

# QUALITATIVE RESEARCH – NATURE, CHARACTERISTICS, SIGNIFICANCE, CRITIQUE

## Unit Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Meaning of Qualitative Research
- 1.3 Nature of Qualitative Research
- 1.4 Characteristics of Qualitative Research
- 1.5 Significance of Qualitative Research
- 1.6 Critique of Qualitative Research
- 1.7 Summary
- 1.8 Questions
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## 1.0 OBJECTIVES

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- 1. To understand the meaning of Qualitative Research
- 2. To learn about the nature, characteristics, significance of qualitative research

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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In this chapter you would learn about meaning of Qualitative Research its nature, characteristics, significance and critique. Learning this subject of qualitative research methodology would help you fetch jobs in NGOs or even in higher studies right up to PhD and beyond. Qualitative Research is an interesting, relatable topic as it emphasis on doing sociology and it's a practical in nature.

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## 1.2 MEANING OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

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The word "qualitative" suggests an emphasis on the characteristics of things as well as on actions and meanings that are not empirically investigated or measured. In qualitative research the social construction of reality, the close bond amongst the researcher and the subject of the study exists. The focus is also upon understanding the context by qualitative researchers. These researchers emphasise how value-laden research is. They look for responses to queries like how social interaction is produced and given meaning in day-to-day life. Quantitative studies, on the other hand, place more emphasis on measuring and analysing the causal connections between variables than on processes. Many social and

behavioural scientists view qualitative modes of inquiry as a perspective on how to approach examining a research as well (Denzin, et.al. 2005).

The goal of qualitative research, is to understand why individuals act, react, and think the way they do. Interview method is used massively within the qualitative research. These interviews can last from one sitting which could be 2 -3 hours or even could be conducted at periodic intervals like twice a week. Participant observation is also one of the key tool which is used in qualitative research. Hence, Qualitative interviewing and even focus groups is used to create concepts, tactics, or, for instance, an appreciation of processes of the groups or institutions. In qualitative research the samples are typically small. In the gathering and analysis of data, the focus of qualitative research is typically on words rather than quantitative. Almost any research scenario that doesn't revolve around determining "how many" can be adapted to qualitative research. The advantage of using a qualitative technique is that you need not begin with a rigid "hypothesis" that needs to be proven. Instead, the quality of the data and insights produced is improved by the open-ended methodology, which may be modified and changed as the research is being conducted. In a way, the quality of the data and insights produced is improved by the open-ended methodology, which may be modified and changed as the research is being conducted. Flexible, open-ended procedures are used to collect data for qualitative research, and the variety of participant responses is valued. Interaction between the researcher and the subject of the study is emphasised in qualitative research. It acknowledges how connections and human interaction are constantly evolving.

Using microanalytic inquiry, Qualitative researchers investigate, assess, and diagnose mechanisms, behaviors, systems, or organisations in areas like problem-solving (such as drug errors), teaching and learning (such as delivering bad news, patient noncompliance), "natural" interactions (such as bonding or sensitive issues like abuses), indicators (such as pain expressions), or situations. (e.g., systems of drug administration or the operations of patient care).

The qualitative research is very important and unquestionably adds to our understanding of the effectiveness, costs, morbidity, and mortality of healthcare.

- It investigates the subjective according to standards of merit. It helps in understanding the perceptions, beliefs, and values.

Qualitative research provides more than just explanation, illumination, or comprehension. This knowledge enables us to acknowledge our humanity in both good and bad circumstances, to offer healthcare, and to structure organizations, programs, and policies appropriately. Any crucial information is easily provided by qualitative research. Morse, J. M. (2004).

Using first-hand experience, genuine reporting, and quotations from real conversations, qualitative research seeks to gain a deeper understanding. It

tries to comprehend how participants interpret their environment and how that interpretation affects their behaviour.

In qualitative research, data is gathered through observation. Choosing and documenting human activities as they occur in their environment is called observation. When other techniques are ineffective, observation can be used to do research, create detailed descriptions of groups or events, and find information that would otherwise be inaccessible.

Researchers from the fields of psychology, anthropology, sociology, and programme evaluation frequently use observation in their work. Direct observation minimises distortion caused by an instrument between the observer and what is being observed (e.g., questionnaire). It takes place outside, not in a lab or under well controlled conditions. When observing people and their surroundings, the context or backdrop of conduct is taken into account. Also, it can be applied to people who have trouble speaking, including children or people who are reluctant to do so.

Some of the major types of qualitative research designs are – Case study, ethnography, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, narrative analysis, grounded theory, participatory Action research, cultural studies, Gender studies.

