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Methods of Child Study: Research and Study of Human Development

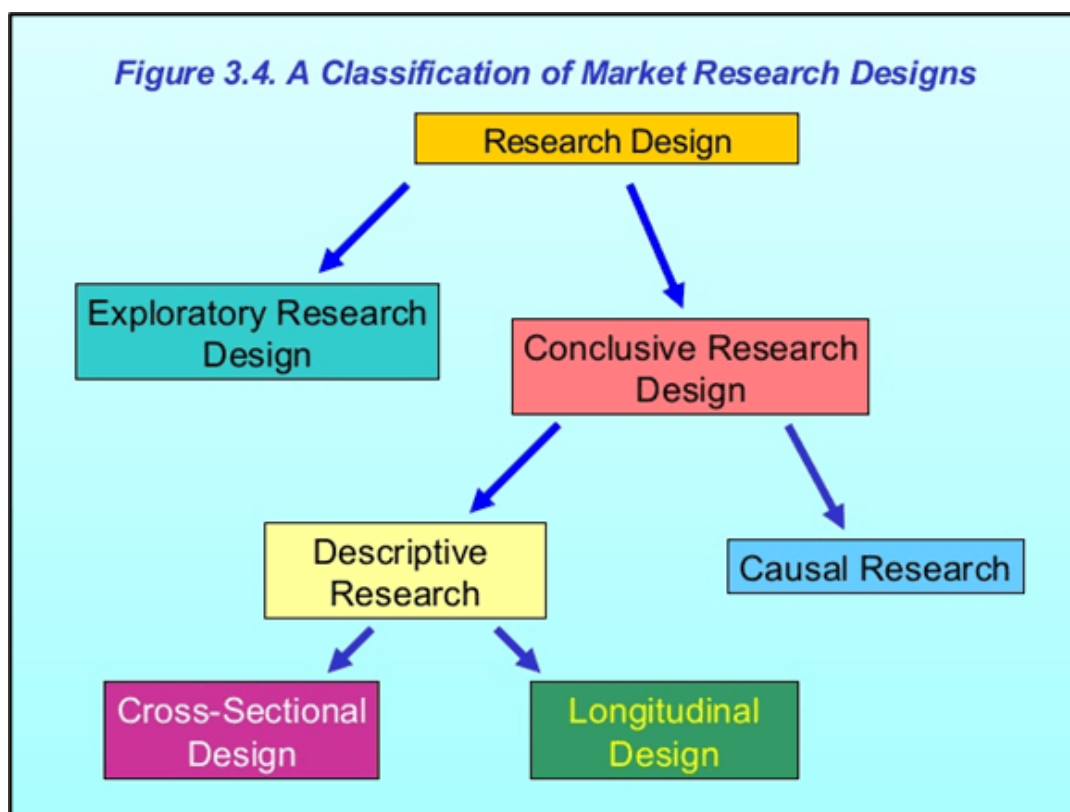
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- Charles Darwin, working on biological diversity, wrote a book On the Origin of Species and also documented his son's acquisition of language. Many years later, Piaget provided a deep understanding of emergence of thought and language in children by observing and keeping detailed notes of his children. He later talked to many children at play to understand development of morality in childhood.
- Piaget improved on the idea of baby biographies and presented a systematic and more scientific procedure to recording childhood actions. Earlier studies on the socialization of children focused on adults to understand how children responded and how they learn. In recent years, there has been growing understanding of recognizing children's potential to be actively making meaning of their physical social world.
- In order to understand children's behavior and thought more systematically, it is important to know specific techniques of studying children.

Research and Study of Human Development

- Research with children builds our understanding of their behavior, nature of responses and ways in which they learn or why they ask questions. We may believe children behave in a particular manner but in our interactions with them in varied situations, we may be surprised to find that they are different from what we had thought.
- Children's skill acquisition may vary according their specific social group. Parental expectations may also differ from group to group. Often parents feel that children are not reading enough, or teachers may observe that parents are not taking enough interest. Such observations would be speculations till a systematic examination could be built as evidence in support of or to negate the hunch.
- Let us study different types of research designs that guide research on children.

Types of Research Design



- Research design is framework or detailed procedures for carrying out the research systematically. The nature of the problem to be studied guides the selection of the research design. The participants (sample) are selected from sections of social groups depending on the nature of the problem.
- Cross Sectional Research: is a way of collecting data from a group of people of different ages at a particular time. This group is matched for all features such as socio-economic status and educational background. This type of research is quick as the data is gathered at one point of time.

- **Longitudinal Research:** is a study of research issues collecting information from a set of people at different intervals of time over a decided period. To study the selected problem, the sample is followed over time and data is gathered from the same set of participants at different points of time.
- **Case Study:** It is an in-depth study of individuals, groups or institutions. This kind of study is done using several techniques. In the Case Study approach, both standardized as well as other techniques of study can be used.
- **Experimental Design:** It is a research design in which two or more groups are compared under similar conditions where each group may get a different treatment (intervention) .

Tools and Techniques of Study

- It is important to identify the methods or techniques of gathering data depending on the age of the children or their literacy level as there are many different ways to engage with children. Although, the methods are based on ordinary and everyday experiences of human beings like talking and watching other people.
- however, the difference in scientific study is that they are systematic, reliable, standardized and valid methods.