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TABLE 1 Alternative Explanations to Social Research

EXAMPLE ISSUE: WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO DO LAUNDRY.

Personal experience and common sense: In my experience, men just are not as concerned about clothing or appearance as much as women are, so it makes sense that women do the laundry. When my friends and I were growing up, my mother and their mothers did the laundry, and female friends did it for their boyfriends but never did the men do it.

Experts and authority: Experts say that as children, females are taught to make, select, mend, and clean clothing as part of a female focus on physical appearance and on caring for children or others in a family. Women do the laundry based on their childhood preparation.

Popular and media messages: Movies and television commercials show women often doing laundry and enjoying it, but men hate it and mess it up. So, women must be doing laundry because they enjoy it and are skilled at it. It is what we see everywhere and what everyone says.

Ideological beliefs: The proper, natural place division of labor is for women to take charge of the home, caring for children and overseeing household duties, including cooking, cleaning, and doing the laundry.



TABLE 2 Quantitative versus Qualitative Approaches

QUANTITATIVE APPROACH	QUALITATIVE APPROACH
Measure objective facts	Construct social reality, cultural meaning
Focus on variables	Focus on interactive processes, events
Reliability the key factor	Authenticity the key factor
Value free	Values present and explicit
Separate theory and data	Theory and data fused
Independent of context	Situationally constrained
Many cases, subjects	Few cases, subjects
Statistical analysis	Thematic analysis
Researcher detached	Researcher involved

Sources: Crewsell (1994), Denzin and Lincoln (2003a), Guba and Lincoln (1994), Marvasti (2004), Mostyn (1985), and Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998).



STEPS IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Quantitative Approach to Social Research

1. *Select a topic.* This may be a general area of study or an issue of professional or personal interest. Topics are broad, such as the effects of divorce, reasons for delinquency, impact of homelessness, or how elites use the media.



2. *Focus the question.* A topic is too broad for actually conducting a study. This makes the next step crucial: We must narrow the topic to focus on a specific research question that a study can address. Often this requires reviewing the research literature and developing hypotheses that often come from social theory. For example, a broad topic—reasons for delinquency—becomes the focused research question: Are teenage East Asian immigrant males with strong ties to their home culture and who have not assimilated into the new society more likely to engage in delinquent acts than those with weaker home culture ties and who have assimilated? Notice how the initial broad topic, reasons for delinquency, becomes focused. We focus on a specific reason for delinquency (i.e., degree of assimilation) and look at a specific group of people (i.e., teenaged immigrant males from East Asia).



3. *Design the study.* Once we settle on a research question, we need to design the study. Designing a study requires making many decisions about the type of case or sample to select, how to measure relevant factors, and what research technique (e.g., questionnaire, experiment) to employ. At this stage as well, decision making is informed by theory.
4. *Collect data.* After we design a study in detail, we must carefully record and verify information typically in the form of numbers. Next we must transfer numerical data into a computer-readable format if it is not already in that format.

