

The Place of Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences

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Q-Step

**A step-change in
quantitative social
science skills**

Funded by the
Nuffield Foundation,
ESRC and HEFCE

The Place of Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences

Overview

- Level of quantification in sociology
- Engaging students with quantitative methods
- Student engagement with quantitative methods



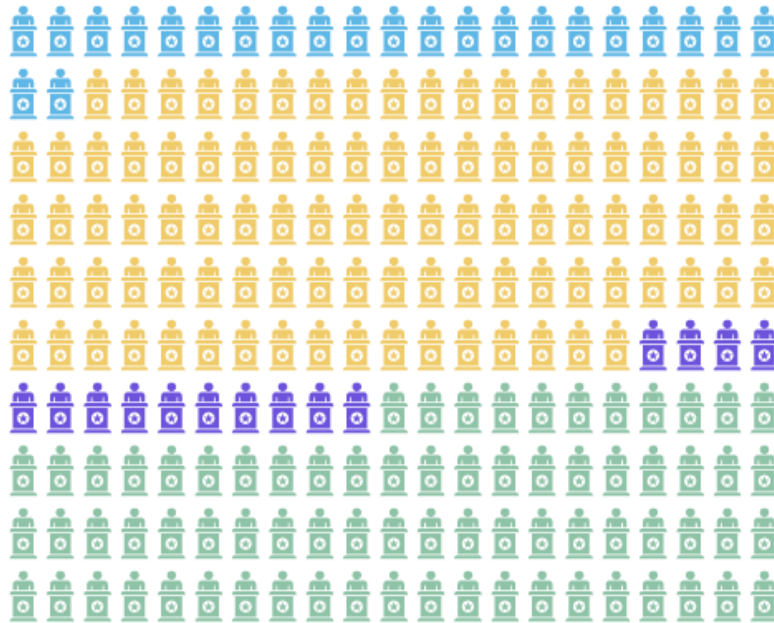
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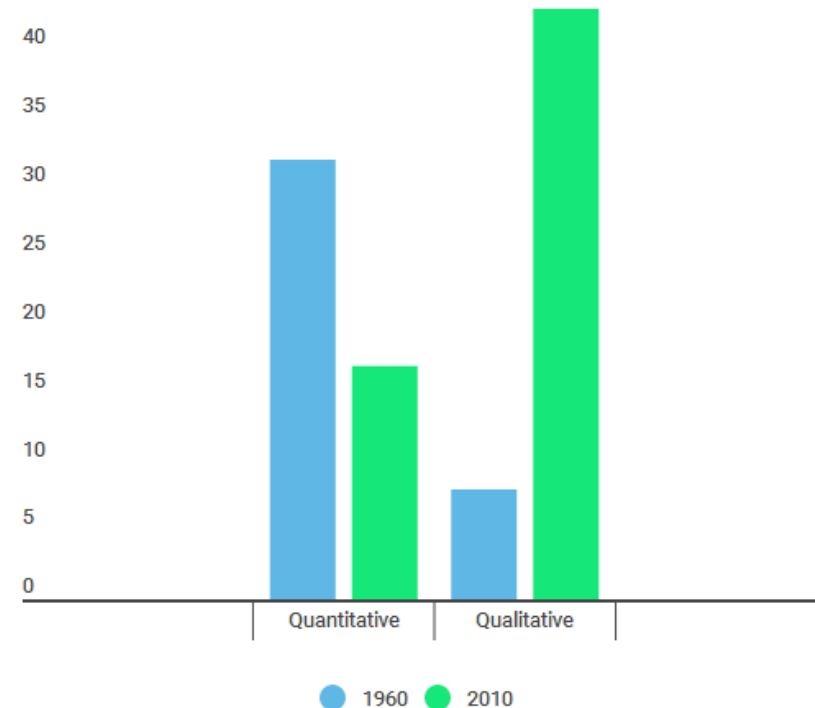
Level of quantification in sociology

British Sociological Association Conference



● Quantitative ● Qualitative ● Mixed Methods ● Non Empirical

MacInnes et al. (forthcoming) 1960-2010



Level of quantification in sociology



Cardiff University

In the last year, how often did you use quantitative methods in your work?

- ☐ Not At All
- ☐ Very Little
- ☐ Some
- ☐ A lot

In the last year, how often did you use qualitative methods in your work?

- ☐ Not At All
- ☐ Very Little
- ☐ Some
- ☐ A lot

Which areas of sociology best characterise your work? Please give 4 examples (e.g. Gender, Employment, Research Methods), listed in order of importance.