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### **1.3 NATURE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

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The nature of Qualitative Research has been inspired by several earlier scholars who belong from both Sociology and Anthropology. These scholars developed the methods wrote books about them. Like Weber, Schutz, Geertz, Malinowski, William Whyte. All these people directly or indirectly influenced the nature of Qualitative Research. Let's take the example of Data collection. Social scientists have long used the data collection techniques that are associated with qualitative research. The most well-known of these techniques is participant observation, which requires the researcher's prolonged immersion among individuals they are trying to understand, in order to produce a comprehensive, in-depth description of the group, organisation, or whatever they are trying to understand.

Malinowski expressly argued for the fieldwork method just after the turn of the century when he urged the social anthropologist to leave the verandah and mingle with the locals. The term "ethnography" is frequently used to describe qualitative research and it suggests that participant observers and qualitative researchers in general are related to anthropology.

The method of data collection that qualitative research is most likely most strongly connected with is participant observation. Unstructured interviewing is where the researcher has no direction and gives the subjects a lot of freedom and this is a preferred strategy while conducting interviews. Although most participant observers engage in some degree of such interviewing, it is qualitative researchers who do so almost

exclusively. These interviews have a very different goal than the common survey method. Some work with a loose collection of subjects they aim to cover, while some qualitative researchers employ an interview timetable. The subject is given a significantly more thorough treatment in both cases.

Different perspectives are associated with the development of qualitative research like -

One of the philosophical forerunners of the qualitative research approach is frequently considered to be Max Weber's concept of *verstehen* (see, for instance, Filstead, 1970, p. 4). Meaning "to understand". Weber prioritised Sociology as a comprehension in the twentieth century, stating that it was a science that sought to interpretively grasp social action in order to arrive at a causal explanation for its causes and effects (Weber, 1947, p. 90). Weber identified two types of understanding: "explanatory" or "motivatory" understanding, in which "the particular act has been put in an intelligible sequence of action, it is the knowledge which can be gained from direct observation of the meaning of a given act" (p. 94).

Phenomenological research aims to comprehend and characterise a phenomenon's fundamental elements. The methodology examines human experience in daily life while putting aside the researchers' prior notions about the phenomenon.

Symbolic interactionism is a sociological theoretical perspective that examines how meaningful, regular face-to-face encounters between people help to create and maintain society.

Naturalism encompasses two interconnected themes i.e a dislike of artificial research methods that are seen to produce distorted images of social reality and a desire to expose the social world in a way that is congruent with the perception that its participants have of that world. travelling with them (Bryman, 2016).

Hence the nature of qualitative research has been influenced by several theories, concepts, disciplines, thinkers and school of thought. Qualitative research can answer why a respondent has answered in a specific way for a question asked. Rich descriptive data and an all-encompassing image of the subject under study are obtained with the aid of qualitative research. It provides a holistic description of people, systems, situations, interactions, and processes that enables interpretation and theory development. Participants in qualitative research are viewed as equal members of the research. Therefore, qualitative research is a suitable option for giving the voiceless a voice. It aids in the growth of new places that would have otherwise gone undeveloped for a very long time.

### **Check your progress**

1. What is unstructured interviewing?

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2. Write the meaning of qualitative research in few lines.

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## **1.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

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### **1. The natural world (natural setting):**

Field data are gathered by qualitative researchers in the areas where participants are confronted with the problem or subject under study. Researchers using qualitative methods don't alter the individuals' daily routines or surrounding conditions. Direct conversations with individuals and observation of their actions in a natural setting are used to obtain information.

### **2. Using researchers as a crucial tool (researcher as key instrument):**

The primary methods used by qualitative researchers to gather their own data include participant observation, documentation, and direct participant interviews. Since they are the only source of data for the study, these researchers typically don't use any instruments or questionnaires created by other researchers.

### **3. Multiple data sources:**

Instead of depending solely on one source of data, qualitative researchers typically opt to gather the necessary information from a variety of sources, including interviews, documentation, and observations.

### **4. Inductive analysis of data:**

qualitative researchers construct categories, patterns, and themes to get a comprehensive conclusion.

### **5. The participants' meaning:**

Instead of focusing on the meaning that previous authors or researchers have transmitted in specific works of literature, the researcher must devote their complete attention to understanding the meaning that they have learned about the subject or research problem from the participants.

## **6. Developing design:**

Qualitative researchers contend that their field is dynamic and always changing. This could imply that the initial plan is not a requirement that must be followed and that, once the researcher enters the field and begins to gather data, all phases of the research may vary. As long as the modifications remain consistent with attaining the research goals, namely learning more about the problem or research issue helps.

## **7. A theoretical viewpoint (theoretical lens):**

When doing their research, qualitative researchers frequently draw on certain viewpoints, including ethnography, cultural ideas, gender disparities, ethnicity, and others.

## **8. Interpretive:**

The observations, perceptions, and understandings of qualitative researchers are often interpreted. Since researchers, readers, and participants frequently interpret qualitative research differently, it may appear that diverse perspectives on a topic or issue are presented.