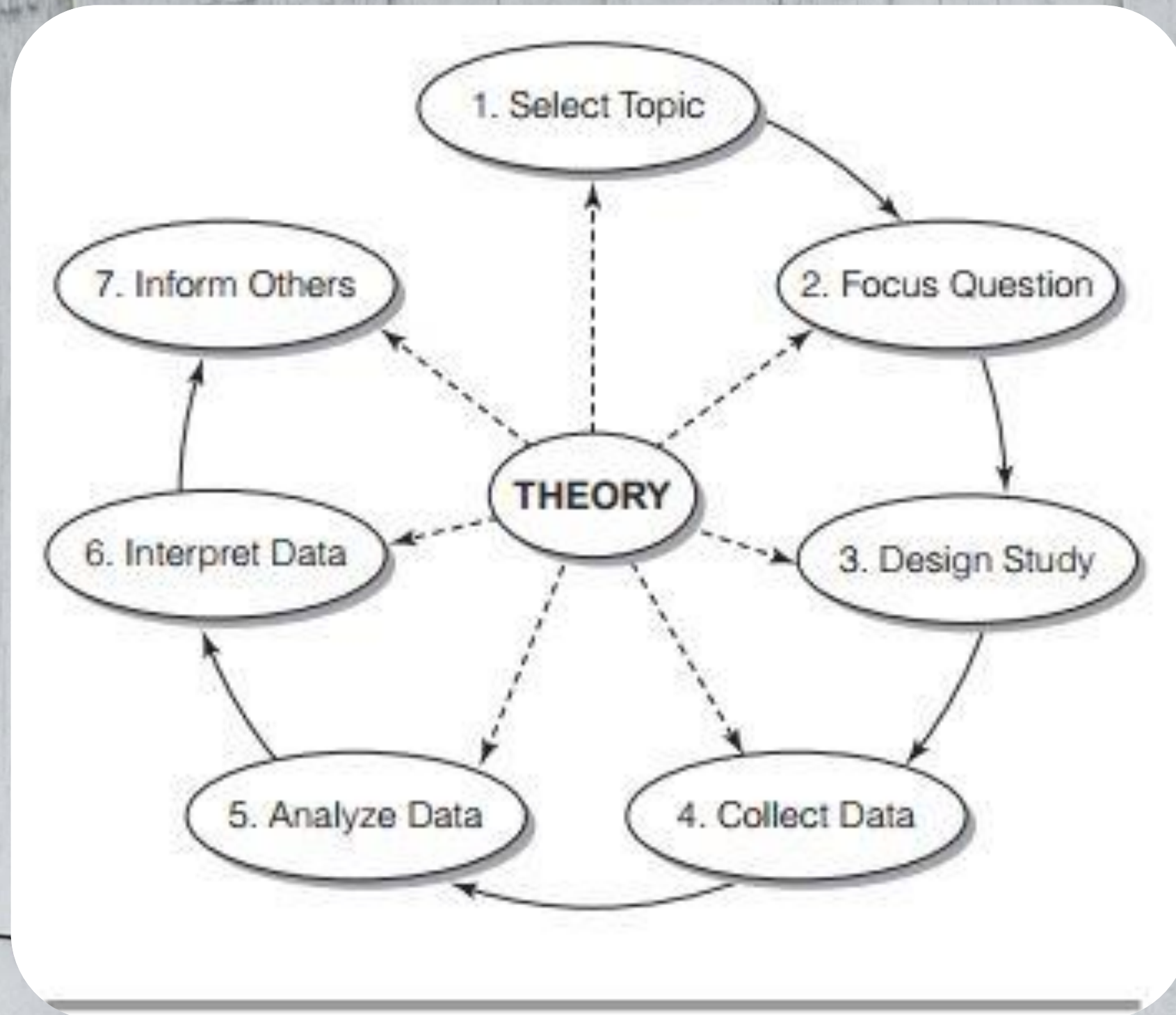


5. *Analyze the data.* This step usually requires the use of computer software to manipulate the numerical data to create many charts, tables, graphs, and statistical measures. These computer-generated documents provide a condensed picture of the data.
6. *Interpret the data.* After we produce charts, tables, and statistics, we must determine what they mean. We examine the analyzed data, use knowledge of the research topic, and draw on theory to answer our research question. We



consider alternative interpretations of the data, compare our results with those of past studies, and draw out wider implications of what we have learned.

7. *Inform others.* At this stage, we write a report about the study in a specific format and present a description of both the study and its results (see Figure 1).





Dimensions and Major Types of Social Research

USE AND AUDIENCE OF RESEARCH

- Basic
- Applied
 - Evaluation
 - Action
 - Social Impact

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

- Explore
- Describe
- Explain

WITHIN OR ACROSS CASES

- Case Study Research
- Across Case Research

■ Across Case Research



SINGLE OR MULTIPLE POINTS IN TIME

- Cross-Sectional
- Longitudinal
 - Time series
 - Panel
 - Cohort
- Case Study

DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

- Quantitative Data
 - Experiment
 - Survey
 - Nonreactive (content analysis, secondary analysis, existing statistics)
- Qualitative Data
 - Field (ethnography, participant observation)
 - Historical-comparative



THANK YOU!

Do You Have Any Questions?

