

Prevalence of Research Methods in Higher Education in Lampung

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ABSTRACT

Higher education research plays a crucial role in shaping academic quality and advancing knowledge, making it essential to map the methodologies applied in order to assess the direction and relevance of scholarly work. This study focused on mapping the prevalence of research methods employed in higher education studies in Lampung Province, specifically examining the tendencies towards quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches, as well as the extent to which new methodologies such as digital ethnography and participatory action research have been adopted. A systematic literature review was conducted on articles, undergraduate theses, master's dissertations, and doctoral research produced in universities across Lampung between 2015 and 2025, involving identification, classification, and comparative analysis of research methods. The findings reveal the dominance of quantitative approaches, although the past five years have shown a significant increase in qualitative and mixed-methods studies. Meanwhile, innovative methods remain rarely applied but indicate promising potential for future development. The conclusion highlights that methodological choices are not merely technical decisions but also reflections of academic culture and institutional capacity, suggesting that diversifying methodologies is vital to enhance research quality and strengthen its relevance to local contexts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education is one of the fundamental pillars in the effort to develop human resources who are excellent, competitive, and adaptive to contemporary challenges. Universities carry a strategic mandate to produce graduates who are able to respond to the complexities of the labour market while also contributing to the advancement of knowledge and technology. In Indonesia, higher education is positioned as a centre of innovation that not only plays a role in the transfer of knowledge but also in the production of high-quality research. Lampung Province, as a strategic region in Sumatra, has demonstrated significant growth in the number of higher education institutions, both public and private, over the past decade. This growth is reflected in the increasing number of students, lecturers, and academic works stored in institutional repositories or published

in local and national journals. Nevertheless, the quality of research produced, particularly in terms of methodology, still faces a number of challenges.

Research methodology plays a crucial role in determining the validity and reliability of scientific findings. The choice of an appropriate method not only affects research outcomes but also defines its contribution to theoretical and practical development. Ideally, research in higher education should utilise diverse methodological approaches suited to the nature of the problems under investigation. Quantitative methods offer advantages in producing objective numerical descriptions, qualitative methods allow for the exploration of meaning and lived experiences in depth, while mixed methods integrate both to provide a more comprehensive understanding. In addition, the advancement of knowledge and technology has given rise to new approaches such as digital ethnography, which enables researchers to examine social interactions in digital spaces, and participatory action research, which emphasises collaboration between researchers and participants in solving real-world problems.

The reality in practice often diverges from this ideal. Research in higher education in Lampung tends to be dominated by quantitative approaches with relatively simple designs, such as descriptive surveys or quasi-experiments. Qualitative research remains limited to small-scale case studies, while mixed methods, though increasingly introduced, have not become a popular choice among students or lecturers. Innovative approaches such as digital ethnography or participatory action research are scarcely explored. This gap indicates that although the complexity of educational and social issues in Lampung requires more diverse and innovative methodological approaches, research practices in higher education remain constrained by repetitive traditional patterns. This condition reflects a methodological gap between the ideal and the actual. Ideally, universities should be centres of methodological experimentation, where lecturers and students not only learn to apply established methods but also explore new approaches better suited to the problems at hand. Unfortunately, the reality shows that limited methodological knowledge, insufficient training, and dominant institutional preferences result in relatively homogeneous research outputs in Lampung. Quantitative research, for instance, is often reduced to measuring relationships between variables without a broader contextual interpretation. Qualitative studies are also frequently superficial due to time constraints, limited resources, and insufficient methodological understanding.

Research methodology serves as a conceptual framework that guides researchers in designing, implementing, and evaluating the research process. In the context of higher education, methodology functions as the foundation for producing scholarly works with clear validity, reliability, and academic contribution. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison [1] emphasise that methodology is not merely a matter of techniques or data collection procedures, but also reflects the philosophical paradigm underpinning the researcher's view of reality. This implies that the choice of research methods must be consistent with the research questions, objectives, and the context of the issues being studied. The dominance of certain paradigms without critical reflection can limit innovation and the diversity of research outcomes.

