

distinguish between
qualitative and
quantitative data
essay sample



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Please itemize and discuss the major advantages and disadvantages of data based on self-reports. Qualitative data and quantitative data are generalized types of data. Quantitative data identifies quantities or values by measuring information, specifically in a way that can be written down by numbers (Probability and Statistics, 2014). This is data that can be measured for example, a person's height, weight and length of hair. Qualitative data delves into the quality of something such as the coarseness of sand, the grace of an individual's run and eye color. This type of data cannot be measured by numbers. Trochim (2006) states he does not feel there is one form of data, in regards to qualitative and quantitative, that is better than the other. I have to agree, both are valuable in the individual sense. However, they are even stronger when they are utilized together in a mixed method research approach (Trochim, 2006).

Individually, I mentioned what information they can provide. Debates are ongoing and continuous in an attempt to determine which is better. There are advocates for both. Quantitative data gives factual and specific numbers for research and survey, etc. However, even though qualitative data is more of a descriptive and opinionated retrieval of data it can be beneficial. Qualitative data can be given a quantitative identity for example given a survey, more often than not, there is a portion depicting short open ended question requesting a respondent insert a text response; this would be the "Please provide additional comments" portion. Initially, the information provided is qualitative basically because from a quantitative standpoint it has no numerical substance. However, the information is usually classified

into simple categories with that category given a label representing them, this giving it quantitative value (Trochim, 2006).

There is normally more than one category that the qualitative data is placed into, even in a numerical format, for example let us just say there is 5 to 10 categories. These categories can depict how many people agreed or disagreed on a certain topic. At the end of the data that is received, it is then transferred into a numerical value. In my opinion, I do not feel there is necessarily a “better”. While most data is transformed into quantitative data to make it a more reliable resolution, the information could not have been gained without the qualitative feedback. The two types of data enhance each other.

Having them combined will assist in highlighting data retrieved and improve its validity. In research, validity is important. Finally, there are advantages and disadvantages of this data. The primary advantage of quantitative research is its ability to obtain large samples of data, provide valid statistics and the accurate reflection of a population. The primary disadvantage is its “superficial understanding of participants’ thoughts and feelings” (Research Methods, 2014). Lastly, the primary advantage of qualitative research is its ability to obtain deep and in-depth descriptions of data. However, not everyone sees things the same way and the samples received are small. They are not generalizable to a larger population like quantitative data and this is its disadvantage.

References:

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