

qualitative method

- interviews or participation observation
- Purpose: explorative and explanatory
- Labour intensive: low numbers objects of study
- Often nonprobability sampling
- In-depth insights

quantitative method

- Questionnaires or/and surveys
- Purpose: descriptive and explanatory
- With little effort high numbers objects of study
- Probability sampling
- Generalizable

choice of subjects

Rather than studying the complete (research) population, social scientists mostly select (relatively few) people for study to discover things that apply to many more people who are not studied, at least so can be claimed to a certain extent.

in probability sampling there are 4 ways in which objects of study can be selected:

1. Simple random: assign numbers to sampling frame and select numbers randomly (computer) -> each element has an equal chance of being selected
2. Systematic: every kth unit in a list is selected in the sample
3. Stratified: grouping of the units composing a population into homogeneous groups before sampling.
4. Cluster: natural groups (clusters) are sampled initially, with the members of each selected group being subsampled afterwards

nonprobability sampling

nonprobability = chance to become part of a sample is unknown

- in general use:
 - Qualitative research
 - Populations with no sampling frame
- Nonprobability sampling, how are objects of study selected?

4 types:

1. Convenience: easy availability of objects of study
2. Snowball: ask objects of study to suggest additional objects
3. Purposive: researcher's judgment about which objects of study will be the most useful or representative
4. Quota: on the basis of pre-specified characteristics, so that the sample will have the same distribution of characteristics assumed in the population

problem of nonprobability samples: **bias**

→ i.e. personal/practical (i.e. easy availability) preferences researcher

sample errors, confidence level and interval

Statistic: the summary description of a variable in a sample, used to estimate a population parameter

Sampling error: the degree of error to be expected of a given sample instead of the population

→ decrease when sample numbers increase
+ when variations decrease

Confidence level: the estimated probability that a population parameter lies within a given confidence interval

Confidence interval: the range of values within which a population parameter is estimated to lie

probability samples

purpose of empirical research = representativeness

→ and so, sample of objects of study from a population must contain the same variations that exist in the population
+ the quality of a sample of having the same distribution of characteristics as the population from which it was selected

method:

- sample of objects of study from a population must contain the same variations that exist in the population
- the quality of a sample of having the same distribution of characteristics as the population from which it was selected

advantages probability sampling:

- are typically more representative than nonprobability samples as biases are avoided
- probability theory permits researchers to estimate the accuracy or representativeness of the sample



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