# Methodology of Psychological Applied Research

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COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

The general course aim is to provide students with the necessary skills for designing and conducting research in different social contexts (school, company, social organisations), paying particular attention to the demands of the applied contexts. In addition, specific attention will be given to quantitative and qualitative research, providing students with the basic knowledge for critically reading the research, using tools for the production of data and materials, and analysing quantitative and qualitative data.

Intended learning outcomes

At the end of the course, students will be able to understand the methodological debate related to applied science and in particular: the analysis of demand in different contexts; the researcher-participant relationship; the use of tools for data production; open science and communication. Students must show that they know and are able to work with quantitative and qualitative data.

COURSE CONTENT

Unit 1 - Introduction to applied research: relevance of research

* 1. Basic research vs applied research
  2. Relevance of research

Unit 2 - Context of the research

2.1 Internal context, external context, client

2.2 Contextual constraints and resources

Unit 3 - Research approaches

* 1. Epistemological positions
  2. Qualitative vs quantitative approach
  3. Research questions and characteristics of the question
  4. Reliability and validity

Unit 4 – Working with quantitative data

* 1. Sampling
  2. Data construction
  3. Descriptive and inferential statistics
  4. Verification of the null hypothesis, power of the test, size of the effect
  5. The concept of significance
  6. Chi square
  7. Correlation
  8. Regression
  9. ANOVA

Unit 5 – Working with qualitative data

* 1. Interview (individual, group) and observation
  2. Approaches: Phenomenology, Grounded theory, Ethnography
  3. Sampling
  4. Thematic analysis

Unit 6 - Mixed methods

* 1. Methodological assumptions
  2. Sequential research designs
  3. Competing research designs

Unit 7 - The researcher-respondent relationship and ethics

7.1 Position of the researcher

7.2 Researcher-respondent relationship

7.3 Contextual ethics

Unit 8 - Validity

8.1 Objectivity and objectiveness

8.2 Inspectability/controllability

8.3 Generalisation/generalisability

8.4 Validity in qualitative research

Unit 9 – Communication, writing and open science

9.1 Communicating applied research

9.2 How to write up the research

9.3 Writing and Open Science

READING LIST

Reference texts

Shaughnessy JJ, Zechmeister EB, Zechmeister JS. (2012) *Metodologia della ricerca in psicologia*.McGraw-Hill Italia. (For students who already have this Manual)

Contarello A., Romaioli D., Nencini A., Brondi S., (2013). Pensare e fare “con”. Rilevanza sociale e ricerca sociopsicologica ovvero metodologie e pratiche per una ricerca sociocostruttivista, *Psicologia sociale, 1*, 41-66.

Mazzara B. (2013) Quale rilevanza per quale psicologia sociale. *Psicologia sociale,1,* 13 – 39.

Richards l., Morse JM (2009). *Fare ricerca qualitativa.* Franco Angeli.

Transparencies and notes from the course and workshop.

Further reading references will be provided at the beginning of the course.

Course materials will be available online on the Blackboard platform.

TEACHING METHOD

The course is organised into frontal lectures, tutorials and workshop teaching.

During the lectures, materials for the tutorials will be provided and group work will be proposed in order to explore the course topics in more depth.

ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA

During the exam, students will be assessed on: a) their acquired skills in the applied psychological research process; b) their skills in quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques; and c) their ability to critically rework the proposed contents. The exam method will differ for students who participate continuously in lectures and those who do not.

More specifically, in the first case, students will have to write a report on the different activities produced during the course, making reference to the theoretical topics related to this work and drafting a meta-reflection on the critical issues of applied research. The report will be written during the course according to specific deadlines given by the lecturers.

In the oral exam, students will be assessed on the materials produced during the course, and their ability to organise the different research materials in a critical discourse.

Students who do not attend the course continuously or who decide not to write the report will take a written exam consisting of 30 multiple-choice questions, 2 open-ended questions on the contents of the course and an oral interview. Each of the three parts will be marked out of thirty and the final mark will be the average of the marks obtained in the three parts.

NOTES AND PREREQUISITES

Students must have methodological and statistical knowledge of the three-year Bachelor's degree in Psychology or in Psychological Sciences and Techniques. Specifically, they will have to know the research cycle, with particular attention to the development of the objectives and choice of research strategy, the psychological measurements and tools, and descriptive and inferential statistics.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG, or on the Faculty notice board.