## **9. A comprehensive account:**

A nuanced picture of a study, issue or problem is often what qualitative researchers aim to create. The viewpoints and elements involved with the issue as a whole are described by researchers.

It can also answer why a respondent has answered in a specific way for a question asked. The methodology used in quantitative research needs to be complementing the topic matter. In qualitative research, the data gathered has a predictive quality. It mostly functions within fluid structures. The results drawn from qualitative research might take into account the complexity of the data and encourages a thorough comprehension of human personality and behaviour characteristics in their natural environments.

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## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

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The significance of Qualitative Research is very vast. Qualitative research tackles the "how" and "why" research questions and allows for a deeper knowledge of experiences, phenomena, and context. To better comprehend human experience, qualitative research enables you to pose questions that are difficult to answer. It is incredibly effective at bringing about constructive social change. Respect for each person's uniqueness is upheld throughout the qualitative research. The best way to interpret and comprehend societal interactions is through research. Qualitative research increases the researcher's enthusiasm for a certain topic. Multiple, cutting-edge methods for assessing and gathering information about a topic are available through qualitative research. Qualitative research reveals the attitudes, perceptions, and feelings of a subject.

Additionally, it encourages the interpersonal and interdependent nature of human connections. Since qualitative research encourages the cooperation of the researchers as well, all the information is accurate and trustworthy. By examining the rankings and counts of the feelings, attitudes, and behaviors, it also provides a thorough and deep understanding of a subject and his way of thinking and working. It can also answer why a respondent has answered in a specific way for a question asked.

Three main categories can be used to group the qualitative research techniques that are most frequently employed: (1) person or group interviews, (2) observation techniques, and (3) document reviews. The goal of the qualitative research interview is to identify and comprehend particular themes that are present in the interviewees' daily lives.

Depending on the subject being studied, the cultural environment, and the project's objectives, interviews might be conducted alone or in groups (focus groups). In order to understand behaviours and interactions in natural contexts, observational data collecting in qualitative research entails close observation of individuals and events. Qualitative study approaches are advantageous when the objective is to comprehend cultural features of a setting or phenomena, when the situation of interest is concealed or when the subjects in the setting seem to hold opinions that are noticeably different from those of other groups. In addition to being a great source of secondary data, written resources such as institutional records, personal diaries, and historical public papers can shed light on the experiences and lifestyles of the group. Qualitative research is useful to gain a thorough grasp of a topic, especially when the issue is delicate.

Several fields let it be gender studies, Lgbtq individuals, queer studies, feminists have been using qualitative research tools like oral history, narrative to express and under the different women and social issues. As it helps them to document their voices, life experiences and provides a space to express themselves in the real life situation and their trauma, injustice done to them both in the academia as well as in real life situations.

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## **1.6 CRITIQUE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH:**

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### **1. Subjective:**

Qualitative research is overly impressionistic and subjective, say quantitative researchers, who occasionally criticise qualitative study. This criticism typically refers to the fact that the researcher's often illogical perceptions of what is essential and important, as well as the frequent deep personal relationships the researcher develops with the subjects of the study, which can overly influence qualitative findings.

### **2. Difficult to duplicate:**

Qualitative researchers frequently claim that these tendencies are even more of a problem because it is so difficult to repeat studies, however replication in the social sciences is by no means an easy task independent of this specific issue. Because it is unstructured and frequently depends on



the creativity of the qualitative researcher, it is nearly impossible to carry out a real replication because there are few set methods to follow. In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary data collector, therefore what is seen and heard as well as what the researcher chooses to focus on are very much a result of his or her preferences.

## **2. Generalization issues:**

It is frequently suggested that the findings of qualitative research have a narrow scope. They contend that it is impossible to know how the results can be applied to different situations when participant observation is employed or when unstructured interviews are conducted with a small number of people in a particular organisation or locale. How are just a few cases able to represent all cases?

## **2. Lack of transparency:**

In qualitative research, it can be challenging to determine what the researcher actually conducted and how the study's conclusions were reached. For instance, the data from qualitative research are sometimes ambiguous regarding issues like how individuals were picked for observation or interview. This shortcoming stands in stark contrast to the sometimes-tedious descriptions of sampling techniques in qualitative research papers. The idea of particularization in detail through qualitative research does not appear achievable.

## **3. Analysing the data:**

Proper analysis of data becomes very much difficult. In addition, someone who is experienced in the domain is required. The amount of time which takes to understand and find the patterns is huge. Specially if the study has been vast, hence one can find researchers spending years. This makes the amount of resources, in terms of time, money, human energy becomes more. With too much human interference there is at times chances of bias which the researcher has to be constantly be aware of while writing otherwise the writing can be biased. Specially when the researcher is studying his or her society it would be a difficult task for him/her to critique one's own society due to the socialization practices and there could be also unknown bias.

