in various documents and sources related to the research topic. Among the important definitions of this method is: "Content analysis is the decomposition of the content of an object, idea, or discourse analyzed into its basic elementary elements, meaning that it breaks down the analyzed compound into its characteristics." It is also defined as: "It is an indirect scientific inquiry technique applied to written, auditory, or visual materials issued by individuals or groups or dealing with them, whose content is presented in a non-numeric form." From these definitions, it becomes clear that content analysis is a scientific method that involves breaking down and simplifying information and ideas, which is an inverse process of composition. Moreover, it goes beyond mere surface description to delve into examining and studying the simplest components that contribute to the formation of the phenomenon.

### **2-Characteristics of Content Analysis:**

Content analysis method distinguishes itself from other methods through a set of characteristics that can be summarized as follows:

- The fields or topics of content analysis are very broad and diverse, making them difficult to define, as well as the methods and techniques of execution.
- Analysis goes beyond and includes description, so it can be said that analysis is an internal and external description of the phenomenon in all its dimensions, and it is much deeper and more precise than just describing the phenomenon.

- Methods and techniques of analysis vary depending on the nature of the material or the analyzed phenomenon.
- Analysis is an inverse process of composition or assembly, meaning that it starts from studying and examining the particles that constitute the phenomenon to reach the overall community as a whole or the studied phenomenon.

### **3. Objectives of Content Analysis Methodology:**

The purposes of content analysis methodology vary according to its topics, methods, and types. The most important of these can be summarized as follows: (Taher, 2011, p. 83)

- Identifying the internal structures or components of the material or phenomenon being analyzed.
- Ensuring the authenticity and belongingness of the material, phenomenon, or analyzed idea.
- Ensuring the alignment of the studied topic with previously known models.
- Researching and uncovering methods for assembling other materials needed by the researcher.

### **4. Applications and Uses in Media Studies:**

This method is used in analyzing the social, economic, and political situations existing in a specific society in the past, present, and future. Regarding the field of media, its usage is abundant in the realm of applied media methodology, especially in topics where an entire analytical methodology is required for its completion or preparation, resorting to analytical methodology or content analysis, even if only in part, especially when it comes to new media topics or modifications therein.

### **5. Drawbacks: (Taher, 2011, p. 83)**

- Requires desk-based effort from the researcher.
- Content analysis results often lean towards describing the content and form of the studied material, without revealing the reasons behind the appearance of the studied material in this form or content.
- Lacks flexibility as the researcher is constrained by the studied material and its limited sources.

- Information derived from content analysis may not necessarily come from authentic documents; documents might be idealized, unrealistic, or even forged.
- Difficulty in accessing some documents due to their confidentiality.
- It is challenging to obtain answers to questions that require knowledge of the underlying reasons.

## **Lecture 8: Comparative Methodology**

The comparative methodology focuses on studying the distribution of media phenomena in different societies, specific patterns of societies, or even comparing complete media phenomena with each other. It also involves comparing main communication systems in terms of their continuity, development, and the changes they undergo. Through this lecture, students will be introduced to the comparative methodology and its applications in the field of media and communication.

### **1-Definition of Comparative Methodology:**

It is the methodology adopted by researchers to compare between their national law and one or more foreign laws or any other legal system, such as Islamic law, in order to highlight the differences or agreements between them regarding the legal issue under study, with the aim of reaching the best solution to this issue. (Qarshoush, 2018, p. 66)

The comparative research methodology holds special importance in the field of legal studies, as it allows researchers to examine the experiences of other legal systems and compare them with national systems. This enables them to identify agreements, differences, or deficiencies between these systems. Consequently, the researcher can present the best solutions to the legislator to assist in amending existing laws or enacting new ones.

The researcher may adopt either horizontal or vertical comparative methodology. In horizontal comparison, the researcher examines the issue in each law separately without considering the position of the other law until completing the analysis of the first law. On the other hand, in vertical comparison, the researcher addresses each aspect of the research simultaneously across all laws being compared. It can be said that vertical comparison is superior to horizontal comparison because it avoids repetition and fragmentation of the research. Additionally, it leads to a better understanding and ease of identifying differences or agreements between the laws being compared. (Hamed, 2003, p. 61)

The comparative methodology is widely used in legal and social studies, such as comparing social phenomena in one society with those in another society, or comparing them in various economic, political, and legal fields. (Kharoua, 2010, p. 35)

This methodology allows for in-depth and accurate study. For example, it enables researchers to study a specific aspect of an economic institution, such as performance or human resources, with depth and precision.

Comparisons can be made to highlight the characteristics and features of each subject being compared, and to demonstrate similarities and differences between them.

Comparative studies have garnered significant interest among legal scholars, historians, and economists. Although the modern concept of comparison as an independent methodology is relatively new, the process of comparison has ancient roots in human thought. Both Aristotle and Plato used comparison as a means of dialogue in discussion, aiming to accept or reject issues and ideas presented for debate. (Gharboul, 2015, p. 12)

## **2. Characteristics of Comparative Methodology:**

Comparative methodology has a set of characteristics, which are considered as follows: (Abdelhamid, 2000, p. 78)

- It is considered an effective method to clarify the similarities and differences present in the research.
- Comparative methodology combines fundamental concepts or concepts collected by the researcher.
- In comparative methodology, research can be conducted through both quantitative and qualitative methods.
- Qualitative comparative methodology is directed towards the case, while quantitative comparative methodology is directed towards the curve.

## **3. Objectives of Comparative Methodology:**

- An effective method that helps all students understand all study materials and divide these materials into a set of summaries.
- If you want to infer all the relationships present in the texts that the researcher should compare, comparative methodology will assist you in doing so.
- It helps the researcher in choosing among studies, selecting primary ones considered appropriate methods, and completely avoiding unsuitable studies.
- If the researcher applies comparative methodology, they can identify the most important positive and negative aspects directly related to the study.

#### **4. Steps of Comparative Methodology**

The use of comparative methodology, which involves numerous comparisons among all phenomena related to a specific scientific research, entails several important steps, as follows: (Taha, 2015, p. 24)

##### **Firstly: Identifying the Comparison Subject**

In the first step, the researcher must precisely determine the subject of research to be compared. This is done by gathering all relevant information regarding the scientific research problem, and the researcher should also familiarize themselves more with the study's sample.

##### **Secondly: Establishing Comparison Variables**

The second step of conducting comparative methodology involves clarifying the variables specific to the study. The researcher then begins to elucidate the similarities and differences among all variables, which is crucial because the researcher needs it at the beginning of their scientific research.

##### **Thirdly: Interpreting the Comparative Data**

The researcher can interpret the comparative data by referring to many scientific studies discussing various aspects of the phenomenon or problem. Subsequently, this will facilitate the researcher's comparison process and lead to multiple results.

##### **Fourthly: Arriving at a Set of Comparative Results**

The fourth step of comparative methodology involves arriving at a set of results. The scientific researcher then proceeds to disseminate all these results through a scientific research paper containing a large set of results that contribute to serving science.

Comparative methodology stands out as an intertwined approach in scientific research methodologies. Comparison cannot be done without specifying hypotheses or problems, which may require another methodology in the study, such as using descriptive or historical methodology.

The comparative methodology employs a set of methods based on common factors and causative agents such as:

**Method of Agreement:** Used when there is a single common factor that was a primary cause of the problem.

**Method of Difference:** Indicates agreement among all study groups except for one differing problem.

**Combined Method:** Combines the previous two methods.

**Method of Relative Variation:** Relies on the relationship between the phenomenon's cause and its occurrence.

The comparative methodology focuses on comparing similarities and differences between social phenomena to discover the factors or conditions accompanying the occurrence of a social phenomenon or specific practice. Areas of using the comparative method include studying similarities or differences between main patterns of social behavior, such as studying political behavior or criminal behavior, studying different models of organizations, especially bureaucratic organizations like labor unions, political organizations, or various industrial organizations.

The study of the growth and development of different personality patterns, motivational patterns, and social attitudes in various societies and multiple cultures involves analyzing whole communities and comparing them based on the predominant patterns of systems or cultural orientations. Comparative methodology, in its broader sense, deals with comparing different societies or cultures within a framework of criteria that have some level of agreement and difference. This comparison focuses on issuing judgments about the characteristics or features compared between these societies and cultures, rather than between groups or categories within the society. These comparisons are based on the criteria and controls that serve as the basis for comparison.

## **5. Applications and Uses in Media Studies**

Employing comparative methodology in media studies represents a highly significant research field in the realm of media and communication sciences. This is due to its immense importance in defining and enriching the methodological and theoretical aspects of media and communication sciences. The utilization of comparative methodology in media studies is one of the most crucial methodological aspects as it provides highly important research findings in this field. (Thamar, 2007, p. 88)

Furthermore, the application of comparative methodology in studying media materials has also witnessed integration with research methodologies and tools in the specialization, with one of the most important being content analysis used both as a method and a tool



simultaneously. This has led to the emergence of what Youssef Thamar calls "comparative content analysis."