Quantitative approaches remain one of the dominant paradigms in educational research. According to Creswell and Creswell [2], quantitative methods are grounded in positivism, which stresses objectivity, generalisation, and causal relationships. Research designs such as surveys, experiments, and quasi-experiments enable researchers to obtain numerical data that can be analysed statistically. The strength of this method lies in its ability to measure phenomena in a standardised manner and produce conclusions that can be generalised to wider populations. However, critics argue that quantitative approaches often overlook meaning, subjective experiences, and the social contexts that underpin the data [3]. The qualitative approach, by contrast, developed from the constructivist paradigm, which views reality as subjective, complex, and socially constructed. Flick [4] explains that qualitative methods focus on understanding meaning, experiences, and social interactions through techniques such as in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. This approach allows for richer exploration of phenomena that cannot be reduced to numbers alone. In educational research, qualitative studies are often used to understand learning experiences, classroom dynamics, and teacher-student interactions. Its limitations include restricted generalisability and the potential subjectivity of the

researcher. However, internal validity can be strengthened through triangulation strategies and reflexivity [5].

As social and educational problems become increasingly complex, there has been a growing need for integrative approaches that combine the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie [6] refer to mixed-methods approaches as a pragmatic paradigm that enables researchers to draw upon the strengths of both methods in order to address multidimensional research questions. Mixed-methods designs may take the form of convergent, explanatory, or exploratory studies, depending on the sequence and purpose of data integration. In educational research, mixed methods have proven particularly useful, for instance by combining survey data on literacy levels with in-depth interviews regarding students' reading experiences. The use of mixed methods has gained increasing academic legitimacy, as it is considered to reduce the weaknesses of single-method approaches [7]. Nevertheless, its adoption in Lampung remains limited due to a lack of methodological training and awareness.

Beyond these established paradigms, advances in digital technologies have introduced new methods that are increasingly relevant in the context of modern education. Digital ethnography is an adaptation of classical ethnography that investigates culture and social practices within digital spaces. Pink et al. [8] highlight that digital ethnography provides a methodological framework for understanding how interactions, identities, and social practices are formed through digital media. In educational research, this method allows for in-depth analysis of how students engage on online learning platforms, build learning communities on social media, or develop digital literacy in virtual spaces. Its main strength lies in its ability to capture the cultural dynamics of digital environments, which are becoming an integral part of academic life.

Participatory methodologies are also gaining increasing attention, particularly participatory action research (PAR). Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon [9] explain that PAR is rooted in the critical paradigm, which emphasises social change through the active involvement of participants in the research process. Unlike traditional methods that position participants as objects of study, PAR treats them as equal partners in problem formulation, data collection, and solution development. In higher education, PAR can be applied to improve teaching quality, enhance curricula, or empower campus communities. This method is highly relevant as it generates knowledge that is not only academic but also practical and transformative.

This phenomenon in Lampung is consistent with findings across many Indonesian universities, where students' methodological choices are often based not on scientific considerations but on supervisors' recommendations or faculty traditions [10]. Such dominance of quantitative paradigms has produced methodological bias, rendering research less innovative. Yet, the advancement of knowledge demands openness towards newer, more contextual, and relevant approaches in line with the changing times. Creswell and Creswell [2] emphasise that methodological choices should always be aligned with the nature of the research questions, rather than mere convenience or technical simplicity. Global trends in educational research methodologies reveal a shift towards more diverse and integrative approaches. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie [11] highlighted the advantages of mixed methods in addressing complex research questions, particularly in education which involves multidimensional phenomena. Kemmis et al. [9] demonstrated that participatory action research produces tangible social impact as it actively engages participants in formulating solutions. Pink et al. [8] underscored the relevance of digital ethnography in the digital era, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic that accelerated the shift of many learning activities into virtual spaces. Unfortunately, such methodological trends have not been widely reflected in higher education research in Lampung, which largely remains bound to conventional paradigms.

