Quantitative tourism research is usually employed to examine and understand tourism-related phenomena (e.g., behavior of tourists, traveler characteristics, destination image assessment and perceptions, decision making and destination selection, demand analysis, performance measures, and general market assessment and segmentation). It does so by collecting numerical and quantifiable primary (e.g., survey or longitudinal) and secondary (e.g., census and government sources, search engines, and organizations, or time-series data from agencies) data and analyzing those with statistical or computational methods and data analytics to describe, explain, and predict the phenomenon in question.

Quantitative research also involves both descriptive and inferential (hypothesis testing) research using different levels of scale (e.g., nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio) leading to both parametric analysis using interval and ratio data and nonparametric data analysis

Qualitative research refers to research applying a range of qualitative methods in order to inductively explore, interpret, and understand a given field or object under study. Qualitative research in tourism takes its inspiration primarily from the cultural and social sciences, such as anthropology and sociology. Most often, the aim of this research approach is to explore and search for meaning or to develop an understanding through empirical studies, generating “thick” descriptions (Geertz 1973) or collecting material, which may become subject to interpretation. Qualitative research seeks to avoid making generalizations, grand claims, and reductions and is often characterized by a high level of reflectivity and sensitivity to power relations and ambiguity. All of these characteristics will be elaborated further below.
The concept of qualitative research covers a range of methodologies, but is usually contrasted with and seen in opposition to quantitative and deductive research, as it attempts to explore the complexity and fragmentary nature of the social world of tourism. This exploration can be carried out through ethnographic fieldwork and/or by applying various methods, which seek to deploy more inductive and explorative approaches. Such methods include interviews, participant or non-participatory observations, focus groups, text and discourse analysis, photo and video documentation or elicitation