Comparative content analysis involves the researcher conducting two analyses and then comparing the results of each. It is used in the study depending on the availability of one of the following cases:

- When the problem statement of the study necessitates this type of analysis.
- When the researcher wants to study the content of two different media outlets, such as a newspaper and a television or radio program.
- When the researcher wants to compare a single type of media from the same nature, such as two newspapers, two radio stations, or two television channels, which applies to the characteristics of this study aiming to compare two television programs on different channels in terms of nature and ownership.
- In the case of studying a topic in two different media outlets.
- When comparing the content of a single medium across different time periods.
- In these cases, the researcher analyzes the content of the first medium and then moves on to analyze the content of the second one, after which they compare the results of the two analyses. There is no objection to analyzing both media simultaneously.

The use of this methodology in the field of media and communication sciences requires caution and adherence to methodical comparison imposed by different methodologies in drawing inferences, such as comparing the results of content analysis either over time or across different categorical units of analysis (such as comparing newspapers with radio channels).

Example of a study: "Media Coverage of the Financial Crisis in Algeria: A Comparative Analytical Study between El Nasr and Echorouk Newspapers during the Year 2016." Prepared by researcher Ktfei Samira: This study aimed to understand the significance attributed by both El Nasr and Echorouk newspapers to the financial crisis in Algeria in 2016. This was achieved by analyzing the allocated space for coverage, the placement of articles related to the topic, identifying the most important published topics, and extracting the key frameworks of media coverage of the financial crisis in these newspapers.

## **6. Its drawbacks**

1. Conceptualization becomes extremely challenging through this method.
2. Determining the unit used for comparison can be difficult.

3. Difficulty in identifying all the characteristics related to your phenomenon.
  4. The comparative method tends to be superficial, focusing only on surface aspects of the phenomenon.
  5. Drawing conclusions becomes difficult if there are significant differences between the phenomena.
  6. Social research comparisons can be challenging because of their inherent complexity.
- (Abdelhamid, 2000, p.44)

## **Lecture 9: Ethnographic Methodology**

The application of ethnographic methodology is not limited to anthropological and social studies alone. Many media and communication scholars have also relied on it to study some media and communication phenomena, especially after the changes brought about by media and their content on family relationships and behavioral patterns among users of these media. Therefore, through this lecture, we aim to introduce students to this methodology and its uses in this field.

### **1-Definition of Ethnographic Methodology:**

Ethnographic methodology is characterized as a qualitative approach used to gain a deep and detailed understanding of the reasons, beliefs, and motivations behind a phenomenon. It aims to provide a comprehensive description of the researched phenomenon and seeks to understand why and how it occurs, along with its impacts and specific contexts. This is achieved through the researcher immersing themselves in the lives and daily routines of the researched individuals. Human actions, individual opinions, and beliefs are influenced by situations and the environment in which they occur, and through the context in which individuals interpret their thoughts, feelings, and actions. The researcher arrives at this framework through data collection and analysis. Ethnography does not aim to generalize results but rather to expand the findings of the case, often leading to insights and scenarios that may be similar. (Qandilji, 2008, p. 45)

The ethnographic methodology also refers to the scientific field study of social phenomena, achieved through direct communication between the anthropological researcher and the subject of study. This direct contact entails the researcher living among the groups being studied and learning the local language to establish a connection with them. (Raymond, 1980, p. 120)

The old ethnographic method was not considered the most optimal scientific approach, as the comparison in it was not conducted in a distinguished scientific manner. Initially, comparison began with expeditions and attempts to compare societies with each other, giving rise to what is known as the "historical tracking" of social phenomena or evolutionary theory. This was done through relying solely on extensive readings and collecting information recorded by

travelers, missionaries, and merchants. No anthropological researcher descended into the field personally to gather information and jot down observations.

The study of the Andaman Islands by Radcliffe-Brown stands out as the first significant field study, followed by the study of the British scholar and pioneer of field studies, Malinowski, of the Trobriand Islands, which lasted for four years. We must also not forget the forgotten study of Lewis Morgan, an American, of the environment of New York society at the end of the 19th century.

## **2. Characteristics of Ethnographic Methodology:**

1. Utilization of in-depth interviews and participatory observation to collect data and information.
2. Linking data and facts with concepts, and extracting theories and knowledge from the field.
3. Connecting the results derived from studying specific groups to a larger context.

## **3. Objectives of Ethnographic Methodology:**

1. Focuses on studying a single case within a small community or specific group.
2. Conducted in the natural environment of human behavior.
3. Aims to understand human behavior.
4. Provides detailed and in-depth insights.
5. Absence of prior hypotheses.
6. Relies on direct observation by the researcher.

## **4. Ethnographic Method Steps:**

The key steps of the ethnographic method can be identified as follows: (Ahmed, 1978, p. 204)

### **4.1 Observation:**

Observation is one of the most important methods in anthropological research. It involves the researcher observing the studied community to identify its characteristics and attributes through description.

Deeper than that methodologically is "Observation-Participation", although some argue it is not feasible. The objection here arises because the researcher is often a stranger to the community being studied. What we mean is that the ethnographic researcher is often

influenced by their theoretical perspectives, ideological positions, mental and psychological makeup, which inevitably affect the results of their study, especially when using the "Observation-Participation" method.

Furthermore, the "Observation-Participation" method also raises questions about the objectivity of the data obtained by the researcher in their fieldwork. This question has been associated with a particular incident of contradiction in the results of a study of a Mexican village by two ethnographers.

Hence, the meaning of "Subjectivity-Participation" is an analysis of the personality of the ethnographic researcher themselves, not intended as an audit of the ethnographer's work by other researchers who review their work by visiting the communities studied or by contacting informants relied upon by the researcher to verify the narratives provided and the information provided to them in the field. Subjectivity aims to clarify the content of the researcher's personal relationship with the subject.

#### **4.2 The Process:**

The process is usually spontaneous and unplanned; it is a cycle, and a cycle is something that occurs repeatedly. The most important characteristic of the process is that it recurs in a patterned manner, deviating little from the pattern. Examples of this include "marriage," as it recurs as a "ritual" in a particular society three times or more, especially if this society enjoys a high degree of unity and homogeneity. However, in the pluralistic society, there is a problem that affects the "Processes" factor, as each layer or class has its own rituals and activities...

#### **4.3. Description:**

Description is one of the most important steps in ethnographic research practiced by social researchers. Here, the researcher describes only what they see, providing an honest and accurate account of what is happening, without adding anything from their own biases or preferences.

This process of "description" is characterized by being a strenuous task that burdens the ethnographic researcher. In this situation, the researcher is required to be extremely precise in documenting information or data. Moreover, they are supposed to not describe everything they observe forcefully. Instead, the focus is solely on obtaining data that can enrich the researcher and assist them in their study topics. Not every description can be considered ethnographic; the researcher's task here differs significantly from that of other specialists who aim to describe everything they come across, whether it be news or information, which may only amount to theoretical data of no real value. Therefore, the anthropological researcher

possesses a "specialized" uniqueness that distinguishes them from other entrants in the process of collecting information from field realities.

#### **4.3 Analysis:**

When we collect information and have it available, we link the processes together, so we find through this linking process that there are relationships and connections between them. We also reach through this the analysis of the content of the relationships and how they can proceed, and what is the degree of harmony and contradiction between them? ... As well as the effects that result from that.

Here, the ethnographic researcher proceeds to analyze each category of these categories into smaller subsets, that is, arranging these categories, organizing them, and breaking them down. At this stage of ethnographic practice, the ethnological touches become evident, as the researcher works to elucidate the channels of construction and disassembly of the social phenomenon through the external data they have committed to.

After analyzing these categories, as we said, the researcher goes on to reveal the effects caused by the studied phenomenon, and here they elaborate on presenting a set of causes that may definitely correlate with the subject of their study. They subject all of them to thorough examination and testing. Then comes the process of "composition" for these categories and processes in order to reach a satisfactory result. It is worth mentioning here that the "Analysis" stage or step is an intermediate stage between "description" and "theorization," which does not appear concretely in ethnography.

Its applications and uses in media studies

Ethnography is no longer confined as a visual activity limited to social, anthropological, psychological, educational, archaeological, and medical fields. It has extended to various other research areas, especially in the context of technological advancements witnessed by human history. Economists describe ethnography as "a research methodology that allows for a dense and eloquent description of social action." (Robert, 2010, p. 1)

Despite its roots in the humanities as a suitable step capable of gathering specific understanding data about societies, cultures, and various human activities, ethnography has been used initially to describe the cultures of others in primitive societies. However, it quickly became used in studying urban populations as well. Given the importance of ethnography, it has garnered considerable attention from economics in general, and marketing in particular, to study consumer audiences.

