

Kumar, R. (2014). Selecting a study design (summary). In *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners* (3rd ed., p. 128).

Summary of Chapter 8 (page 128)

In this chapter various study designs in both quantitative and qualitative research have been examined. For each study design, details have been provided on the situations in which the design is appropriate to use, its strengths and weaknesses, and the process you adopt in its operationalisation. In quantitative research the various study designs have been examined from three perspectives. The terminology used to describe these perspectives is that of the author but the names of the study designs are universally used. The different study designs across each category are mutually exclusive but not so within a category. The three perspectives are the number of contacts, the reference period and the nature of the investigation. The first comprises cross-sectional studies, before-and-after studies and longitudinal studies. The second categorizes the studies as retrospective, prospective and retrospective–prospective. The third perspective classifies studies as experimental, non-experimental and semi- experimental studies. Qualitative study designs are not as specific, precise and well defined as designs in quantitative research. Also, there is a degree of overlap between study designs and methods of data collection. Some designs can easily be considered as methods of data collection. Some of the commonly used designs in qualitative research are: case study design, oral history, focus group studies, participant observation, community discussion forums and reflective journal log. Four additional approaches to research have been described: action research, feminist research, and participatory and collaborative enquiries. Though these cannot really be considered designs in themselves, they have acquired their own identity. Both action and feminist research can be carried out either quantitatively or qualitatively, but participatory and collaborative enquiries are usually qualitative in nature.