## **4. Statistics do not accurately depict qualitative research:**

The replies provided are not measured because qualitative research is a perspective-based methodology. Although comparisons can be performed and this may result in duplication, most situations that call for statistical representation and are not covered by qualitative research process call for quantitative data. This becomes a big problem as in large scale study qualitative cannot be used.



## Check your progress

1. Discuss two critiques of Qualitative research.

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2. List out some qualitative research design.

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## 1.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter we learnt about qualitative research methodology. Like the name suggest qualitative focusses upon a limited quantity of subjects, topic and studies it in in-depth, in detail. The word "qualitative" also suggests an emphasis on the characteristics of things as well as on actions and meanings that are not empirically investigated or measured. In qualitative research the social construction of reality, the close bond amongst the researcher and the subject of the study exists. The focus is also upon understanding the context by qualitative researchers. These researchers emphasise how value-laden research is. They look for responses to queries like how social interaction is produced and given meaning in day-to-day life. Quantitative studies, on the other hand, place more emphasis on measuring and analysing the causal connections between variables than on processes. Many social and behavioural scientists view qualitative modes of inquiry as a perspective on how to approach examining a research as well (Denzin, et.al. 2005). The goal of qualitative research, is to understand why individuals act, react, and think the way they do. It helps the society to move forward in a positive way by bringing out details which otherwise would not be visible. Using first-hand experience, genuine reporting, and quotations from real conversations, qualitative research seeks to gain a deeper understanding. It tries to comprehend how participants interpret their environment and how that interpretation affects their behaviour. Qualitative research though has some negative points like its time consuming, expensive, the researcher bias could occur and the interviewer has to be well trained to collect, analyse data. Thus, qualitative research has it own uniqueness whereby it is useful to document people who are indigenous, where interviews are to be conducted. Qualitative researcher often are seen spending lot of time conducting the fieldwork which helps then a better understanding of the topic and to come up with interesting insights which a quantitative study would not be able to get. Several prominent works in Indian Sociology like that of M.N. Srinivas- Religion among Coorgs, Remembered village,

Mythili Krishnaraj study of Mumbai has been conducted through Qualitative research.

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## 1.8 QUESTIONS

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1. Write a note on the meaning of Qualitative Research
2. Discuss in brief the significance of Qualitative research
3. Explain the nature of Qualitative research
4. Discuss the characteristics of Qualitative research.

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## 1.9 REFERENCE

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## **PREOCCUPATIONS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCHERS**

### **Unit Structure**

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Meaning of researcher
- 2.3 Understanding Qualitative researcher
- 2.4 Preoccupations of Qualitative researchers
- 2.5 Summary
- 2.6 Questions
- 2.7 References

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### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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- To learn about the pre occupations of qualitative researchers
- To learn about the process involved in it.

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### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

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In this chapter we are going to learn about the preoccupations of Qualitative researcher. Qualitative research is a significant methodology for comprehending social phenomena, which involves examining the personal experiences of individuals and groups within a specific context. It is particularly useful when dealing with complex social issues that are not easy to measure or quantify, such as attitudes, beliefs, and cultural practices. Qualitative researchers put a lot of emphasis on subjective interpretation and understanding. They aim to understand the meaning and importance that participants attach to their experiences rather than gathering objective data. To gather this rich and comprehensive data, researchers use various techniques such as observation, open-ended interviews, and focus groups. In addition, qualitative research adopts an adaptable approach to data analysis. Rather than starting with fixed hypotheses, researchers begin with a broad research question and let the data guide them. They review and categorize the data to identify patterns and themes, which are then used to develop theories and explanations about the social phenomena being studied. Qualitative research has various applications across several fields such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, and education. It is helpful in exploring a wide range of social phenomena, including cultural practices, social inequality, and individual identity. Furthermore, qualitative research has the potential to provide insights and perspectives that quantitative research methods often overlook, making it a valuable tool for social scientists who seek to

comprehend complex social issues more profoundly. Before going further let us learn about researcher, the most important person.

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## **2.2 MEANING OF RESEARCHER**

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A person who conducts organized studies and research with the purpose of uncovering or verifying new information, facts, or concepts is known as a researcher. Researchers work in diverse fields, such as science, medicine, technology, social sciences, and humanities, among others. They employ a range of research methods, such as experiments, surveys, observations, interviews, and data analysis, to collect and analyze data and make inferences based on their findings. The primary objective of a researcher is to advance knowledge in their field and provide significant contributions to society.

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## **2.3 UNDERSTANDING QUALITATIVE RESEARCHER**

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A qualitative researcher is someone who uses qualitative research methods to gather and analyze non-numerical data, including text, images, and observations. The purpose is to achieve a more profound understanding of a specific research question or phenomenon. Qualitative research methods are usually applied to investigate intricate social and human issues that are not easily quantifiable and highlight the importance of context, subjectivity, and the personal significance attached to experiences.