Media and communication research did not miss the opportunity to invoke ethnographic methodology after quantitative research dominated media audience studies for a long time. Quantitative studies, which largely marginalized the importance of the media audience - readers, listeners, and viewers - along with their various interactions, understandings, and interpretations of media content, did not provide sufficient information to interpret individual behaviors and practices in themselves.

Even with the emergence of communication models, the focus was heavily on the sender and their role in organizing and forming media messages, neglecting the receiver. This led to a linear and one-sided view of media, as if reception, according to this perspective, was directed from one side without any consideration for the audience. Television viewing, between the symbolism of reception and the context of viewing, saw a turning point in the 1980s, transferring audience research from the sphere of influence.

#### **5. Drawbacks of Ethnographic Methodology:**

- This type of research requires a long time, as ethnographic research may take anywhere from two to ten years.
- It can be difficult for the ethnographic researcher to deal with the community under study in terms of language, customs, religion, beliefs, gender, especially in societies where there is gender segregation.
- The social or religious background of the researcher may not allow them to participate in some activities that do not align with their values or self-esteem.
- The presence of the researcher may not make people behave spontaneously as they do in their daily lives.
- The researcher's prolonged presence may lead them to sympathize with the community and abandon objectivity.
- It requires high skill in observation and recording. (Hussein, 1986, p. 17)

## **Lecture 10: The Semiological**

The semiotic approach is considered one of the most capable methodologies for uncovering verbal, non-verbal, and visual communication symbols in all their forms. By nature, it encompasses the study of all linguistic and visual elements because its fundamental subject is the study of communication methods and tools used to influence the receiver. The communicative function is not solely carried out by linguistic patterns; rather, there are other non-linguistic patterns with semiotic communicative functions. Visual and non-visual formations within the communication domain are one of the fields of semiotic application, as they constitute communicative events producing meaning that goes beyond the meaning of words alone in their overall context. Therefore, through this lecture, we aim to explore the semiotic methodology in the field of media and communication.

### **1-Definition of the Semiological Approach**

The term "Sémitiques" has its origins in Greek and is derived from the root "Sème," meaning the interpretation of signs. Semiotics is the analysis of signs or the study of their systems.

Among the earliest proponents of this term were the philosophers Plato and then Aristotle. The concept of significance crystallized after a famous philosophical debate that took place in 300 BCE in Athens between the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers, with the disagreement revolving around natural and conventional signs. The Stoics concluded that the ideal sign refers to the name of the medical symptom. (Paul Cobley, 2005, pp. 10-11)

Ahmed Youssef mentioned in his book "Descriptive Semiotics" that the term "sèmeion" has since that time indicated the meaning of the medical symptom, becoming associated with the field of medicine. (Ahmed Youssef, 2016, p. 20)

The term transitioned from the medical field to religious areas specialized in interpreting sacred texts. Augustine (354-430 AD) presented his theory on signs, considering the sign as the central subject in philosophical examination. (Paul Cobley, 2005, pp. 10-11)



During the Renaissance, philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) linked the term to logic, using it to discuss a formal mathematical language that corresponds with all mental and intellectual operations.

Semiology, as a science, concerns itself with the study of sign phenomena in terms of their nature, characteristics, patterns, and forms. Alain Landry referred to the same concepts in the philosophical dictionary, stating: "Sémiologie is the science of meanings and signs, a science that studies the life of signs and symbols at the core of social life. It constitutes a part of social psychology, and consequently, of general psychology. The science of meaning will be nothing but a part of it." (André Lalande, p. 1265)

### **3-The objectives of semiotic methodology:**

The objectives of semiotic methodology aim at communication through its signs, symbols, and signals to inform and influence others consciously or unconsciously. In other words, semiotics utilizes a range of linguistic and non-linguistic means to alert and influence others by sending a message and conveying it to them. Hence, the sign consists of three elements: the signifier, the signified, and the referential function.

### **3. Steps of semiotic methodology:**

As previously mentioned, semiotics is the science of linguistic and non-linguistic functions, studying signs, symbols, and visual icons. It relies on two processes: analysis and synthesis. Its methodology is encapsulated in three levels:

**Structural analysis:** This involves investigating the internal conditions that govern the formation of meaning and excluding anything external.

**Structuralist analysis:** It presupposes the existence of a system and a set of relationships, leading to the acknowledgment that a text has no meaning except through a network of relationships. Therefore, it requires attention to aspects of difference, coherent conflict, and variance. Structuralism necessitates the descriptive internal study of the text.

**Discourse analysis:** Methodological levels begin with the smallest linguistic unit, the phoneme, moving to larger linguistic units like the sentence, then discourse analysis.

These levels aid in analyzing and approaching texts. In the field of narrative, there are two structures: surface structure and deep structure. On the surface level, the narrative compound is studied to determine narrative responsibilities.

Deep structure is manifested in two methodological dimensions: the structural dimension classifying meaning values according to relationships or formations, and the semantic dimension, a series of procedures for transitioning from one value to another.

According to Greimas, the semiotic square is the logical and real semantic matrix for all narrative manifestations across mental, logical, and semantic processes controlled by contradiction, complementarity, or implication.

Regarding poetry semiotics, it analyzes the text through structural levels considering literary genres like the phonetic level, morphological level, semantic level, and structural level in its two aspects: grammatical and rhetorical, as well as the associative level.

In theater semiotics, it studies by focusing on linguistic theatrical signs and non-linguistic signs. In other words, it studies theater by dissecting spoken signs (dialogue and dramatic linguistic interaction, character interaction, and dramatic factors) and visual signs (scenography, communication, decor, stage, lighting, costumes, accessories). (GEORGE.2009. p. 17)

#### **4.Applications and uses in media studies:**

The nature of media studies necessitates reliance on semiotic methodology dedicated to studying all forms of signs, as it is a cognitive activity with significant specificity in terms of its origins, extensions, effectiveness, and analytical methods derived from various fields of knowledge such as linguistics, philosophy, logic, psychological analysis, and anthropology.

This methodology holds functional significance, especially in the realm of images. Through it, as George Benino articulates, researchers can explore an element that may seem insignificant to some; however, semiotics of the image gives it weight, influencing both its significance and its semantic utilization. By diving into the deep levels of iconic or linguistic message signs, researchers commit to scientific neutrality in analysis, aiming to achieve integration in psychological, social, and cultural aspects that enrich the analysis and contribute to reshaping a semantic system that allows for a better understanding of the function of the media message as a visual communicative matrix rich with meanings.

The data collection process poses one of the initial challenges in semiotic analysis and, consequently, the analysis of media content. According to researcher Sofie Moeran, the reason for this is the vastness and abundance of media products - messages - and their diversity, making it difficult to process them accurately and comprehensively. Therefore, when starting semiotic analysis, we must define the scope of the study or its reference framework before obtaining data related to the observation on which the analysis is focused.

Then, we collect data on the sub-elements or recurring semantic forms upon which the description relies, leading us to determine the concept of the media message.

During the analysis process, we must consider that images contain visual signs with a language subject to the principle of pre-encoding, associated in its meaning with human experience or practice, fundamentally different from absolute arbitrariness as in language. The pre-encoding governing the world of iconic signs is the same pre-encoding governing human experience as a whole. Any attempt to grasp the content of an iconic sign requires, by the analyst, prior knowledge open to multiple worlds, meaning summoning cultural experience as a primary condition for grasping the possibilities of evidence. (UMBERTO, 1972, pp.169-181)

## **Lecture 11: Qualitative Methodology**

Qualitative methodology is considered among the modern types of methodologies applied in the field of media and communication. It relies on direct methods to collect qualitative information about the phenomenon under study. It can be relied upon in some media studies only, which require precision and immersion in the phenomenon and studying it in its natural conditions as a direct source of data. It examines phenomena and understands them in order to provide accurate interpretation and description. Therefore, through this lecture, we aim to introduce students to this methodology and its uses in the field of media and communication.

### **1-The Concept of Qualitative Methodology:**

Qualitative methodology refers to any type of research that reaches conclusions through non-statistical or quantitative methods, aiming for insight, understanding, and application to similar situations. The term qualitative research is a comprehensive term that encompasses various types of research in sociology, including ethnographic research, case studies, field research, and naturalistic research conducted in a natural setting, as well as participant observation research. While these types of research differ in their philosophical and analytical foundations, they share several common aspects that classify them under one category compared to quantitative research. Qualitative research can be defined as the search for the essential nature of phenomena as they exist in reality.

