



# Characteristics of Quantitative, Qualitative, and Action Research

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	<u>intention</u>	<u>type of knowledge generated</u>	<u>typical methods</u>	<u>researcher role</u>
<b>Quantitative Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ description</li><li>▪ inference</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ propositional (“what’s happening”; “what does it look like”)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ population statistics</li><li>▪ randomly-sampled surveys</li><li>▪ content analysis</li><li>▪ detailed observation of behavior</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ designs/owns research</li><li>▪ observer</li></ul>
<b>Qualitative Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ description</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ propositional (same)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ interviews</li><li>▪ surveys</li><li>▪ ethnography</li><li>▪ phenomenology</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ designs/owns research</li><li>▪ observer</li></ul>
<b>Action Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ change</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ propositional (same)</li><li>▪ skill (“how-to”)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ any</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ directs &amp; facilitates research process</li><li>▪ participant observer</li></ul>
<b>Participatory Action Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ change</li><li>▪ empowerment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ propositional (same)</li><li>▪ skill (“how-to”) for groups</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ any</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ facilitates research process</li><li>▪ consultant observer</li></ul>

Note that the division of research types into quantitative, qualitative, and action research does not correspond to Jürgen Habermas’ tripartite association of knowledge with the human interests in control, understanding, and liberation. Habermas is concerned with the role of theory in knowledge, not with systems of knowledge-generation *per se*. For various technical philosophic reasons, the two systems do not line up.