

INTRODUCTION TO

# SOCIAL RESEARCH

QUANTITATIVE & QUALITATIVE APPROACHES

KEITH F PUNCH

THIRD  
EDITION



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# PREFACE

This third edition of *Introduction to Social Research* contains substantial new content, and a number of new features.

The new content is:

- A chapter on theory and method in social science research
- A chapter on searching and reviewing the relevant literature
- A chapter on ethics
- A chapter on research and the Internet

The new features, which focus on pedagogical aspects of this material, are:

- Learning objectives, added at the start of each chapter
- New chapter summaries, key terms, and exercises and study questions, added at the end of each chapter

At the same time, the basic structure and rationale for this new edition remain the same as for the two earlier editions. Thus, with respect to structure, the book begins with a view of research and a simple but robust model of research, and then uses the model to guide the planning of quantitative, qualitative and mixed method empirical research in the social sciences. In the process of doing that, it stresses the need for the development of genuine empirical questions, and describes the connections between concepts and their empirical indicators. It then proceeds to show the implementation of this model in both qualitative and quantitative research.

With respect to rationale, the intention is to lay bare the logic of all stages of the empirical research process (whatever the nature of the data), and to give a basis for students to proceed immediately with planning and developing research. As before, therefore, I have tried to stress the logic behind research and its techniques, rather than technical issues per se. One of my aims in doing this is to 'demystify' the research process, and where necessary to simplify it, in an effort to demonstrate clearly the logic behind it, and thus to show that good quality research is within the reach of very many people.

For their assistance in preparing this new edition, I want to thank Alis Oancea, for her contributions on searching and reviewing literature, and Wayne McGowan, for his contribution on research and the Internet.

As with all my previous publications with SAGE, I also want to thank the SAGE editorial team in London who have helped me in many different ways. I particularly want to thank Katie Metzler and, especially, Amy Jarrold for their encouragement, support and assistance, especially in updating readings, and in preparing material for the website attached to this book.

# COMPANION WEBSITE

The website contains key material on qualitative and quantitative research, as well as all the figures and tables from the book and my own guide to lecturing on social research. You can visit it at: [www.sagepub.co.uk/punch3e](http://www.sagepub.co.uk/punch3e)



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## About the Book

Welcome to the companion website for the third edition of *Introduction to Social Research*.

In the new edition of *Introduction to Social Research*, Keith Punch takes a fresh look at the entire research process, from formulating a research question to writing up your research. Covering qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods, the book focuses on matching research questions to appropriate methods. Offering concise, balanced coverage, this book clearly explains the underlying principles of social research and shows you how to put this understanding into practice.

The third edition has been fully updated and now includes:

- A new chapter on literature searching and reviewing
- Expanded coverage of ethics
- A new section on using the internet in research
- A range of additional student learning features

Using a range of examples from student research and published work, the book is an ideal introduction for any social science student taking a research methods course or embarking on their own undergraduate or postgraduate research project.

On this companion website, you will find...

## Instructor Resources

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This site is designed to help create a significant learning opportunity for your students by encouraging active participation, experience and reflection.

## Student Resources

This section contains a wealth of resources for use as you carry out your research, including:

- Free chapters: access to free content to help you develop your understanding of the research process.
- Web links: links to resources that are helpful to all those carrying out research.
- Further reading: expand your learning with selected titles.
- Video tutorials: get to grips with SPSS for free.

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Keith Punch began his working life as a teacher of French, German and mathematics in Western Australian secondary schools, before moving to the university sphere. He completed his PhD at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in the University of Toronto in 1967. He has since worked in universities in several countries, and is now Emeritus Professor in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Western Australia, and Adjunct Professor at several other universities. For the last 20 years of his career, he concentrated on research supervision and research training, and on developing and managing transnational graduate programs in education in several countries in South East Asia, on behalf of the University of Western Australia.

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# INTRODUCTION

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