Level of quantification in sociology

Research Methods



Type of Researcher



● Quant ● Qual ● Mixed Methods

Level of quantification in sociology

Explanatory Variables	Researcher Identity	
	Qualitative	Mixed Methods
	Exp (B)	Exp (B)
Gender		
Male	0.49*	0.77
Age		
18-34	0.27	0.12**
35-44	0.44	0.27
45-54	1.02	0.42
Seniority		
Professor/Reader	0.34	0.28
Senior Lecturer	0.24*	0.17**
Lecturer	0.38	0.19**
Qualification outside the UK		
Yes	0.34**	0.40*0
R ² =.097 (Cox and Snell), .117 (Nagelkerke). Model $\chi^2(16)=42.18$, $p<.05$ N=412		

Level of quantification in sociology

Quantitative Researchers



Qualitative Researchers



Level of quantification in sociology

- “...quantification is the root of all evil in sociology”
- “I think the move towards quantification is very worrying. Other disciplines can do that. The richness of sociology comes from working with people’s stories in their detail and complexity. We are in danger of loosing that”
- “The problem is that the only ‘research’ funded is nonsensical quantification...”
- “I see British sociology as mostly qualitative...At least this is the sort of thing that gets published in British mainstream journals.”

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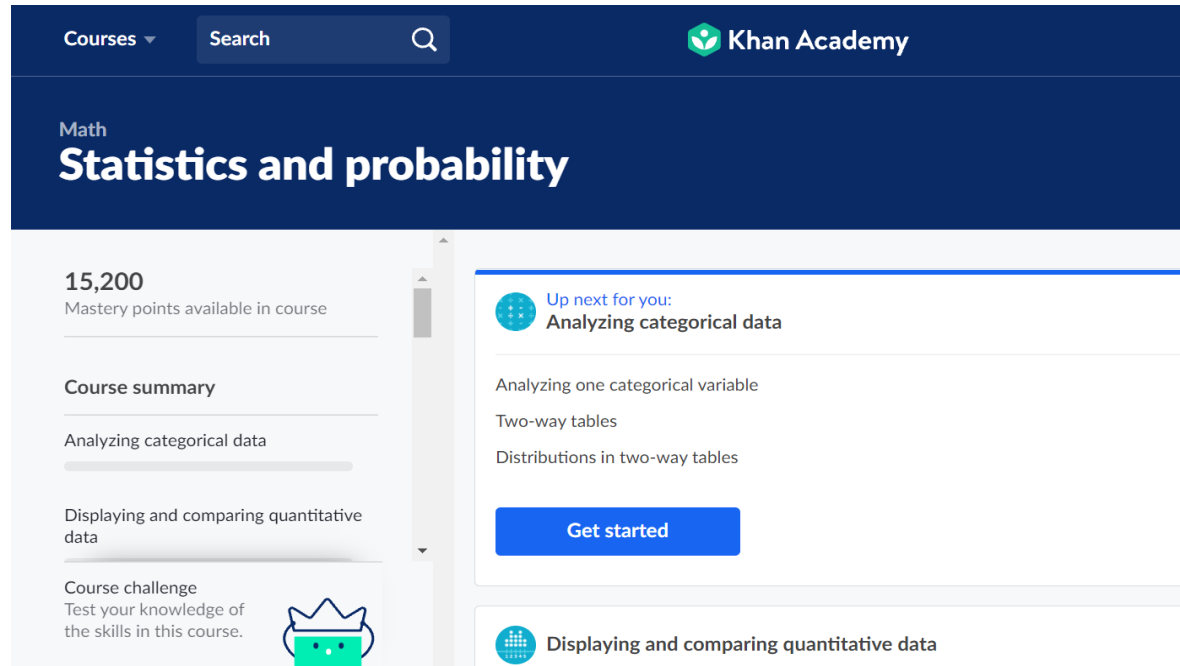


Engaging students with quantitative methods

Students' Attitudes



Engaging students with quantitative methods



The image shows the Khan Academy interface for the 'Statistics and probability' course. The top navigation bar includes 'Courses', a search bar, and the Khan Academy logo. The course title 'Math Statistics and probability' is prominently displayed. On the left, a sidebar shows '15,200 Mastery points available in course' and a 'Course summary' section with progress bars for 'Analyzing categorical data' and 'Displaying and comparing quantitative data'. The main content area features a 'Get started' button and a list of topics: 'Analyzing one categorical variable', 'Two-way tables', and 'Distributions in two-way tables'. A 'Course challenge' section at the bottom encourages testing knowledge.

