

CHAPTER 8

UNDERSTANDING RESEARCH METHODS, POPULATIONS AND SAMPLING

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this chapter the student should be able to:

- Define a research population.
- Select a sample from a population.
- Explain how the choice and design of data collection method(s) used in the research project are fundamentally influenced by the aim of the research being undertaken, the population of the study, the kind of data required for the study and the location of that data.

RESEARCH SKILLS

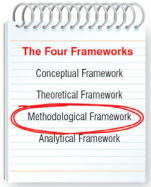
At the end of this chapter the student should, using the exercises on the accompanying online platform, be able to:

- Outline an appropriate population for a given research project and select a sample from that population using an appropriate sampling method.
- Select and design appropriate data collection methods for a given research project.

Data collection methods, research populations and samples, and sampling methods are fundamental elements of the methodological framework, the third

framework in the four frameworks approach to the research project. The aim of this chapter is to explain how to select a population, and when and how to select a sample from a population for a research project. The chapter details different research methods, i.e. different ways of gathering data.

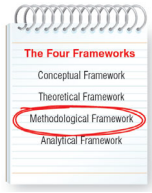
RESEARCH DIARY ACTIVITIES



ACTIVITY 8.1

In your research diary, write a note on the population you intend to use/are using in your research project. Is you intend to work with a sample of that population, detail, explain and justify the sampling method you intend to use.

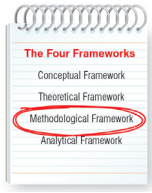
ANSWER:



ACTIVITY 8.2

In your research diary revisit the data collection methods you had proposed for your research project. Having read Chapter 8, are they still the same? Explain your answer.

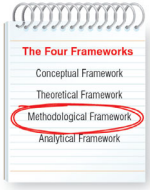
ANSWER:



ACTIVITY 8.3

In your research diary, describe in as much detail as you can the population of your study. Write a note in the diary explaining how the different characteristics of the population impact of the sampling method you have chosen to use and the data gathering methods you propose using in your research project.

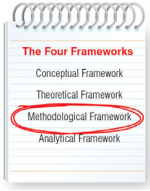
ANSWER:



ACTIVITY 8.4

Read through the research diary exercise in the Real World Research textbox on page 215 of the textbook. Draw on the reflections you have already engaged in the first three research diary exercises for this chapter to help you complete this exercise. You will be able to adapt the answer to this activity for use in the research methodology chapter of your thesis/in the research methodology section of the report of your research.

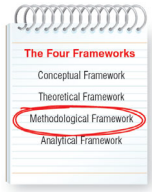
ANSWER:



ACTIVITY 8.5

Read through the Real World Research textbox which starts on page 218 of the textbook. Then carry out the research diary exercise at the end of the textbox and answer the questions posed.

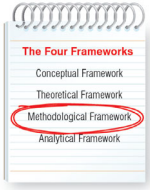
ANSWER:



ACTIVITY 8.6

Read the Your Research textbox on page 231 and carry out the research diary exercise outlined in it. This exercise will help you develop your knowledge and understanding of data gathering methods and of quantitative and qualitative research and data.

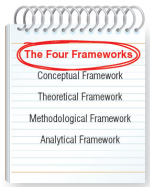
ANSWER:



ACTIVITY 8.7

In your research diary, outline and explain the decisions you have now made in relation to the data gathering methods you intend to use in your research project.

ANSWER:



YOUR RESEARCH DIARY

Please use this section to start your own Research Diary and keep accurate records of your research as it progresses

DATE:

RESEARCH ELEMENT/ASPECT:

Detail the topic or section of research being undertaken

SOURCE:

Record website addresses, book citations, library references, contact details etc.

SUMMARY:

Reflect on your experiences, thoughts, ideas and developments

NOTES:

Make general notes on your research, for example questions for further reflection and/or investigation, your thoughts, your observations and plans for future research.