

Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is perhaps the simpler to define and identify.

The data produced are always numerical, and they are analysed using mathematical and statistical methods. If there are no numbers involved, then it's not quantitative research.

Some phenomena obviously lend themselves to quantitative analysis because they are already available as numbers. Examples include changes in achievement at various stages of education, or the increase in number of senior managers holding management degrees. However, even phenomena that are not obviously numerical in nature can be examined using quantitative methods.

Sources of Quantitative Data

The most common sources of quantitative data include:

Surveys, whether conducted online, by phone or in person. These rely on the same questions being asked in the same way to a large number of people;

Observations, which may either involve counting the number of times that a particular phenomenon occurs, such as how often a particular word is used in interviews, or coding observational data to translate it into numbers; and

Secondary data, such as company accounts.