Courses ▾ Search 🔍 Khan Academy

Math
Statistics and probability

15,200
Mastery points available in course

Course summary

Analyzing categorical data

Displaying and comparing quantitative data

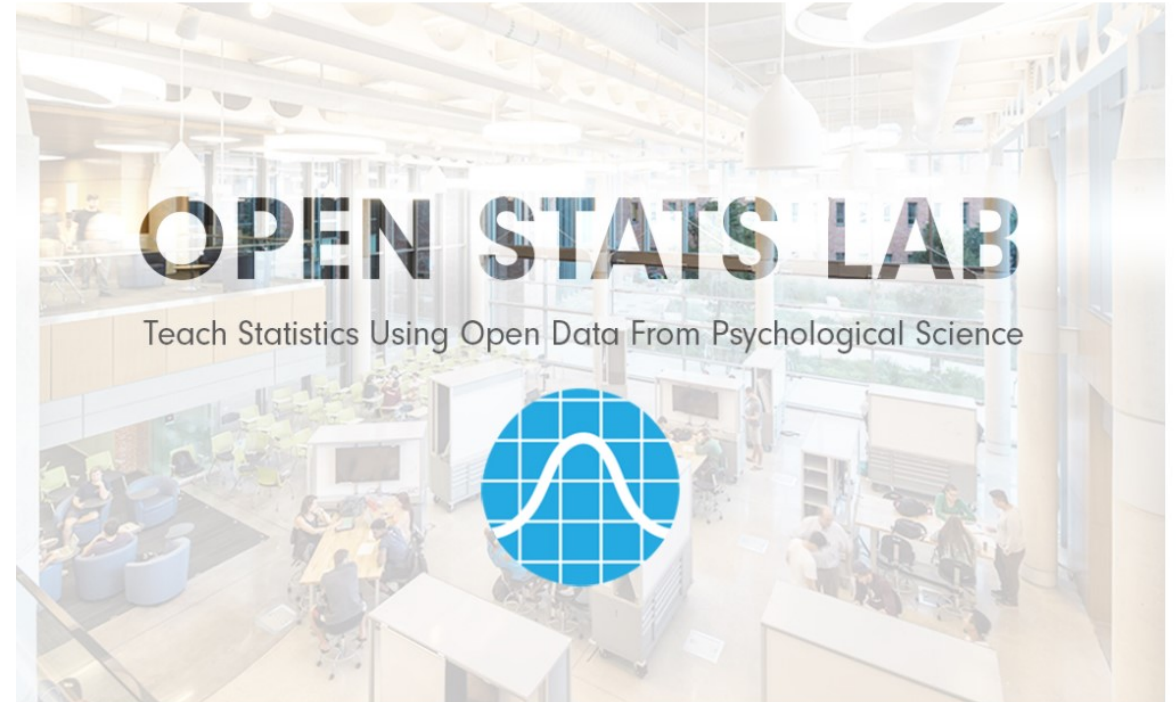
Course challenge
Test your knowledge of the skills in this course.

Up next for you:
Analyzing categorical data

Analyzing one categorical variable
Two-way tables
Distributions in two-way tables

Get started

Displaying and comparing quantitative data



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Student engagement with quantitative methods



2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
					Module Evaluation Data
			Dissertation Proposal Data	Dissertation Proposal Data	Dissertation Proposal Data
Dissertation Conference Registration Data	Dissertation Conference Registration Data	Dissertation Conference Registration Data	Dissertation Conference Registration Data	Dissertation Conference Registration Data	

Student engagement with quantitative methods



Proposal Data:

	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Qualitative	58.7	56.5	61.8
Quantitative	33.5	30.4	29.9
Mixed Methods	7.7	13.0	8.3
Total	167	161	140

Student engagement with quantitative methods

Proposal Data:

	2018/2019 (%)	2019/2020 (%)	2020/2021 (%)
Qualitative	58.7	56.5	61.8
Quantitative	33.5	30.4	29.9
Mixed Methods	7.7	13.0	8.3
Total	167	161	140

Conference Registration Data:

	2015/2016 (%)	2016/2017 (%)	2017/2018 (%)	2018/2019 (%)	2019/2020 (%)
Qualitative	74.4	70.2	68.2	62.2	66.9
Quantitative	16.5	21.0	24.0	31.7	25.3
Mixed Methods	9.1	8.9	7.8	5.9	7.8
Total	121	124	129	167	130

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Any
Questions?

Thank you for listening!

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