

Qualitative Research Methods in Business and Social Sciences

an Introduction

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Qualitative Research



- Objective
 - Introduce you to new research methods far beyond the tradition of statistical/econometric techniques.
- Encompassing
 - Methods, instruments, data collection, data analysis, technical report, and, ethics.



Qualitative Research

Outline



- Brief introduction
- Definition and Importance
- The process
 - Questions and subjects
 - Methods and instruments
 - Findings and final report
- Ethics

Introduction

- The Scientific Method
 - Observation
 - Literature (prior information)
 - Identify problem and limit the questions
 - Formulation of the hypotheses
 - Testing of hypotheses (data collection and analysis)
 - Conclusions
- Statistical analysis
 - Census
 - Survey
 - Experiments
 - Data from private & public organizations
- Qualitative research
 - Expands the number of variables



What is Qualitative Research?

- It is an inductive systematic approach to describe subjects of research involved in a problem; providing meaning to a complex problem or a series of problems.
- Allows us to:
 - see problems and subjects from many angles.
 - reduce complex situations into tractable problems.
 - obtain in-depth understanding of an issue.
 - answer research questions.
 - analyze problems from subjects' perspectives.



Quantitative vs. Qualitative

- Pursues new knowledge (unfold the true)
- Corrects old knowledge
- Incorporates/finds new knowledge into a body of knowledge (interdisciplinary research).
- Identification of subjects, data collection, analysis, and conclusions.
- Deductive | Inductive
- Quantitative:
 - Statistical, experiments, survey, etc
- Qualitative:
 - Observation, interviews, content analysis



Importance of Qualitative Research

- How many of you have started to think about a research paper idea and discontinues it just because there was not numerical data?
- You may have a research problem but there is not an underlying theory.
- May be you have a complex research problem and there is a need to analyze and synthesize for reducing the dimensionality.
- Helps to conceptualize the research problem.

Using Qualitative Research

- To uncover knowledge from action makers
- Identifies knowledge
 - Emotions, judgments, perceptions, attitudes, perspectives, experiences, feelings, opinions, level of knowledge for a particular issue.
- For identification of context to problem at hand.
- To produce holistic views of a problem.
- Builds up the justification to your theory.
- To pursue better understanding of quant. studies.
 - Justify data requirements

The Process of Qualitative Research

- Identification of a problem (research problem statement)
 - Inconsistencies
 - The issue
 - Difference between reality and best outcomes
- Define the purpose
- Formulate the questions
- Selection of method (research design)
- Choose individuals or subjects of the study

The Process of Qualitative Research

- Data collection
 - Not highly numerical > qualitative:
 - Emotions, judgments, perceptions, attitudes, perspectives, experiences, feelings, opinions, level of knowledge for a particular issue.
 - Actions, reactions, & interactions
- Data analysis
 - Systematic reflexion of the evidence
 - Avoid bias & early judgments
 - Revise your paradigms
 - In the field or after the collection
- Conclusions
 - Are not general as in statistical methods, because they are bounded by context, space, time, and, subjects of study.



How to select research questions?

- Interests will reduce a set of problems
- Select and limit the problem
- Define the goals: general / specific
- Formulate hypotheses and questions



Then:

- Select qualitative research method (design the study)
- Execute the plan
- Do the work on the field
 - Obtain qualitative data

Research Subjects

- Subjects may not be random but selected at convenience.
- Identify criterion for selection
- Sample size
 - Panel (7-12)
 - Interviews (10-20)
 - Resources (money, time, nature of problem)
- The research purpose
- Segmented based on key characteristics
- By referral



Qualitative Research Methods



- Observation
- Interviews
- Content analysis
- Experiments for observation purposes
- Experiential: active engagement
- Survey
- Key Participants / informants
- Panel discussion (focus groups)
- Panel of experts
- Semi-structured interviews
- **Case study**

Instruments of Data Collection



- Journal / diary
- Notebook
- Questionnaire
- Videos
- Telephone interviews
- Chats
- Records by subject and media source
- Email
- Message boards
- Stories
- Roll playing / simulation
- you name it!

