

# Quantitative and qualitative

Psychology



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Introduction Quantitative research basically refers to the systematic investigation of various phenomena, often social through the use of mathematical, statistical and computational methods with an aim of developing mathematical models and/or theories that pertain to the phenomena and centers on measurement. Quantitative research therefore focuses on numerical trends and answers the question to what extent. In contrast, qualitative research tends to be broader than just measurements and considers themes and patterns exhibited by various phenomena (Denzin, Norman, Lincoln & Yvonna, 2005). Qualitative study gathers deep understanding of human behavior and the genesis of such behavior. Qualitative research in other words attempts to answer the questions how and why.

Sample quantitative study in forensic psychology.

Forensic psychology involves the consideration of human behavior in the justice system. It is often used as the bases for mitigation in legal cases. A typical quantitative study in forensic psychology is the research on the number of children sexually abused carried out by UNICEF in the year 2011. The research focuses on the number of such children (3, 377 reported globally in 2010, though many more could have gone unreported), the number of abusers suffering from mental disorders (91 in the 3377 cases), the ages of the abused children (most vulnerable ages between 8 and 12 years), the number of close relatives victimizers (46% were fathers and step fathers), average age of first abuse (9 years 10 months for boys and 9 years 7 months for girls) and percentage of heterosexual abusers (96% - 100%)The research is clearly quantitative. It tends to focus on the numerical figures and does not delve deep in other factors connected to the abuse other than <https://assignbuster.com/quantitative-and-qualitative/>

the numbers. The research focuses only on statistical data. (Marshall, Catherine & Gretchen, 1998)

Sample qualitative study in forensic psychology

A sample qualitative research is one carried out in the year 2011 by Advocates for Youths, a Non- Governmental Organization that looks into issues concerning the youth on sexual abuse. The group found out that: Sexual abuse in children is on the decline primarily due to law enforcements and agencies that protect children although many children remain at risk of abuse, the risk of abuse is higher mainly in females, children bullied from an early age, the LGBTQ youth, disabled children, children living with a single parent and physically abused youth (Ferrami, 2011).

The research also established the patterns and trends among perpetrators, signs of sexually abused children, effects of child sex abuse on the child and the society at large, cultural contributors to abuse and ways of recovering after sexual abuse in children.

This study is qualitative as it goes beyond numbers and gathers deep understanding of trends in human behavior.

Quantitative versus Qualitative

It is easy to collect data in a quantitative research as the data involved is mostly numerical. In the case of UNICEF, the data collection was relatively easier as the figures were readily available from the relevant institutions in the various countries. The Advocates for Youths however had a much tougher job as they had to track down individual victims to get answers on questions such as ways of recovery, to get to learn the cultures of various societies in order to get the cultural implication of the same. The researchers' questionnaires were designed differently with the UNICEF

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questionnaire having slots for numerical figures and the Advocates for Youths requiring more information. The data was interpreted differently as the methods of collection were different. The conclusions drawn were also different as the quantitative research offered insight into the problem while the qualitative result offered an answer to the same.

### Conclusion

Though both qualitative and quantitative studies are equally important in investigation especially in social sciences, the former captures more segments of the research as it goes beyond numbers (Hunter, Laura, & Erin, 2008). However, the two are complementary working in harmony and give more conclusive results than either when applied alone.

### References

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