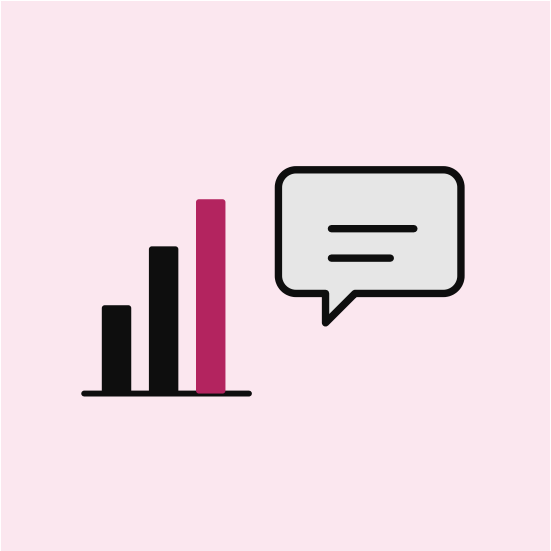
Concept

Qualitative and quantitative research

Two complementary ways of doing research: qualitative seeks to understand why and how; quantitative, to measure how much and how often.



In Spanish
Investigación cualitativa y cuantitativa

Origin
Mixed methods: Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989); Creswell and Plano Clark (2007)

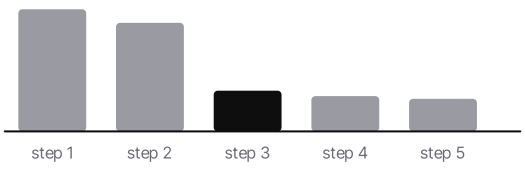
What problem it addresses

It helps you choose the method according to the question, and not use one for what only the other can answer.

An example

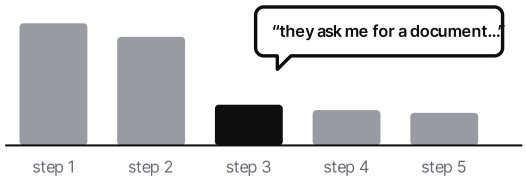
Imagine that many people abandon an application form.

Numbers only



The data show that most people drop out at step 3. **You know where.**

Numbers and conversations



Five interviews reveal that step 3 asks for a document almost nobody has on hand. **You know why.**

The numbers point to the problem; the conversations explain its cause.

Why it happens

1

Quantitative research answers how much? how many? how often?

2

Qualitative research answers why? how? what does it mean?

3

Together they give a fuller, more reliable picture.

Applications in design

Use it like this

Use data to know where to look and conversations to understand what is going on there.

Avoid

Using five interviews to estimate how many people think something: that's not what they're for.

Don't fall for it

Before choosing the method, write down the question you want to answer.

How much? + Why?

What the research says

Mixed methods combine quantitative and qualitative data in a single study so each offsets the other's limitations (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007).

●●● **Solid evidence.** The example is illustrative. Combining methods also helps detect when the data and the conversations contradict each other.

Connections

Used in

- Survey
- A/B testing

Related to

- HEART framework
- Data saturation
- Triangulation

Authors and works

2007	**John Creswell and Vicki Plano Clark**	Systematized how to combine both kinds of research.
1989	**Jennifer Greene, Valerie Caracelli and Wendy Graham**	Proposed an early framework of the purposes for combining qualitative and quantitative methods, such as cross-checking or complementing results.

Sources

Original sources

- Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 11(3), 255–274. View source (https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737011003255)

Secondary sources

- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2007). Designing and conducting mixed methods research. Sage.

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