

Descriptive Questions

Descriptive research questions seek answers to “How much?,” “How often?,” or “What changes over time or over different situations?” type of questions. The script for a descriptive research question would be as follows:

- (Descriptive question) Do(es) (participants) (variable being studied) at (research site)?
- This script could lead to the following descriptive question:
- How frequently do kindergarten children engage in aggressive acts on the playground?

Descriptive questions can seek to identify the degree of relationship that exists between two or more variables. The script for a descriptive relationship question would be as follows:

- What is the relationship between (variable 1) and (variable 2) for (participants)?
- This script could lead to the following relationship questions:
- What is the relationship between amount of time studied and the grades students make?

Predictive Questions

Predictive questions are questions that seek to determine whether one or more variables can be used to predict some future outcome. The script for a predictive question would be as follows:

- Does (predictor variable) predict (outcome variable) in (setting)?
- This script could lead to the following predictive question:
- Does parental educational level predict students’ propensity to drop out of high school?

Causal Questions

Causal questions are questions that compare different variations of some phenomenon to identify the cause of something. These questions often involve the manipulation of an independent variable and the comparison of the outcome of this manipulation. The script for causal questions would be as follows:

- Does variation (or change) in the (independent variable) produce changes (e.g., increase, decrease) in (a dependent variable)?
 - This script could lead to the following causal question:
 - Does variation in amount of homework assigned produce a change in students’ test performance?
-