



## Market Research Lecture

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- This lecture will cover
  - Qualitative Research
  - When to use Qualitative Research
  - Qualitative Research Methods



# Complementary methodologies

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- Fundamentally, qualitative and quantitative are different ways of collecting data
- Textbooks sometimes present qualitative and quantitative as alternatives or as qualitative always leading quantitative
- The reality is that qualitative and quantitative are complementary methodologies



## Qualitative research...

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- Designed to tackle problems of understanding, not measurement
- Allows us to explore in depth attitudes, opinions, and behaviour, more open and flexible, can use projective techniques
- It is about why (reasons and motivations) rather than what and how many



## Qualitative research...

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- Main approaches are group discussions (focus groups) or extended one-on-one interviews (depth interviews); mini-groups; affinity pairs; some observational research
- Interviewing conducted face-to-face, using explorative approaches – although less “structured” it is still a rigorous research technique
- Relatively small samples



# Quantitative research

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- About measurement of WHAT is happening
- Representative sample - draw statistical inferences for entire target population
- High level of control and structure of questionnaire and procedures
- Mode of interview varies (face to face, phone, self-completion, internet)
- Relatively large samples



# When used....

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## **Qualitative**

- Brainstorming/idea generation/testing new products/concepts
- Exploring communications and brand related issues
- Understanding needs, perceptions, behaviours and attitudes
- Aid in development of quantitative research ...  
Measuring the right things, not pre-conceived
- In situations when impractical to obtain reliable quantitative samples

## **Quantitative**

- Measuring size, characteristics, attitudes and behaviours of target populations
- Determining broad behavioural and attitudinal patterns
- Hypothesis testing
- Validation of qualitative findings



# Cost and Time Factors....

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## **Qualitative**

- Cheaper
- Quicker

## **Quantitative**

- More expensive
- Longer

## **However...**

Online quantitative can be very fast and very cost effective

Large scale qualitative studies can be very time consuming and expensive



When to use qualitative research



## When is qualitative research appropriate...

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- When building theories & models to explain consumer behaviour
  - Developing a hypotheses to test
  - Better understanding of “why” – gain insight, motivation/action/attitude
  - Understanding customer purchase behaviour or decision making
  - To build up a mental profile or picture of who these customers really are



## When is qualitative research appropriate...

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- To gain depth about consumer motivation (rational and emotional)
  - As an end in itself – e.g. stand along qualitative
  - As input to a quantitative phase of research:
    - Defining consumer language
    - Identifying service issues/ product attributes/ behavioural alternatives
    - Identifying/ hypothesising market segments to size and measure



## Sometimes qualitative is the only appropriate method ...

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- In situations where it is impractical to obtain reliable quantitative samples e.g.
  - Some professional groups (e.g.. CEOs, specialist doctors)
  - Where the total sample frame consists of only a few individuals
  - In some sensitive topic areas (e.g. drug or alcohol abuse)



## In a dual qualitative/quantitative project, does qualitative come first?

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- Mostly, but not always
  - Defines parameters of content of quantitative survey questionnaire
  - Defines parameters of the issues, attitudes or segments to be examined
- In some cases, quantitative is needed prior to qualitative
  - Defining the sample selection for qualitative
- The final choice (of which comes first) is influenced by the research objectives



## Example 1 Bercham

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- Bercham Recruiting - who recruit into the insurance sector
  - Qualitative research occurred first with focus groups in Melbourne & Sydney with job candidates
  - Subtle but important differences emerged from the responses across these two markets
  - Highlighting the need for an overall quantitative survey
  - Influenced the final survey design



## Example 2 HealthWise Pharmacies

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The quantitative survey happened first, as we already knew the main issues to cover, but needed an overall “big picture” of **what** was happening in the market

- The focus groups then followed up the key quantitative findings to probe into **why** those key findings occurred
- They were conducted across selected locations



# Advantages & disadvantages of qualitative research

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## **Advantages**

Economical and timely data collection  
Exploring all possible behaviours/ attitudes/ perceptions  
Preliminary insights into building models and scale measurements

