



Qualitative Research

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Objectives:

- To understand the basic concepts of qualitative study design
- To differentiate between qualitative and quantitative study designs
- To understand the basic design features of qualitative design

Types of research

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graph TD; A[Types of research] --> B[Quantitative]; A --> C[Qualitative]; B --> D[Observational]; B --> E[Experimental];
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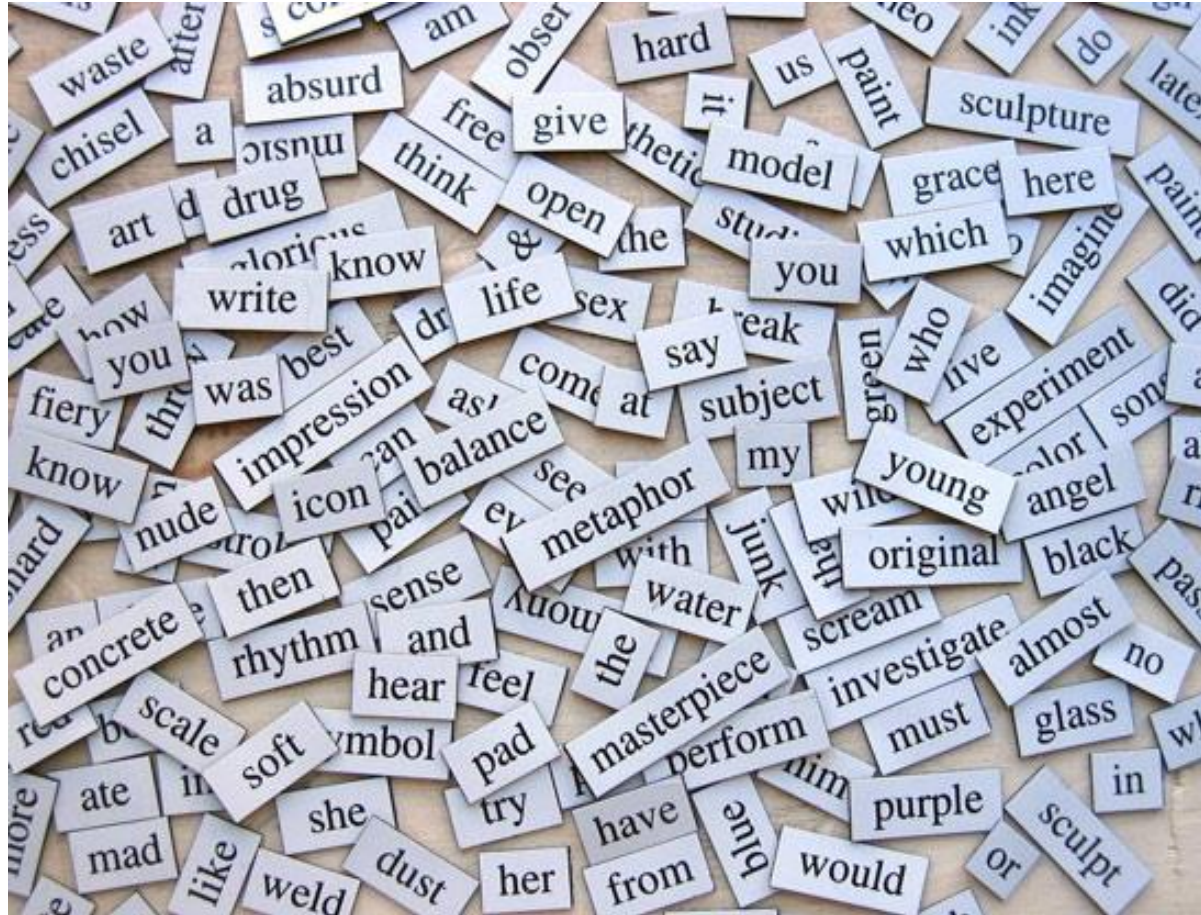
Quantitative

