

# SUMMARY

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1. Research is asking questions and finding answers.
2. Scholarly research is the discovery of answers to questions through the application of scientific and systematic procedures.

3. Academic research follows accepted norms and procedures that have been adopted by scholars from many disciplines.
4. In the process of scientific discovery and explanation, four outcomes are sought: describing behavior, determining causes of behavior, predicting behavior, and explaining behavior.
5. The best research is that which is driven by theory, validates a theory, further explains a theory, challenges an existing theory, or aids in the creation of theory.
6. As a social science, communication researchers use both quantitative and qualitative methods.
7. The study of communication from a social science perspective looks for patterns across cases and focuses on symbols used to construct messages, messages, the effects of messages, and their meanings.
8. Communication scholars start with an interesting question and then formulate a formal research question or hypothesis.
9. A hypothesis is a tentative, educated guess or proposition about the relationship between two or more variables.
10. A formal research question asks what the tentative relationship among variables might be, or asks about the state or nature of some communication phenomenon.
11. Research is judged to be scientific by 12 characteristics: its empirical nature, its ability to be tested, the extent to which it can be falsified or disproved, the ability to replicate or repeat findings, the public nature of findings, its self-correcting nature, the ability to measure or observe the phenomenon of interest, the ability to minimize error through the control of procedures, its level of objectivity, the skepticism it raises, the generalizability of findings, and its heuristic nature.
12. Questions suitable for communication research are those with theoretical significance, of social importance, and in which the researcher has personal interest.
13. Questions suitable for communication research may be questions of fact, questions of variable relations, questions of value, or questions of policy.

## KEY TERMS

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empirical	questions of policy
heuristic	questions of value
hypothesis	questions of relationships
proprietary research	research
qualitative methods	research question
quantitative methods	social science research
questions of cause and effect	theory
questions of definition	

See the website [www.mhhe.com/keyton4](http://www.mhhe.com/keyton4) that accompanies this text. For each chapter, the site contains a:

- chapter outline
- chapter checklist
- chapter summary
- short multiple-choice quiz
- PowerPoint presentation created by Dr. Keyton

For a list of internet resources, visit <http://www.joannkeyton.com/CommunicationResearch-Methods.htm>.