**MODULE 4.2 – HANDOUT 1**

**Table 1:** Differences between quantitative and qualitative methods in social science research

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|  | Quantitative | Qualitative |
| **Type of questions the approach is best suited  to answer** | What? How many? How often?  Answers a controlled sequence of questions with predetermined possible answers. Because responses are pre-defined, they can be counted. | How? Why?  No preformed answers, just captures what respondents say (words are the ‘data’). |
| **Participatory** | Less likely. Participants have limited to no control over question sequence and responses. Pilot testing mandatory to ensure responses are relevant and relatable.  Researchers define the line of inquiry, the questions and their sequence, and the universe of response options. It is a structured method where participants just respond to questions in the sequence that is presented and within the parameters provided. Every participant experiences the same structure. | More likely. Participants have more control of the discussion through responding to more open-ended questions. Strong interviewer skills required to facilitate discussion which is relevant to participant but also covers all areas of questionnaire.  Researchers define the line of inquiry and provide open-ended questions for use in a conversational context where the researcher and participants INTERACT responsively to one another. Sequence and spontaneity are allowed for both the researcher and participant. Semi-structured, organic process. Participants do not experience the same set of questions or interactions because the researcher is empowered to listen and probe the participant in ways that achieve the aims of the inquiry. |
| **Research design, data collection and sampling** | Tools and procedures established beforehand. Fixed formats that are consistently applied is key to quality and the ability to compare groups or assess trends over time. | Flexible and open tools and adjustable procedures. Flexible formats that allow for exploration and characterization of important (deep) contextual information that does not need to be compared across populations, places, or over time. |
| Survey-based with close-ended questions. The unit of analysis is at the individual level of respondents or counts of respondent universe. | Case-based: open-ended questions, semi-structured or unstructured interviews, focus group discussions. The unit of analysis depends on the method employed but usually represents the conversation between the researcher and participants. The transcript of an interview or a focus group discussion is analysed as a whole data unit regardless of the number of individual participants. |
| Surveys (e.g. face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, self-administered via mail, internet)  Population movement tracking  Registration  Structured interviews | Individual interviews  Key informant interviews  Semi-structured interviews  Focus group discussions  Observations |
| Greater number of subjects with characteristics of the whole population. | Few subjects with characteristics of specific populations (e.g. purposive sampling). |
| A specific number of participants is statistically defined. | Number of subjects is often defined in the field with data collection stopping when ‘saturation’ is reached – that is, researchers get answers from new respondents that are similar to what they have heard from earlier respondents without any new ideas or insights. |
| **Data analysis, interpretation and findings** | Statistical analysis: statistical programs, charts, deductive methods, descriptive statistics, inferential statistics,  univariate or multivariate analysis. | Interpretation: thematic analysis, content analysis, inductive reasoning, iterative process of reading, categorizing the data into codes that are defined, and describing patterns and making interpretations of those patterns to represent the perspectives of research participants. |
| Establishment of association among results. | Researchers interpret the categorized/coded data. |
| **Presentation and dissemination** | Mainly numerical and categorical values. Can display findings through tables, charts, and pictures with or without a discussion. | Mainly textual (words, pictures, audio, video). Narrative synthesis with descriptions and quotations, and detailed discussion/debriefing session required. |