Qualitative

Observational

Experimental

Qualitative research



Qualitative research

- **Naturalistic approach**
- **Holistic:** no single reality – reality is based on perceptions – it is different for each person – changes over time
- **Words** rather than numbers to describe findings
- **Depth** and **richness** of information
- Emphasizes seeing the world from the **perspective of the participants**



Qualitative research

- **Interpretive**: goal is **understanding** rather than prediction
- **Reflexivity** / active use of researcher as research instrument
- Emphasizes the **subjective** dimensions of human experiences
- Assumes a **dynamic reality**
- **Inductive** in nature



Qualitative research question: (Why/ How)

➤ Answers the **WHY** question:

- Why do young girls continue to smoke? Eg. Hilary Graham's research
- Why do young men engage in many high-risk activities?
- Why are some health care services inequitable provided?
- Why has a clinical trial failed...? Why has it worked?

Qualitative research question: (Why/ How)

➤ Answers the **HOW** question:

- How opinions and attitudes are formed
- How people are affected by the events that go on around them
- How and why cultures have developed in the way they have

Qualitative data:

- Text/story
- No numbers
- Statistical inference has no role in qualitative research

I: Yeah, I said... what I haven't talked about and things I haven't mentioned to you is things like the visits they do and things like how they can maximise the value of some of the things... because it's starting with them. So, if they go on a visit and they want to record things or recognise what they're learning in some ways... then they are...

R: I totally understand what you're saying, you know... perhaps the next thing to do, might be, if it would fit in with you, would be for us to sit in on some planning activities, so maybe a visit somewhere. I don't know... and to be part of that planning process but for us to be thinking about how we might talk to you about technology things, or things that technology might do because it fits in with what you might want to achieve with that activity, do you see what I mean?

I: T's organising a London Planetarium visit, so that's another... we haven't got a date for that, I don't think.

R: Yeah, that's fine, what's the best way of us working with you and thinking of these activities. That's really... when do you plan them, how do you plan them...?

I: Community meeting. So, you could come in, we could agree on a community meeting that you could come to where we plan the planetarium and the college visit.

R: Yeah, that would probably... because it needs to be part of your normal process and...

I: Yeah. So, T... when do you think you want to go to the planetarium?

T: I don't know.

I: When should we plan it... should we do something early next week, plan a visit to the planetarium.

T: Yeah, I think we should definitely go sometime in March.

[] Mentor identified Focus of Attention ... "How can they maximise the value..."

[] Learner confirmation of gap... "I don't know"

[] Researcher illustrating participatory focus of activity "if it would fit in with you"

[] Mentor highlighting learner-centred activity "T's (T is the learner) organising..."

[] Mentor confirming participatory nature of activity "we could agree..."

[] Mentor acting as a Form of Assistance for Learner (in response to "I don't know" remark)

Sampling techniques:

Non-random sampling

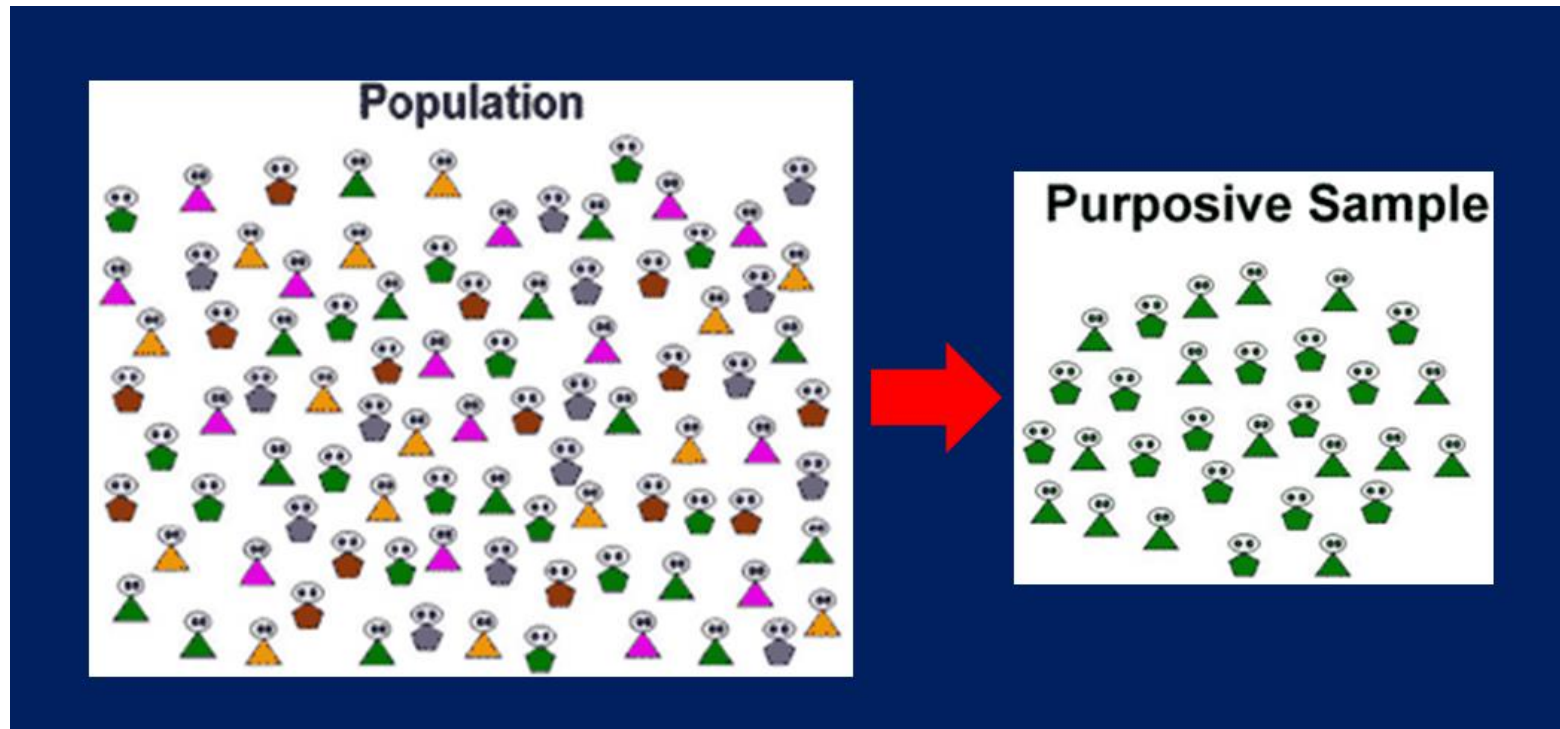
- Purposive
- Snowballing
- Quota
- Convenient



Saturation: a situation in data collection in which participants' descriptions become repetitive & confirm previously collected data

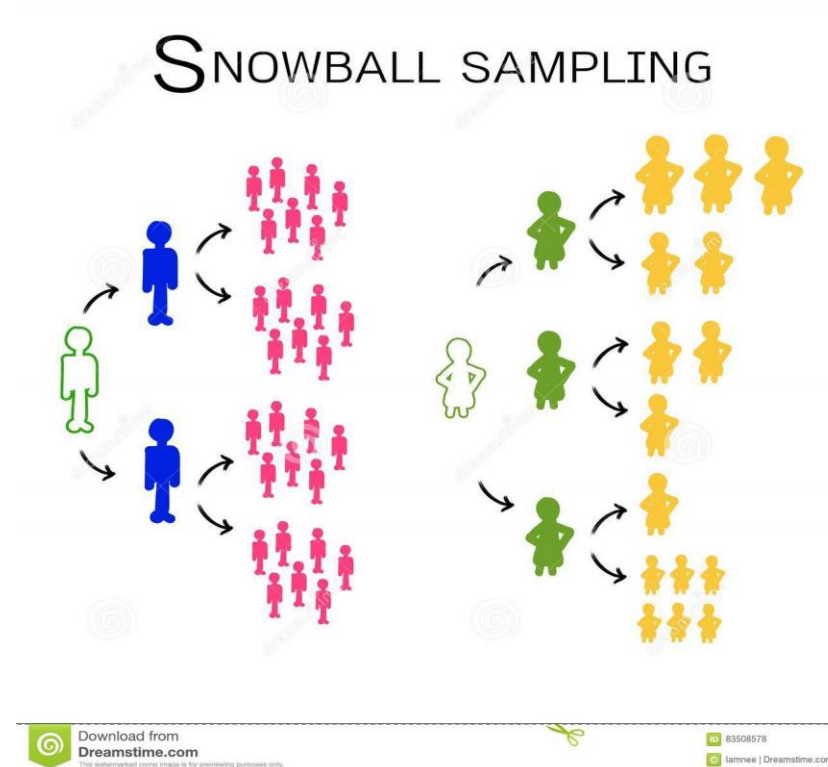
Purposive sampling:

Researcher seeks out elements that meet specific criteria.



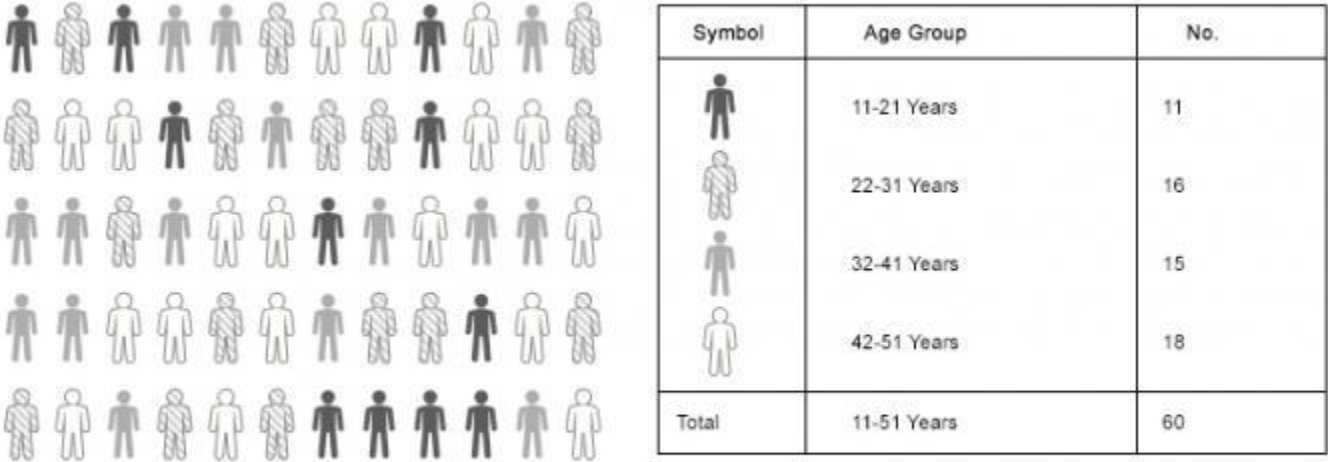
Snowball:

Researcher relies on participant referrals to recruit new participants.



Quota sampling:

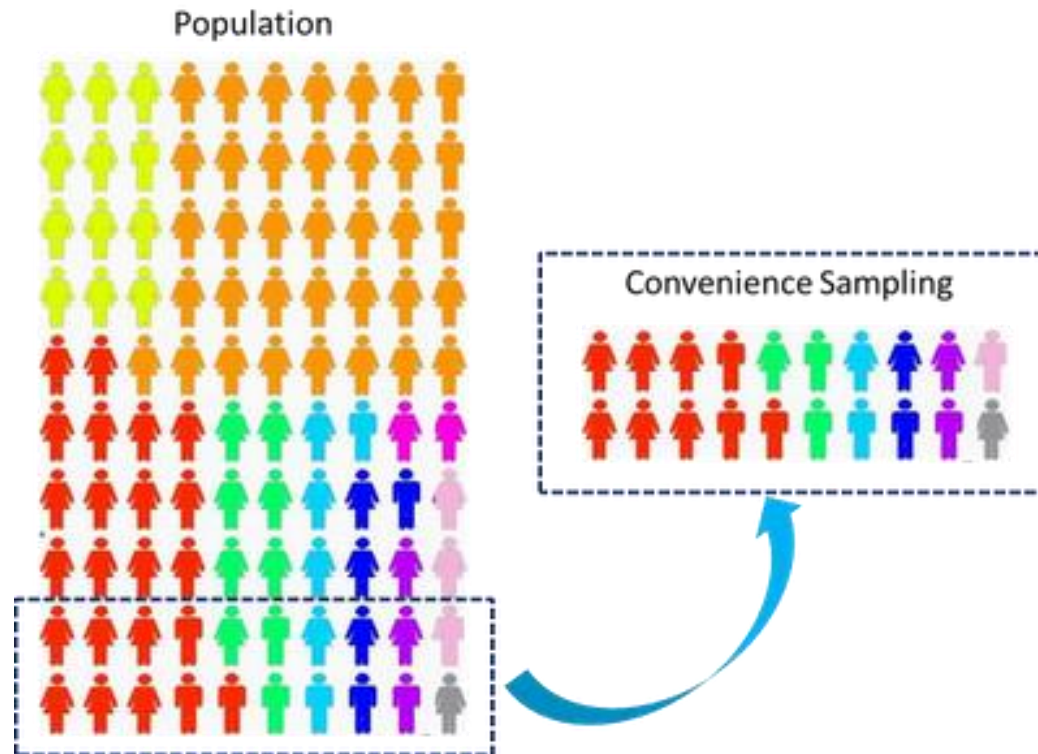
Researcher selects cases from within several different subgroups.



Quota Sampling

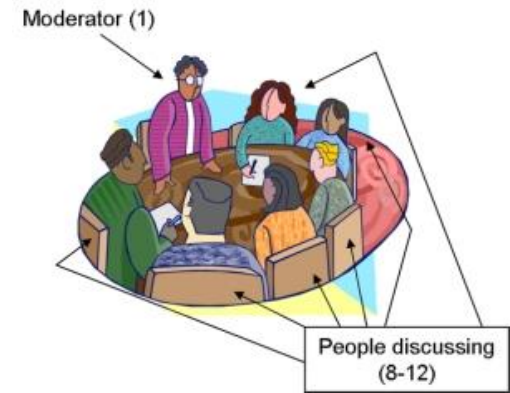
Convenient:

Researcher gathers data from whatever cases happen to be convenient.



Data collection methods:

- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Observations
- Documents



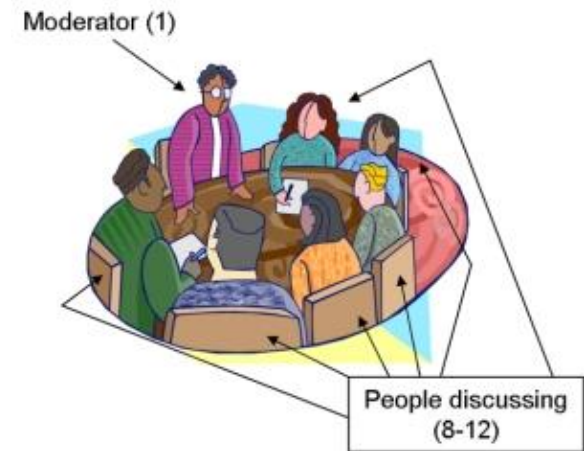
Face-to-face interviews

- Semi-structured interviews
- Open-ended questions
- Flexible in probing, expanding, question order.
- Researcher can elicit more in-depth response or fill in information if participant doesn't understand the question
- Certainty about who answered the questions
- Cost time and money



Focus group

- A number of respondents to be brought together to discuss an issue.
- Ideal size: 6 – 12 people
- To generate a broad ranging output
- Homogeneity and anonymity in selection of groups



