

THE MENTAL MUSINGS

The Psychological Research Newsletter

ICA administers various surveys for you to complete. How do they differ from one another, and what will the collected data be used for? In this article, we will look at the different data collection methods, various types of data, and the usefulness of participating in surveys.

Introduction

ICA uses different surveys to gather feedback. Generally, your opinions are collected, informing decision-makers of ICA's strengths and areas for improvement. This leads to the implementation of better policies and allows individuals and ICA to grow. Let's first understand how the data collected using traditional methods benefit us.

Traditional Data Collection Methods

You would have completed numerous surveys and attended various interviews. These are traditional methods that collect **quantitative** and **qualitative** data.

Quantitative Data

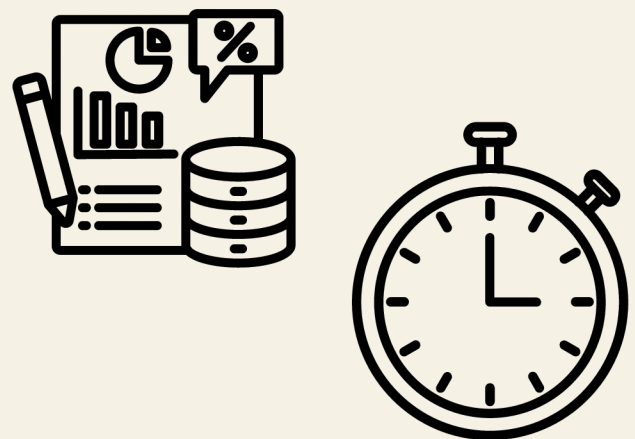
Quantitative data are represented with numbers. They are mostly objective, which is essential in ensuring research findings are accurate.

Examples of quantitative data:

- Performance ratings and grades
- Time taken to complete an activity
- Number of travellers

Methods to collect quantitative data:

- Performance grading exercises
- Time measurement (e.g. stopwatch)
- Surveys with multiple choice questions and ratings



Yong Le wants to know the number of travellers ICA cleared in 2024. He recalled that ICA collects quantitative data and releases them in an annual report. It showed that ICA cleared 38 million more travellers, a 20% increase compared to 2023.

What are some forms of quantitative data collected within ICA? How do they benefit us?

Employee Engagement Survey (EES)

- A rating scale is used to collect your opinion on various aspects of working in ICA.
- They include, but is not limited to, leadership, career development, and teamwork.
- Why it matters:
 - You can help leaders identify areas where their staff need more support in.
 - Divisions can learn from high-performing teams and apply best practices across ICA.

360 Leadership Surveys

- A rating scale is used to measure leaders' performance.
- Ratings come from supervisors, peers, staff and the leaders themselves.
- Why it matters:
 - Leaders receive a well-rounded view of their strengths and areas for growth.
 - They can better identify training opportunities that help them improve.
 - Stronger leadership boosts motivation, productivity, and more.

Qualitative Data

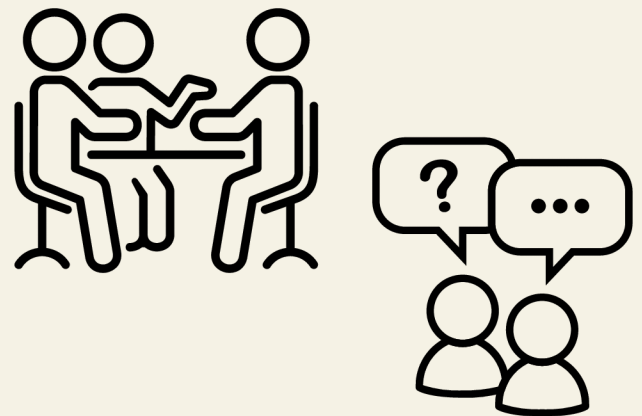
In contrast, qualitative data are descriptive and are collected when participants share their perspectives, helping to explain quantitative data.

Examples of qualitative data:

- Texts
- Observations
- Audio recordings

Methods to collect qualitative data:

- Surveys with open-ended questions
- Interviews
- Focus group discussions



Aqilah received her department's EES results and found that job satisfaction decreased. Upon interviewing her staff to understand the results, she found that, following her division's reorganisation, they were uncertain about their new job roles. Hence, she planned more engagement sessions to help her staff adapt to the changes.

What are some forms of quantitative data collected within ICA? How do they benefit us?

Job Interviews

- Important part of hiring processes.
- Opportunity for employers to know their candidates better.
- Why it matters:
 - Helps employers hire the right people for the team.
 - Helps potential employees determine if the team and organisation are the right fit for them.

What is an example of a mixed methods study? How does it benefit you and ICA?

IPD's Psychological Competencies Study

- How do psychological competencies increase work engagement?
- To find out, we collected **quantitative data** with a **survey**.
- We will collect **qualitative data** using **FGDs**, further exploring useful psychological competencies
- Why it matters:
 - We acquire a deeper understanding of psychological competencies benefitting your work.
 - Better learning opportunities and tailored support systems can be developed.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

- Group discussions involving participants and a moderator.
- Encourages interaction among participants to reveal their attitudes and feelings.
- Why it matters:
 - A platform to share your thoughts in detail.
 - Helps explain what survey numbers really mean, ensuring they are interpreted correctly when crafting policies.

New Data Collection Methods

Modern technology can collect physiological data that we cannot detect ourselves. Additionally, real-time data can be collected automatically with the use of devices like our smartphones. The healthcare sector uses these data to monitor patients' physical and mental wellbeing. Likewise, ICA can utilise modern technology to monitor the stress of our officers.

Collecting Biomarkers

Stress can be measured objectively using biomarkers such as:

- Brain activity
- Breathing rate
- Heart rate



Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Data

As quantitative and qualitative data offer unique benefits, mixed methods studies collect both to ensure a comprehensive understanding.

They are difficult to measure with traditional methods as we cannot feel and describe biomarkers like brain activity. They are also more reliable than self-reported stress levels in surveys and interviews as individuals interpret stress differently.

Digital Phenotyping

Smartphones and smart watches have become essential in our lives. Digital phenotyping uses these devices to collect physiological and phone usage data in the background without disrupting daily work.

Measurements linked to stress include:

- Number of steps taken
- Number of different places visited daily
- Frequency of phone locks and unlocks



They empower officers by helping them detect and manage stress more effectively. Additionally, real-time monitoring shows how work factors, like shift duration, affect stress. This helps us understand work on the ground better which helps guide better workplace policies.

Data Collection Practices

Now that we have seen how data collection benefits both officers and ICA, let's explore good practices for survey administrators.

Surveys should be **anonymous** to encourage honest feedback. However, it may reduce accountability, leading to less thoughtful responses. If the survey does not involve sensitive topics, we may collect basic personal information when tracking completion to increase accountability.

If we do so, **confidentiality** needs to be upheld by unlinking personal data from the responses. This ensures, individual answers remain unknown to administrators and other readers of the survey's findings.

Additionally, we aim to improve survey participation to collect enough data for decision-making. Offering **incentives**, like training hours and feedback providing an explanation on responses, can boost engagement. Additionally, explaining the usefulness of surveys increase the willingness of officers to support our efforts.



We hope that this issue has helped you understand why IPD and other divisions conduct surveys. Remember that your participation can benefit you and help us build a better workplace for all.

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