

## Know your... Research Methods

<b>Quantitative Data</b>	Data in the form of numbers e.g. graphs & tables
<b>Qualitative Data</b>	Data in the form of words
<b>Valid</b>	Honest/true results
<b>Reliable</b>	Finding the same or similar results next time
<b>Representativeness</b>	Making your research reflect the characteristics of the population, so that <b>generalisations</b> can be made
<b>Practical issues</b>	Considering how to <b>access</b> the group, and how much <b>time/money</b> you will spend on the study
<b>Ethical issues</b>	Taking into account if the <b>topic is sensitive</b> or the <b>group vulnerable</b> , gaining <b>informed consent</b> , offering <b>anonymity</b> , and generally acting according to <b>BSA guidelines</b>

### SAMPLING

Samples are needed so that **generalisations** can be made. Generalisations are **statements** and **conclusions** that apply not only to the sample but also to the population.

<b>Sampling Frame</b>	Complete list from which you are studying e.g. electoral roll
<b>Sample</b>	A group of people taken from the sampling frame

<b>Simple Random Sampling</b>	Everyone has same chance of being picked
+	Everyone has same chance
-	Not always representative e.g. sample might be dominated by same sex

<b>Stratified Random Sampling</b>	Divide the sample into groups e.g. boys and girls, then take equal random sample from both
+	Better results – not all girls or boys
-	Still not true result – you may get all one age group

<b>Cluster Sampling</b>	Take clusters of people, from say Manchester
+	You get a better result
-	Time consuming – not true result from all areas

<b>Systematic Sampling</b>	Every 5 <sup>th</sup> , 10 <sup>th</sup> , 100 <sup>th</sup> or whatever, name from sampling frame
+	Likely to get a varied list of people – everyone has same chance of being picked
-	May get all males/females

<b>Snowball Sampling</b>	a sample in which one respondent puts the researcher in touch with other potential respondents
+	Useful if the group is otherwise difficult to access
-	May be less representative

<b>Quota Sampling</b>	Researcher has to interview specific people e.g. 10 teenagers taking G.C.S.E in Sociology
+	Good sample frame of people
-	Time consuming

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<b>Primary Data</b>	Your own research eg questionnaires, interviews etc
<b>Secondary Data</b>	Already exists eg Official statistics, letters, diaries
<b>Pilot Study</b>	To test out your method, and spot any potential problems
<b>Triangulation</b>	Carrying out more than one method of research, usually to check your findings ie to improve validity
<b><u>QUESTIONNAIRES</u></b>	List of questions given to respondent. Face to face or by phone
+	Interviewer can explain questions
-	Expensive – takes a lot of time. Also, researcher can influence interviewee, affecting validity
<b>Closed questions</b>	Require a fixed answer e.g. Yes/No
+	Quick & easy to answer
-	Answer may not reflect true feelings, reducing validity
<b>Open ended questions</b>	Questions that require more than one word answers
+	More detailed & informative answer
-	Difficult to tabulate and analyse
<b><u>Self-Completion ques</u></b>	The respondent fills in the answers by themselves
+	Cheap - can therefore reach a large number of people
-	Low response rate
<b><u>INTERVIEWS</u></b>	Interviews can be held over the phone or face to face. The researcher reads out the questions.
<b>Structured</b>	The questions are already written down and asked by the researcher
+	High in validity
-	Researcher can lead interviewee, affecting validity
<b>Unstructured</b>	Less planned – no list of premeditated questions
+	Real discussion
-	Can have trouble remembering answers. Same results may not be found with another researcher, so less reliable
<b><u>OBSERVATION</u></b>	Observing people in their natural setting eg at school or work. Closer to real life than other methods and therefore more valid, but the researcher can become biased. Can join in with the group (participant) or just observe (non-participant)
<b>Overt participation</b>	Being open or honest about why the researcher is there
+	Often easier from a practical viewpoint, and more ethical
-	The observed may change their behaviour, reducing validity
<b>Covert participation</b>	The observation is kept secret
+	Only way to access some outsider groups
-	Can be dangerous. Less ethical