Dealing with data and data analysis:

- During data collection interviews are usually recorded (audio/visually).
- Transcribed verbatim.
- Field notes and journals
- Reading, rereading, analyzing, synthesizing & reporting
- Cyclical
- Extensive amount of time
- Data similar in meaning are clustered together
- CAQDAS

- I: Yeah, I said... what I haven't talked about and things I haven't mentioned to you is things like the visits they do and things like how they can maximise the value of some of the things... because it's starting with them. So, if they go on a visit and they want to record things or recognise what they're learning in some ways... then they are...
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- R: Yeah, that would probably... because it needs to be part of your normal process and...
- I: Yeah. So, T... when do you think you want to go to the planetarium?
- T: I don't know.
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TABLE 1 Participants' Demographic Data

Demographic characteristic	No.	%
Age		
20–30	11	50
31–40	5	23
41–50	6	27
Education		
Primary and elementary school	4	18
High school	10	45
University	8	37
Marital status		
Single	7	32
Married	14	64
Divorced	1	4
Occupation		
Housekeeper	10	45
Occupied	12	55
Total	22	100

SOCIAL BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S HEALTH

Gender inequalities. Some of the participants complained about gender inequality. This was a concept that was revealed by the participants in different and complex ways such as “negative/painful experiences,” “becoming happier to have a male embryo, even during prenatal period,” and “don’t spend enough money on their wives after marriage.” The participants from lower socioeconomic groups experienced more frequent and more negative experience of gender inequality. One of the participants said, “I am 47, I have four children, but I still have to ask for my husband’s permission for every little thing, I have no freedom.” Another participant explained the discrimination as follows: “When they want to curse somebody, they say, ‘You are even more inferior than a woman’. It seems that being a female is a kind of curse.”

Burden of responsibilities. Multiple and difficult duties were identified as another social barrier determining the women’s health perceptions. The married women and those who had children experienced more responsibility and overload than singles and those with no children. The participants mentioned less marital satisfaction and less support from their husband, as one participant stated:

Nobody cares for us (housewives); you are busy with cleaning, washing, and cooking at home from the very morning to night, but nobody appreciates you. I wish somebody cared about me, thought about me, listened to me, or even just said a small thankyou.

Overall, the women with multiple roles reported more negative health problems and less social support, and the single ones mainly complained of caring for their old sick parents.

Research trustworthiness (evaluation)

Quantitative	Qualitative	
Internal validity	Credibility	Are the findings believable?
External validity	Transferability	Are the findings applicable elsewhere?
Instrument reliability	Dependability	If the study were repeated, would the same findings emerge?
Intra-observer reliability	Confirmability	Has the researcher biased the findings?

Which is better?

- ▶ Qualitative research is not intrinsically better or worse than quantitative research.
- ▶ Research design should be selected depending on research question.
- ▶ Qualitative research is **complementary** to quantitative research.
Both processes produce different kinds of knowledge that are valued by the profession and both are needed to promote excellence in practice

Mixed method study design:

- **Detailed description** and **inductive** reasoning provided by a qualitative study can be a stepping stone to a quantitative study that gathers **detailed measurements** of phenomena in a range of settings.
- Quantitative survey may **pose questions** that require the **in-depth** interpretation by an interview or focus group.
- Combining the two methodologies is known as **mixed-methods** research.

Comparison of Qualitative and Quantitative approaches

Quantitative	Qualitative
Deductive (theory testing)	Inductive (develop theory)
Large, random samples	Small, purposive samples
Generalizability, representativeness	May, or may not, be representative
'Objective' instruments (attitude/ outcome scales)	Less structured instruments (interviews)
Results as number and statistics	Results as words and concepts
Infer to population	Do not infer to population
'Distance' between researcher and subjects	Reflexivity and attention to individual participants
Emphasis on following original research plan	Flexibility of approach

References:

- Bryman A (2001) Social Research Methods. Oxford University Press.

