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LEVEL: 400**Question**

Qualitative research strategy is commonly called  the interpretative research that rely heavily on “thick” verbal descriptions of a particular social context being studied.

Expalin the following concepts used in qualitative research:

1. Trustworthiness

2. Saturation of data

3. Content analysis approach

4. In-depth interview guide

**Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is all about establishing these four things, which are described in more detail below.

**Credibility:** is the how confident the qualitative researcher is in the truth of the research study’s findings.  This boils down to the question of “How do you know that your findings are true and accurate?” Qualitative researchers can use triangulation to show the research study’s findings are credible.

**Transferability**: is how the qualitative researcher demonstrates that the research study’s findings are applicable to other contexts.  In this case, “other contexts” can mean similar situations, similar populations, and similar phenomena. Qualitative researchers can use thick description to show that the research study’s findings can be applicable to other contexts, circumstances, and situations.

**Confirmability**: is the degree of neutrality in the research study’s findings. In other words, this means that the findings are based on participants’ responses and not any potential bias or personal motivations of the researcher. This involves making sure that researcher bias does not skew the interpretation of what the research participants said to fit a certain narrative. To establish confirmability, qualitative researchers can provide an audit trail, which highlights every step of data analysis that was made in order to provide a rationale for the decisions made. This helps establish that the research study’s findings accurately portray participants’ responses.

**Dependability:** is the extent that the study could be repeated by other researchers and that the findings would be consistent. In other words, if a person wanted to replicate your study, they should have enough information from your research report to do so and obtain similar findings as your study did. A qualitative researcher can use inquiry audit in order to establish dependability, which requires an outside person to review and examine the research process and the data analysis in order to ensure that the findings are consistent and could be repeated.

**Saturation of data**

Data saturation is a term used in research to indicate that no new information is expected to be added that will enhance or change the findings of a study. Data saturation is important to achieve. It is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study, when the ability of obtain additional new information has been attained, and when further coding (identification of themes) is no longer feasible.

Yet the concept of data saturation is considered to be a neglected one. This is because it is a concept that is hard to define. What is data saturation for one is not nearly enough for another.

There are two ways in which data saturation plays itself out in research:

1. Data saturation in sampling

When a researcher chooses respondents for a study (conducts ‘sampling’), they may do so using ‘theoretical sampling’. This means they will continue adding new units to the sample until the study has reached a saturation point; that is, until no new data are produced through inclusion and analysis of new units. Theoretical sampling is an approach to acquiring respondents for research that is related to an approached called ‘grounded theory’ and is characterised by the fact that the collection of data is controlled by the emerging theory. The researcher has to constantly look for new units and data, and justify the theoretical purpose for which each additional group is included in the study. This type of approach to sampling is uncommon due to the constraints of a fixed budget which determines the design of the study and its sampling parameters.

Researchers often struggle with knowing how to estimate how many interviews will be required to reach data saturation and again, are often dictated by project budgets. When deciding on a study design, researchers should aim for one that is explicit regarding how data saturation is reached. To best achieve data saturation, good care should be taken in sampling a cross section of populations of interest, so that a full range of views is likely to be heard.

2. Data saturation in qualitative interview

In-depth interview and focus groups are two commonly used methods of qualitative research. They each involve the search for depth of meaning, unlike a quantitative survey which tends to focus on close-ended questions such as yes/no or rating scales. A focus group or in-depth interview is an exploratory form of research. It is open ended and less formally structured than a survey. The interviewer needs to investigate the topic of interest with the respondent until there is nothing left to add. This may be done by using questions at the end of the interview such as ‘Anything else?’ or ‘Do I need to know anything other than what I have asked you?’ This is done to ensure that saturation has been achieved; that there is nothing else to add to the topic of interest.

Failure to reach data saturation in qualitative research has an impact on the quality of the research and compromises the validity of the content. However, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to obtaining data saturation. There are data collection methods that are more likely to reach data saturation than others, although these methods are highly dependent on the study design.

Unfortunately, data saturation can really only be known after the fact, once qualitative interviews have been conducted and data has been analysed. Yet market research is typically planned, justified and costed ahead of time. So, achieving data saturation in reality, must be a combination of sensible sampling, good research design, well designed research tools, and the reality of the commercial parameters to the project.

**Content of analysis approach**

Researchers use content analysis to find out about the purposes, messages, and effects of communication content. They can also make inferences about the producers and audience of the texts they analyze.

Content analysis can be used to[quantify](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/qualitative-quantitative-research/) the occurrence of certain words, phrases, subjects or concepts in a set of historical or contemporary texts.

**How to conduct content analysis**

If you want to use content analysis in your research, you need to start with a clear, direct [research question](https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/research-questions/).

