

Introduction to Questionnaire Survey and Interview[in Japanese, Introduction to the fieldwork (フィールドワーク入門)]

Class 1: Course Introduction

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Tsukasa Iga (ASCI-GSID)

Course instructor

- Tsukasa Iga (Designated Associate Professor @ Asian Satellite Campus Institute: ASCI)
- Comparative Politics, Political sociology, and Area Studies
- Research topics: ①Media and Politics in Southeast Asia, ②Social Movements in Malaysia, ③Political Party, especially Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR)
⇒ Main research method: fieldwork (interview and participatory observation)
- The detail of the instructor:
-Researchmap: <https://researchmap.jp/7000010648>



Today's Contents

- 1. What is Academic Research in the Field?**
- 2. What are the Differences Between the Qualitative Method and the Quantitative Method?**
- 3. Group Works in This Course**
- 4. Instructor's Experiences (Many Failures)**

Related courses:

Overseas Field Work (OFW)/ Domestic Field Work(DFW)

1. What is Academic Research in the Field?

Two Most Important Questions Before We Start This Course

1. What is Academic Research?

- What are the essential elements of academic research?
- How does academic research differ from essays and consultants' papers?

2. Why Do You Go to the Field? What is the Purpose of Conducting "Field Research"?

- What is field research?
- Where is your field?
- What activities do you perform in the field?

1. What is Academic Research in the Field?

Essential Elements for Academic Research

1. Question(s)

- Who are the main readers of your paper?
- Is the paper suggesting new findings academically or practically?

2. Research Review

- Finding an appropriate research question
- Convincing the significance of your research (topic)

3. Hypothesis

- How do you solve the puzzle?
- What is the cause of the event?

4. New Finding(s)

⇒ The first and most important (and sometimes the most difficult) task is to find your appropriate question!

★ How do you find your research question? What is the appropriate research question?

1. What is Academic Research in the Field?

- **Why Do You Go to the Field? What is the Purpose of Conducting "Field Research"?**

1. Collecting Research Data

- Statistical data, interview data, historical documents, etc.

2. Finding Your Appropriate Research Question(s) and Hypothesis (Hypotheses)

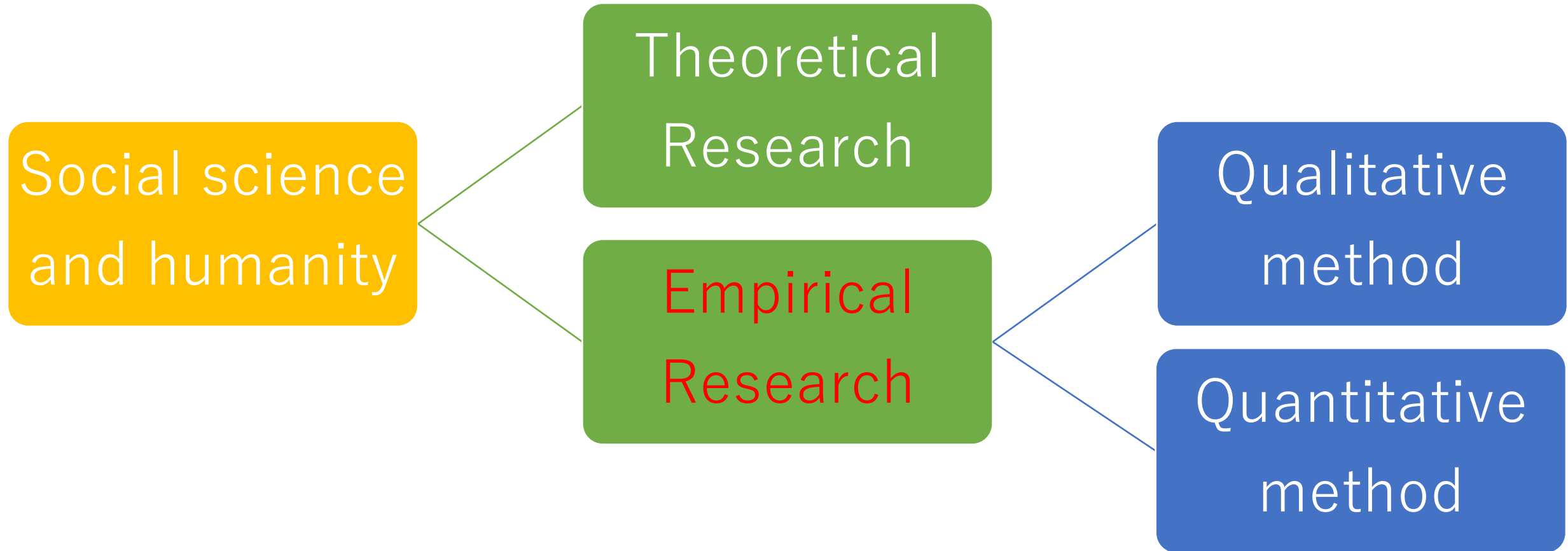
3. Gaining Confidence When You Write

Importance of Your Imagination: Can you imagine the people's lives at the grassroots level or the feelings of decision-makers?

Fieldwork as a Methodology

⇒ **A methodology (or technique) to find, shape, and improve your research question(s) and hypothesis (hypotheses)!**

2. What are the Differences Between the Qualitative Method and the Quantitative Method?



2. What are the Differences Between the Qualitative Method and the Quantitative Method?

Qualitative Method

- **Using words, conversations, and sentences (non-quantified data)**
- Induction: Advantageous for finding original questions and forming a hypothesis
- Methods: Interviews, (participatory/non-participatory) observations, and fieldwork in a narrow sense (e.g., checking landscape, vegetation, traffic, etc.)

