

Limitations of qualitative research



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Discuss The Strengths And Limitations Of Quantitative And Qualitative Data In Supporting Knowledge Claims In The Human Sciences And At Least One Other Area Of Knowledge.

“ There’s no such thing as qualitative data.

Everything is either 1 or 0”(Fred Kerlinger)

“ All research ultimately has a qualitative grounding”(Donald Campbell)

Based on what Kerlinger and Campbell said, we can see different angle of views on quantitative data and qualitative data. From Kerlinger points of view, he rejected qualitative data totally but Donald in the other hand said that the basic of all research is qualitative data. One question arises is why do this two contradict views occurred? Before answering the question, a depth understanding on how this two data works should be done at the first place. When we think about quantitative data, immediately our powerful photographic memories will recall everything that deals with numbers such as height, weight and many more. When the word qualitative data comes across our mind, we will think about something which are descriptive such as colours, beauty and so on. Qualitative data can be obtained by the qualitative research which may save the researcher from making inappropriate assumptions as they proceed to design another stage of their work.

What is the significant of this two data in human lives? Basically, quantitative data and qualitative data information are evidence to support one’s claim.

Without the existence of this two data, the validity of a research is unacceptable because of there are no evidence to support the claims. By

using our common sense, ask ourselves, can we immediately believe something is said to be true without any supporting data? The answer is exactly no. To answer the first question, the contradiction of views occur is due to the strengths and limitations of both data. Therefore, to get a clear view on how do these quantitative and qualitative data are used as the supporting evidence, we shall discuss in this in the perspective of human science. Human science is about same universal principles, processes and patterns govern and underlie human activities in different fields such as psychology, social and cultural anthropology, economic and many more.

Dealing with human being is never going to be an easy task because human are very complex. The complexities of the human being has lead to the a new branch of science which is human science in order to study the behavior of human. One of the behavior that is crucial to be passed on from one generation to other generation of human being is politeness. Reader' Digest has came out with a ranking of the most courteous to the least courteous city in the its January 2008 article. New York city, USA was crowned to be the most courteous. On what basis does Reader's Digest magazine came out with this ranking ?

To establish this ranking, Reader's Digest magazine team has set up a test called Politeness Test to prove the truth behind a statement made by Lynne Truss, an author of bestselling book " Talk to the Hand" which was 70 percent of US people are ruder now than they were 20 years ago. To measure politeness of a human being is a challenging task. However, there is always a way to measure it. The simplest way to measure this is by naturalistic observational method. To apply this method, the reporter of the <https://assignbuster.com/limitations-of-qualitative-research/>

Reader's Digest magazine had set up three tests and one of them was "document drops" (who would help them retrieve a pile of "accidentally" dropped papers) For consistency, Starbucks Coffee shop was chosen to be the venue of the test. By observing the behavior of the New Yorkers who entered the coffee shop, many perceptions were made by the reporters. For example, people who was willing to pick up the "accidentally" dropped document was considered as people who had courtesy.

The question is, to what extent this qualitative data obtained from the naturalistic observation method is sufficient enough to establish the ranking? The qualitative data is valid because the biggest strength of the method is it shows realistic situation. The realism of qualitative data can be obtained because the observer cannot easily change or introduce a new stimuli into the situation. However, the major weakness of this method is the risk of biasness of the observer. During the observation, the reporter of Reader's Digest magazine might be influenced by emotion when observing the rudeness of people. Therefore, this will lead to the inability to draw a correct conclusion of the observation.

However, in order to make the politeness test more valid, we need a set of quantitative data to support the qualitative data. The quantitative data can be obtained by establishing a correlational research. This research is structured by introducing two variables and how they interrelated. Therefore a statistical model is carried out to prove the relation between two variables. For example, let the variables be "number of who lift up the file" and "the level of courtesy" and test whether they are independent or dependent for each sample taken from a sample population of New Yorkers. The statistics <https://assignbuster.com/limitations-of-qualitative-research/>

data in forms of percentage will give a strong base to support the Reader's Digest Politeness Test. Since politeness is a very subjective matter, this quantitative data also cannot stand alone. Hence both data are needed in supporting this claim.

2008 is the year where economic crisis hit the world. The developed countries were facing hard times because of the many business had to shut down because of the stagnant falling of demand since people controlled the expenses. In the economy cycle, the economist predicted that recession will hit for eleven months in ten years. However, this prediction is inaccurate because recent recession hit economy only in five months. This occur because economist also is in anticipation and future is uncertainties. During economic recession, exports and imports of business are slowed down and the country will experience high rate of unemployment. For the poor country, the recession gave a big impact such as increase in the rate of poverty since many labors were dismissed. From physicality aspect, we can observe how thin the people in the poor country when economic recession hits the world.

