



Market Research Lecture

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



Complementary methodologies

- 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...

- 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...

- 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

- 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....

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....

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...

- 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...

- 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 ...

- 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?

- 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

- 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

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

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



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...

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

- 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....

- 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

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

- 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....

- 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

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

- 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

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