To gather data, qualitative researchers employ various techniques, such as conducting interviews, holding focus groups, observing behaviors, and scrutinizing documents. Data analysis involves identifying patterns, themes, and categories, and often involves using coding and categorization strategies to sort and interpret the data. Qualitative research aims to provide a comprehensive and detailed account of the research question or phenomenon being studied and to gain insight into the experiences and meanings of those involved.

Qualitative researchers have several distinguishing characteristics that set them apart from other types of researchers. The primary difference is that they utilize qualitative research methods to collect and analyze non-numerical data, such as words, images, and observations, in order to gain a deep understanding of a particular phenomenon or research question. These researchers also place a significant emphasis on the importance of context, subjectivity, and the meaning people attribute to their experiences. To understand human behavior and social phenomena, qualitative researchers often use an interpretive approach. Furthermore, qualitative researchers tend to adopt a more adaptable and iterative approach to research, where the research questions and methods can evolve and change as the research progresses. They may also include the participants in the research process, giving them the opportunity to provide feedback and influence the research.

Another unique aspect of qualitative research is the researcher's role. Qualitative researchers may become personally involved with the

participants, and their own biases and perspectives can have an impact on the research. To avoid influencing the research findings, qualitative researchers engage in self-reflection and reflexivity. Overall, the distinguishing characteristics of a qualitative researcher include their use of qualitative research methods, emphasis on context and subjectivity, adaptable and iterative approach to research, and their self-awareness in recognizing and managing their personal biases.

### Check Your Progress

1. Who is a researcher?

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2. Qualitative researcher give emphasis on interpretation and understanding. Do you agree or disagree.

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## 2.4 PRE OCCUPATIONS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCHERS

### 1. Seeing the world through the eyes of the subjects:

The idea that the subjects of social science and natural science do vary is one of the basic assumptions of many qualitative researchers. One significant distinction is that the analytical objects of natural science (atoms, molecules, gauges, chemistry, etc.) are unable to assign significance to the events taking place in their surroundings. But individuals do. In Schutz's work, this argument is extremely clear. Schutz draws attention to the fact that, in contrast to the subject of natural science, the subject of social research—people—can ascribe meaning to their surroundings. As a result, many qualitative researchers declare a dedication to seeing things from the perspective of the people who were studied. Instead of assuming that the participants of the study are unable to reflect on the social world for themselves, it is important to view it from their point of view.

The goal of qualitative research is to see the world and the events through the perspective of the subjects being studied. It is important to view the social world from the viewpoint of the subjects being researched rather than assuming that they are unable to form their own opinions about it. The epistemology guiding qualitative research as having two main tenets:

"Face-to-face interaction which is the prerequisite for learning about another person's thinking, and (2) you must engage in this interaction and be in the place of other and learn about the experiences of the people (Lofl and Lofl,1995). So, it is not unexpected that many researchers claim to have attempted to consider the opinions of the people they have interviewed in their reports of their investigations.

Abductive reasoning is a type of reasoning that is commonly utilized in qualitative research. In qualitative research, the starting point for inquiry is often the viewpoints of the subjects being studied. Abductive reasoning involves constructing a theoretical comprehension of the people and contexts under examination based on their language, meanings, and perspectives, which shape their worldview. In the process of abduction, it is crucial for the researcher to develop a scientific understanding of the social world from the participants' viewpoints, without losing touch with the way in which the world is perceived by those who provided the data. While it follows a broadly inductive approach, abduction is distinct in that it emphasizes explanation and comprehension of the participants' worldviews.

## **2. Having Empathetic View point:**

Empathy is crucial for researchers as it enables them to comprehend the viewpoints and encounters of their subjects at a deeper level. By attempting to view things from their subjects' perspectives, researchers can develop a better understanding of the social and cultural context of their subjects and comprehend their beliefs, values, and behaviors. In qualitative research, understanding the subjective experiences and meanings of individuals is prioritized over measuring objective facts and figures, making empathy essential. Empathy can also aid researchers in building rapport and trust with their participants, resulting in more meaningful and accurate data and a smoother research process.

The empathetic perspective of attempting to view the world through the eyes of the individuals being studied is a crucial component of qualitative research. This empathetic stance is aligned with interpretivism and reveals epistemological connections with phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, and Verstehen. However, it is not without practical difficulties. For example, there is a danger of "going native," where the researcher becomes too involved in the subject matter and loses sight of their research. Moreover, there is the issue of determining how far the researcher should go, especially if the researcher is studying an in illegal or hazardous activities. This could pose a risk in studies and to the researcher too. Not only the present researcher but the for the future researcher too. It is also possible that the researcher may only view the social scene from the perspective of certain individuals.

## **3. Understanding the context:**

Qualitative researchers need to prioritize gaining insight into the subjective experiences of individuals and their cultural and social context. This is why they often include a great deal of descriptive detail in their

reports. They not only focus on description - they also ask "why" kind of questions to explain their findings. These details, while seemingly significant, are actually crucial to understanding behavior, values, and beliefs. The emphasis on context is key in qualitative type of research. Descriptive detail is used to create a map of the context and to make sense of behaviour that might otherwise seem irrational. However, there is a risk of getting too caught up in details, which could potentially hinder data analysis.

