



Pluralistic Approach to Research Methods

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Abstract

Growing interest in interdisciplinary courses is apparent worldwide particularly in social sciences. This paper argues that development of interdisciplinary courses requires a pluralistic approach towards research methods among academics in these fields for mutual understanding and collaboration. It seems that a pluralistic rather than one-sided approach is vital for interdisciplinary courses to help both academics and students approach multifaceted phenomena of concern in these fields. Although research methodology has long been taught as an integral part of university courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels in psychology, education, and social sciences, however, the quantitative approach has been predominant in these fields. Recently qualitative research methods attracted a fresh attention of academics, researchers and postgraduate students looking for alternative approaches to overcome shortcomings associated with quantitative research. Nevertheless, the structure and content of university courses on research methodology in education, psychology and social science remained mainly untouched, presumably due to entrenched traditional quantitative approaches. This study was aimed at exploring factors impeding a pluralistic approach towards research methods. Data were collected using a survey instrument administered to a sample of 148 graduate students in psychology, education, and social science. Results indicated that negative attitude toward qualitative approach and lack of relevant expertise among lecturers contributed most to such a problem.