

***Scientific Research in the Social Sciences Between Ethical
Commitment and Methodological Challenge: An analytical
view of the reality of preparing social research from a
theoretical and field perspective.***

Yamina GUENAOUI.

- Belhadj Bouchaib University; Ain Témouchent (Algeria).

Email: yamina.guenaoui@univ-temouchent.edu.dz

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Abstract:

This article highlights the fundamental components of scientific research in general, and research in the social sciences in particular. It further examines the methodological difficulties and ethical obligations that hinder the work of researchers in the social sciences compared to those in the natural sciences. These challenges arise from the interplay of multiple factors, such as the instability of social phenomena due to the continual transformation of societies. The paper also points:

To several proposals that may help alleviate the methodological and ethical obstacles confronting researchers.

And analyses the obstacle and propose recommendation.

Keywords: Scientific research; research ethics; methodology; methodological and ethical challenges.

Introduction:

Scientific research functions through an organized method to discover particular truths about specific subjects and phenomena. The research process exists to examine phenomena through study and analysis to determine their validity or invalidity. The foundations of societal progress and

development rest upon scientific research and all nations have elevated scientific research and its conditions to their highest priority levels.

The study of various phenomena reaches its most effective solution through scientific research which provides complete understanding for developing suitable remedies. Furthermore, it fosters creativity and excellence. Research ethics demands that investigators maintain objectivity throughout their presentation and evaluation of their research subjects.

Research motives:

This paper is a summary of observations made during student research projects, either in practical sessions or graduation theses. In many cases, researchers encounter methodological and ethical difficulties, prompting us to review the most significant methodological challenges and obstacles. This prompted us to review the most important methodological and ethical challenges and difficulties they face in their work. Through this research paper, we also attempted to suggest some recommendations that would contribute to the smooth progress of the researcher and the research. To address this topic, we started with the following problem: how can methodological difficulties be reconciled with adherence to the ethics of social research?

1) Scientific Research: Concept, Objectives, and Conditions:

1.1. Concept of Scientific Research:

Scientific research is generally understood as a set of organized, agreed-upon rules and principles that guide researchers in their study of phenomena. Scholars of science and knowledge define it as the systematic and structured methods employed by researchers in addressing any problem of knowledge, whether through discovery, invention, or justification (Al-Muajel, 2016, p. 10).

More specifically, scientific research is regarded as an intellectual process undertaken by an individual, referred to as the researcher, who seeks to investigate the facts concerning a specific issue or problem, known as the research topic. From this perspective, scientific research, as a scientific project seeking to establish objective truths through the comprehensive examination of a problem or subject, must rest upon a set of foundational rules and conditions to ensure its rigor and credibility. In particular, the researcher—as planner, organizer, and guide of the various stages of the research process—must ensure the coherence of its three essential components (Group of Professors and Researchers, 2023, p. 23): the research topic, the research method, and the research results. The absence of adherence to these elements deprives any study of its scientific character.

Accordingly, scientific research can be defined as an investigation, or an exploratory and experimental examination, that seeks to uncover or explain truths while also reviewing existing theories or laws, in order to align them with new findings or applications, or to reassess earlier knowledge (Jadl, 2019, p. 111).

I.2. Objectives of Scientific Research:

Gaston Bachelard states: “For the scientific spirit, all knowledge is an answer to a question; if there is no question, there can be no scientific knowledge” (Angers, 2004, p. 33). The pursuit of accurate scientific knowledge and its continuous development constitutes one of the most fundamental objectives of scientific research. The researcher endeavors to uncover new facts and information that contribute to the advancement and evolution of science. It is therefore self-evident that the process of scientific inquiry must ultimately yield benefits for the research itself, the researcher, and society at large.

The research process aims at discovery, confirmation, revision, refinement, and the provision of new insights that

expand the body of knowledge. Furthermore, scientific inquiry seeks to address the problems facing human societies through discoveries and inventions that foster progress and development across various domains.

The objectives of scientific research may be summarized as follows:

- Description: This represents one of the most fundamental goals of scientific research. The researcher seeks to collect data and information to explain phenomena as they exist in reality.
- Prediction: The purpose of prediction is to formulate hypotheses and anticipatory models that account for the behavior of the studied phenomenon, or similar phenomena, in the future.
- Explanation: The researcher must elucidate the phenomenon under study by clarifying the causes and factors that give rise to its occurrence.
- Control and Regulation: Through scientific research, the researcher seeks to verify, regulate, and exercise control over phenomena in the future.

