

Research methods pros/cons

Research method *Advantages*

Qualitative

1. Observations
2. Case studies
3. Ethnographies
4. Open-ended surveys

- Yields “real life” data that other methods can’t provide
- Provides a good way to generate hypotheses

Quantitative

1. Experiments
2. Lab tests
3. Surveys with numerically weighted answers

- Enables use of sophisticated equipment for measuring and recording behavior
- Can be useful for generating hypotheses
- Can statistically identify cause-and-effect relationships
- Surveys can provide information about many people for relatively cheap cost

Disadvantages

- Sometimes relies only on self-report data, which can be misleading
- Can be relatively subjective in that it depends on individual observations rather than more structured measures
- Doesn’t allow conclusions about cause-and-effect relationships

- Conducted in artificial setting, so results may not generalize to real-world situations
- Demands validity (test is matched to its purpose)
- Demands reliability (results are consistent with repeated tests)
- Can create illusion of objectivity
- Surveys still rely on self-report data, which can be misleading