

## **Compare and Contrast Qualitative and Quantitative Research**

### **Quantitative business research**

Business research that addresses research objectives through empirical assessments that involve numerical measurement and analysis

### **Qualitative business research**

Research that addresses business objectives through techniques that allow the researcher to provide elaborate interpretations of phenomena without depending on numerical measurement; its focus is on discovering true inner meanings and new insights.

Quantitative researchers direct a considerable amount of activity toward measuring concepts with scales that either directly or indirectly provide numeric values. The numeric values can then be used in statistical computations and hypothesis testing. This process involves comparing numbers in some way.

In contrast, qualitative researchers are more interested in observing, listening, and interpreting. As such, the researcher is intimately involved in the research process and in constructing the results. For these reasons, qualitative research is said to be more subjective, meaning that the results are researcher-dependent. Different researchers may reach different conclusions based on the same interview.

In that respect, qualitative research lacks intersubjective certifiability (sometimes called intersubjective verifiability), the ability of different individuals following the same procedures to produce the same results or come to the same conclusion. This should not necessarily be considered a weakness of qualitative research; rather it is simply a characteristic that yields differing insights.

In contrast, when a survey respondent provides a commitment score on a quantitative scale, it is thought to be more objective because the number will be the same no matter what researcher is involved in the analysis.

## **Compare and Contrast Exploratory and Confirmatory Research**

In exploratory research, you're gathering data without trying to establish a particular theory.

In confirmatory research, your goal is to find evidence for (or against) a hypothesis.

Let us say exploratory research found a connection between walking and positivity.

Confirmatory research could confirm (or disprove) this.

Confirmatory research has stricter boundaries than exploratory research.

Choosing between exploratory vs. confirmatory research depends on the subject of your research. If there is little to no empirical evidence surrounding the topic, then exploratory research could be the best choice. This would give you an opportunity to gather data and discover interesting leads.

Let us say a soft drinks company is producing a new product aimed at post-graduate students. They might do some exploratory research to discover the drinks these students enjoy. They might also research their general drinking habits.

But, if there's already significant research on the topic, it might be best to investigate a particular theory. In this case, you would want confirmatory research. If the soft drinks company is developing a new drink aimed at teens, it is more likely to have data ready to analyse. Researchers could test an established hypothesis here. This could be that teens prefer apple-flavoured drinks to pear-flavoured drinks, for example.

These two types of research often work best when used together. For example, exploratory research might find that most post-grad participants enjoyed iced tea. Confirmatory research could then test whether iced tea is the most popular drink among post-grad students.

### What are the major categories of Qualitative Research

#### Orientations to Qualitative Research

Qualitative research can be performed in many ways using many techniques. Orientations to qualitative research are very much influenced by the different fields of study involved in research.

These orientations are each associated with a category of qualitative research. The major categories

of qualitative research include

1. Phenomenology—originating in philosophy and psychology
2. Ethnography—originating in anthropology
3. Grounded theory—originating in sociology
4. Case studies—originating in psychology and in business research

Precise lines between these approaches are difficult to draw and there are clearly links among these orientations. In addition, a particular qualitative research study may involve elements of two or more approaches.

### Explain the terms: Phenomenology, Ethnography

#### phenomenology

A philosophical approach to studying human experiences based on the idea that human experience itself is inherently subjective and determined by the context in which people live. The phenomenological researcher focuses on how a person's behavior is shaped by the relationship he or she has with the physical environment, objects, people, and situations. Phenomenological inquiry seeks to describe, reflect upon, and interpret experiences. Researchers with a phenomenological orientation rely largely on conversational interview tools. When conversational interviews are face to face, they are recorded either with video or audiotape and then interpreted by the researcher. The phenomenological interviewer is careful to avoid asking direct questions when at all possible. Instead, the research respondent is asked to tell a story about some experience.

Ethnography represents ways of studying cultures through methods that involve becoming highly active within that culture. Participant-observation typifies an ethnographic research approach. Participant observation means the researcher becomes immersed within the culture that he or she is studying and draws data from his or her observations. Ethnographic study can be particularly useful when a certain culture is comprised of individuals who cannot or will not verbalize their thoughts and feelings. For instance, ethnography has advantages for discovering insights among children since it does not rely largely on their answers to questions. Instead, the researcher can simply become part of the environment, allow the children to do what they do naturally, and record their behavior.

### What is Grounded Theory?

Represents an inductive investigation in which the researcher poses questions about information provided by respondents or taken from historical records; the researcher asks the questions to him or herself and repeatedly questions the responses to derive deeper

explanations. Grounded theory is particularly applicable in highly dynamic situations involving rapid and significant change. Two key questions asked by the grounded theory researcher are “What is happening here?” and “How is it different?” The distinguishing characteristic of grounded theory is that it does not begin with a theory but instead extracts one from whatever emerges from an area of inquiry.

### What is a Focus Group Interview? Discuss the advantages of the same

A focus group interview is an unstructured, free-flowing interview with a small group of people, usually between six and ten. Focus groups are led by a trained moderator who follows a flexible format encouraging dialogue among respondents. Common focus group topics include employee programs, employee satisfaction, brand meanings, problems with products, advertising themes, or new-product concepts.

The group meets at a central location at a designated time. A moderator begins by providing some opening statement to broadly steer discussion in the intended direction. Ideally, discussion topics emerge at the group’s initiative, not the moderator’s. Consistent with phenomenological approaches, moderators should avoid direct questioning unless necessary

advantages:

1. Relatively fast
2. Easy to execute
3. Allow respondents to piggyback off each other’s ideas
4. Provide multiple perspectives
5. Flexibility to allow more detailed descriptions
6. High degree of scrutiny