In addition to contextual understanding, another reason why qualitative researchers emphasize descriptive detail is that it can help to challenge preconceived notions or stereotypes about a particular group of people or phenomenon. By providing rich, nuanced descriptions of the experiences and perspectives of research participants, qualitative researchers can paint a more accurate and complex picture of the social world under investigation.

However, there is also a risk of becoming too caught up in descriptive detail and losing sight of the larger research question or theoretical framework. Qualitative researchers must strike a balance between providing enough descriptive detail to understand the context and experiences of their participants, while also keeping a clear focus on the research question and larger theoretical concerns. Overall, the emphasis on descriptive detail and contextual understanding is a key feature of qualitative research. By providing rich, detailed accounts of the social world under investigation, qualitative researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of research participants and challenge preconceived notions about social phenomena.

Qualitative researchers put great emphasis on descriptive detail as it helps to understand the context and experiences of research participants. This rich, nuanced description can provide a more accurate and complex picture of the social world being studied and challenge stereotypes or preconceived notions about a particular group or phenomenon. However, it is important to maintain a balance between providing enough descriptive detail while also keeping the larger research question and theoretical framework in mind. The emphasis on descriptive detail and contextual understanding is a crucial aspect of qualitative research as it provides a deeper understanding of research participants and can challenge pre-existing ideas about social phenomena.

While emphasizing descriptive detail is crucial for qualitative researchers to comprehend the social and cultural context and gain insight into the subjective experiences of individuals, it is equally important for them not to forget about the bigger picture of the research question and theoretical framework. Qualitative research is distinguished by its emphasis on descriptive detail and contextual understanding, which helps researchers to develop a comprehensive understanding of the social world under investigation and debunk preconceived notions and stereotypes about social phenomena.



#### **4. Emphasis on the process:**

The emphasis on process is a central aspect of qualitative research, particularly in ethnographic studies. Researchers seek to reveal how social life develops and changes over time, often through participant observation and in-depth interviews. By providing a nuanced and dynamic understanding of social phenomena, this approach challenges simplistic and static views of social reality.

The emphasis on social processes is a significant feature of qualitative research, which seeks to illustrate the way events and patterns change over time. Ethnographic research, in particular, places an emphasis on process as researchers immerse themselves in a social setting for an extended period. Through observation, researchers can identify the development of events and the interconnectedness of various elements within a social system. Semi-structured and unstructured interviewing can also provide a sense of process by encouraging participants to reflect on the events leading up to or following a particular situation. While there is a risk of presenting a static picture of social reality, qualitative research can provide a sense of process by viewing social life in terms of streams of interdependent events and elements. The life-history approach is one method of qualitative research that can be used to detail an individual's life processes.

Qualitative research places a great deal of emphasis on social processes, aiming to demonstrate how events and patterns change over time. This emphasis on process is particularly pronounced in ethnographic research, as researchers engage with social settings for extended periods. Through participant observation, researchers can observe the development of events and the interconnectedness of social system elements. Similarly, semi-structured and unstructured interviews can create a sense of process by allowing participants to reflect on events leading up to or following a particular situation. Despite the possibility of presenting a static view of social reality, qualitative research can generate a sense of process by understanding social life in terms of interdependent events and elements. The life-history approach is a qualitative research technique that can provide an in-depth account of an individual's life processes.

#### **5. Flexibility in working:**

Qualitative research is characterized by a flexible and unstructured approach that avoids predetermined formats. Researchers prefer this approach because structured methods may limit their ability to adopt the worldview of those being studied. The goal is to minimize structure and ask general questions to avoid imposing a researcher's frame of reference on participants. Ethnography is a good fit for this approach, as it allows researchers to gradually formulate a narrower focus based on observations. This approach may reveal important aspects of social worlds that might be missed by an unfamiliar researcher. For example, a study of food habits among teenagers needs to be studied using a qualitative approach to gain a contextualized understanding of the experiences of participants, without

imposing a particular framework on them. In qualitative research, researchers rely on their observations and insights gained through immersion in the social setting to formulate specific research questions. This approach is flexible lacks a strict structure, allowing for a more genuine understanding of the worldview of the people being studied.

Qualitative research is a valuable tool for exploring complex social phenomena and generating new insights. It is particularly useful when studying areas where little is known or when traditional research methods may be inappropriate. This is because qualitative research methods are flexible and can be adapted to suit the needs of a particular study. For example, focus groups, interviews, and observation are all commonly used qualitative research methods, each of which has its strengths and weaknesses.

