

WOX7001 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Topic 5 – Qualitative Research

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Introduction

- Qualitative research is an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and sometimes counterdisciplinary field. It crosses the humanities and the social and physical sciences. Qualitative research is many things at the same time. Its practitioners are sensitive to the value of the multimethod approach. They are committed to the naturalistic perspective, and to the interpretative understanding of human experience. At the same time, the field is inherently political and shaped by multiple ethical and political positions. - Nelson et al's (1992, p4)

Introduction

- ‘Qualitative Research...involves finding out what people think, and how they feel - or at any rate, what they say they think and how they say they feel. This kind of information is subjective. It involves feelings and impressions, rather than numbers’.

Introduction

- Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter.
- Qualitative Researchers study “things” (people and their thoughts) in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.
- Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials - case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts-that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals lives.

Qualitative vs Quantitative

	Qualitative Research	Quantitative Research
Objective	To gain a qualitative understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations	To quantify the data and generalize the results from the sample to the population of interest
Sample	Small number of non-representative cases	Large number of representative cases

Qualitative vs Quantitative

	Qualitative Research	Quantitative Research
Data Collection	Unstructured	Structured
Data Analysis	Nonstatistical	Statistical
Outcome	Develop an initial understanding	Recommend a final course of action

Qualitative Methods



"The research department says things look bad quantitatively, but qualitatively we're in good shape."

Focus Group

- One of the commonly used qualitative research methods, used in data collection.
- A focus group usually includes a limited number of respondents (6-10) from within your target market.
- The main aim of the focus group is to find answers to the “why” “what” and “how” questions.
- Focus groups are an expensive method as compared to the other online qualitative research methods.

Focus Group



"Geez, you're the worst focus group I've ever seen."

Group size	8 – 12
Group composition	Homogeneous; respondents prescreened
Physical setting	Relaxed, informal atmosphere
Time duration	1 – 3 hours
Recording	Use of audiocassettes and videotapes
Moderator	Observational, interpersonal, and communication skills of the moderator

Procedure for Conducting a Focus Group



Depth Interviews

“If you wish to know the road up the mountain, you must ask the man who goes back and forth on it.”

-- Zenrinkusi



Depth Interviews

- One of the most common qualitative research methods.
- Like focus groups, depth interviews are an unstructured and direct way of obtaining information.
- Unlike focus groups, however, depth interviews are conducted on a one-on-one basis.
- These interviews typically last from 30 minutes to more than an hour.
- They attempt to uncover underlying motives, prejudices, or attitudes toward sensitive issues.

Depth Interviews

- Substantial probing is done to surface underlying motives, beliefs, and attitudes.
- Probing is done by asking such questions as:
 - » “Why do you say that?”
 - » “That's interesting, can you tell me more?”
 - » “Would you like to add anything else?”

Focus Group vs Depth Interviews

Characteristics	Focus Groups	Depth Interviews
Group synergy and dynamics	+	-
Peer pressure/group influence	-	+
Client involvement	+	-
Generation of innovative ideas	+	-
Indepth probing of individuals	-	+
Uncovering hidden motives	-	+
Discussion of sensitive topics	-	+
Interviewing respondents who are competitors	-	+
Interviewing respondents who are professionals	-	+
Scheduling of respondents	-	+
Amount of information	+	-
Bias in moderation and interpretation	+	-
Cost per respondent	+	-

Note: A + indicates a relative advantage over the other procedure, a - indicates a relative disadvantage.

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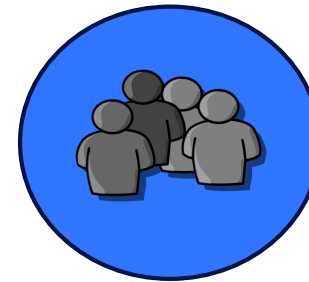
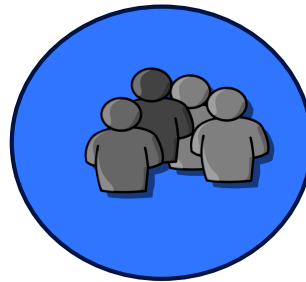
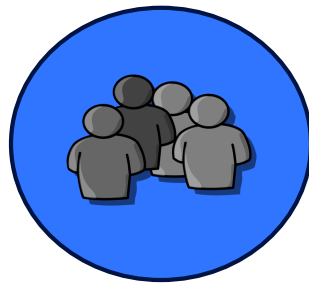
Ethnographic

- Ethnographic research is the most in-depth observational method that studies people in their naturally occurring environment.
- This method requires the researchers to adapt to the target audiences' environments which could be anywhere from an organization to a city or any remote location. Here geographical constraints can be an issue while collecting data.
- To understand the cultures, challenges, motivations, and settings that occur. Instead of relying on interviews and discussions, you experience the natural settings first hand.



