

General Research Methodology

Quantitative Research:

relies primarily on the collection of numerical data

Qualitative Research:

relies primarily on the collection of non-numerical data

Incompatibility thesis

- During the 1980s, especially when the ‘paradigm wars’ reached its peak, many researchers argued that there was no possibility of combining the quantitative and qualitative research methods in one single research design.
- Researchers recommended the use of either methods but not both.

Pragmatism

- What works is what is important and valid.
- Pragmaticist consider that both quantitative and qualitative research are situated in one single continuum, with quantitative at one end and qualitative at the other end.
- Research, therefore, could be primarily quantitative, primarily qualitative or mixed.

Emphases of Quantitative, Mixed and Qualitative research

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Scientific method	Confirmatory or top-down: testing hypothesis and theory with data	Confirmatory and exploratory	Exploratory or bottom-up: generating new hypotheses and grounded theory from the data from the field work
View of human behavior	Behavior is regular and predictable	Behavior is somewhat predictable	Behavior is fluid, dynamic, situational, social, contextual, and personal

Emphases (Continued)

Most common objectives	Describe, explain, predict	Multiple objectives	Explore, discover, construct, describe
Focus	Narrow-angle lens, testing specific behavior	Multiple focus	Wide-angle and deep-angle lens, examining the breadth and depth of the phenomenon
Interest	General laws	Connect the local and general	Local, particular groups or people

Emphases (Continued)

Nature of Observation	Studying behavior under control conditions Isolating the causal effect of single variable	Studying variable in more than one context, perspective, or condition	Studying behavior in natural environments, studying the context in which the behavior occurs
Nature of reality	Objective (different observers agree on what is observed)	Commonsense realism and pragmatic view of world	Subjective, personal and socially constructed
Form of data collected	Quantitative data based on precise measurement using structured and validated instrument	Multiple forms	Qualitative data, in-depth interview, observation, field notes

Emphases (Continued)

Data Analyses	Identifying statistical relationship	Combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses	Search for patterns, themes and holistic features
Results	Generalizable findings providing representative of objective outsider viewpoints	Provision of insider and outsider viewpoints	Particularistic findings providing representation of insider viewpoints Present multiple perspectives
Form of Final reports	Statistical report (e.g. correlation, comparison of means, and statistical significant findings)	Mixture of numbers and narratives	Narrative report with contextual description and direct quotation from research participants.