



A STUDY OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

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Abstract: *This research paper is based on theoretical framework which analyzed the study of qualitative and quantitative research in social sciences. Both qualitative and quantitative research has equal importance and is used by researchers according to their statements of problem. Qualitative research is in exploratory in nature that means finding a new problem whereas quantitative research is in descriptive in nature that means to describe the detailed solution of a particular problem. But now a day's most of the researchers have used quantitative research in their research. The objective of this paper is to describe about characteristics, differences and use of qualitative and quantitative research in social sciences. It will help to the researchers to clear the concepts of these two types of research design.*

Keywords: *Qualitative research, quantitative research, research problem.*

Introduction

Quantitative Research is defined as the systematic empirical investigation of social phenomena via statistical, mathematical or computational techniques. Its objective is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories and/or hypotheses pertaining to phenomena. At its core, quantitative research is used to identify patterns and predict behavior. This type of research is used in business, marketing and in social sciences such as psychology, economics, sociology, and political science, and, less frequently, in anthropology and history.

Quantitative research is generally conducted using scientific methods, which can include:

- The generation of models, theories and hypotheses
- The development of instruments and methods for measurement
- Experimental control and manipulation of variables
- Collection of empirical data
- Modeling and analysis of data



QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative Research is the examination, analysis and interpretation of observations for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships, including classifications of types of phenomena and entities, in a manner that does not involve mathematical models. For example, in the social sciences, qualitative research methods are often used to gain better understanding of such things as intentionality (from the speech response of the researcher) and meaning (why did this person/group say something and what did it mean to them?).

This research asks broad questions and collects word data from participants. Qualitative methods produce information only on the particular cases studied, and any more general conclusions are only hypotheses. Unlike quantitative methods which are used to identify patterns and make predictions, qualitative research aims to explain behavior.

Qualitative researchers aim to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern it. The qualitative method investigates why and how of consumer behavior, not just what, where, when. Hence, smaller but focused samples are more often needed than the large samples required of quantitative methods.

Qualitative researchers typically rely on the following methods for gathering information: Participant Observation, Non-participant Observation, Field Notes, Reflexive Journals, Structured Interview, Semi-structured Interview, Unstructured Interview, and Analysis of documents and materials.

The Following Are Some Examples of Qualitative Approaches Used in Collecting Data:

- Storytelling
- Classical Ethnography
- Interviews (phone or in-person)
- Focus Group discussions

In a focus group, a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards a specific product, service, concept, advertisement, idea or packaging. It is conducted in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with each other.



LITERATURE REVIEW

As the sociologist **William Bruce Cameron** stated, “Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted.” In order to affect change and maximize health, it is crucial to understand the varying importance of health issues to different groups, and to identify factors that impact decision-making and guide health-seeking behaviors. Qualitative research allows investigators to develop a deeper understanding of a topic than can be obtained through quantitative research alone. Qualitative research uses methodologies such as focus groups, in-depth interviews, and direct observation so researchers can investigate stakeholders’ attitudes, beliefs, and preferences – the how and why of decision-making. Qualitative research methods provide an opportunity for a systematic, in-depth evaluation of a question that may not be easily answered through quantitative methods. Furthermore, these methods can add to quantitative results through explanations and clarifications with the target population.

OBJECTIVE

- To study the characteristics of qualitative and quantitative research in social sciences
- To study the differences between qualitative and quantitative research
- To study the importance and use of qualitative and quantitative research

METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on the collection of data from secondary sources. Secondary data is obtained from internet, various published and unpublished records, magazines, books and journals.

Differences between quantitative and qualitative research

	Quantitative	Qualitative
Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experimental • statistical • positivist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • naturalistic • ethnographic • phenomenological • anthropological • interpretive • constructivist
Focus or Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe with statistics • test theories • show relationships • predict • obtain a single true reality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop understanding and meaning • describe naturally occurring behavior • describe multiple realities



Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• structured• predetermined• specific• contrived	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• emergent• evolving• flexible• natural• holistic
Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• experiments• questionnaires• surveys• structured observations or interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• observations• open-ended interviews• field research• case studies
Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• deductive• statistical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• interpretive• inductive• ongoing• searching for themes• text analysis

USAGE

Qualitative Research is ideal for earlier phases of research projects while for the latter part of the research project, Quantitative Research is highly recommended. Quantitative Research provides the researcher a clearer picture of what to expect in his research compared to Qualitative Research.

CONCLUSION

Qualitative research typically is exploratory and/or investigative in nature. Its findings are often not conclusive and cannot automatically be used to make generalizations. However, it is indispensable in developing a deep understanding of a given thematic complex and sound rationale for further decision making. Quantitative research is essential for providing a broad base of insight on which typically a final course of action is recommended. Sample selection in qualitative research is usually based on a smaller number of not-necessarily representative cases. Respondents are frequently selected with the expectation that they fulfill certain criteria. In quantitative research, sample selection seeks out a large number of cases that are expected to best represent the population of interest. Individual respondents are selected at random. Combining of qualitative and quantitative research is becoming more and more common. It is important to keep in mind that these are two different philosophies, not necessarily polar opposites. In fact, elements of both designs can be used together in mixed-methods studies.



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