

■ **TABLE 14.1** Strengths and Weaknesses of Quantitative Research

Strengths

- Testing and validating already constructed theories about how and why phenomena occur
- Testing hypotheses that are constructed before the data are collected
- Can generalize research findings when the data are based on random samples of sufficient size
- Can generalize a research finding when it has been replicated on many different populations and subpopulations
- Useful for obtaining data that allow quantitative predictions to be made
- The researcher may construct a situation that eliminates the confounding influence of many variables, allowing one to more credibly establish cause-and-effect relationships
- Data collection using some quantitative methods is relatively quick (e.g., telephone interviews)
- Provides precise, quantitative, numerical data
- Data analysis is relatively less time consuming (using statistical software)
- The research results are relatively independent of the researcher (e.g., statistical significance)
- It may have higher credibility with many people in power (e.g., administrators, politicians, people who fund programs)
- It is useful for studying large numbers of people

Weaknesses

- The researcher's categories that are used might not reflect local constituencies' understandings
 - The researcher's theories that are used might not reflect local constituencies' understandings
 - The researcher might miss out on phenomena occurring because of the focus on theory or hypothesis testing rather than on theory or hypothesis generation (called the *confirmation bias*)
 - Knowledge produced might be too abstract and general for direct application to specific local situations, contexts, and individuals
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