Quantitative Method

- **Using numbers and numerical formulas (quantified data)**
- Deduction: Advantageous for demonstrating and verifying the hypothesis
- Methods: Questionnaire surveys, multivariate analysis
 - ★ Introduction to Statistics and Data Science by Mendez Sensei

Historical and Archival Method

- Finding new historical materials and checking the authenticity of historical materials

Eclecticism Approach

- **For the fieldworker, a multi-method (or triangulation) approach is possible and recommended. However, the sequence in the comprehensive research process is sometimes very important.**

2. What are the Differences Between the Qualitative Method and the Quantitative Method?

Multiple Definitions, Meanings, and Images

- What is “democracy” for different people?
Japanese, Chinese, Ukrainian, Malian, Cambodian, American, etc.
- What is “poverty” for different groups?
Filipino immigrant workers in Dubai, Moldovan rural villagers, etc.

Is your question truly relevant and worth asking for the local society and its people?

Solution

- Combine research review of previous studies with qualitative methods (observation, interview, etc.)

★Fieldwork as a Methodology

A technique to find, shape, and improve your research question(s) and hypothesis (hypotheses)!

Core Target for Qualitative Method

- **Understanding people’s ideas, perspectives, and worldviews**

3. Group Works in This Course

Class Structure from Next Week

1. **Instructor's Lecture Session:** 30-40 minutes
2. **Group Work Session:** Teaming up with GSID friends (about 4-5 students per group)
3. **Group Presentation Session**

What Will We Do in the Group Work Session?

Two Types of Interviews:

Life Story Interview (Unstructured Interview)

Kikitori [Targeted Interview] (Semi-Structured Interview)

Three Types of Interviews

1. **Unstructured Interview:** Free-flowing conversation, main initiative by the informant
 - Example: Life story interview
2. **Semi-Structured Interview:** Effective data collection within a short period, shared initiative between the informant and you
 - Example: Kikitori (targeted interview)
3. **Structured Interview:** Fixed questions and procedures, main initiative by the interviewer
 - Example: Questionnaire survey

⇒ **If you adopt a fieldwork research approach, it is recommended to start with unstructured or semi-structured interviews, then move to structured interviews (questionnaire).**

3. Group Works in This Course

Life Story Interview (Unstructured Interview)

Expected Informant: Your family member (preferably an older person), best friend, or teacher – someone who understands your study

- This allows your team to skip the preliminary survey and appointment scheduling.

Interview Time: You must interview until both you and the informant are satisfied.

Example Questions:

- When were the crossroads of your life?
- What was the hardest event in your life?
- Why did you start your career?
- What did you feel at that time?

Important Point: Understand the informant's worldview and perspective to create their narrative.

3. Group Works in This Course

Kikitori [Targeted Interview] (Semi-Structured Interview)

Expected Informant: Working professionals (e.g., GSID alumni, your ex-boss, etc.)

- Try to make an appointment by yourself.
- The biggest challenge for Kikitori is making an appointment.

Interview Time: About 1 hour


You need to ask clear and concise questions within 1 hour.

Example Questions:

- What are the important criteria to continue your work?
- What was the hardest challenge in your career?

Important Point: Try to minimize the informant's cost and burden.

Schedule of this course



Class No.	Date	Lecture	Group work	Team Target	Homework
1	4/12	Introduction	—	—	—
2	4/19	Research design, Purpose, and Process	Teaming up	Decide your team's name / self-introduction	Team members prepare for more than 1 candidate for the informant
3	4/26	Participatory observation and interview	Deciding the Informant for your life story interview		Preliminary research for the informant
4	5/10	Manners and ethics	Expected results, the personal, socioeconomic, and historical backgrounds of the informant		Finding 50 questions for the informant
5	5/17	Life Story Interview: methodological idea, purpose, research design, interview techniques, and data analysis	50 questions for the life story interview	Conduct the life story interview (between May 17 and 31)	
6	5/24	Making appointments for Kikitori	Preparation (or analysis) for the life story interview		
7	5/31	Hypotheses for Kikitori	Analyzing collected data on the Life Story interview / finding the candidates of the Kikitori		

Schedule of this course



8	6/7	Presentation and discussion for the life story interview 1		Contacting and making an appointment with the informant for kikitori
9	6/14	Presentation and discussion for the life story interview 2		
10	6/21	How to make a better questionnaire	Response from the informant of the life story interview / preparation for the questions for kikitori	Sending the basic questions to the informant if possible
11	6/28	Writing a report with qualitative data		
12	7/5	Murakami: Underground Whyte: Street Corner Society Observation	Preparation for the questions for Kikitori / analyzing the collected data	Conduct Kikitori (between June 28 and July 12)
13	7/12	Presentation and discussion for Kikitori 1		
14	7/19	Presentation and discussion for Kikitori 2		Prepare for the team report
15	7/26	Final discussion		

4. Instructor's Experiences: Failures

Why My Interview Failed with the Secretary General of a Famous NGO in Malaysia

- 1. Over-Reliance on Friend's Network:** I depended too much on my friend's connection without verifying the details independently. This led to misunderstandings and may have caused inconvenience to the secretary general.
- 2. Lack of Preliminary Research:** I didn't conduct enough research before the interview. As a result, I lacked crucial information about the organization and its activities. This made it difficult to ask relevant questions and understand the context of the interview.

Key Lesson Learned:

To conduct a successful interview:

Make Appointments in Advance: It's essential to schedule interviews properly to respect the interviewee's time and ensure they are prepared.

Conduct Thorough Research: Before the interview, gather detailed information about the organization, its leaders, and recent activities. This preparation helps in asking informed questions and showing genuine interest.

By improving these aspects of my approach, I can enhance the quality and effectiveness of future interviews.