

Second axis: Subject of political science and its methods

Political science originated as a social science which studies state and its agency, the government. The scope of political science has become so vast that it is difficult to give a precise definition .

1. Subject of political science

Paul Janet defines political science as « that part of social science which treats of the foundation of state and principals of goverment », so political science begins and ends with the state. But there is some political philosophers who consider political science as the study of power because power is the most important factor in a state. Lasswell defines political science as « the study of shaping and sharing of power » and according to David Easton it is « the study of the autoritative allocation of values for a society. »

2. Methods of political science

Political science is an organized body of knowledge, the facts of which have been scientifically and systematically observed, collected, and classified. These facts are formulated and proved a series of propositions or principles that form the scientific basis. These principles are used as a groundwork for further investigation.

It was not until the nineteenth century that the State's phenomena came to be regarded as a proper field for scientific investigation. Since then, many methods and approaches have been suggested and employed.

➤ The Comparative method

Comparative method is about looking at an object of study in relation to another. The object of study is normally compared across space and/or time. Comparative methods can be qualitative and quantitative.

A Comparative method in research refers to a strategy where characteristics or parts are compared across different research situations to identify differences or similarities, leading to a better understanding of the underlying causes or relationships.

Comparative methods are an analytical approach to the study of political phenomena. With this approach, researchers use similarities and differences to develop theories and hypotheses, infer causality, and generalize results. In the study of politics, this method is used to identify similarities and differences in political structures, processes, and outcomes, and the factors that explain these similarities and differences. Political systems, actors, or phenomena are compared across multiple cases or contexts. This may involve comparing the political systems of different states, the political behaviour of individuals or groups within a state, or the outcomes of different policies or interventions.

➤ **The Descriptive method**

Descriptive research is an appropriate choice when the research aim is to identify characteristics, frequencies, trends, and categories. It is useful when not much is known yet about the topic or problem. Before you can research why something happens, you need to understand how, when and where it happens.

Descriptive research is a method describing the characteristics of the population or phenomenon studied. This descriptive methodology focuses more on the “what” of the research subject than the “why” of the research subject.

The method primarily focuses on describing the nature of a demographic segment without focusing on “why” a particular phenomenon occurs. In other words, it “describes” the research subject without covering “why” it happens.

✓ **Importance of Descriptive Research in Scientific Studies**

- Understanding of a Population or Phenomenon

Descriptive research provides a comprehensive picture of the characteristics and behaviors of a particular population or phenomenon, allowing researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the topic.

- Baseline Information

The information gathered through descriptive research can serve as a baseline for future research and provide a foundation for further studies.

3. Informative Data

Descriptive research can provide valuable information and insights into a particular topic, which can inform future research, policy decisions, and programs.

4. Sampling Validation

Descriptive research can be used to validate sampling methods and to help researchers determine the best approach for their study.

5. Cost Effective

Descriptive research is often less expensive and less time-consuming than other research methods, making it a cost-effective way to gather information about a particular population or phenomenon.

6. Easy to Replicate

Descriptive research is straightforward to replicate, making it a reliable way to gather and compare information from multiple sources.