



Strategic Market Research

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*Chapter 3: Choosing
the Right Method*



Qualitative or Quantitative

■ Qualitative Research

- Overview: General thoughts, feelings, usage patterns, etc.
- Delivery: Excellent moderator using research technique he/she is comfortable with will provide useful information.
- Examples: focus groups, individual interviews, observations of product usage.
- When: Little or no research has been done on the topic and project is somewhat exploratory (do before quantitative).



Qualitative or Quantitative

■ Quantitative Research

- Overview: Numeric data, large sample sizes (100 to 1000s)
- Delivery: A well-worded survey that is thoughtful and covers the major issues will deliver tremendous value.
- Examples: Internet surveys, mail surveys, in-person intercept surveys.
- When: Want to collect numeric data.



When to Use Qualitative?

- Little or no research has already been conducted on the topic
- Objective of research is somewhat exploratory
- There is a need to explore some issues in depth to understand thoughts, feelings, behaviors
- There is some uncertainty about the issues that may be influencing behavior



When to Use Quantitative?

- Qualitative research has already been conducted
- Major thoughts, feelings, behaviors have already been illuminated among this customer group
- Objective is to measure specific thoughts, feelings, behaviors among a broader set of people.



Qualitative Methods

- Focus Groups, Minigroups Triads
 - Overview: Group discussions moderated by a facilitator.
 - Advantages: Get a broad overview from numerous people in small amount of time; Use group dynamic to explore issues in a way that is more difficult with an individual.
 - Disadvantages: Sometimes group dynamic can interfere with collection of accurate thoughts and feelings from the participants (group think); Group Polarization: people's individual views are intensified if all participants share similar views.



Qualitative Methods

■ Individual Interviews

- Overview: Talking to only one person.
- Advantages: Allow you to explore individual motivations and get first-hand stories of how people use products and services (also reveal how someone lives and works).
- Disadvantages: Tend to involve fewer total respondents and require a significant amount of time; Also result in so much depth with one person that finding patterns is hard.



Qualitative Methods

■ In-Depth Telephone Interviews

- Overview: Useful when interviewing a small number of people who are spread across a wide geography.
- Advantages: Schedule the interview at the participants' convenience; Don't need to travel to collect your data; Useful for sensitive subject matter (anonymity).
- Disadvantages: Limited time that people want to spend on the phone; People have tendency to multitask; Cannot see people you are interviewing (non verbal communication).



Qualitative Methods

■ Shop-Alongs

- Overview: Shopping trips made with respondents to stores where they normally shop to observe how they purchase.
- Advantages: See how people really buy items vs. how they claim to do so; Learn how stores and retailing techniques influence buying behavior.
- Disadvantages: Not useful to learn “why” people buy products – its better for “how;” Very time consuming; the researcher’s presence can affect respondent’s behavior.



Qualitative Methods

■ Observations

- Overview: Watch shoppers purchase items they buy.
- Advantages: See the difference between what people say they do vs. what they really do; Useful to do before starting qualitative research to understand the market as it exists.
- Disadvantages: Time consuming and not always easy to draw conclusions from observing people at a distance.



Qualitative Methods

■ Online Discussion & Focus Groups

- Overview: Moderator posting a question and respondents posting their answers online. Useful when respondents are not close enough geographically.
- Advantages: Generates a discussion among a national audience; People feel more comfortable interacting online vs in person (anonymity).
- Disadvantages: Do not occur in person so you cannot observe nonverbal communication; Possibility that people lie or those participating are pretending to be the people with whom you actually want to speak.



Quantitative Methods

■ Internet Surveys

- Overview: Use online systems/tools to collect data from respondents using interactive questionnaires.
- Advantages: Fairly representative of the population in general; Allows researchers to program skip patterns into questionnaires to explore specific issues in detail; One can survey low incidence populations (consumer groups that are only 1 to 5% of the population); More affordable.
- Disadvantages: Some consumer groups are difficult to reach with online surveys (elderly and consumers with low incomes).



Quantitative Methods

■ In-Person Surveys

- Overview: Soliciting individual opinions face to face.
- Advantages: Catch people right after they have engaged in a behavior or had an experience (other methods allow for time for impressions to fade); Generally more accurate.
- Disadvantages: Respondents generally can only give a few minutes of time to complete the survey; Average interview is only 3 to 5 minutes long; Can be longer if you bring a respondent to a facility.



Quantitative Methods

■ Telephone Surveys

- Overview: One on one questions and answers over the phone. Previously as popular as Internet surveys.
- Advantages: Almost everyone has a phone; Interviewer can determine if respondent understands questions and can clarify if not; Interviewer can dissuade a respondent from hanging up.
- Disadvantages: People filter calls from people they don't know; 13% of US households only have a cell phone (less accessible, more cost and limited demographic).



Quantitative Methods

■ Mail Surveys

- Overview: Send questionnaire to respondents by mail to be completed at home and returned by the same method.
- Advantages: Cost effective; can reach a wide audience.
- Disadvantages: Difficult to have the level of question specificity you can get with a phone interview; Cannot program skip patterns; Instructions can be misunderstood and not easily clarified; Respondents might not complete the survey or take a long time to return it.



Quantitative Methods

■ Mixed Methods

- Overview: Combine two or even three different methods.
- Advantages: Leverage the best of each method chosen.
- Disadvantages: Requires more preparation, supervision.



Quantitative Methods

- Emerging Methods
 - Internet Video Diaries
 - Webcams with Discussion Forums
 - Cell Phone Surveys
 - Text Messaging