However, this qualitative data is not enough to support the economy recession. Therefore, in order to make the claim more firm, quantitative data must be obtained from example, correlation method where two variables which are demand and supply are used. The correlation between both variables shows a clear picture of the world's economy. The lower the demand, the lower the supply implies that demand is directly proportional supply. This will lead to reasoning part to explain why the demand is falling or rising. So things will fall in the right place the cause has been justified by reasoning.

Nowadays, we have seen the emergence of the personality test on the net. Most of the current personality theories concern on the identification and measurement of the specific personality. (Zuckerman, Eysenck , & Eysenck 1978). Let's look at personality test which is more valid. For example, Dr Campbell, a researcher on the human behavior from University of Michigan carried out a personality research which ion introversion and extroversion. People might say it is easy to distinguish those who are introverts and extroverts based on the way they communicate with the society. Yes, it is true that we can distinguish the introverts and extroverts by observing their communication skill, confidence level, the way they walk and so on. People can easily percept others based on their attitude and this kind of attitude is taken as qualitative data . Again, there might be biasness in judging people.

Therefore, Dr Campbell used theoretical treatments of introversion and extroversion in order to support the qualitative data. He applied the corelational method. He came out with two variables “ introversion/extroversion” and “ experience seeking”. A sample of his college students were given a personality scale wish measures the relationship of the variables. According to the theory, extroverts should seek for outside stimulation whilst the introverts seek the inner stimulation. To visualize the relationships, he used Eysenck Personality Inventory and Zuckerman's sensation seeking scales in order to plot the data. From there, a quantitative data can be obtained to distinguish to support the qualitative data. However, the test is too objective and there might be possibilities that the sample of college students did not do the test seriously.

Art demands a critical thinking in order for us not to be easily swept away along unthinkingly into its pleasures or reject it as a knowledge . In creating the feelings and beliefs, the arts certainly do not avoid knowledge claims. For example, Leonardo's famous Vitruvian man drawing represents standard physicality of a human being. What is meant by standard physicality of human being? From observation method, we know a normal human being will have two hands, two legs a head and so forth. Human being is a unique creature and hence we have to explore the entire human being by using our critical and creative thinking. This Vitruvian man drawing has all characteristics of a normal human being. This contributes to the qualitative data. Different human being has different lengths of hands, legs and so on. Does this reason enough to prove the uniqueness of a human being? Leonardo Da Vinci was the first person who look the uniqueness of from different angle.

The Vitruvian man drawing portrays the standard proportion of human body. It was the version produced by Leonardo Da Vinci, who has a vast knowledge of both anatomy and geometry made him uniquely suited to the task. Leonardo's famous drawings of the Vitruvian proportions of a man's body first standing inscribed in a square and then with feet and arms outspread inscribed in a circle . By using logic , he provides the simplest illustrations on shifting the “ center of the magnitude” without a corresponding change of the “ centre of the normal gravity”. This remains passing through the central line from the pit of the throat through the umbilicus and pubis between the legs. Leonardo repeatedly distinguishes these two different ‘ centers’ of a body, which is the centers of ‘ magnitude’ and ‘ gravity (Keele 252).” The ‘

fundamental' measure of 24 palms comes directly from Vitruvius' definition of human height being 4 cubits or 24 palms. This quantitative data is a strong evidence to support the claim that human beings are unique.

Sometimes the art themselves are not the truth but it leads us to the truth.

Dancing is a part of art. It is indisputable dancing has its way of brightening up the person's day. From the aspect of health, dancing gives a significant impact in reducing stress and depression. For example, a person enters a dancing studio after facing a problem will have a brighter smile after going out of the studio. To determine whether our perception is true, we can carry out an interview in order to obtain self report from that particular person.

Many questions can be asked such as " how do you feel after dancing?" and so forth. From his response, we come out with perception that he is stress free. However, this method is going to give us a weak qualitative data in order to support the claim. The interviewer might be bias during the interview session.

Therefore, to justify the claim that dancing contributes in reducing stress and depression, an experiment can be carried out. The strength of the method is we have full authority in controlling our variables. For example, our variable is " number of dance" and " the number of anti depressant pills taken". First of all, a sample of people who come problematic background has to be chosen. The hypothesis is, the greater number of dancing, the lower number anti depressant pills are being consumed. A statistical data can be obtained to support the claim. Hence, the validity of the of the claim saying that dancing can reduce stress is justifiable.

Based on the justification above, I concluded that qualitative data and quantitative data play important roles on supporting the knowledge claims in human science and art. Some of the claims required both qualitative and quantitative data in order to support the claims. Although both of data have their own strengths and limitations, they are complementary each other in order to justify the every single things and events that occurs in our lives. I respect both views from Fred Kerlinger and Donald Campbell because both of the views are correct and applicable in our daily lives. There is no right or wrong on both views. It depends on situation in order to use qualitative data or quantitative data to support our knowledge claims.

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