

concern will likely be whether the elements and relationships abstracted from a larger universe are fruitful in generating statements that have explanatory and predictive power in the universe intended. On comparative studies, while it is true that any study that is analytical is also comparative, the term is more often used for cross-institutional, cross-cultural and cross-national work. For these, one may anticipate dilemmas in settling the unit of analysis and the method of comparison as a minimum plus concern with what instrumentation can be held constant if the work is really across cultures. For normative research, one must anticipate that it may not be modish in all circles, yet recognize that, if explanations then can be verified and predictions established, it should be possible to posit norms and subject them to legitimate research.

So much for the briefest sampling of a limited number of research strategies in order to suggest the positive value of being well aware of choices and what might later be part of executing and defending any decision taken.

The negative aspect is that one may be led to choose an inappropriate research strategy or discouraged in the pursuit of worthwhile research that one is motivated to do because of a kind of upsmanship or prestige social pecking order game that sometimes operates. The game is that which associates some research strategies with a higher order of intellectual life and others with a lesser order. The realities, of course, are that such judgments will operate in all phases of life and that some disciplines, graduate schools, journals and professional societies will accord greater esteem to the strategies that they want to be representative of their achievement. That the effect of the foregoing can be enormously positive is not disputed.