Qualitative data can be used to ask the question "why." It is investigative and is often open-ended until further research is conducted. Generating this data from qualitative research is used for theorizations, interpretations, developing hypotheses, and initial understandings.
Qualitative data can be generated through:

- Texts and documents
- Audio and video recordings
- Interview transcripts and focus groups
- Observations and notes

Qualitative data examples

To better understand qualitative data, let's take the example of a bookcase. The following characteristics of this bookcase determine the quality of the information that's available to us about it:

- Made of wood
- Built in Italy
- Deep brown
- Golden knobs
- Smooth finish
- Made of oak

Discrete data
Discrete data is just data that cannot be broken down into smaller parts. This type of data consists of integers (positive and negative numbers, e.g., -100, 10, 100, and so on) and is finite (meaning it reaches a limit).
A few examples of discrete data would be how much change you have in your pocket, how many iPhones were sold last year, and how much traffic came to your website today.
Another important note is that discrete data can technically be categorical. For example, the number of baseball players in a team born in Mexico is whole and discrete.
Continuous data
Continuous data is data that can be infinitely broken down into smaller parts or data that continuously fluctuates.
A few examples of continuous data would be the speed of your train during the morning commute, the time you take to write an article, your weight, and your age.
Which data type is better for data analysis?
Now that we have broken down the bread and butter of qualitative and quantitative data, it's time to consider which type is better for data analysis.
Qualitative data will almost always be considered **unstructured data or semi-structured**. This type of data is loosely formatted with very little structure. Because of this, qualitative data cannot be collected and analyzed using conventional methods..
Making sense of qualitative data can be time-consuming and expensive, although some methods of "structuring" this data.
Quantitative data will almost always be considered structured data. This type of data is formatted in a way so it can be quickly organized. Perhaps the most common example of structured data is numbers and values found in spreadsheets.

Because quantitative data and structured data go hand-in-hand, quantitative data is generally preferred for data analysis. However, you should now be able to understand better the different types of data that exists, and the benefits of using each one in certain circumstances.

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