



Understanding the difference between Qualitative & Quantitative Research

» Quantitative Research

Quantitative research involves the use of a structured questionnaire in which the response options are pre-coded and a large number of respondents are involved. Quantitative research involves a statistical representation and the results can be typically projected to the population. The results are statistically relevant and can reliably determine if one concept, product, package, etc., is better than the alternatives.

Quantitative research is not appropriate as a method to develop creative ideas. Quantitative research is essentially evaluative, not generative.

» Methods:

- Detailed and structure questionnaire possibly with some open-ended questions. e.g. Customer Exit Survey.
- Usually deployed through face-to-face or telephone or online interviews.

» Generally used:

- To answers the questions “how many, where from, how much”;
- To test alternative hypotheses such as which concept is more favourable;
- Understand the market segment sizes and profile e.g. Trade Areas;
- Understand the market conversion rate potential from non-user to user.

» Qualitative Research

Qualitative research was developed to explore the behaviour of the consumer that are less accessible through traditional questionnaires and closed answer responses. The research methodology was designed to explore the answers to the question of “why”.

Qualitative research involves collecting, analysing and interpreting data by observing what people say and do. It is non-numerical data that provides depth and detail through direct quotation and careful description of situations, events, interactions and observed behaviours in order to generate patterns, themes and ideas.

- Analysis is a complete, detailed description and answers the “why” questions.
- Subjective, but is able to generate ideas and concepts (lists of possibilities) with in-depth focus and knowledge of the researcher’s problem.
- Employs a wide variety of techniques to collect data, rather than a standard structured questionnaire.

» Methods:

- In-depth, open-ended interviews; for example in the form of focus groups, that is, groups of five to seven respondents at a time carry on a group discussion, led by a trained moderator.
- Direct observation; and
- Written documents, including such sources as open-ended written items on questionnaires or diary records.

» Generally used:

- For brainstorming and testing new ideas or concepts e.g. entertainment and leisure precinct.
- To assist with quantitative research e.g. understanding “why” some customers are non-users, and not just how many are non-users.
- In situations where it is impractical to obtain reliable quantitative samples. e.g. sensitive topic areas

» Pluralistic Research

Quantitative and Qualitative Research are complimentary tools. Many researchers have adopted the methodology of Pluralistic Research that combines the two approaches.

Depending on the problem definition this may involve qualitative research initially to understand the nature of the issue and potential solutions followed by a quantitative phase to understand the scope of the issue and level of support for the various solution options.



CONTACT US

For a discussion about your research needs or more information about our services, please contact: Peter Kelly, Managing Director

Tel: (02) 8912 0900 **Fax:** (02) 8912 0999 **Email:** info@directional.com.au

Mail: Directional Insights, PO Box 1658 North Sydney NSW 2059

www.directional.com.au