The limited adoption of new methods may be attributed to several factors. First, the lack of human resources with expertise in alternative methodologies has slowed methodological innovation. Second, restricted access to international literature on methodological developments narrows students' and lecturers' perspectives. Third, an academic culture in some institutions that prioritises timely graduation over research quality further contributes to methodological limitations. These conditions have serious implications for research quality, as methodological limitations

constrain external validity, depth of analysis, and the contribution of research to theoretical development and policy-making. According to Bazeley [12], the greatest challenge of contemporary research is producing knowledge that is not only scientifically valid but also socially and contextually relevant. Thus, higher education institutions in regions such as Lampung are required not merely to replicate commonly used methods but also to innovate by selecting and developing approaches suited to local problems. For example, research on access to higher education in rural areas of Lampung may be enriched through a combination of quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, and PAR approaches to encourage more responsive policy changes.

Higher education institutions in Lampung have the responsibility not only to produce research that is locally relevant but also to contribute to national and global academic discourse. However, if research remains dominated by homogeneous methods, such contributions become very limited. For instance, research on digital literacy among Lampung students would be richer if digital ethnography were used to capture the dynamics of their interactions on social media or online learning platforms, rather than relying solely on quantitative surveys. Similarly, studies on community participation in higher education would have greater impact if conducted through participatory action research rather than descriptive designs alone.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on mapping the prevalence of research methodologies employed in higher education in Lampung through a systematic literature review. To date, no study has specifically examined methodological tendencies at higher education institutions in Lampung, despite its importance in understanding the trajectory of research development and informing strategies to improve research quality. By assessing the prevalence of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, and by investigating the extent to which new methods such as digital ethnography and participatory action research have been adopted, this study aims to provide a comprehensive and critical overview of research methodology in Lampung's higher education sector. This research not only provides an empirical map of methodological tendencies but also opens a space for reflection among lecturers, students, and university administrators to improve the quality of research in the future. It contributes as an innovation in methodological studies by presenting specific local data that are often overlooked in national-scale reviews. Furthermore, the findings of this study may serve as valuable input for revising research methodology curricula in higher education institutions in Lampung, ensuring that students are equipped with broader and more adaptive methodological knowledge.

The aim of this study is to map the prevalence of research methods employed in academic works in higher education institutions in Lampung, covering the dominance of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, and to examine the extent to which new approaches such as digital ethnography and participatory action research have been adopted, thereby providing a comprehensive overview of methodological developments in higher education research in Lampung over the past decade.

2. METHOD

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) to map the prevalence of research methods used in academic works within higher education institutions in Lampung. The SLR approach was selected because it is more structured than conventional narrative reviews and can reduce researcher subjectivity when selecting literature. The data sources included institutional repositories of several universities in Lampung, covering undergraduate theses, master's theses, doctoral dissertations, and scholarly articles published in national and international journals. The publication period was limited to 2015–2025, in line with the focus of the study.

The inclusion criteria comprised academic works authored by students, lecturers, or researchers affiliated with higher education institutions in Lampung, which explicitly identified the research methods used and addressed higher education issues or topics relevant to the educational context. Conversely, academic works that did not explicitly mention research methods, were popular or opinion-based writings, or were unavailable in full-text format were excluded from the analysis. All identified literature was subjected to a multi-stage selection process, including screening by title, abstract, and full text, to ensure alignment with the research criteria.

The primary research instrument was a data extraction sheet developed by the researchers to record information from each document. The information collected included year of publication, type of academic work, originating institution, field of study, and research method employed. The data were then coded and categorised according to method type: quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods, and emerging approaches such as digital ethnography and participatory action research. The coding process was carried out manually and re-verified to ensure consistency.

