

## Lecture 2

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**Paper CC6: Fundamental of Research Methodology**

*Dear M.Ed. II Sem Students*

Our Topics of Today's discussion are:

- Quantitative research: types and characteristics
- Qualitative research: types and characteristics

Let us now discuss the second one----

### Qualitative research

**What is Qualitative Research?**

- **It is a formal, objective, systematic process for obtaining information about the world. A method used to describe, test relationships, and examine cause and effect relationships.**
- **It is used to test relationships, describe, examine cause and effect relations**
- Qualitative research is defined as a market research method that focuses on obtaining data through open-ended and conversational communication.
- This method is not only about “what” people think but also “why” they think so.

For example, consider a convenience store looking to improve its patronage. A systematic observation concludes that the numbers of men visiting this store are more. One good method to determine why women were not visiting the store is to conduct an in-depth interview of potential customers in the category.

Therefore, the qualitative research methods allow for in-depth and further probing and questioning of respondents based on their responses, where the interviewer/researcher also tries to understand their motivation and feelings. Understanding how your audience takes decision can help derive conclusion in market research.

**Types of Qualitative Research**

The following are the qualitative research methods that are frequently used:

**1. One-on-One Interview:** Conducting in-depth interviews is one of the most common qualitative research methods. It is a personal interview that is carried out with one respondent at a time. This is purely a conversational method and invites opportunities to get details in depth from the respondent.

One of the advantages of this method provides a great opportunity to gather precise data about what people believe and what their motivations are. If the researcher is well experienced asking the right questions can help him/her collect meaningful data. If they should need more information the researchers should ask such follow up questions that will help them collect more information.

These interviews can be performed face-to-face or on phone and usually can last between half an hour to two hours or even more. When the in-depth interview is conducted face to face it gives a better opportunity to read the body language of the respondents and match the responses.

**2. Focus groups:** A focus group is also 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. One advantage of focus groups is, you don't necessarily need to interact with the group in person. Nowadays focus groups can be sent an online survey on various devices and responses can be collected at the click of a button.

Focus groups are an expensive method as compared to the other qualitative research methods. Typically they are used to explain complex processes. This method is very useful when it comes to market research on new products and testing new concepts.

**3. Ethnographic research:** 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.

This research design aims to understand the cultures, challenges, motivations, and settings that occur. Instead of relying on interviews and discussions, you experience the natural settings first hand.

This type of research method can last from a few days to a few years, as it involves in-depth observation and collecting data on those grounds. It's a challenging and a time-consuming method and solely depends on the expertise of the researcher to be able to analyze, observe and infer the data.

**4. Case study research:** The case study method has evolved over the past few years and developed as into a valuable qualitative research method. As the name suggests it is used for explaining an organization or an entity.

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.

**5. Record keeping:** This method makes use of the already existing reliable documents and similar sources of information as the data source. This data can be used in a new research. This is similar to going to a library. There one can go over books and other reference material to collect relevant data that can likely be used in the research.

**6. Process of observation:** Qualitative Observation is a process of research that uses subjective methodologies to gather systematic information or data. Since, the focus on qualitative observation is the research process of using subjective methodologies to gather information or data. The qualitative observation is primarily used to equate quality differences.

Qualitative observation deals with the 5 major sensory organs and their functioning – sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing. This doesn't involve measurements or numbers but instead characteristics.

### **Characteristics of Qualitative Research**

Below are the three key elements that define a qualitative research study and the applied forms each take in the investigation of a research problem.

#### **The Design**

- **Naturalistic** -- refers to studying real-world situations as they unfold naturally; non-manipulative and non-controlling; the researcher is open to whatever emerges [i.e., there is a lack of predetermined constraints on findings].
- **Emergent** -- acceptance of adapting inquiry as understanding deepens and/or situations change; the researcher avoids rigid designs that eliminate responding to opportunities to pursue new paths of discovery as they emerge.
- **Purposeful** -- cases for study [e.g., people, organizations, communities, cultures, events, critical incidences] are selected because they are "information rich" and illuminative. That is, they offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest; sampling is aimed at insight about the phenomenon, not empirical generalization derived from a sample and applied to a population.