Example

Observing the culture and practice of people living in far-flung areas away from modernization



Interview

Observations

immersion

HELP THE RESEARCHER:

- ☐ Have first-hand experience of the practice of members of the group
- ☐ Obtain first-hand testimonies from the research participants
- ☐ Present accurate reports regarding the research subjects

Results are context-specific → findings are applicable only to that specific group

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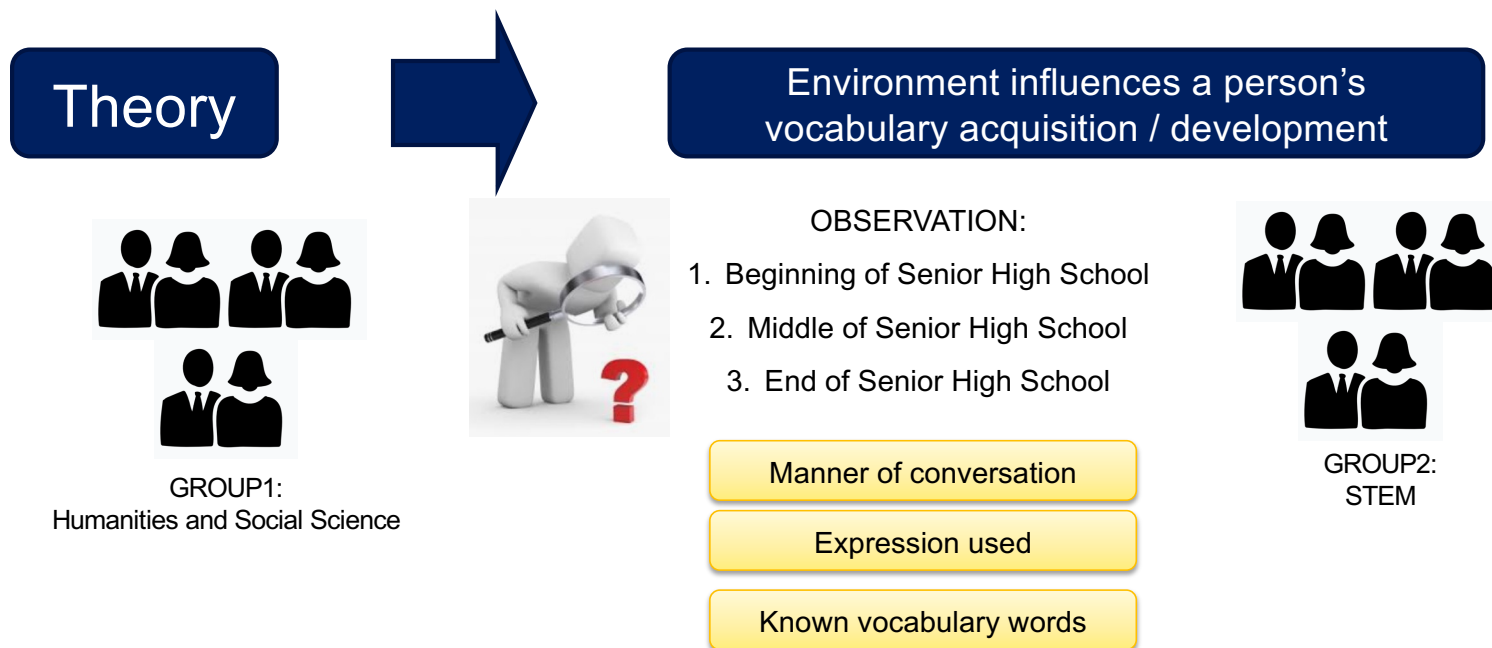
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Case Study

- Involve a long-time and in-depth study of a person, group, organization or situation / phenomena.
- This type of research method is used within a number of areas like education, social sciences and similar.
- This method may look difficult to operate, however, it is one of the simplest ways of conducting research as it involves a deep dive and thorough understanding of the data collection methods and inferring the data.