Data analysis was conducted using both descriptive quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitatively, the prevalence of each method was calculated as a percentage of the total literature analysed. Qualitatively, narratives were developed regarding trends in method usage, the dominance of certain methods in specific fields, and the emergence of innovative approaches, based on the synthesis of the data. The analysis also examined shifts in methodological usage across years, although the study did not focus solely on temporal trends. The research procedures followed a systematic flow from identification, selection, extraction, to data synthesis. To ensure transparency, the research process was illustrated using the PRISMA framework as a general guideline. This research method is expected to produce a reliable, transparent, and replicable account of the prevalence of research methods in higher education institutions in Lampung.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

This section presents a description of the main findings regarding the prevalence of research methodologies used in scholarly works in higher education institutions across Lampung Province between 2015 and 2025. The analysis covered academic outputs such as undergraduate theses, master's theses, doctoral dissertations, and journal articles authored by lecturers and students affiliated with Lampung universities. All documents that met the inclusion criteria were extracted based on the research methods applied, thereby enabling the identification of both quantitative distributions and methodological patterns. The findings are presented descriptively in narrative form and in tables to provide a clear overview of the research methodology landscape.

3.1.1 General Distribution of Research Methods

The analysis of the literature indicates that, over the past decade, higher education research in Lampung has employed diverse methodological approaches, although there is still a tendency for dominance by a single type of method. Overall, quantitative methods remain predominant across most research outputs, including theses, dissertations, and journal articles. However, as educational challenges become increasingly complex and demand broader perspectives, qualitative approaches, mixed methods, and even emerging methodologies have gradually gained more space in academic research within the region. To provide a more concrete picture, Table 1 illustrates the general distribution of research methods used in higher education publications in Lampung between 2015 and 2025.

Table 1. Distribution of Research Methods in Higher Education in Lampung (2015–2025)

Research Method	Number of Publications	Percentage (%)
Quantitative	324	54.0
Qualitative	162	27.0
Mixed Methods	88	14.7
Emerging Methods	27	4.3
Total	601	100

Source: Synthesised from higher education research literature in Lampung (2015–2025).

The table shows clearly that more than half of the higher education research in Lampung continues to employ quantitative approaches, particularly at the undergraduate level, where academic projects are typically designed to be simple and measurable. Common types of quantitative studies include surveys, experiments, quasi-experiments, and correlational or regression analyses aimed at examining relationships between variables. This dominance is understandable, as the academic tradition in many universities in Lampung remains strongly

oriented towards numeric-based research, largely due to the ease of implementation, the availability of standardised instruments, and the accessibility of statistical software.

Qualitative methods occupy the second position with 27 per cent. Although still far fewer in number compared to quantitative approaches, this reflects a significant increase in interest towards research that emphasises contextual understanding and in-depth interpretation. Case studies and phenomenology are the most commonly employed designs, particularly in studies exploring students' learning experiences, social interactions on campus, and the role of cultural values in educational processes.

Mixed-methods approaches account for 14.7 per cent of the studies, showing that a substantial portion of researchers in Lampung are experimenting with combining the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative designs. Such research is most common at the master's and doctoral levels, where greater comprehensiveness is expected. These designs are often applied to studies evaluating the effectiveness of education policies, innovative teaching models, and curriculum development programmes that require both numerical analysis and in-depth interviews.

Although still limited, emerging methods have begun to appear, comprising 4.3 per cent of the total. Identified methods include digital ethnography, applied to investigate student interactions within online learning platforms, and participatory action research (PAR), frequently used in community empowerment and university–community collaboration contexts. The presence of these methods indicates a growing openness towards methodological innovation, though greater encouragement is needed for their wider adoption.

3.1.2 Trends in Methodological Development

When examined over time, the distribution of research methods reveals notable shifts. During the early period of 2015–2018, quantitative methods dominated almost 70 per cent of the research. This is understandable, as research during this stage largely followed traditional models focusing on the measurement of academic achievement, evaluation of learning outcomes, and student satisfaction surveys. Qualitative studies accounted for only about 18 per cent, mixed methods 10 per cent, while emerging methods were virtually absent.

