

A Brief comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods

	Quantitative	Qualitative
Focus of Research	Quantity (how much, how many)	Quality (nature, essence)
Key Concepts	Statistical relationships, prediction, control, description, hypothesis testing	Meaning, understanding, description
Sampling	Large, random, representative, stratified	Non-representative, small, purposeful
Data	Measures, counts, numbers	Field notes, people's own words
Methods	Experiments, surveys, instruments	Observations, interviews, reviewing documents
Instruments	Inventories, questionnaires	Researcher, tape recorder, camera, computer
Data Analysis	Deductive (by statistical analysis)	Ongoing, inductive (by researcher)
Findings	Precise, numerical	Comprehensive, holistic, richly descriptive
Advantages	Controlling intervening variables, oversimplification	Flexibility, emphasis on understanding large groups, hard-to explain anomalies

Source:

Bogdan and Biklen, 1992; Worthen and Sanders, 1987; Gall, Borg, and Gall, 1996; and Merriam, 1998.