Thus, qualitative research is based on the subjective dimension of human experience, which is constantly changing according to the data of time and place. The researcher, through this

methodology, cannot neutralize their professionalism, as they are part of the phenomenon under study, influencing and being influenced. It is also considered participatory research methodology, aiming to collect non-statistical data to understand people's opinions on issues relevant to their livelihoods and their perception of problems and issues. This type of research has its roots in anthropology.

Its primary aim is to understand the phenomenon under study. Therefore, more emphasis is placed on interpreting the meaning of the collected statements or observed behaviors.

Also, qualitative research is characterized by the participation of both researchers and participants in the search for truth. This is what has made participatory observation, qualitative interviews, life history research, conversational analysis, and documentary methodology undergo a revival. Therefore, qualitative research is the one that sees society, its people, and its history as an open book from which to learn rather than one to be taught. It directly extracts knowledge from people and their lived world, interpreting qualitative changes in complex society. It is a complex concept that integrates various theoretical and methodological approaches into social reality. As Anselm Strauss states, qualitative research refers to any type of research that has not been reached through statistical procedures or any other quantitative means.

## **2. Objectives of the Qualitative Approach**

The qualitative approach in scientific research achieves several objectives for researchers:

**Identifying New Phenomena:** It helps in recognizing new phenomena or those about which little information is known.

**Exploring Different Perspectives:** It allows for understanding various viewpoints on a specific topic or phenomenon, thereby deepening the study.

**Organizing Facts and Information:** Qualitative research organizes facts and information in an organized manner, enhancing the scientific rigor of the study.

**Clarifying Natural Phenomena:** It makes natural phenomena and events clearer and more understandable.

**Aim for Predictions:** It aims to predict phenomena that are likely to occur in the future.

qualitative research is interdisciplinary, interpretive, political and theoretical in nature. Using language to understand concepts based on people's experience, it attempts to create a sense of the larger realm of human relationships. As Steinar Kvale (1996) explains, the subject matter of qualitative research is not "objective data to be quantified, but meaningful relations to be interpreted" (p. 11). Qualitative researchers consider alternative notions of knowledge and

they understand that reality is socially constructed. They showcase a variety of meanings and truths, and draw on a belief in and support of a researcher's active role in the research process. (brennen, 2013, p 4)

### **3. Characteristics of the Qualitative Approach**

Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of the qualitative research method is its dialectic of authenticity, authenticity in approaching the researched subject, and authenticity in approaching reality. Authenticity means that the researcher understands the subject in its own context and specificity. There is the structure, or the establishment of a framework, which means understanding the event or the field from theoretical, general, and comparative perspectives. The most important characteristics of qualitative research design are:

**1. Openness:** The qualitative research process is open, unlike quantitative methodologies, where the steps of research are controlled by the researcher's mind. Qualitative methodologies consider research as an open field for the researcher and the researched to modify and develop. The principle of openness encompasses both theoretical and methodological dimensions and results in several outcomes, including:

- Emphasizing the exploratory function of qualitative social research.
- Abandoning the formation of hypotheses in advance.
- Qualitative research focuses on exploratory field research.

Social research is somewhat exploratory, discovering and describing the field of study at the expense of the theoretical study of the subject. This is a criticism of the qualitative method, as hypotheses are adjusted and expanded based on the data obtained in the field research. Therefore, social and anthropological theories have a dynamic character, as they evolve during the research process based on existing data.

**2. Interactive Research:** While quantitative research methods emphasize the distance between the researcher and the researched in the research process, qualitative methodologies emphasize that the research process should be interactive between the researcher and individuals belonging to a specific culture.

**3. Dynamic Relationship Between Research and Subject:** Understanding research as an interactive process and communication between the researcher and the researched means that the relationship between research and the subject is dynamic. This dynamism is what distinguishes the research and its subject. Qualitative research primarily concerns itself with models, as Hopf says, of interpretation and action that have specific social obligations. However, these collective models of action and interpretation cannot be conceived as static;

rather, they are reproduced and changed according to the hypotheses of qualitative sociology through the actions and interpretations of active community members.

**4. Critical Reflection on the Subject and Analysis:** Qualitative social research is characterized by critical reflection on the subject or contemplation of the research subject and process. The principle of reflection regarding the subject of analysis, i.e., the phenomena and processes to be studied, is based on the theoretical conception of the subject area itself. The basic hypothesis of the interpretive model lies in assuming critical reflection on the meanings of linguistic human behavior products (symbols, linguistic acts, linguistic or non-linguistic interpretations, and signs, and actions).

**5. Interpretation:** The principle of interpretation means expecting the social researcher to articulate the various steps of the research process as much as possible. Additionally, the rules by which field-acquired data should be interpreted are also defined. Qualitative researchers must interpret their data better and avoid falling prey to compression and coding, as is the case in quantitative research. Qualitative research is conceptual, intellectual, and field-based, even in empirical reality; it investigates as a cognitive and epistemic problem.

**6. Flexibility:** Narrative interviews are characterized by flexibility, with the participants contributing to the research process. For the qualitative researcher, it is necessary to develop and define the research process. Their task is to direct the research to obtain data and interpretations from empirical social life, remaining deeply rooted in it. Ultimately, the goal of qualitative research lies in how to pose and present the problem and obtain the required data.

#### **4. Qualitative Research Steps:**

First: Identifying the Research Topic.

Second: Reviewing Previous Research.

Third: Participant Selection to Obtain Data.

Fourth: Collecting Data from Participants Using Personal Interviews, Direct Observation, or Other Tools.

Fifth: Analyzing the Data Interpretatively, Not Statistically.

Sixth: Preparing, Evaluating, and Interpreting the Research Report.

#### **5. Applications and Uses in Media Studies:**

Perhaps the distinctive feature of media research in general is that it started off quite simply, especially in the 1930s, where the spotlight was on media propaganda and some surveys

conducted by the media to understand public trends, opinions, and tastes. Then research evolved into conducting studies targeting advertising and organizing electoral campaigns (Shuman, 2004, p. 11).

Langner mentioned in 1998 that messages in media texts did not receive significant attention in media research over the past fifteen to twenty years. Consequently, there began to emerge, albeit shyly, attempts to use qualitative analysis methods and tools to study media texts. Initially, these attempts were characterized by hesitation, confusion, lack of clarity, or methodological and procedural integration. However, they formed a type of confrontation and challenge. In the early 1970s, some Scandinavian researchers in the field of media turned to supporting and using qualitative content analysis from an ideological perspective. This approach was known as the humanistic direction, which focused on power relations that media texts attempt to express. It also sought to develop qualitative analysis tools, benefiting from the advancements achieved in linguistic studies.

However, despite all these obstacles faced by qualitative research, it managed to find a place in media studies with the emergence of many research topics that took it as a starting point in studying media phenomena. These studies primarily aim to understand the phenomenon under study. Therefore, the focus here is more on capturing the meaning of the collected statements or observed behaviors. Hence, the researcher focuses more on case studies or studying a small number of individuals. When the researcher tries to understand the stages of child learning, the events that marked a certain time period, or the perceptions of love in different countries, they rely on qualitative methods using participant observation or interviews as data collection tools, taking into account the cultural, social, and psychological contexts in analyzing a specific media phenomenon (Abdullah, 2011, p. 32).

## **6. Drawbacks**

1. Qualitative research lacks objectivity, transparency, and neutrality.
2. The qualitative researcher may incline or show bias towards one of the phenomena under study.
3. The researcher is prone to errors when measuring or observing the phenomenon.

## **Lecture 12: Quantitative Method**

The quantitative method relies on collecting information and transforming it into quantitative statistical data. Consequently, this type of methodology is considered precise and more objective compared to other methodologies, as it deals with information using accurate statistical measures. Thus, the researcher obtains objective results that can be generalized later. In this lecture, we will delve into the quantitative method and its applications in the field of media and communication.

### **1. Definition of the Quantitative Method:**

It is a type of scientific research that assumes the existence of objective social facts that are singular and isolated from the feelings and beliefs of individuals. It primarily relies on statistical methods to collect and analyze data.

It is also known as research that involves collecting data using quantitative measurement tools that are developed to ensure reliability and validity. It is applied to a sample of individuals representing the original population, and then the quantitative data is processed using statistical methods that ultimately lead to results that can be generalized to the original population within a certain level of confidence.

The concept of quantitative research can be defined as a type of research in which the researcher decides in advance what will be studied, precisely defines it, formulates specific and narrow questions, and focuses on numerical data using numbers and tables, while analyzing this data with a high degree of objectivity. (Amer, 2008, p. 45)

Moreover, quantitative research views the phenomenon under investigation as independent and attempts to measure it in an isolated and independent manner. It also focuses on using tools characterized by reliability and evidence of its commitment to the subject. Furthermore, quantitative research is concerned with generalizing the results to include cases with characteristics of the phenomenon.