I.3. Conditions of Scientific Research:

The conditions governing scientific research during its preparation and writing do not differ from those required of the researcher as the one who leads the process of inquiry.

I.3.1. The Researcher:

Since scientific research aims at investigation and the discovery of facts—whether by attaining new results or by re-examining and reassessing prior studies on the phenomena under consideration—the cumulative nature of science dictates that a researcher cannot wholly dismiss prior work. Rather, such work constitutes the foundation upon which further inquiry is built.

Accordingly, the researcher must remain committed to objectivity, honesty, and consultation with predecessors and experts in the relevant field of study. The researcher should

also possess epistemic sensibility, demonstrated by proficiency in using search engines, familiarity with technological tools for gathering and processing information, and the ability to handle data effectively.

I.3.2. Research:

Research topics vary widely, both in their impact on society and in their originality and contemporaneity. Consequently, the researcher must be attentive to ensuring that the perspective adopted in selecting a phenomenon or subject of study is characterized by originality and avoids mere repetition of what has already been addressed by others. This requires the researcher to possess an epistemic sensitivity that enables them to benefit from the accumulated body of knowledge and findings of previous studies, thereby opening new horizons for research.

Scientific research must also remain flexible, with results open to review and revision in order to derive new laws, which may then be generalized to comparable phenomena or subjects that share similar conditions and data.

Additionally, the researcher is required to adhere to what is commonly referred to as research ethics, which ensure both objectivity and credibility.

2) The Concept of Research Ethics:

Since research is governed by a set of conditions and characteristics, as noted earlier, these cannot be achieved unless the researcher abides by recognized ethical principles. These principles delineate the boundaries that must guide the researcher throughout their scholarly journey. Commonly referred to as research ethics, these principles comprise a set of human values and moral standards to which the researcher is expected to adhere in the course of conducting scientific inquiry. They include academic honesty, accuracy, credibility, and objectivity (Nasreddine, 2024, p. 1169).

Commitment to these shared ethical standards is what grants the researcher and their work recognition among peers

and distinguishes their contributions. The sound progression of research does not depend solely on methodological rigor or access to information and data; it must also be coupled with the researcher's personal integrity and ethical competence. This is demonstrated through their behavioral practices, which must be upright and consistent across all stages and applications of research. Research ethics draw their authority from religious principles, the cultural values and traditions of society, as well as the prevailing legal framework (El-Sayed, 2022, p. 204).

Oxfam (Oxfam International) further defines research ethics as a collection of general principles, guidelines, foundations, and regulations that guide and shape the design, conduct, management, use, and dissemination of research involving living beings (both humans and animals). Within these guidelines, the term "research" is applied broadly, encompassing diagnostic and investigative inquiries into socially significant issues, as well as activities conducted as part of monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and educational responsibilities focused on specific interventions, policies, or programs (Darwish, 2023–2024, p. 09).

Thus, the importance of ethical commitment in scientific research lies in ensuring that the outcomes are both trustworthy and credible.

3) The Problematic of Methodology:

Research methodology is the discipline that specifies how the researcher should conduct their study. It represents the pathway to be followed, beginning with the researcher's decision to undertake an inquiry and the determination of its subject, and extending through to its completion. (Al-Askari, 2004, p. 10).

It also serves as the scientific and practical framework that directs the processes of investigation and analysis in order to produce reliable results. Methodology reflects the researcher's perspective on the subject matter as well as their

manner of handling data (Abd, 2025, p. 12). Consequently, methodology refers to the set of guidelines, tools, and techniques that support the researcher throughout the study. Its primary purpose is to educate the student-researcher, imparting to them the fundamentals of scientific inquiry, fostering a scientific spirit, and facilitating the research endeavor.

Methodology also denotes the specific approach chosen by the researcher for their study (e.g., descriptive, historical, or experimental methods). This choice is determined by both the researcher's capabilities and the nature of the topic under investigation (Al-Hamdani, 2006, p. 88).

Research methodology is required at every stage of inquiry—from the formulation of the problem to the attainment of results. It demands mastery of methodological and technical skills aimed at either building upon previous research on the studied phenomena by providing new analyses, interpretations, and judgments, or revisiting established topics using innovative approaches and perspectives.

Nevertheless, in many instances, the research process encounters a range of obstacles that hinder the balance between methodological rigor and ethical responsibility, thereby complicating the progress of social inquiry. This issue becomes particularly evident in the following dimension:

4) Methodological and Ethical Constraints in Social Research:

1. The most prominent theories, methodologies, and scientific foundations underpinning the social sciences have often been imported from Western countries, whether as a legacy of colonialism, through academic missions abroad, or by relying on externally developed programs. As a result, their application does not always correspond to local realities.

