



## RESEARCH METHODS IN EDUCATION: A BOOK REVIEW

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### **Research Methods in Education (eighth edition)**

**Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion & Keith Morrison**

Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon.

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The eighth edition of *Research Methods in Education* by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) continues to hold a student's hand and guide them through the complexity of educational research. Ingleby (2012) describes the previous edition as having a reputation of 'biblical proportions', and the excellent international examples and case studies that endeavour to clarify challenges in epistemology continue in this latest edition. The authors maintain a degree of engagement throughout, which is why it remains popular with students.

The book aims to inform students, academics, and researchers undertaking, understanding, and using educational research methods. The book is viewed as a success, having been translated into several languages across the globe.

The book is formatted similarly and transparently to the previous editions, whereby Parts that consist of Chapters and then sub-Chapters form the main structure.

Part 1 begins with the nature of the inquiry, addresses the search for understanding through paradigmatic positions, and then evaluates research. Furthermore, the text also covers research design, methods of data collection, data analysis and reporting through practical advice, and raising questions for researchers. The book becomes an inspiring travel guide that helps students navigate around the research world.

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*Research Methods in Education* remains an up-to-date version of the already well-established text, addressing new challenges presented by virtual methods. The profound differences between paper-based and internet surveys are not overlooked in chapter 18, and the authors provide a comprehensive discussion of specific challenges that online surveys may bring.

There is also an exciting subsection on the ethics of participation online with updated references from Roberts and Allen (2015). The argument of whether a participant consents to something regardless if they completed it is particularly relevant and has implications beyond the social sciences. The authors also attempt to introduce technical factors that a researcher must consider such as traceable locations and information when participants click on the survey link (IP address). In this sense, it is nearly impossible to guarantee total security, data privacy, and anonymity, which are just some of the modern-day challenges that researchers must adapt to. The authors propose some 'possible solutions', such as asking the participant to complete the survey in an internet café, however, this becomes somewhat of a departure from the real life of a researcher.

A review of the previous edition by Ingleby (2012) suggests that the book's underlying assumption is that there is an acceptance of the nature of science and non-science. Ingleby (2012) argues that this may be a weakness of the book, proposing clear links between positivism and anti-positivist thought. These themes remain present in the eighth edition; however, the new addition of mixed methods research as a transformative paradigm is an attempt to mitigate these potential shortfalls.

There is an absence of discussion around the successful uses of TEL and social media in this section. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) write that social networking sites fail because students and teachers "*often dislike blending study with social life*". However, this is a somewhat limited observation, excluding the 'why' this may be the case for many schools. In contrast, researchers are aware of the social, personal, and professional challenges associated with social media. Professional development in schools, staff privacy, and functionality not suited for education purposes may touch on some of these.

There is a general feeling that the authors are pessimistic about using social media in pedagogy, describing it as 'disruptive', for instance. The authors also perhaps wrongly describe 'open Facebook groups' instead of the widely accepted term 'Facebook Pages'. This is interesting as there are multiple examples of schools engaging with parents through Pages, often blending the study with social life. The section on social networking may expand with a flurry of post-Covid19 and the period of remoting working papers published.

Without a doubt, *Research Methods in Education* has become an essential part of an early-career or experienced researcher's portfolio.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The author has declared that no competing interests exist.

### **About the Author**

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