### **2. Objectives of Quantitative Methodology**

The goals of quantitative research are numerous, and some of the most important ones are outlined in the following paragraphs:

- Studying topics more comprehensively to achieve better enhanced results.
- Providing a wealth of data and information for greater accuracy in results.



- Establishing solid standards that make research replication highly possible, thus enabling its analysis and comparison with similar studies.
- Summarizing extensive sources of information and conducting comparisons across different time categories.
- Linking experimental observation with quantitative research through measurement.
- Minimizing the appearance of confounding variables.

### **3. Characteristics of Quantitative Methodology**

Quantitative research relies on using or establishing hypotheses as temporary answers or solutions, related to describing a specific reality by building relationships and measuring variables, and using available data to find correlational or causational relationships. Additionally, quantitative studies attempt to reach generalizations not tied to the context in which the study is conducted, aiming to generalize research results to other cases.

Quantitative analysis also relies on constructing variables. Regardless of the sociological issue we pose to ourselves or the hypothesis we want to prove, we always find ourselves facing the issue of establishing variables, which translates concepts and ideas into specific research operations. For example, the relationship between gender and suicide, the level of efficiency and its relationship with productivity, or the relationship between age and success.

In social research, the issue of constructing variables involves translating concepts into tangible evidence. This requires moving from abstract definitions to concrete manifestations, allowing for the classification of these variables.

From this perspective, Poul Azarsfeld describes the "four stages of constructing variables" as follows:

- Conceptualization: For example, conceptualizing the idea of organization.
- Operationalization: Analyzing components of the concept.
- Indicator Testing: Finding indicators for the concept.
- Evidence Formation.

In quantitative research, researchers use data collection tools to measure the variables of their research. It's worth noting that data collection tools work to gather data to answer specific predefined questions. Examples of such tools include surveys, questionnaires, etc.

Researchers derive results from the data that they can generalize to a larger sample size. The larger the sample size, the greater the likelihood of generalizing the results and the stronger the results become.

In quantitative research, samples are often random or probabilistic, aiming to represent the population adequately and to a significant extent.

#### **4. Steps of Quantitative Methodology**

5. The quantitative methodology in scientific research follows a set of organized steps, including:

- Defining the study title: The study title is formulated, for example, as "The Role of Teachers in Motivating Students in Early Stages of Basic Education."
- Establishing the study's significance: This involves determining the importance of the study, which could be achieving the highest academic performance level.
- Crafting the study objectives: Identifying the study's objectives, such as mechanisms for motivating and fostering competition among students.
- Formulating the study hypotheses: "Encouraging competition among students leads to improvements in their academic performance."
- Reaching study conclusions: "Student competition leads to an increase in academic achievement."
- Providing recommendations and solutions: "Future studies should identify further mechanisms for enhancing educational efficiency."

#### **5. Applications and Uses in Media Studies**

Scientific studies in the field of humanities and social sciences, particularly in media and communication sciences, often employ quantitative methodology to study various phenomena. In analyzing media and communication phenomena, the quantitative approach stems from positivist empiricism, which views scientific phenomena as measurable.

Instances of using the quantitative approach in media research:

- Availability of information about the studied phenomenon.
- Nature of the study's questions (quantitatively measurable).

- Clarity of the fundamental concepts in the research subject.
- Existence of obstacles related to the research subject or the study community.

## **6. Limitations**

- Lack of neutrality, as the writer may lean towards the phenomenon under discussion.
- Failure to achieve accuracy in measurement and reach conclusions.
- One of its drawbacks is that it obliges the researcher to study a large number of people because the larger the study sample, the more the results are susceptible to generalization.

## **The Lecture 13: Methodological Procedures for Scientific Research:**

In order for students to prepare their academic research effectively, there are several methodological procedures they should follow to complete their study properly. Students should adhere to the most important methodological stages of scientific research and commit to the systematic arrangement of the steps of the scientific method because they complement each other. Therefore, through this lecture, we aim to provide students with the most important methodological stages to follow in order to obtain accurate results and conduct a good study.

### **1. Choosing the Research Topic**

The process of conducting scientific research requires the availability of specific criteria. Not every qualified student can be a researcher, and not every work completed by a researcher constitutes scientific research. Several factors govern the process of choosing a research topic, including personal factors referred to as subjective factors, and scientific research-related factors referred to as objective factors.

#### **1.1 Personal Factors for Choosing a Scientific Research Topic**

Personal factors that influence the choice of a scientific research topic are those related to the researcher's individual characteristics and the extent to which they possess the innate, mental, ethical, and linguistic qualifications to undertake a particular type of scientific research. These factors include: (Aboud, 2004, p. 20)

- **Psychological inclination or interest in a particular topic:** Psychological factors play a role for the researcher as they enable perseverance and patience in the arduous process of research on a topic that requires effort, time, and financial resources. It also fosters a sense of connection and attachment between the researcher and the topic.
- **Integrity:** Integrity is an ethical trait that every researcher should possess. It is essential for attributing actions and statements to their rightful owners with honesty and sincerity. Integrity is the cornerstone of the researcher's honor, as it is said, "One of the blessings of work is to attribute speech to its owners." Scientific integrity is the foundation of the intellectual architecture constructed by the researcher.
- **Economic capabilities:** Economic factors are also important as researchers often need resources for copying, traveling, and translating to gather appropriate scientific documents for their research topic. Without access to suitable references and sources, researchers cannot

commence reading, leading to delays in initiating the research writing process. Consequently, this consumes time, potentially causing delays in completing the research within the expected timeframe.

### **1.2.Objective factors in choosing a scientific research topic**

In addition to personal factors, we have objective factors that relate to the research topic rather than the researcher themselves. A researcher cannot choose their topic if one of the following factors is not available:

- Specialization factor: Under no circumstances can a researcher investigate a topic far from their specialization. They would be forced to waste more time reading and acquainting themselves with a subject they have not previously studied or been familiar with (Aboud, 2004, p. 20).
- Scientific value factor of the topic: If the intended research topic lacks scientific value, it will likely be rejected by scientific bodies. The researcher would then be compelled to waste more time proposing a new topic.
- Time factor: The researcher must respect the time frame given to prepare their scientific research, which varies depending on the type of research. Completing a doctoral thesis typically requires four years, extendable by two years in the classical system, or three years extendable by two years in the LMD system. A master's thesis typically takes a year to complete, extendable by one year. As for the master's dissertation, it is often prepared in the second semester, approximately five to six months, etc.

### **2. Choosing a Research Title and How to Formulate It**

The title is defined as one of the most important parts of scientific research, serving as the gateway for the researcher to understand the elements and parts of the subject under study. It also allows the reader to get an overview and idea of the topic before delving into it. It connects integrally with the rest of the scientific research, and the core idea carried by the title cannot be deviated from, neither in terms of the problem nor in terms of the plan. Therefore, the researcher must be precise in crafting the title when choosing a topic that encompasses the methodological parameters previously mentioned in this study. The title is known as the subject of research and its general idea, which includes all the elements, parts, and details of the research, accurately and clearly. It is the entry point of the research and the first thing that meets the reader's eye, providing the initial impression in a concise phrase indicating the

intended study. The task does not stop at finding the research topic title alone but extends to main and subheadings.

#### Criteria for Formulating the Title:

There are several criteria that the researcher must respect when formulating the title, including general and specific conditions. The general conditions apply to all titles regardless of their nature or purpose, while there are specific conditions applicable to a specific category of titles, namely main titles, which bear the burden of defining the topic before it is read. Among these conditions, we have:

A. General Conditions: It is required that the title be clear, concise, brief, accurate, innovative, and, most importantly, relevant to the essence of the topic, without neglecting the aesthetic element.

B. Specific Conditions, the most important of which is undoubtedly:

1. Determining the Nature and Number of Variables to be Used in the Title: This condition entails specifying the nature and quantity of variables to be incorporated into the title, as well as determining the position of the title in the category of titles and the appropriate style for its formulation, along with the type of vocabulary to be employed, inevitably following the scientific specialization of the researcher.

### **3. Identifying the Research Problem**

The research problem is the cornerstone and foundation of scientific research, consisting of a set of questions that come to the researcher's mind due to the presence of some defect, deficiency, ambiguity, or confusion in a particular issue that the researcher seeks to elucidate. The problem is formulated in the form of a question or dilemma, diagnosing the deficiency or defect perceived in any aspect of the educational process that the researcher wants to study. To identify the research problem, several considerations must be taken into account, including:

- The problem should be within the researcher's specialization.
- It should be within the researcher's research interests.
- It should possess scientific and practical value, meaning it is important scientifically, socially, or for both.
- It should be novel, meaning it has not been previously addressed, implying an attempt to explore new aspects.