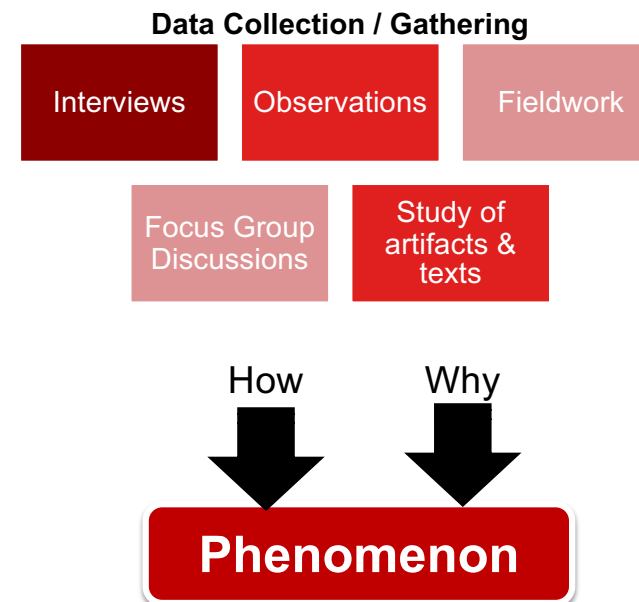
Example

A study on how students' vocabulary development is influenced by their environment



Grounded Theory

- This take place when a researcher **DISCOVERS** a **NEW THEORY** to underlie his study at the time of data collection and analysis.
- Helps offer an **EXPLANATION** about the main **CONCERN** of the **PARTICIPANTS** involved in the research.



When to use qualitative research?

- Researchers make use of qualitative research techniques when they need to capture accurate, in-depth insights. It is very useful to capture “factual data”.
 - » Developing a new product or generating an idea.
 - » Studying your product/brand or service to strengthen your marketing strategy.
 - » To understand your strengths and weaknesses.
 - » Understanding purchase behavior.
 - » To study the reactions of your audience to marketing campaigns and other communications.
 - » Exploring market demographics, segments, and customer groups.
 - » Gathering perception data of a brand, company, or product.

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Examples of open-ended questions

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Open-ended interview questions

If hired, how would you use your skills to grow the company?

How could we improve our online store for you?

2

Open-ended customer-facing questions

3

Open-ended technical questions

Can you please explain the back-end Javascript code template used for this webpage?

4

Open-ended demographic questions

What is your age?

5

Open-ended Personal / Psychographic questions

How do you typically deal with stress and anxiety?

Close-Ended Questions	Open-Ended Questions
<p>Do you like working with us?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	<p>Tell us about your experience with our organization so far.</p>
<p>Have you been stressed lately?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Unsure • No 	<p>Share with us what has been troubling you.</p>
<p>How satisfied are you with your current job role?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Somewhat unsatisfied • Very unsatisfied 	<p>What do you expect from this appraisal?</p>

Why use open-ended questions?

- No limits on the answers: Happy or unhappy, the customers need a platform to voice their opinions. As answer options for open-ended questions aren't provided, the respondent has the liberty to include details about feelings, attitudes, and views that they usually wouldn't get to submit in close-ended questions.
- Medium for respondents to answer creatively: These questions are more appreciative of the respondents than close-ended questions as users aren't expected to just "fill" them out for the sake of it.
- Respondents may stun you with the vision and creativity they show with their answers. Links to their blogs or a verse or two of their poetry will leave you spellbound.

Why use open-ended questions?

- Expect the unexpected: If there are only close-ended questions in a survey, the users usually get disconnected and fill it out without giving it much thought. With the kind of freedom that open-ended questions offer, users can respond the way they'd like to, be it the number of words or the details or the tone of the message.
- These responses may be marketing tips for improving the branding of the organization or some creative ideas that can lead to monetary gains.
- Get answers to complicated situations: Knotty situations need feedback that is more than just a mere Yes/No. Single-select or Multi-select questions cannot do justice to the detail or scrutiny required for some critical and complex situations.

Why use open-ended questions?

- Open-ended questions work best in situations where the respondents are expected to explain their feedback or describe the troubles they're facing with the products.
- Understand your clientele better: You can learn from your respondents. The open-ended questions offer the freedom to these respondents to be vocal about their opinion that would be insightful for organizations.
- Respondent logic, thoughts, language, and reference choices can be known from these questions that can reveal a lot about how the respondent's brain functions.

Thank You

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