One of the key benefits of qualitative research is its ability to capture the nuances of human behavior and experience. By engaging with participants in their natural environment, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the social and cultural factors that shape their lives. This approach allows researchers to explore topics that may not be easily quantifiable, such as emotions, beliefs, and attitudes.

However, qualitative research is not without its challenges. It can be time-consuming and labor-intensive, and data analysis can be complex and difficult. Additionally, the subjective nature of qualitative research means that findings may not be generalizable to other populations or contexts. Nonetheless, the insights generated by qualitative research can be invaluable for informing policy and practice in a wide range of fields, from healthcare to education to social policy.

In other words, In qualitative research, an unstructured approach to data collection is typically used, offering more flexibility in the research process compared to structured approaches used in quantitative research. Qualitative researchers prefer less structured methods of interviewing that are more open-ended and allow for a more nuanced understanding of the topic being studied. This approach permits changes in direction during the investigation, potentially leading to new avenues of inquiry. For example, O'Reilly's study on British expatriates in Spain shifted its focus from the elderly to a broader age range and from permanent residents to more temporary forms of migration. Similarly, Gerson's research on changing family structures was redirected after an interview with a young man, prompting her to concentrate on processes of change in families rather than their structures. The unstructured nature of qualitative research can produce unexpected insights and novel areas of investigation.

The use of structured methods of data collection, like structured interviewing and observation, has its advantages but also its limitations. In survey investigations, interviews need to be as comparable as possible, which restricts the researcher's ability to change course in their investigation. On the other hand, most qualitative research involves an unstructured approach, which provides greater flexibility, allowing the

researcher to easily shift direction during the investigation. This flexibility can result in a more in-depth and contextualized understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Blumer (1954) suggests that qualitative researchers should employ sensitizing concepts, which are more open-ended, unlike the definitive concepts used in quantitative research. Such concepts allow for an exploratory approach that is better suited to the unstructured nature of qualitative research.

Overall, the unstructured nature of qualitative research provides greater adaptability and flexibility, leading to the discovery of unexpected insights and novel areas of investigation. It also allows for an exploratory approach to data collection, leading to a more nuanced comprehension of the topic being studied.

## **6. Ethics in research:**

Irrespective of whether one is conducting quantitative or qualitative research one of the important thing an researcher has to practice is that of being ethical at every stage of research, whether it be data collection, data analysis, choosing the sample. The researcher has to convey the truth to the subject like where the data would be used post the study. How it is used for academic purpose or what purpose it is collected. Identity of the individual has to be kept safe so that once the researcher leaves the place the informant doesn't face any trouble. In sensitive cases where there is risk, violence, abuses involved sudo (fake) names of the respondents is better to use by informing both the committee, supervisor or by taking own decision. As that would be protecting the person specially in cases of children, women.

The principles and guidelines that dictate the proper conduct of research are collectively known as ethics in research. The main objective of ethical guidelines is to guarantee that research is conducted in a manner that safeguards the dignity, rights, safety, and well-being of research participants while also promoting scientific integrity. Informed consent, confidentiality, risk minimization, respect for participants, scientific integrity, institutional approval, and continuing review are some of the key principles of ethics in research. The ultimate aim of ethical guidelines is to protect the rights and well-being of research participants, as well as to promote scientific integrity and public trust in research. Failure to follow ethical principles in research may have serious consequences, including harm to participants, loss of trust in research, and legal or professional penalties.

To ensure that ethical guidelines are being followed, many institutions require researchers to obtain approval from an institutional review board (IRB) which many organizations, universities have, before conducting research involving human participants. The IRB evaluates the research proposal to ensure that it meets ethical standards, and may require changes or modifications to the study design before approval is granted. In addition, researchers must periodically review and assess the conduct of their research to ensure that it continues to meet ethical standards. This

ongoing review process helps to ensure that any issues or concerns that arise during the study can be addressed in a timely manner.

Adherence to ethical principles in research is crucial for maintaining the trust and credibility of the scientific community. It is the responsibility of researchers to prioritize the well-being and rights of research participants above their own interests, and to conduct research in a transparent, honest, and responsible manner. By doing so, they can contribute to the advancement of knowledge while upholding the highest ethical standards.

### **Check Your Progress**

1. Do you think ethics needs to be followed in research.

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2. Do you think qualitative researchers are flexible while studying a topic - comment.

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## **2.6 SUMMARY**

In conclusion, qualitative research is a flexible and unstructured approach that allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of complex social phenomena. By minimizing structure and avoiding predetermined formats, qualitative research can provide nuanced and contextualized insights that may be missed by more traditional research methods. While there are challenges associated with this approach, the benefits are clear, and qualitative research has become an essential tool for understanding the social world. The chapter also discussed about the different preoccupations of qualitative research like seeing from people's eyes, being flexible, ethical etc.

## **2.7 QUESTIONS**

1. Discuss the empathetic view point of researcher
2. Write a note on the context in qualitative research
3. Discuss in brief the process in qualitative research.