- The problem should not be on topics that are difficult to address due to their sensitivity to society.
- The problem should be researchable.
- The topic should be specific, not general, containing several sub-problems.

#### **4. Hypotheses and Questions**

Hypotheses are expectations or assumptions made by the researcher, believed to represent temporary solutions to the problem either through confirmation or refutation. They are not formulated by the researcher's imagination alone but are based on their experiences, readings, and familiarity with previous studies and experiments. Hypotheses can also be derived from specific scientific theories to verify their validity according to specific study parameters, either to support or refute these theories.

For example, a researcher might formulate several hypotheses in their study to find the causes of a certain phenomenon and propose solutions to address it. They might formulate hypotheses such as:

- Poverty as a cause of the phenomenon.
- Family status as a cause of the phenomenon.
- Socioeconomic status as a cause of the phenomenon.
- Violence as a cause of the phenomenon.
- Internet usage as a cause of the phenomenon.

Therefore, in their research, they aim to confirm one of these hypotheses, which constitute temporary solutions for them, and accordingly, either confirm or refute them through confirmatory or null hypotheses (Aboud, 2004, p. 28).

#### **5. Basic Concepts and Variables**

A variable is something that can be measured, manipulated, and controlled in the research process. Studies tend to analyze variables that can describe a place, person, or idea, such as describing a person's gender, height, place of residence, educational qualifications, practical experience, and many other examples.

For instance, if the variable is a person's practical experience, the change in their experience over specific years and its impact on their work can be studied.

The characteristics of variables in scientific research remain closely linked to the type of these variables, as will become clear in our subsequent discussions.

Based on what we have mentioned, we can define variables in scientific research according to the statistical definition as things that are subject to change and can be measured quantitatively or qualitatively.

One of the most important characteristics of qualitative or quantitative research variables is their susceptibility to influence, as in independent variables, and susceptibility to being influenced, as in dependent variables, with the researcher's ability to control and manipulate, which plays a fundamental role in achieving accurate research results.

## **6. Previous Studies**

One of the most important stages in the formation of research is the part concerning previous studies. A research cannot be completed or conducted without it, as it consists of a collection of old and previous research that addressed the same research topic.

Many researchers have studied the research topic thoroughly before, so the researcher should start where others left off, with a distinguished study of the topic. It is also important for the researcher to identify similarities and differences between their research and other studies that have addressed the same topic.

With this, we have covered the definition of previous studies. What do you think about moving on to discuss their special significance and the role that these studies play for the researcher as well as for your own scientific work?



## **Lecture 14. Field Research Procedures**

Field research for any study requires a set of procedures and techniques for the researcher to collect necessary information from the field. To ensure the accuracy and objectivity of this information, the researcher must adhere to the correct scientific methodology to ultimately achieve precise results that fulfill the study's objectives. In this lecture, we will discuss the most important field research procedures that students should be aware of to complete their academic research.

### **1. Survey Study of the Spatial Field of Research:**

Also known as exploratory or descriptive research, in this type of study, the researcher conducts a survey and applies it to a small sample selected properly from the same community. This serves as training for the researcher and the assisting team. Through this, the researcher can ensure the validity of the instructions. There are two types of instructions: the first to guide the individuals executing the test, providing a detailed explanation of the experiment and its procedures. The second type is to guide the respondents, providing a simplified idea about the test and its purpose. From this experiment, the researcher learns about:

- Response method.
- Test duration.
- Appropriateness of the location.
- Validity of the test (difficulty or ease, reliability, stability, and objectivity).
- Stability in the optimal arrangement of the tests.

What are the most important steps in survey studies:

- Summarizing the various sciences and fields related to the research problem. This includes the works conducted by other researchers, focusing on understanding the methodology, theoretical aspects, and assumptions included in previous studies, which will undoubtedly assist the researcher in conducting their research.

- Consulting with experts in scientific and practical experience who are the ones to seek advice and opinions. They are individuals who have the opportunity to identify important factors in various locations, relationships, and human behavior.

### **2-Research Community (Human Environment)**

The purpose of the research community in this point is, as researchers defined it, "a limited or unlimited set of vocabulary items (unit elements) predetermined, where observations are

focused." In other words, the definition of the research community according to other researchers is: "all the phenomena that the researcher studies."

As for the vocabulary of the research, also known among researchers as research elements or units, they are the basic components of the research group, i.e., the parts that make up the research community such as individuals and objects, etc. For example, if we conduct a field study of the audience of Algerian television, the research unit in this case is the individual viewer. And if we analyze the content of news in a particular newspaper, the research unit here is the individual news item, and so on.

It is evident from the points mentioned that the research community is the total collection of vocabulary items and other limited components, the community that the researcher can determine its real size. For example, a study on the impact of violent cartoons aired on a specific television station on the audience of a certain elementary school, where the necessary resources are available for the researcher to have a good understanding of this small research community and determine its actual or unlimited size.

### **3. Temporal Scope of the Study:**

- The temporal scope of the study is one of the main boundaries of research, referring to the scientific study's time frame.
- It is the duration or period required by the researcher to gather field data and information for the study.
- The temporal scope is not the period required by the researcher to complete the scientific thesis, which varies from one research topic to another.
- The scientific researcher is alerted to specify the subject of the scientific study and have sufficient cognitive understanding.
- It involves limiting the scientific sources used in the research and ensuring the suitability of the temporal scope of the study.

### **4. Statistical Methods:**

Statistical analysis is considered the sixth and final tool in the list of scientific research tools used in collecting information. It is an indirect analysis tool because the researcher does not deal directly with the analysis material - as noted in the use of content analysis - but with

statistical data resulting from quantitative analysis or field studies in the form of numerical data.

Consequently, statistical analysis is used to analyze numerically derived results in media phenomenon analysis quantitatively. This is done to mathematically prove the accuracy of these numerical results by using various statistical methods, such as determining the average of the dataset obtained in the study (applying measures of central tendency), calculating the degree of dispersion or difference between the studied variables (applying measures of dispersion), or studying the relationship between variables (applying correlation coefficients), etc. These measures are typically applied to conduct certain statistical tests to uncover relationships between the data of the studied variables.

The process of statistical analysis of the quantitative data obtained in the study is preceded by the process of tabulating the quantitative data. This involves presenting this quantitative data in the form of statistical tables, accompanied by graphical illustrations and line charts, to facilitate their reading by interested parties. This procedure falls within the realm of the descriptive level of the data referred to in the previous point and constitutes, at the same time, the fundamental step for carrying out the statistical analysis of these tabulated data, within the framework of achieving what is called inferential analysis of the results, to interpret the relationships existing between the researched variables, aiming to uncover the controlling factors. This is achieved through the application of some statistical tests, which allow for the study of these relationships mathematically to verify their accuracy. Therefore, the step of statistical analysis of quantitative data comes after the process of tabulation.

## **5. Data Collection Tools (Observation, Interview, Questionnaire)**

### **5.1 Observation**

Observation is one of the most important tools in scientific research as it allows the researcher to examine the aspects under investigation closely within their natural, non-artificial conditions. This is because observation often occurs in some cases without the subjects being aware that they are under scrutiny and that their actions are being monitored, unlike the interview and questionnaire methods, where the subjects are aware that they are under study, and thus may not behave normally with the researcher.

Observation can be conducted to obtain qualitative and descriptive information about specific behaviors and situations, aiming to identify their general characteristics. It can also provide

quantitative statistical information about the frequency of specific behaviors, within the framework of predicting future occurrences.

There are two types of observation: participant observation and non-participant observation. Participant observation means that the researcher immerses themselves in the various conditions of the research community by participating in the daily lives of its members and engaging in their different activities. The researcher considers themselves as part of the studied field, interacting and responding with its members as if they were one of them in their daily lives, without engaging in actions or behaviors that would disrupt the normalcy of the studied field.

This type of observation is often used by anthropologists studying some simple communities in Africa and Asia to understand the customs and traditions that regulate their lives, aiming to gather information and data to facilitate their integration into modern society. However, in some cases, researchers may find it difficult to use participant observation due to the challenges of integrating into the life of the researched community.

This could be due to the direct interaction between community members, which prevents the researcher from infiltrating, or because the researcher is unable to live with the members of these communities due to their peculiar behaviors. Additionally, time constraints may prevent the researcher from engaging in participant observation, which requires sufficient time for observation and participation.

Observation without participation is used in cases where the researcher simply records the observed aspects of the participants, such as behaviors and visible movements, from a certain distance without delving into exploring the various dimensions of these behaviors or actions or the meanings attributed to them by the participants. This approach does not require the researcher to immerse themselves in the lives of the research community or participate in their activities. It is often employed in exploratory and descriptive research to inventory statistically the observed aspects of the participants.