**Example research question for content analysis**

Is there a difference in how the US media represents male and female politicians in terms of trustworthiness?

Next, you follow these five steps.

**1. Select the content you will analyze**

Based on your research question, choose the texts that you will analyze. You need to decide:

* The medium (e.g. newspapers, speeches or websites) and genre (e.g. opinion pieces, political campaign speeches, or marketing copy)
* The criteria for inclusion (e.g. newspaper articles that mention a particular event, speeches by a certain politician, or websites selling a specific type of product)
* The parameters in terms of date range, location, etc.

If there are only a small amount of texts that meet your criteria, you might analyze all of them. If there is a large volume of texts, you can select a [sample](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/sampling-methods/).

To research media representations of male and female politicians, you decide to analyze news articles and opinion pieces in print newspapers between 2017–2019. Because this is a very large volume of content, you choose three major national newspapers and sample only Monday and Friday editions.

**2. Define the units and categories of analysis**

Next, you need to determine the level at which you will analyze your chosen texts. This means defining:

* The **unit(s) of meaning** that will be coded. For example, are you going to record the frequency of individual words and phrases, the characteristics of people who produced or appear in the texts, the presence and positioning of images, or the treatment of themes and concepts?
* The**set of categories** that you will use for coding. Categories can be objective characteristics (e.g. female, aged 40-50, lawyer, mother) or more conceptual (e.g.trustworthy, corrupt, conservative, family oriented)

**3. Develop a set of rules for coding**

Coding involves organizing the units of meaning into the previously defined categories. Especially with more conceptual categories, it’s important to clearly define the rules for what will and won’t be included to ensure that all texts are coded consistently.

Coding rules are especially important if multiple researchers are involved, but even if you’re coding all of the text by yourself, recording the rules makes your method more transparent and reliable.

**4. Code the text according to the rules**

You go through each text and record all relevant data in the appropriate categories. This can be done manually or aided with computer programs, such as [QSR NVivo](https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo/products), [Atlas.ti](https://atlasti.com/learning/free-training/" \t "_blank) and [Diction](https://www.dictionsoftware.com/), which can help speed up the process of counting and categorizing words and phrases.

**5. Analyze the results and draw conclusions**

Once coding is complete, the collected data is examined to find patterns and draw conclusions in response to your research question. You might use statistical analysis to find [correlations](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/correlational-research/) or trends, [discuss](https://www.scribbr.com/dissertation/discussion/) your interpretations of what the results mean, and make inferences about the creators, context and audience of the texts.

**IN DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE**

An in-depth interview guide is a method for structuring an interview and ensuring that important questions will not be forgotten during the interview. You need to have specific objectives in mind when you are figuring out what to ask. You should ask questions in natural, conversational language avoid jargon or technical terms your respondents may not know

COMPONENTS OF AN IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

**Purpose and introduction:** its purpose is to convince a potential respondent to complete an interview. Interviewers should introduce themselves and the reason the research is being conducted. The introduction of the topic should not give away too many details about exactly what you’ll be asking, but should be sufficiently informative so that the person will agree to speak to you. Emphasize the social value of the research.

**Questions:** In an in-depth interview, the questions themselves make up the vast majority of the guide. **Conclusion:** The interviewer ends the interview by asking if respondents have any last suggestions or comments about the topic.

**WRITING GOOD IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS**

**Ask open-ended questions:** Questions should reveal what respondents are thinking not what you think they are thinking. They should encourage an expansive, detailed reply. Use open-ended questions especially at the beginning of an interview to identify themes.

Closed-ended questions are not off-limits: use them to narrow responses later in the guide, to bring greater focus to key questions, or clarify and confirm points.

**Ask effective probing questions:** Probes reveal greater detail by clarifying or expanding upon earlier responses. Good probing generates conversation, the focus is on the response, not on the person providing the response. Examples include, What else, what does that mean to you, help me understand, etc. Ask respondents to think back: Ask respondents to “think back” to a specific event and reflect on their personal experience. This strategy invites concrete, specific responses, and grounds respondents in their own experiences, attitudes and beliefs, as opposed to having responses that are based on “what others have said” or popular opinion. Keep questions simple: Think of the shortest, most direct way to ask a question. Avoid questions with multiple interpretations, or a question that is really asking two questions at once.

**Avoid asking “why”:** “Why” puts respondents on the defensive; these questions can sound like an interrogation, feel inflammatory or rude, or have unpleasant associations (e.g., whining children or accusing parents). Consider alternatives. Instead of “Why do you prefer that type of program,” ask “What are the major reasons you prefer that type of program? What do you like about it?”

**Be cautious about giving examples:** By giving examples, you risk limiting respondents’ responses (they may not think beyond the example). Consider using examples as part of your probing questions, after respondents have already given their input.