

Overview of Qualitative Research

Understanding User Needs

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Sales data? Survey? Usage statistics?

Quantitative research helps to understand...

- Overall trends
- Existing product or service
- Issues you can anticipate

Quantitative research is less useful for...

- Detailed understanding
- New possibilities
- Unanticipated issues





Detailed understanding: How do users input a destination?

New feature: Quizzes to help people memorize routes?

Unanticipated issue: Might families want "most fun" route?



Qualitative Research

Characterized by...

- Non-numerical data
- Direct interaction with people and contexts
- Richness and detail

Strengths of qualitative research

- In-depth
- Broad range
- Hypothesis generation
- Causal explanations





Qualitative Research Methodologies

Data gathering:

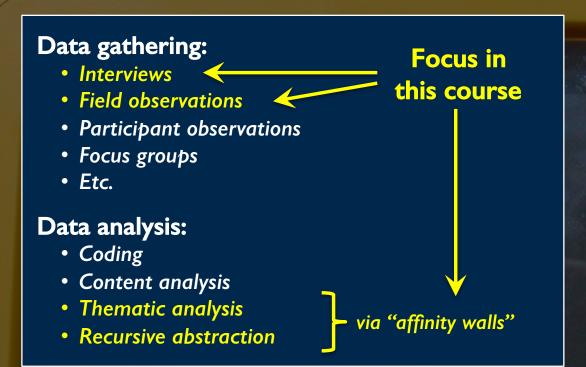
- Interviews
- Field observations
- Participant observations
- Focus groups
- Etc.

Data analysis:

- Coding
- Content analysis
- Thematic analysis
- Recursive abstraction



Qualitative Research Methodologies





Qualitative research is not the best for questions such as...

- What proportion of our users do X?
- Would usage increase if we did Y and instead of Z?
- Does program V cause effect W?

Weaknesses of qualitative research:

- Providing numerical data or analysis
- Confirming hunches, guesses, intuitions
- Making close comparisons