Interviews

- Identify the problem with the subject (disclaimer)
- Identify context
- Avoid cumbersome wording of questions
 - Open questions
 - End questions
 - Provide enough detail
- Example:
 - Consumption of dairy products



Observational Research

- What are you going to observe?
- Describe activities and Identify behaviors
- Record keeping of
 - conversations, interactions, structures (e.g. social/organizational business, resources, culture)
- Laws and procedures
- Anthropology
 - Farmers' technologies in Tasmania
- Business
 - Choice of Decisions by CEO's



Content Analysis

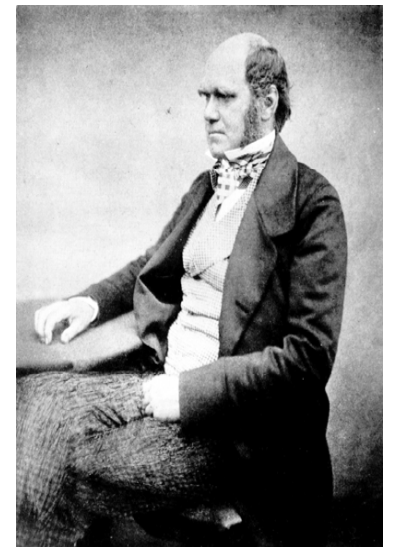
- Summaries from a myriad of sources
- Keeping context and view points
- History:

- Economic History:

- Cotton production and wealth accumulation in Southern States in the 18th and 19th century.

- Biographical studies

- emergence of John Kenneth Galbraith as economic policy maker.
- Influence of David Hume on theories developed by Charles Darwin.



Findings from Qualitative Research

- Purpose
- Relations of cause and effect
- Describe the conflicts with theory
- Description of a new theory
- Propose best solutions to problems
- Elaborated vision for new endeavors
- Inductive
 - Findings can be applied to broader situations
- Results are bounded by the nature of problem, questions, data collection, analysis and interpretation of the data.



Final Report



- Description
- Narrative
- Evidence & analysis
- Sequence of topics (Be creative!)
- Typical order
 - introduction, problem statement (purpose), questions and hypotheses, justification, methods, results, conclusions and recommendations.

Ethics



- Consent and withdrawal
 - Tell the importance of the research project.
- Confidentiality and anonymity
- Information
 - Privacy
 - Protection
- Guidelines of your institution
- Legal consequences

Ethics



- Cultural aspects
 - the limits of appropriateness may be different
- Distinguish between problems
 - Personal
 - Professional (research)
- Be wise and do your **best!!!**

Examples of Qualitative Research

- Evaluation of Relationships
 - CEO / Intermediate management
 - Consumer / Producer
 - Exporter / Importer
 - Country A / Country B
- Consumer Behavior
 - Walking paths of consumers in the supermarket.
 - Analysis of brand choices – *in situ*.
 - Adaptation to self-check out systems.



Business Management



- Evaluation of decisions.
- The process of accumulation of skills.
- Description of organizational structures.
- Review of mechanisms of planning, execution and control.
- The process of adoption of technologies.
- Appraisal of valuable employees.
- Evaluation of performance-based reward systems.
- Strategic planning of the firm.
- Marketing plans for selling goods.
- Communication strategies by organizations.

For Your Bookshelf



- Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods
 - Michael Quinn Patton
 - <http://www.amazon.com/Qualitative-Evaluation-Research-Methods-Michael/dp/0803937792>
- Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches
 - John W. Creswell
 - http://www.amazon.com/Research-Design-Qualitative-Quantitative-Approaches/dp/1412965578/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1286148315&sr=1-1
- Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach
 - Joseph A. Maxwell
 - http://www.amazon.com/Qualitative-Research-Design-Interactive-Approach/dp/0761926089/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1286457219&sr=1-2
- Find Literature Applied to Specific Research Problem
 - Agriculture, business management, anthropology, marketing, public relations,

Planning Qualitative Research

- We are going to make a research plan using qualitative research if and only if time allows it.

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