On the other hand, participant observation is mostly used in interpretive research, where the researcher goes beyond statistical inventorying of the observable aspects in the research field to explain the reasons and backgrounds behind their occurrence in this way or that.

## **5.2.Interview**

Interviewing is an intervention within the tools of scientific research, used by researchers to gather information from individuals who often possess undocumented data. The term "interview" is derived from the verb "interview" in the sense of facing someone. It involves engaging in dialogue where the researcher poses problems and the interviewee responds regarding the topic under study.

In scientific research, an interview is a direct research tool used to question individuals, either individually or collectively, to obtain qualitative information related to exploring the deep-rooted causes among individuals or identifying, through each individual case, common reasons for the behavior of the participants.

The research interview differs from casual conversations or journalistic interviews. In scientific research, an interview is a tool subjected to strict scientific conditions. It is conducted within the framework of accomplishing a specific research problem and a predetermined plan. The researcher regulates the nature of the information and data to be collected from participants according to specific steps, which are established after careful consideration, including defining its axes.

### **5.3. Questionnaire**

The term "questionnaire" is derived from the verb "to inquire." In scientific research, a questionnaire is a carefully crafted list of questions prepared by the researcher to be presented to participants. These questions aim to obtain answers containing the required information and data to clarify and define the studied phenomenon from its various aspects. Questionnaires are known by various names in scientific research circles, such as surveys, polls, or inquiries, all of which essentially translate to the same concept: "Questionnaire" or "Sondage" in French.

The questionnaire is considered one of the primary and commonly used research tools in the humanities, especially in media and communication sciences. It is employed to obtain accurate information that the researcher cannot observe firsthand in the field of study. This is because such information is often possessed exclusively by its qualified owner, who may not readily disclose it to others.

In its design, the questionnaire serves as a guiding document containing a series of questions tailored to specific and defined topics according to the researcher's conceptualization. The aim is to gather research-specific information in the form of quantitative data, which aids the researcher in making numerical comparisons to obtain the desired research findings.

Alternatively, it may provide qualitative information that reflects the attitudes and opinions of the respondents on the issue at hand.

Collecting information through a questionnaire is done directly, through face-to-face encounters with respondents who may not be educationally or physically qualified in reading and writing. This necessitates the careful preparation of questions in advance and the personal recording of answers within the confines of the predetermined format of the questionnaire. This ensures the achievement of the research's ultimate goal, similar to what was discussed regarding structured interviews.

## **Lecture 15: Study Results**

The results of the research represent a transitional stage from the questions and hypotheses of the study to proposing solutions and recommendations for the research problem. In other words, the results are the ultimate goal of the study, as they provide answers to the study's questions or confirm or refute the hypotheses, thus reaching a solution to the research problem. In this lecture, we will discuss how to extract the results of the study, the most important methods of presenting them, formulating them, and analyzing them.

### **1. Presentation and Analysis of Study Results (Tables and Graphs such as Circles, Columns, and Curves):**

- Presenting the problem and analyzing it supported by calculations, tables, and figures with data to address it with some detail of the results resulting from solving the problem, providing evidence and explanations.
- Clarifying the facts and information gathered from the research and explaining the interrelationships.
- Objectively linking similar studies and theory with research results.
- Balancing between goals and hypotheses and the results obtained.
- The researcher presents the evidence and then discusses each piece of evidence separately, and it is possible to separate between presenting the results and discussing them, presenting the results and then returning to discuss all these results.
- Noting the weaknesses of the study or warning other researchers about the quality of the method used.
- A good researcher is the one who distinguishes between presentation and discussion, as all research that the researcher cannot separate the presentation from the result is preliminary research, and the researcher will not be able to discuss his results later on.

Presentation of results includes, as stated in (Author, 2010, p. 20):

Tables are considered one of the best means to present a large amount of data with a quick clarification of their interpretation without the need to read the accompanying commentary.

Each table should be numbered, and the commentary should begin with the table number. For example, the table should include information about group means, within-group variability, total sum of squares, degrees of freedom, variance, standard deviation, differences, significance values, and a summary statement. In essence, the table should convey the intended meaning clearly. It might be better to divide the results into several tables to avoid complexity or cognitive overload. However, if the tables are large, it is appropriate for them to occupy two pages or a large portion of a page when written, and then be reduced in size for inclusion in the research document.

Tables are discussed according to the results, and the clearer the table, the clearer the presentation. The complexity of the table correlates with the weakness of the discussion. These tables provide support for achieving the objectives and hypotheses posited by the researcher (Author, 1999, p. 120).

### **1.1 Figures (Graphs such as circles, columns, and curves):**

This section includes all relevant graphical representations, whether photographic or hand-drawn, to facilitate understanding and convey the intended message to the reader. The use of figures in various forms aims to enhance comprehension and convey the message whenever possible. However, the presence of a figure does not negate the need for explanation; rather, theoretical explanation complements or supplements the presence of the figure. The combination of a figure with theoretical explanation may highlight certain obscure aspects or facets that the researcher aims to clarify.

Figures come in various types, such as maps, organizational structures, graphs, charts, etc. While tables present numerical results, figures require readers to interpret values swiftly. Figures provide a quick understanding of the results through the use of geometric drawing scales (Author, 1999, p. 120).

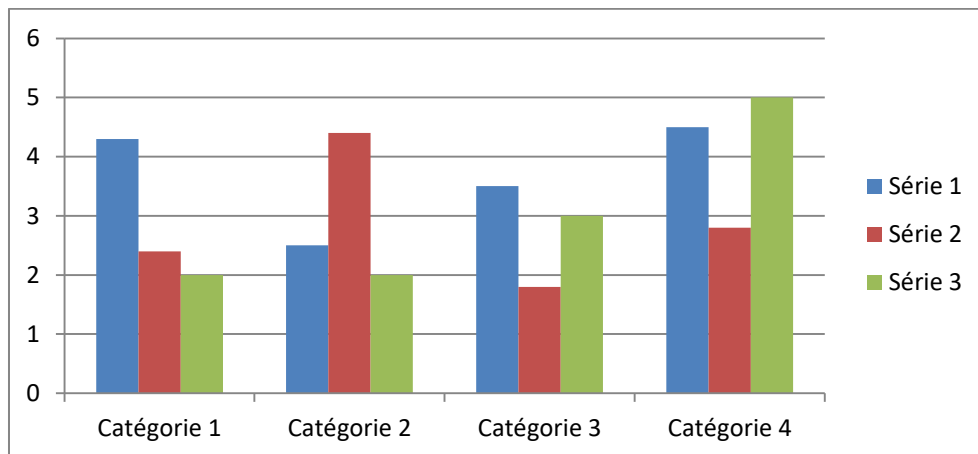
- Increases the amount of information more than merely duplicating the text.
- Conveys necessary facts.

Tables, graphs, and figures are more effective than words in describing phenomena and variables of the studied phenomenon. Figures illustrate some characteristics of the variables, such as general trends, seasonal patterns, distribution shapes, degree of symmetry, and other properties. Below are some types of figures and their drawing methods, focusing on modern approaches in graphical representation

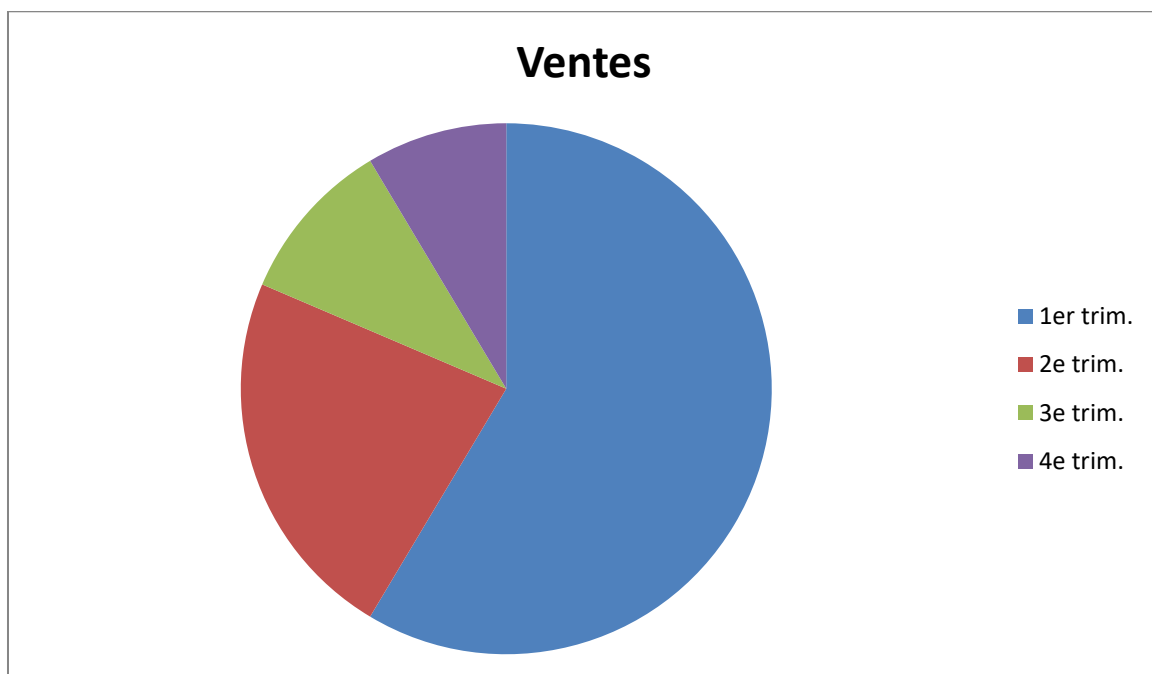


- Bar charts
- Pie charts
- Line graphs
- Empirical cumulative distribution function plot

