



CHOOSE YOUR ADVENTURE! Research Methods Cheat Sheet

Quantitative Research	Qualitative Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can be counted or quantified• Use statistical analyses• Closed-ended questions & responses<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes/No (or other binaries)• Likert scales<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (e.g. Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)• Income level• Relatively large # of participants (100+)• Community or population-level inquiry• Examples<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surveys• Evaluation forms• Online polls• Need assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can't be easily counted or quantified• Use thematic analyses (and others)• Open-ended questions & responses<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you think about...• Why did you...• How would you...• Relatively small # of participants (< 20)• In-depth inquiry with small group• Examples<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus groups• In-depth interviews• Storytelling• Photovoice

Quantitative Methods

Surveys

- Often Likert
 - (e.g., disagree – neutral – agree), check box, Yes/No response options
- Often combined with demographic + qualitative short answer questions
- Can assess where the community or respondents stand on certain issues (snapshot)
- Well-structured questions & responses are critical
 - No leading, confusing or double-barreled questions
 - No overlapping or missing responses (e.g., age choices are <10, or 11 or older)
 - Don't exclude anyone & use community-driven terms (e.g., sexual orientation)
- Pre-test with a smaller group before opening it up more broadly
- Who takes your survey matters (e.g., "extremist website" surveys)

Needs (and Assets) Assessments

- Similar to survey, except almost always done to aid decision-making about specific action
- Asking community about what they consider to be their most important needs (and assets)
- Results guide future action – usually around most highly prioritized responses
- Pre-set list of questions & types of respondents desired
- Different methods: personal interview, phone, online or written response
- Helpful documentation for funding & advocacy
- Can set the stage for community mobilization & movement-building
- Can help resolve conflicts / build support about which issue to tackle first



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Qualitative Methods

Focus Groups

- 6-12 participants (8 is ideal), fairly homogeneous
- 1.5 - 2 hours (including setup & closure)
- Need skilled facilitator & note taker or recorder
- Takes advantage of group dynamics – disagreements, questioning, qualifications
- Mix of individual & collective opinions
- Insights into community norms (people say what they think they “should” say)
- Look for common themes/differences
- Group session means confidentiality is less secure
- Less time- and resource-intensive



In-depth Interviews

- Usually one-on-one (strong confidentiality)
- Rapport with and trust of participant is critical (in-language preferred)
- Conversational, but with structured set of questions (= interview guide)
- Rich narratives with personal reflections on lived experiences
- May hear things you wouldn't hear in a group (\neq norms)
- More data = more time- and resource-intensive than focus groups
- Thematic analysis: systematically code data to identify themes within and across interviews (often use quotes to illustrate)

Storytelling

- Similar to interviews
- Find key question or short set of questions that can generate stories
- Stories are recorded or documented in some way so that they can be publicly shared
- Individual stories can reflect depth and unique qualities
- Easier to preserve “whole person”
- Analysis across stories can also reveal overall themes

