Tips for Finding Qualitative and Quantitative Study Articles

Consider the name of the journal. Some journals will publish only a certain type of research. For example: aug2018

- Qualitative: International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, Qualitative Inquiry

Examine the article itself. Does it have a Methods and Results section? If not, the article is likely not an original research article.

Does the Methods section talk about a literature search strategy? If so, it is a review article, such as a systematic review or meta-analysis, not a qualitative or quantitative article.

In the Methods or Results sections, does the study mention using quantitative/data analysis and/or statistical tests (such as ANOVA, t-test)? Does the Results section include tables and plots? If so, it is likely a quantitative study. However, keep in mind that qualitative data can also be expressed quantitatively.

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1 Portions of this section are adapted from University of Texas at Arlington Library’s “Finding Quantitative and Qualitative Research: Distinguishing Article Type” at https://libguides.uta.edu/researchtype/evaluating. Creative Commons license BY-NC 4.0.

Searching for Studies by Methodology

Advanced Search in **PsycINFO** database includes a limiter for **methodology**. See [https://www.apa.org/pubs/databases/training/method-values.aspx](https://www.apa.org/pubs/databases/training/method-values.aspx) for definitions of field values.

Most research databases do not provide a methodology search option or limiter. An alternative way to find articles that use a specific methodology is to search the **abstract field** for words associated with the desired methodology. This is because most article abstracts provide a brief description of the research methodology. The examples below are from the **ERIC** database:

Quantitative study words can include: statistic*, anova, t-test, time series, validity, correlation. Qualitative study words can include: focus group, ethnographic, case study, interview, narrative. Use OR to find alternative terms or synonyms. **Warning:** This approach may retrieve studies that use a **mixed methods** approach.

Use NOT to **exclude** articles that contain references to undesirable methodologies. **Warning:** This approach may result in a much smaller set of results.

**Caution:** **Database systems can return false matches.** Once you have found an article, read the methodology section with care to be sure it’s the type of study you want.