#### **The Collection of Data**

- **Data** -- observations yield a detailed, "thick description" [in-depth understanding]; interviews capture direct quotations about people's personal perspectives and lived experiences; often derived from carefully conducted case studies and review of material culture.
- **Personal experience and engagement** -- researcher has direct contact with and gets close to the people, situation, and phenomenon under investigation; the researcher's

personal experiences and insights are an important part of the inquiry and critical to understanding the phenomenon.

- **Empathic neutrality** -- an empathic stance in working with study respondents seeks vicarious understanding without judgment [neutrality] by showing openness, sensitivity, respect, awareness, and responsiveness; in observation, it means being fully present [mindfulness].
- **Dynamic systems** -- there is attention to process; assumes change is ongoing, whether the focus is on an individual, an organization, a community, or an entire culture, therefore, the researcher is mindful of and attentive to system and situational dynamics.

### **The Analysis**

- **Unique case orientation** -- assumes that each case is special and unique; the first level of analysis is being true to, respecting, and capturing the details of the individual cases being studied; cross-case analysis follows from and depends upon the quality of individual case studies.
- **Inductive analysis** -- immersion in the details and specifics of the data to discover important patterns, themes, and inter-relationships; begins by exploring, then confirming findings, guided by analytical principles rather than rules.
- **Holistic perspective** -- the whole phenomenon under study is understood as a complex system that is more than the sum of its parts; the focus is on complex interdependencies and system dynamics that cannot be reduced in any meaningful way to linear, cause and effect relationships and/or a few discrete variables.
- **Context sensitive** -- places findings in a social, historical, and temporal context; researcher is careful about [even dubious of] the possibility or meaningfulness of generalizations across time and space; emphasizes careful comparative case analyses and extrapolating patterns for possible transferability and adaptation in new settings.
- **Voice, perspective, and reflexivity** -- the qualitative methodologist owns and is reflective about her or his own voice and perspective; a credible voice conveys authenticity and trustworthiness; complete objectivity being impossible and pure subjectivity undermining credibility, the researcher's focus reflects a balance between understanding and depicting the world authentically in all its complexity and of being self-analytical, politically aware, and reflexive in consciousness.

### **Basic methodology for a qualitative research design**

1. Identify a general research question.
2. Choose main methods, sites, and subjects for research. Determine methods of documentation of data and access to subjects.

3. Decide what you will collect data on: questions, behaviors to observe, issues to look for in documents (interview/observation guide), how much (of questions, of interviews/observations, etc.).
4. Clarify your role as researcher. Determine whether you will be obtrusive or unobtrusive, objective or involved.
5. Study the ethical implications of the study. Consider issues of confidentiality and sensitivity.
6. Begin to collect data and continue until you begin to see the same, repeated information, and stop finding new information.
7. Interpret data. Look for concepts and theories in what has been collected so far.
8. Revise the research question if necessary and begin to form hypotheses.
9. Collect further data to address revisions. Repeat Steps 6 and 7.
10. Verify your data. Complete conceptual and theoretical work to make your findings. Present your findings in an appropriate form to your audience.

**Some specific limitations associated with using qualitative methods to study research problems in the social sciences include the following:**

- Drifting away from the original objectives of the study in response to the changing nature of the context under which the research is conducted;
- Arriving at different conclusions based on the same information depending on the personal characteristics of the researcher;
- Replication of a study is very difficult;
- Research using human subjects increases the chance of ethical dilemmas that undermine the overall validity of the study;
- An inability to investigate causality between different research phenomena;
- Difficulty in explaining differences in the quality and quantity of information obtained from different respondents and arriving at different, non-consistent conclusions;
- Data gathering and analysis is often time consuming and/or expensive;
- Requires a high level of experience from the researcher to obtain the targeted information from the respondent;
- May lack consistency and reliability because the researcher can employ different probing techniques and the respondent can choose to tell some particular stories and ignore others; and,
- Generation of a significant amount of data that cannot be randomized into manageable parts for analysis.

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