

Qualitative research

The “soft” side of research

Qualitative research

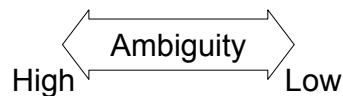
Defined

- Qualitative research is the kind of research that generates insight and understanding rather than quantifiable measurements

Qualitative research

Compared to quantitative research

	Qualitative	Quantitative
Purpose	To explore	To understand
Questions	Not standardized	Standardized
Instrument	Camera, recorder	Questionnaire
Sample	Very small	Much larger
Analysis	Subjective	Objective
Result	Tentative	Conclusive



Qualitative research

Tools

- Focus groups
- Depth interviews
- Projective techniques

Exploratory research

Uses qualitative research tools

- Initial research conducted to clarify and define the nature of a problem
- Does not provide conclusive evidence
- Subsequent research expected

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Exploratory research

Reasons for conducting

- Diagnose a situation
- Screening of alternatives
- Discover new ideas

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Concept testing

- Exploratory research procedure that tests some sort of stimulus as a proxy for an idea about a new, revised, or repositioned product

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Exploratory research

Methods

- Experience surveys
- Secondary data analysis
- Case studies
- Pilot studies

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Experience survey

- Ask knowledgeable individuals
- About a particular research problem
- Most are quite willing

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Secondary data analysis

Another exploratory research tool

- Data collected for a purpose other than the project at hand
- Economical
- Quick source for background information

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Case study

Yet another tool of exploratory studies

- Intensely investigates one or a few situations similar to the problem
- Investigate in depth
- Careful study
- May require cooperation

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Pilot study

A group of tools of exploratory research

- A collective term
- Any small scale exploratory study that uses sampling
- But does not apply rigorous standards

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Pilot studies

Several kinds

- Focus group interviews
- Projective techniques
- Depth interviews

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Projective techniques

Simulated activities

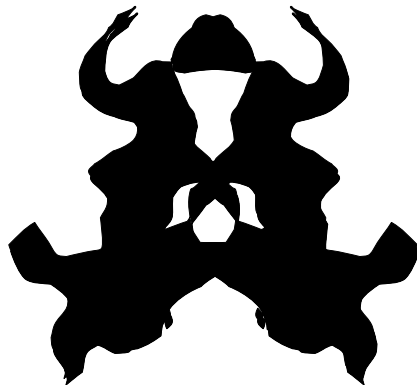
- Help understand behavior that may resist direct questioning
- They all involve presenting the respondents with ambiguous stimuli and observing their reaction

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Projective techniques

Rorschach test

- What do you see in the picture?



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Projective techniques

Word association

- Involves reading words and asking respondent to answer with the first word that comes to their minds
- Researcher looks for
 - Association between words
 - Response latency

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Projective techniques

Sentence completion

- Respondents are asked to finish the incomplete sentences given to them
- Researcher looks for

Revealing insights from the way the sentences are completed

People who drink beer are _____

A man who drinks light beer is _____

Imported beer is most liked by _____

The woman in the commercial _____

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Projective techniques

Role-playing

- Respondents are instructed to play the role of a third person and describe how they might react in certain situations
- Researcher observes the latent behavior

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Projective techniques

Thematic apperception test

- Participants are presented with a picture depicting a theme
- With no verbal clues and minimal (if any) emotional hints in the image, the respondents are instructed to explain the situation

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Projective techniques

TAT Example

- Look at the following image carefully
 - How does the woman feel? What might she be thinking?



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Projective techniques

Picture frustration (cartoon) test

- Respondents are asked to explain what the cartoon characters might be doing or saying
- Researcher seeks to ascertain feelings

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Projective techniques

Picture frustration (cartoon) test



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Focus groups

Defined

- A small group of people
 - brought together
 - to discuss a particular topic
 - in an unstructured, spontaneous and informal manner
 - under the guidance of a moderator

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Focus groups

Typical objectives

- To generate ideas
- To understand vocabulary
- To reveal consumers' behavioral constructs
- To complement qualitative data

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Focus groups

Operational questions

- What size
 - No hard rules, but the consensus is 8-12
 - Large enough to generate group interaction
 - Small enough to allow everyone to participate
 - The actual attendance is difficult to control

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Focus groups

Operational questions

- Who
 - The members should have homogeneity in some dimension
 - Selection should facilitate communication among total strangers
 - Demographics or other variable may be used to generate homogeneity

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Focus groups

Operational questions

- How to select the participants
 - Selected purposely for the study
 - Initial telephone contact to qualify and solicit participation
 - Incentives may help gain participation
 - Call-back lists may help cover for no-shows

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Focus groups

Operational questions

- Where should it take place
 - Ideal setting is a focus group facility
 - Needs to be conducive to discussion
 - Relaxing atmosphere, comfortable seating
 - Video or audio recording equipment
 - Viewing room for clients to observe

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Focus groups

The moderator

- A person who conducts the session and guides the discussion flow
 - Good communication and observation skills
 - Prepared and equipped with the topics for the discussion
 - Needs to generate stimulating discussion
 - Should gain involvement of all participants
 - Should properly frame the session with a carefully prepared introduction

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Focus groups

Reporting and use of results

- Evaluated by an analyst
- Subjective evaluation based on prior experience
- The report will
 - List the salient themes
 - Indicate apparent diversity of opinion
 - Include verbatim excerpts when needed

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Focus groups

Advantages

- Generate ideas
- Allow clients to observe the group
- Versatile tools
- Quite suitable for special groups

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Focus groups

Disadvantages

- May not represent the population
- Subjective interpretation
- High cost per capita

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Depth interviews

A limiting case of focus groups

- A depth interview is a series of probing questions posed one-on-one to a subject by a trained interviewer
- Can be conducted at home or at a central facility
- Otherwise similar to focus group studies, they lack group interaction