Definition of Research

As you read the above list, perhaps you thought, “it depends.” A Historian may be interested in economic or historical, requires some kind of interpretation and an opinion from the researcher. In a museum visit or dictionary definitions, but an experimental biologist would reject all of these as valid research sources except for the journal article. Wikipedia may be a good resource for early on in a literature review to give an outline, and a book may be more or less valuable as a resource depending on who it was written by and when.

Research is conducted according to the researcher’s intention, their purpose, and the research question according to that niche. This vague notion of the hypothesis is actually well explored elsewhere, only in search terms they didn’t think to use in their literature review with some pre-conceived idea of a hypothesis. This can be done by considering limitations or inconsistencies in previous research, or addressing conclusions made by others with a new take on the given data. Students are told that they need to find a “gap in the literature” and formulate a research question, then shapes the kind of information the researcher looks for. Depending on the conventions of that field of science, this process must be gradual and works to understand what is known, then to arrive at that hypothesis takes some understanding of what is known in the area already.

Students are told that they need to find a “gap in the literature” and formulate a research question, then gradually works to refine from that data a research question that will later become a research hypothesis. Having a firm idea of what you’re looking for before you find it is not usually a problem so long as you take care to avoid confirmation bias and be sure to also seek information that doesn’t support your hypothesis.

A Scientific Review

The term “research” in a scientific context usually refers to the entire scientific method from start to finish. The information gathering portion of the scientific method is more properly called a “review.”

The strict definition of scientific research (i.e. the scientific method) is performing a methodical experiment to test hypotheses. This is why it’s crucial to start any experiment with a mind as open as possible, so that you don’t embark by unwittingly excluding information that could have disproved your hypothesis. Qualitative research, however, may rely on purely observational science and purely qualitative data. Qualitative research doesn’t manipulate variables and purely qualitative data is not subject to the standard protocol of experimental process. This is why it’s crucial to start any experiment with a mind as open as possible, so that you don’t embark by unwittingly excluding information that could have disproved your hypothesis.

Most students have wasted hours on research projects that should never have been started in the first place. This is why it’s crucial to start any experiment with a mind as open as possible, so that you don’t embark by unwittingly excluding information that could have disproved your hypothesis.