Methodology

Your dissertation gives you the chance to explore both primary and secondary research methods.

Secondary research methods are those you use to create your literature review and investigate the context of any cases you are reviewing. This means using your reading skills (e.g. skimming for main ideas and scanning for specific detail) and your writing skills (e.g. note-taking and summarising). If you need to improve your library search skills, you can find help and advice at Getting Started (http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users).

Primary research methods are divided into two main categories: qualitative and quantitative. You should explore both the qualitative and quantitative topic bars on the left of the screen before deciding which research methods to use. You could combine elements of both and engage in mixed methods research. Focus on what will help you investigate your project most effectively.

Watch this screencast below from Dr Estelle Shale (formerly WBS Associate Professor of Operational Research) about managing data.

- Listen carefully and make a note of all the new advice you hear.

Note: *Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.*

Qualitative research

Qualitative research usually deals with the opinions and experience of a relatively small number of people. The most common related methods are observation, interviews and discourse analysis. Tools for qualitative data analysis include NVivo, advanced MS Word and MAXQDA. For advanced MS Word usage, see this Tutorial: Qualitative Analysis in Word (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk) and for MAXQDA, see MAXQDA: Importing Documents (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYlR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291).

Watch this film of a difficult qualitative interview. Watch, listen and take notes, then use your notes to help you answer the questions below.

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- The researcher is particularly interesting in how company rankings affect employee attitudes. What did the interviewer gain from the interviewee in terms of data relevant to this focus?
- What did the interviewee's body language signify about their feelings about being interviewed?
- At what point in the interview did the interviewee's mood change?
- In your opinion, how successful was the interview?

For more information about qualitative research:

- Watch WBS Associate Professor of Governance Kevin Morell's video 'How Much Data is Enough for a Masters Dissertation (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxI&feature=youtu.be) (Focus on Interviews)'.
- Watch Gerry Katz talking on 'Ethnography or observational research (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY)'.
- Watch Graham R. Gibbs's videos on interviewing: Part 1: Interviews and the Interview Society (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU) and Part 2: The Pros and Cons of Interviewing (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ).

Quantitative research

Quantitative research deals with numerical measures, such as financial amounts, demographics and trends. The number of people or amount of company data is relatively large. The most common related methods are questionnaires and the collation of companies' statistical data. Tools for quantitative data analysis include SPSS, advanced MS Excel and R. For projects that need you to build models from historical company data, you can use SAS or other specialist modelling software. For advanced MS Excel, go to: Using Excel in data analysis (https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/) and for R, see: The Landscape of Data Analysis (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4gIzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_i8z) . For SAS, go to: How to use SAS (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9lPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3), and for other specialist modelling software, search online and follow up on any that look interesting to you in YouTube.

Watch the film below from Professor James Mitchell showing ways of coping with quantitative data. Watch, listen and take notes; then use your notes to help you decide what you would like to do.

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