

TABLE 2.1 Emphases of Quantitative, Mixed, and Qualitative Research

| | Quantitative Research | Mixed Research | Qualitative Research |
|---------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Scientific method | Deductive or “top-down” The researcher tests hypotheses and theory with data | Deductive and inductive | Inductive or “bottom-up” The researcher generates new hypotheses and grounded theory from data collected during fieldwork |
| View of human behavior | Behavior is regular and predictable | Behavior is somewhat predictable | Behavior is fluid, dynamic, situational, social, contextual, and personal |
| Most common research objectives | Description, explanation, and prediction | Multiple objectives | Description, exploration, and discovery |
| Focus | Narrow-angle lens, testing specific hypotheses | Multilens focus | Wide-angle and “deep-angle” lens, examining the breadth and depth of phenomena to learn more about them |
| Nature of observation | Attempt to study behavior under controlled conditions | Study behavior in more than one context or condition | Study behavior in natural environments Study the context in which behavior occurs |
| Nature of reality | Objective (different observers agree on what is observed) | Commonsense realism and pragmatic view of world (i.e., what works is what is “real” or true) | Subjective, personal, and socially constructed |
| Form of data collected | Collect quantitative data based on precise measurement using structured and validated data collection instruments (e.g., closed-ended items, rating scales, behavioral responses) | Multiple forms | Collect qualitative data (e.g., in-depth interviews, participant observation, field notes, and open-ended questions) The researcher is the primary data collection instrument |
| Nature of data | Variables | Mixture of variables, words, and images | Words, images, categories |
| Data analysis | Identify statistical relationships | Quantitative and qualitative | Search for patterns, themes, and holistic features |
| Results | Generalizable findings | Corroborated findings may generalize | Particularistic findings Representation of insider (i.e., “emic”) viewpoint Present multiple perspectives |
| Form of final report | Statistical report (e.g., with correlations, comparisons of means, and reporting of statistical significance of findings) | Eclectic and pragmatic | Narrative report with contextual description and direct quotations from research participants |