2. Dominance of Western Paradigms: Western schools of thought are often considered the most authoritative models, serving as the primary reference point in social research through their thinkers, methodologies, and theoretical frameworks. The implicit assumption is that knowledge produced there remains universally valid across all contexts. This perception renders the application of such principles almost inevitable, as though they were immune to critique or revision. Consequently, the credibility of social science research often appears stagnant, failing to evolve or innovate. In many cases, research outcomes seem predictable, even known in advance of the study itself—leading to the impression that, while the social sciences are abundant in methodologies, they remain deficient in results.
3. Lack of Genuine Student Interest: A considerable number of students enrolled in faculties of social sciences are directed into these disciplines against their will. This lack of genuine motivation negatively affects their interest and academic achievement, which in turn compromises the quality and credibility of the research produced.
4. Neglect of Research Findings: Institutions frequently overlook the results of social science research and their significance in elucidating and interpreting the significant transformations and changes taking place in society.
5. Time Constraints in Field Research: One of the biggest problems that social field researchers face is that they don't have enough time to finish their studies. This, in turn, has an effect on the quality and trustworthiness of their work.
6. Availability and Accessibility of References: The quality of resources available in libraries also poses a challenge. In many cases, these references are primarily in French or English—languages in which many students and researchers lack proficiency. Alternatively, when translations into Arabic are available, their effectiveness and

reliability are often compromised by issues of translation accuracy.

7. Language Barriers: Many students and researchers in faculties of social and human sciences struggle with language-related challenges. Frequently, the language of instruction does not align with the language proficiency of learners, thereby weakening their motivation and academic aspirations.

Recommendations:

1. Training Programs for Researchers: It is essential to subject researchers to training courses designed to assist them in preparing their studies according to scientific and methodological standards.

2. Inclusion of Research Ethics as a Core Subject: Research ethics should be integrated into all academic disciplines in order to equip students and researchers with the fundamental principles and rules that must be observed, alongside practical training in their proper application.

3. Establishment of Specialized Information Banks: Dedicated databases for sources and references should be created to provide researchers with the scientific materials necessary for the preparation of rigorous academic studies.

4. Recognition of Outstanding Research Efforts: The contributions of researchers and the value of distinguished studies should be acknowledged and promoted.

5. Utilization of Research Outputs for Societal Development: Particular attention should be paid to the outcomes of scientific research, especially in the social sciences, as a means to advance and improve society and to address the problems faced by individuals.

6- The social sciences need increased recognition which should be higher than what other scientific and applied disciplines receive.

7- Specific financial budgets need to be designated for social science research to conduct studies effectively while saving time and effort.

8- Research ethics in the present day encounter various difficulties because research fields constantly transform which generates new issues that need proper oversight. Research ethics standards need proper enforcement through both ethics committees and research review boards together with building researcher awareness about academic integrity.

9- The promotion of academic integrity among researchers requires the organization of numerous symposia and conferences that focus on scientific research ethics.

10- Researchers who show excellence in combination with their strong dedication to scientific research ethics should receive incentives for their work.

Conclusion:

Social research is essential for understanding and analyzing the various social phenomena that characterize society and which are influenced by and influence different social factors, relationships, and interactions among members of society. Therefore it was necessary therefore, it is necessary to focus on training researchers well, through organizing special training workshops and workshops related to field research, because the latter is considered the real laboratory that reflects the actual reality of each society.

Therefore, it is necessary to focus on training researchers well, through organizing special training workshops and workshops related to field research, because the latter is considered the real laboratory that reflects the actual reality of each society. If the task of social research is important in gaining knowledge of society, and thus contributing to its development and improving the living conditions of individuals, then ensuring the researcher is well cared for is a crucial and necessary task to qualify him to

perform his task in the best way. This is achieved by ensuring good and continuous training through overcoming difficulties, especially with regard to research methodology and ethics, because these two elements are considered essential in shaping the researcher's personality.

The achievement of these goals depends on authorities giving proper recognition to social science disciplines because students and graduates currently view these fields as less important or effective than other disciplines. Researchers who receive proper recognition develop an understanding about the importance of their work. The consistent adherence to scientific standards and ethical practices and methodological approaches enables research to transform current perspectives about knowledge fields. Societal development relies on research and studies that intellectual elite's conduct throughout all domains and specializations.

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