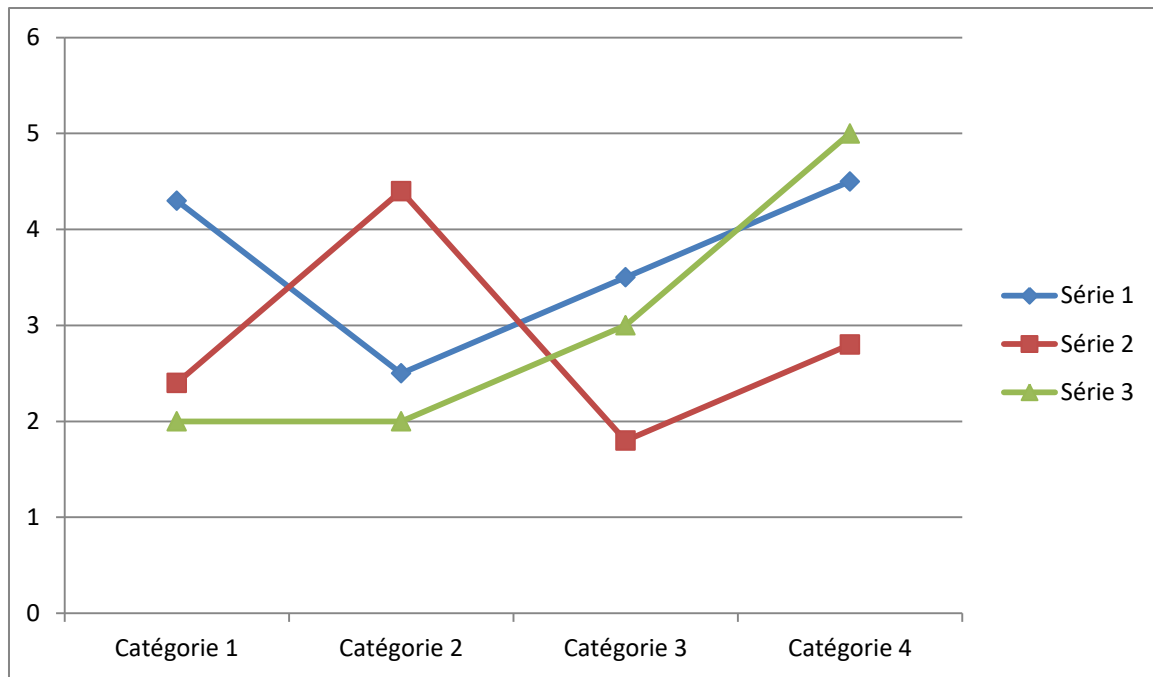
### Bar charts (column charts) are...



### Pie charts



### Line graphs



## 2. Extracting Study Results (In Light of the Research Questions, Hypotheses, and Previous Studies)

### 2.1 In Light of the Research Questions:

According to Dr. Mukhtar Mohammed Ibrahim, "The important question that can be posed in the context of presenting and analyzing data is: Is the researcher seeking to build or derive a theory based on the quantitative and qualitative data, or is it merely presenting a descriptive statistical presentation of the collected data, and providing conventional results in the form commonly accepted and prevalent in scientific research?"

On the other hand, Dr. Rashid Zerwati states, "Since general questions are a comprehensive probabilistic interpretation of the phenomenon, when they are proven in front of the experiment and their validity is confirmed, they become research questions that explain the phenomenon that was previously ambiguous and problematic."

### 2.2 In Light of the Hypotheses:

Hypothesis testing is a statistical procedure used by researchers to test scientific hypotheses to determine whether the hypothesis is true or false. However, not all scientific hypotheses are statistically tested, and not all statistical hypotheses are of scientific interest. It is important to distinguish between the general scientific hypothesis and the statistical hypothesis. "The scientific hypothesis is general and important, but not all of them can be statistically tested,

while the statistical hypothesis does not have a generalizing characteristic... It is related to very specific phenomena" (Al-Zibari Taher Hassou, 2011, p. 179).

And naturally, the issue of determining statistical methods relies either on descriptive statistics, such as extracting means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages, or on analytical statistics, such as extracting other statistical tests like "t-tests," "ANOVA," or "Chi-square," etc. (Al-Zibari Taher Hassou, 2011, p. 113).

Today, libraries are rich with specialized books in the field of social statistics, and there are programmed measures and training guides for these methods, in addition to the availability of applied software programs for statistically analyzing data, relying on either descriptive or analytical statistical methods, along with available training courses.

### **1.3. In Light of Previous Studies:**

These studies adhere to the methodological rules of scientific research, which necessitate the availability of a study topic and its purpose, or all the elements of the problem if applicable: questions, significance, causes, hypotheses, concepts, sample, methodology, tools, and results, as well as theoretical background and framework. Previous studies may either be congruent, in which case there must be a difference in the study field, or they may be complementary, wherein the researcher studies the aspect that has not been adequately addressed (Zerwati Rashid, 2012, p. 28).

The astute researcher is well aware of the importance of previous studies. They do not simply skim through them hastily; rather, they carefully examine and scrutinize them, ensuring they remain fixed in their designated place. They may organize them within one of the demands of the first chapter, for example, or dedicate a separate chapter to them if the number of studies warrants it. Therefore, researchers interested in scientific research are advised to begin by familiarizing themselves with the previous studies, taking their time to examine and scrutinize them thoroughly, aiming to understand what has been studied and what remains unexplored, in order to incorporate it into their own study.

As "Mohammed Shafiq" suggests, initially, these studies enable the formation of a richer framework of information, assisting the researcher in defining practical and procedural terms and concepts. They serve as a guide to the theoretical and methodological literature and the resulting conclusions. Considering that each study begins where previous studies ended, the true researcher is the one who demonstrates their technical and cognitive skills in utilizing

previous studies at every stage and every sub-step of the research process. This effort is commendable and represents a technical aspect of scientific research practice, contributing to the completeness of the research process, not to mention the value of acknowledging the efforts of others.

One of the most important stages in utilizing and addressing previous studies, and what is relevant to this demand, is a significant stage. It involves discussing and interpreting the results of the study in light of previous studies, or comparing the scientific contribution of the previous study with the scientific contributions that preceded it, providing appropriate, explanatory, and rational justifications. This is where the researcher's skill in mastering the fundamental processes of the scientific method, such as analysis, synthesis, classification, interpretation, judgment, generalization, inference, and abstraction, shines. Here, the researcher employs these processes as needed by the research necessity, with each process having its unique function, place, and appropriate role.

### **3-Conclusion**

The conclusion of a research project serves not only to comment on the research findings, suggestions, and recommendations but also to emphasize its value and potential applications. According to Rashid Zrouati, the preferred model is for the conclusion to take the form of an executive project for implementing the research results. In this, the researcher demonstrates to citizens and responsible authorities, or to both, how to implement the proposed solutions for their benefit. This includes discussing the circumstances hindering the implementation process and adapting the research results to harvest their benefits under these conditions.

A research project typically concludes by elucidating its practical value and how its findings can benefit subsequent field or academic studies. This could involve curriculum development, methodological enhancements, the discovery of new theories, or adjustments to theoretical aspects. On the other hand, the utilization of research results for planning and development purposes across various domains, shedding light on psychological, social, cultural, and economic issues, constitutes recommendations and suggestions. Additionally, it includes addressing the issues raised by the study, proposed by the researcher based on the study's results or aspects that require further investigation.

This demand requires comprehensive authorship, methodological discussion, and the organization of international and national conferences and scientific seminars to reach a

unified understanding of how to highlight and interpret the value of the results. This should be done in the context of the study's hypotheses, questions, and objectives, as well as in light of previous studies and the adopted theoretical framework, or by interpreting them in the context of various theoretical perspectives.

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