

# Methodology – Describing Research Design and Data Collection

**Course:** English for Research and Thesis Writing

## 1. Purpose of the Methodology Section

The Methodology (or "Methods") section explains **how** you conducted your research. Its primary goal is **replicability**—providing enough detail so that another researcher could repeat your study and get similar results.

In Academic English, this section is usually written in the **Past Tense** (because the work has been done) and often uses the **Passive Voice** (to maintain objectivity).

## 2. Describing Research Design

You must clearly state your overall approach.

### Key Vocabulary:

- **Qualitative:** Focuses on words and meanings (interviews, case studies).
- **Quantitative:** Focuses on numbers and statistics (surveys, experiments).
- **Mixed-Methods:** A combination of both.

### Useful Phrasing:

- "A **descriptive research design** was adopted for this study."
- "This research employs a **quantitative approach** to examine..."
- "An **exploratory case study** was conducted to understand..."

## 3. Sampling and Participants

Explain who was studied and how they were chosen.

- **Population:** The whole group (e.g., All SMEs in Algeria).
- **Sample:** The specific group you studied (e.g., 100 SMEs in Setif).
- **Sampling Technique:** How you picked them (Random, Purposive, Convenience).

### Examples:

- "The **target population** consisted of middle managers in the telecommunications sector."
- "A **sample of 150 respondents** was selected using **random sampling**."
- "Participants were **recruited** via email invitations."

## 4. Data Collection Tools (Instrumentation)

Describe the "tools" used to gather information.

Tool	Common Academic Verbs
<b>Survey / Questionnaire</b>	<i>Administered, Distributed, Designed</i>
<b>Interviews</b>	<i>Conducted, Recorded, Transcribed</i>
<b>Observations</b>	<i>Carried out, Noted, Documented</i>
<b>Secondary Data</b>	<i>Extracted, Retrieved, Analyzed</i>

### Example Descriptions:

- "Data were collected through a **five-point Likert scale questionnaire**."
- "Semi-structured **interviews** were conducted to gain in-depth insights."
- "Secondary data were **retrieved** from the National Office of Statistics (ONS)."

## 5. The "Passive Voice" for Objectivity

In the Methodology, we focus on the *action*, not the *person*.

- **Active (Less Formal):** "I distributed the surveys to the students."
- **Passive (Academic):** "The surveys **were distributed** to the students."
- **Passive (Academic):** "Statistical analysis **was performed** using SPSS software."

## 6. Practical Exercise: Drafting your Method

Fill in the blanks to create a professional Methodology paragraph for your project:

"This study utilizes a (.....) approach. To achieve the research objectives, data (.....) from a sample of (.....) participants. The sampling frame included (.....). The primary instrument used was a (.....) which was distributed via (.....). Finally, the data (.....) using (.....)."

## 7. Methodology Checklist

- Have I specified the research **approach** (Qualitative/Quantitative)?
- Have I described the **sample size** and **sampling technique**?
- Did I explain the **tools** used for data collection?
- Is the section written primarily in the **Past Tense** and **Passive Voice**?
- Did I mention any **software** used for analysis?