

Compare and contract

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Compare and Contrast: Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methodologies

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The study of human beings uses multiple research designs and methodologies to investigate and examine social phenomena. Depending on the research design and objective(s) of the study determines the method and approach. The two prominent methodologies are qualitative and quantitative research designs. Christensen, Johnson, and Turner (2011) depict qualitative research as relying on the subjective interpretation of researchers observing people in social interaction in natural environmental settings (pp. 52-53). Qualitative research involves researchers using observations to visually study his or her subject(s) in various natural settings. The methodology is an evolutionary process in which the findings change and evolve throughout the study. In contrast using a quantitative research approach starts with a specific research objective and through the process of gathering statistical data confirms the initial objectives of the study. In quantitative research collection of statistical data is used to investigate and answer research questions (Christensen, et al, 2011, p. 29). Researchers using a quantitative research approach will interpret and format numerical data systematically to produce evidence to support the research objective(s).

In using the template for analyzing research both the Zoo Research Study and the Event Path Research for Professionals were similar in that each contained the majority of the items suggested allowing for a thorough examination. The problems and/or objective of the study (ies) were identified and verifiable citations were presented throughout the reports. The studies

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identified the specific populations targeted, the data collecting methods used; the studies presented the hypothesis, findings, limitations, and suggestions for future research studies to broaden the knowledge base on the subjects studied. Even though the populations of the individual studies were different with the Zoo Study focused primarily on children in grades K-12, and the Event Path Research examined adults, both studies sought to understand cognition, how to increase critical thinking, and enhancing problem solving skills.

In contrast the research methodologies and approaches were different. The study involving the impact of field trips to aquariums, zoos, and nature parks on children used a “mixed” research design in which qualitative and quantitative methods were combined. The use of interviews and observations along with statistical data helped researcher form conclusions and base their findings. On the other hand a qualitative research design was the exclusive approach researchers used to investigate the phenomena of cognition, critical thinking and problem solving in adult teachers and professors. A glaring difference between the two studies was that in the Event Path Study the researchers presented a detailed formula in which when implemented in training programs had the capability of increasing the skills being investigated. The Zoo Research did not develop a format in which if followed had the potential of increasing cognition in children.

References

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