The situation began to change between 2019 and 2022. The proportion of quantitative research decreased to 55 per cent, while qualitative studies rose to 30 per cent. Mixed-methods approaches also gained greater attention, increasing to 12 per cent. During this period, research in Lampung increasingly explored topics requiring deeper social, cultural, and experiential understanding. Examples include studies on student adaptation to technology-based learning, the influence of social environments on motivation, and case studies on private university management practices.

The most significant changes occurred between 2015 and 2025. Quantitative research dropped further to 45 per cent, qualitative rose to 32 per cent, and mixed methods increased to 18 per cent. Emerging methods reached about 5 per cent, spurred by the digitalisation of learning during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Researchers increasingly employed digital ethnography to investigate student interactions in virtual spaces, while participatory action research was adopted in community engagement programmes where universities partnered with local communities to address education-related issues directly.

These trends suggest that higher education research in Lampung is moving away from quantitative dominance towards greater methodological diversity. This shift aligns with global developments in educational research, where multiperspective approaches are increasingly recognised as essential for understanding complex phenomena. If this trend continues, it is plausible that within the next decade, qualitative and mixed methods will approach parity with quantitative methods, while emerging methodologies will gain stronger prominence in addressing the challenges of digitalisation and community engagement.

3.1.3 Research Areas and Methodological Linkages

Beyond overall distributions and temporal trends, the findings also reveal distinctive patterns in the use of research methods across subject areas. Quantitative methods were most prevalent in research focused on evaluating teaching practices, measuring academic achievement, and analysing education policies. These areas typically require large-scale numerical data, making quantitative approaches most appropriate.

Qualitative methods were commonly applied in studies emphasising subjective experiences, interactional dynamics, and cultural contexts. Examples include research into students' experiences of online learning, lecturer–student relationships, and the influence of local wisdom on education practices. Such topics require deep exploration of meaning and interpretation, thus lending themselves well to qualitative inquiry.

Mixed-methods approaches frequently appeared in research on programme or policy effectiveness. For instance, studies evaluating new curricula often combined quantitative analyses of learning outcomes with qualitative interviews with lecturers and students. This combination provides a more comprehensive perspective by merging statistical data with contextual insights.

Emerging methods were closely associated with research in digitalisation and community empowerment. Digital ethnography was applied in the study of online learning platforms, virtual discussion forums, and the use of social media in academic settings. Participatory action research, on the other hand, was adopted in community literacy programmes, rural development projects, and collaborative initiatives between universities and local institutions to address educational challenges.

These findings emphasise that the choice of research method in Lampung is not merely determined by academic traditions or curricular frameworks but is also strongly shaped by the research topic itself. The more complex and context-specific the subject matter, the more likely researchers are to employ qualitative, mixed, or emerging methods. Conversely, topics requiring large-scale measurement still lean heavily towards quantitative approaches.

3.2 Discussion

This section aims to interpret the findings of the methodological mapping presented above, linking them with the theoretical framework while also evaluating their implications for research practices in Lampung's higher education institutions. The main focus of the discussion is: (1) understanding why quantitative methods remain dominant; (2) examining the significance of the rise in qualitative and mixed-methods research; (3) evaluating the adoption of emerging methods (digital ethnography and participatory action research) alongside their barriers; and (4) outlining practical implications, policy directions, and recommendations for strengthening the quality of local research methodologies. In this discussion, quantitative findings (distributions and trends) are not only described but also critically assessed in relation to institutional factors, human resource capacities, academic culture, and the demands of the digital era.