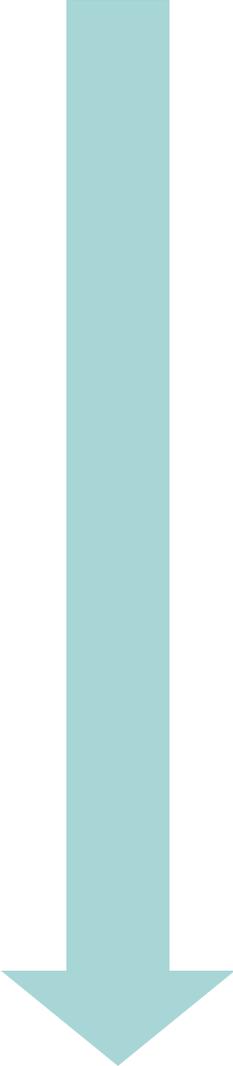
## **Disadvantages**

Risks of making over generalisations from small sample  
Often an inability to distinguish small differences  
Lack of statistical reliability  
Relies heavily on personality and skill of moderator and recruiter



# Keys steps in qualitative research

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Select qualitative mode

Define sample and recruitment specs

Establish timing and locations

Discussion guide & stimulus development

Fieldwork (moderation / interviewing)

Analysis and presentation



# Methods of qualitative research...

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## **The most common methods of qualitative research:**

- In-depth interviews
  - Face-to-face; telephone; online
  - One-on-one; or paired
- Focus groups
  - Face-to-face; online
  - Mini; expert panels; extended time



# Focus groups

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- Usually 8 people per group
- Pre-recruited according to specified criteria which can include:
  - Age, gender, life stage, consumption habits, behaviour, attitudes etc
- Typically about 1.5 hours in duration
- Usually conducted at specialist venues or at a convenient location
- Controlled by a moderator, who is responsible for conducting the research



# The moderator....

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- They play crucial role and must be well trained. They are:
  - Voice of the consumer, but representative of the client
  - Encourage discussion by fostering an open and honest, non-confrontational group environment
  - Deal with group dynamics (constructive and destructive)
  - Are able to draw on different tools and techniques to elicit a range of necessary responses from the group participants



## Strengths and weaknesses of focus groups

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### Strengths

- Interaction between respondents
- Respondent often more at ease
- Public consensus viewpoint
- Allows moderator to be 'creative'
- Can canvass a lot of perspectives at once

### Weaknesses

- Needs highly skilled moderator to correctly capture all points of view
- 'Group think' and confirming to social norms
- One or two respondents can dominate
- Limited air-time per respondent
- Can be hard to cover sensitive subject matter



# In-depth interviews

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- 1 moderator and (usually) 1 respondent
- 1 hour typical duration
- Can be conducted almost anywhere
- Can use general discussion topics, or a semi structured set of questions
- Are used for business to business as well as business to consumer research
- Primary mechanism for motivational research into **why** people think and act the way they do



## In-depth interviews....

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- Respondent gets one on one attention and gets lots of air time
  - In a 1 hour interview that 1 respondent talks for most of the time
  - Do the maths for a 2 hour group (120 minutes with 8 respondents) - and don't forget the moderator will spend time asking questions!



# Strengths and weaknesses of depth-interviews

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## **Strengths**

- Great for sensitive subjects
- Get in-depth insight into individual behaviour
- Good for people who are hard to reach and hard to convene together in a group
- Can be good when over claim is a problem (moderator can spot inconsistencies faster and probe)

## **Weaknesses**

- Time consuming and can require enormous amounts of travel
- Respondent can feel interrogated and put on the spot and can give answers that just try to please
- Can be exhausting for respondent
- Only as good as the person recruited for the interview



## Combining Depth Interviews with Focus Groups

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- Quite often the qualitative research will begin with focus groups and progress on to depth interviews.
- An example was for Gunnersens who make kitchen bench top surfaces.
  - An initial focus group was conducted with people and the main buying issues were identified and worked in the group
  - Then 10 depth interviews were conducted as a detailed follow up
  - All the depth interviews were conducted in the respondent's kitchen, so they were in the most realistic environment possible.
  - This provided an opportunity for them to go into more detail on what they looked for, why, how and also their post purchase evaluation.



# And finally... face to face versus online

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## **Face to face**

'Traditional' qualitative,  
tried and tested

Still the gold standard

Allows for verbal and  
non-verbal interpretation

Visual stimulus can be  
shown

## **Online**

Relatively new in Australia

Real-time = e.g. 'live' chat  
room - fast paced & quick  
turnaround

Over-time = e.g. typically  
3-5 days; asynchronous (at  
time convenient to  
respondent) - Rich,  
considered responses

Visual stimuli can be shown