

## COMBINING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

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Quantitative data are better for giving accurate descriptions of large samples of data, comparing them, and drawing broad conclusions; qualitative data are better for describing specifics, capturing the richness of the data, and giving a vivid sense of particulars.

They can be combined in a number of ways, including:

1. Gathering a large number of examples or a large number of answers to open-ended data, then coding them into general categories, reporting frequencies of examples in each category, and providing verbatim descriptions of examples. Planalp, S., DeFrancisco, V., & Rutherford, D. (1996). Varieties of cues to emotion in naturally-occurring situations. Cognition and Emotion, *10*, 137-153.
2. Gathering a large number of cases, asking other people to sort them into piles and to label the piles, then use cluster analysis to derive common categories through quantitative means. This will give you a tree diagram of how cases “cluster” together. See Shaver, P., Schwartz, J., Kirson, D., & O’Connor, C. (1987). Emotion knowledge: Further exploration of a prototype approach. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, *52*, 1061-1086.
3. Observing and describing aspects of interaction, some of which are easily quantified and some are not. For example, you might describe the number of minutes talked, the number of floor switches, or the number of times the word “cool” was used, but describe qualitatively what they were talking about and whether the tone was formal or informal.
4. Using quantitative measures for sampling a population (e.g. stratified sampling or quota sampling), but then gather qualitative data (or quantitative too). See Menzel, P. (1994). *Material world*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.
5. Providing quantitative data about a phenomenon (e.g. heterosexual married, heterosexual cohabiting, gay, and lesbian couples), then providing in-depth qualitative descriptions of representative cases. See Blumstein, P., & Schwartz, P. (1983). American couples. New York: Simon & Schuster.
6. Doing qualitative exploratory research as a way of generating hypotheses to be tested by quantitative means.
7. Taking quantitative findings and describing what they mean in greater detail for specific cases. See Hochschild, A. R. (1989). The second shift. New York: Viking Penguin.