

Worksheet 6: Methodological definitions and examples answers

Research methods (1.1.1–1.2.2)	Definitions	Examples
Causation	Where a change in one variable is linked with a similar change in another variable across cases in a data set.	The higher a person's social class the more likely they are to go to university.
Digital sources	Online sources of information linked to new media technologies like blogs, social networks.	Qualitative: letters and diaries.
Historical documents	Any documents from the past. These are secondary sources as the data already exists and may be qualitative or quantitative.	Quantitative: birth, marriage and death records, the census.
Interpretivism	An approach to research that starts at the level of the individual, focusing on small-scale behaviours using qualitative methods.	Studies such as 'Gang Leader for a Day' by Venkatesh or Irving Goffman's 'The Presentation of self in everyday life'.
Macro view	Macro views focus on the large scale of whole societies.	Marx's study of capitalism and social class or functionalist works like Merton's strain theory.
Media content	Data from media sources including books, newspapers, television shows, documentaries and social media.	Instagram, Pinterest, Facebook, emails.
Micro view	Micro views focus on small-scale interactions within a society.	Studies such as Cohen's 'Delinquent Boys' or Paul Willis 'Learning to Labour'.
Official statistics	Existing sources of quantitative data compiled by the government.	Official crime statistics, official statistics on education.
Positivism	An approach to research based on studying society in a scientific manner using quantitative methods.	Durkheim's study on suicide or Milgram's obedience experiment.
Primary data	Information collected first-hand by the researcher doing research.	Information gained from conducting questionnaires, interviews, etc.



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Qualitative data	<i>Information in word form.</i>	<i>Data from an unstructured interview or a diary.</i>
Quantitative data	<i>Information in numerical form.</i>	<i>Official statistics, data from a closed question survey.</i>
Secondary data	<i>Information that already exists and has previously been collected by other researchers.</i>	<i>Official statistics, studies by other sociologists.</i>
Trends	<i>Patterns of change over time in data.</i>	<i>How patterns of crime change year on year. How exam results of boys and girls have changed in the last 10 years.</i>