3.2.1 Interpretation of the dominance of quantitative methods

The dominance of quantitative methods, accounting for the largest proportion of the sample (54.0%), reflects several structural and cultural conditions within Lampung's higher education institutions. Historically and curricularly, many undergraduate programmes emphasise quantitative skills and the use of standardised instruments (e.g. questionnaires, tests), making survey- and statistics-based research the most familiar and “safe” choice for students and supervisors alike. This aligns with the view that quantitative approaches offer ease in operationalising variables and producing measurable results Creswell & Creswell[5]. Supervisory practices and academic evaluation policies also play a role: supervisors often recommend designs that are straightforward, measurable, and easy to evaluate, enabling students to graduate on time—a trend also reported in other Indonesian contexts Lestari & Gunawan[9]. Furthermore, the widespread availability of statistical software and guides makes quantitative methods more technically accessible than qualitative approaches requiring advanced interpretative skills.

However, quantitative dominance is not merely a practical choice; it has substantive consequences. Its limited ability to capture meaning, experiences, and context often results in superficial findings when applied to complex educational phenomena. Issues such as student motivation, the role of local culture in learning, or online teaching interactions require qualitative exploration to uncover nuances invisible to numerical data alone Tracy[14]. Thus, the prevalence of quantitative methods underscores the need for methodological capacity-building to ensure local research can yield both theoretical contributions and contextually relevant solutions.

3.2.2 The significance of the rise in qualitative and mixed-methods research

The growth of qualitative (27%) and mixed-methods (14.7%) research, particularly since 2019, signals a positive paradigm shift among Lampung researchers towards more holistic approaches. This trend responds to two key needs: first, the necessity of understanding social-cultural contexts and subjective experiences; second, the need to produce findings that are not only statistically robust but also contextually relevant. Mixed-methods, as a pragmatic paradigm combining the strengths of quantitative and qualitative designs, has gained traction because of its potential to triangulate results and address multidimensional research questions.

This rise is evident in studies on online learning adaptation, marginalised groups' experiences on campus, and the implementation of pedagogical innovations. It also suggests that some major institutions in Lampung (such as the University of Lampung and UIN) have begun expanding methodological capacity through enhanced methodology courses, workshops, and inter-departmental collaborations. Nevertheless, challenges remain: qualitative studies often suffer from insufficient analytical depth, while mixed-methods are sometimes conducted as "simple combinations" without meaningful integration—undermining the methodological value Bazeley[1]. Therefore, increases in quantity do not automatically translate into enhanced methodological quality; attention to depth and rigour remains crucial.

3.2.3 Adoption of emerging methods: potential, barriers, and the Lampung context

Although accounting for only 4.3 per cent of the studies, the adoption of emerging methods such as digital ethnography and participatory action research (PAR) indicates early signs of methodological innovation responsive to technological developments and demands for community engagement. Digital ethnography is relevant for examining learning practices that have shifted to digital spaces—such as interactions in learning management systems, online discussion forums, or social media-based study groups—that conventional surveys cannot easily capture Pink et al.[8]. PAR, on the other hand, provides a framework for empowering campus and surrounding communities, thereby producing research outputs directly linked to real-world change Kemmis et al.[9].

Nevertheless, their adoption faces significant barriers. First, methodological literacy in digital and online ethnographic techniques remains low; formal training on digital ethics, online sampling, and narrative analysis is rarely included in curricula. Second, technological infrastructure and internet access are uneven across parts of Lampung, limiting the feasibility of conducting representative digital research. Third, ethical and regulatory issues surrounding online data collection—such as privacy and informed consent in public digital spaces—create hesitancy among researchers lacking clear guidance. Fourth, academic reward systems still privilege conventional quantitative outputs, leaving methodological innovation under-recognised. These barriers indicate that adopting emerging methods requires multidimensional strategies, including capacity-building, infrastructure investment, context-specific ethical guidelines, and revised institutional incentive structures.

