

Study Guide

Marketing Research Test 4

Qualitative research and research objectives

The data qualitative researchers analyze consists of text (sometimes image) rather than numbers. Some researchers criticize qualitative research as soft, lacking rigor and being inferior. What increases the likelihood of good research is a deliberate, thoughtful, knowledgeable approach whether qualitative or quantitative methods are used. While the reliability and validity of quantitative analysis can be evaluated numerically, the trustworthiness of qualitative analysis depends fundamentally on the rigor of the process used for collecting and analyzing the data.

When magnitude of response and statistical projectability are important, quantitative research should be used to verify and extend qualitative findings. But when the purpose of a research project is to better understand psychoanalytical or cultural phenomena, quantitative research may not offer a great deal of insight or depth. For these topics, qualitative research and analysis often is superior to quantitative research in providing useful knowledge for decision makers.

Differences between quantitative and qualitative analyses

The most apparent difference stems from the nature of the data itself.

1. Qualitative data analysis:

- Is textual (occasionally visual), rather than numerical.
- Tend to be ongoing and iterative (data is analyzed as it is collected, which may affect further data collection efforts in terms who is sampled and what questions are asked).
- Good qualitative researchers employ member checking
- Is largely inductive (the categories, themes, and patterns analysts describe in their reports emerge from the data).
- Qualitative researchers differ in their beliefs about the use of quantifying their data.
- Qualitative researchers use different techniques for data collection

2. Quantitative data analysis

- The goal of quantitative analysis is quantifying the magnitude of variables and relationships, or explaining causal relationships.
- Understanding is the goal of quantitative analysis.
- Quantitative analyses are guided entirely by the researchers.
- The categories, themes, and patterns are defined prior data collection.
- Quantitative data analysis is numerical

Data reduction in qualitative research

The amount of data collected in a qualitative study can be extensive. Researchers must make decisions about how to categorize and represent the data. This results in data reduction. The most systematic method of analysis is to read through transcripts and develop categories to represent the data. When similar topics are encountered, they are coded similarly.

- Categorization and coding of data that is part of the theory development process in qualitative data analysis
 - Consists of many interrelated processes:
 - Categorization and coding
 - Comparison
 - Theory building
 - Iteration and negative case analysis
 - The role of tabulation

- Key Terms:

Categorization (1 st step in DR)	Placing portions of transcripts into similar groups based on their content
Code Sheet	Lists the different themes or categories for a particular study
Codes	Labels or numbers that are used to track categories in a qualitative study
Comparison	Developing and refining theory and constructs by analyzing the differences and similarities in passages, themes, or types of participants
Integration	Moving from the identification of themes and categories to the development of theory

Recursive	A relationship in which a variable can both cause and be caused by the same variable
Selective Coding	Building a storyline around one core category or theme; the other categories will be related to or subsumed to this central overarching category
Iteration	Working through the data several times in order to modify early ideas
Memoing	Writing down thoughts as soon as possible after each interview, focus group, or site visit
Negative Case Analysis	Deliberately looking for cases and instances that contradict the ideas and theories that researchers have been developing

Options for displaying qualitative data

Qualitative researchers typically use visual displays to summarize data. Data displays are important because they help reduce and summarize the extensive textual data collected in the study in a way that conveys major ideas in a compact fashion.

Displays may be tables or figures.

- Tables have rows or row by column formats that cross themes and/or informants.
- Figures may include flow diagrams, traditional box and arrow causal diagrams (often associated with quantitative research);
- diagrams that display circular or recursive relationships;
- trees that display consumers' taxonomies of products;
- consensus maps, which pictures the collective connections that informants make between concepts or ideas;
- and checklists that show all informants and then indicate whether or not each informant possesses a particular attitude, value, behavior, etc.