3.2.4 Implications for research quality, policy, and academic practice

The mapping results hold important implications at several levels. At the academic level, quantitative dominance without sufficient qualitative or integrated research undermines the theoretical contribution and contextual relevance of findings. Over-reliance on single-survey designs risks producing generic, less actionable recommendations for local policies. Thus, universities should cultivate research ecosystems that support methodological collaboration, peer mentoring, and comprehensive methodological training.

At the policy level, there is a need for institutional reforms to provide incentives for mixed-methods and PAR, budgetary support for digital research, and the establishment of methodological centres offering consultancy. Local journals and editorial boards should also broaden assessment criteria to value methodological diversity and qualitative rigour more highly. Practically, these findings underscore the need for capacity-building programmes (e.g. workshops, modules, and micro-credentials) on digital ethics, advanced qualitative techniques, and meaningful integration in mixed-methods studies.

3.2.5 Practical recommendations and future research directions

Based on the analysis, several practical recommendations can be outlined: (1) strengthening methodology education at all levels by incorporating mixed-methods, digital ethnography, and PAR modules into compulsory or elective curricula; (2) establishing supporting facilities such as methodology labs, consultancy centres for quantitative and qualitative analysis, and access to analytical software; (3) developing context-sensitive ethical and technical guidelines for online data collection in Lampung universities; and (4) providing academic incentives (e.g. research grants, awards, and workload credits) for innovative research.

For future studies, in-depth qualitative investigations into the determinants of methodological choice—such as interviews with supervisors, institutional leaders, and students—are recommended. Comparative studies across faculties or types of institutions could also shed light on the variables influencing methodological preferences. Additionally, applied participatory action research involving local communities could serve as a medium to test the real-world impact of participatory approaches on educational challenges in Lampung.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study affirm that the methodological landscape of educational research in higher education institutions in Lampung remains dominated by quantitative approaches. While such approaches provide convenience in measuring variables and conducting statistical analyses, they fall short in capturing the layered meanings and complexities of educational phenomena. This dominance reflects an academic culture that is pragmatic and efficiency-oriented in relation to study completion, yet substantively it creates limitations in generating findings that are truly contextual. On the other hand, the increasing proportion of qualitative and mixed-methods research indicates a paradigm shift towards greater openness to diverse and integrative approaches. This can be interpreted as an early sign of growing awareness among researchers that education is not merely about numbers and measurable variables, but also a social practice that requires deep understanding of experiences, interactions, and cultural dynamics.

The emergence of new methods such as digital ethnography and participatory action research, although still limited, demonstrates considerable potential for methodological innovation that is relevant to the demands of the digital era and the need for community empowerment. Their presence also shows that some researchers have sought to move beyond established methodological conventions by attempting to integrate digital technologies and involve communities as both subjects and agents of change. Thus, educational research in Lampung has the prospect of evolving in a more responsive direction to meet the challenges of the times, although it still faces obstacles in the form of limited methodological literacy, insufficient infrastructure, and institutional policies that do not yet fully support methodological diversification.

These findings address the initial research questions concerning the prevalence of methods, the trends in methodological shifts, and the degree of adoption of new approaches. More substantively, the conclusion that can be drawn is that the choice of research methods is not merely a technical matter, but represents structural conditions, academic culture, and institutional vision in shaping educational research. Therefore, in order to improve the quality of research, higher education institutions in Lampung need to facilitate the development of researchers' methodological capacity through a more diverse curriculum, the strengthening of methodological laboratories, and the creation of a research ecosystem that encourages cross-approach collaboration.

The future prospect of research development lies in expanding the implementation of qualitative and mixed-methods research with more mature integration, while simultaneously promoting the exploration of innovative and contextually relevant methods, such as digital research and participatory action studies. Beyond enriching academic contributions, methodological diversification also carries practical value: research findings can become more adaptive to local educational issues, more sensitive to cultural contexts, and more relevant as a foundation for educational policies at both institutional and regional levels. Ultimately, educational research in

Lampung is expected to generate knowledge that is not only academically robust but also has tangible impact on educational practice and social development in the era of digital transformation.

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