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## THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS - INTERPRETIVISM

### Unit Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Theoretical Underpinnings
- 3.3 Meaning and Significance
- 3.4 Advantages & Disadvantages
- 3.5 Summary
- 3.6 Questions
- 3.7 References

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### 3.0 OBJECTIVES

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- To understand the philosophical position of Interpretivism
- To familiarize students with its meaning, significance, advantages and disadvantages

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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Sociological theory is often broadly divided into positivism and interpretivism. Interpretivists argue that the study of human society must go beyond empirical and supposedly objective evidence to include subjective views, opinions, emotions, values: the things that cannot be directly observed and counted. They are phenomena that require interpretation. Indeed, most interpretivists would go further and suggest that research cannot really establish social facts, that society is all about subjective values and interpretations and cannot be understood just through facts and figures.

Simply put, positivism and interpretivism are two very different perspectives on how we can obtain knowledge about the world. The positivist approach was heavily endorsed by early sociologists such as Auguste Comte and Émile Durkheim. Whereas, Interpretivism is a theoretical approach which directly opposes the positivist approach by stating that knowledge about society and human beings cannot be objectively known. As opposed to positivism, the underlying premise of interpretivism is that we cannot use scientific methods to obtain knowledge about the world.

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## 3.2 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

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Recognition of the subjective component in human action has had a long history in understanding the social world, and a far longer history before sociologists arrived on the historical scene. Historically, this recognition could be traced back in the thoughts of the ancient Greek stoic philosopher and sociologist Epictetus who stated that, “it is not actions that alarms or disturbs man, but it is their opinions and fancies about actions”. This notion has been in continuation since then by the philosophers and sociologists in understanding and interpreting the social world. For instance, in the early eighteenth century, Schopenhauer observed that people became happy or unhappy because of the way they look at things, or for what things were for them; not because of what things objectively were.

In the early 19th century, through the establishment of Thomas Theorem – “If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences”, William Isaac Thomas further validated Schopenhauer’s thought. Thus, this tapestry of studying the social world through a subjective thought and ideas confirms the significance of interpretivism which is to see the world through the eyes of the people being studied, allowing them multiple perspectives of reality, rather than the “one reality” of positivism.

Interpretivism has its roots in the philosophical traditions of hermeneutics and phenomenology, and the German sociologist Max Weber is generally credited with being the central influence. Interpretivists look for meanings and motives behind people’s actions like: behaviour and interactions with others in the society and culture. Similarly, cultures can be comprehended by studying people’s ideas, thinking, and the meanings that are important to them. This school of thought of cultural study through human actions was founded by Franz Boas in his modern anthropological conception.

Boas viewed culture as an integrated system of symbols, ideas and values that should be studied as a working system, an organic whole where he observed people’s mental content as being judgement minded in relation to individuals. Boas’s thought is reflected in anti-positivism or interpretivism and understanding verstehen sociology in the social science study advocated by Max Weber and Georg Simmel. In the view of interpretivism, it is argued that value free data cannot be obtained, since the enquirers use their own preconceptions in order to guide the process of enquiry, and furthermore, the researcher interacts with the human subjects of the enquiry, changing the perceptions of both parties.

### Check Your Progress:

1. Write a note on the background of Interpretivism.

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### 3.3 MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE

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Interpretivists believe that the correct way to obtain knowledge about the world is to explore the meanings that people attach to it. Knowledge is most valuable when it is in-depth, and when it incorporates people's individual points of view. The main aim of interpretivism is not to discover object facts, but to understand the meanings that people attach to certain behaviours and experiences. They recognize that these insights are subjective, but see more value in them when it comes to obtaining knowledge about the world.

Interpretivism refers to the approaches which emphasize the meaningful nature of people's character and participation in both social and cultural life. It denotes that the methods of the research which adopt the position that people's knowledge of reality is a social construction by human actors, and so it distinctively rules out the methods of natural science. Thus, Interpretivism, by its nature promotes the value of qualitative data in pursuit of knowledge.

To understand the contemporary social world from an interpretivist point of view, it is important to explain how *verstehen* distinguishes human/social action from the movement of physical objects. It is similarly necessary to know how can people access and accommodate "meaning"? *Verstehen* is a German term that means to understand, perceive, know, and comprehend the nature and significance of a phenomenon. Interpretivists use this to comprehend the meaning intended or expressed by people. Weber used the term to refer to the social scientist's attempt to understand both the intention and the context of human action.

In general interpretivist approach is based on the following beliefs:

#### 1. Relativist ontology.

This approach perceives reality as intersubjectively that is based on meanings and understandings on social and experiential levels.

#### 2. Transactional or subjectivist epistemology:

According to this approach, people cannot be separated from their knowledge; therefore, there is a clear link between the researcher and research subject.

#### Check Your Progress

1. What is the significance of Interpretivism?

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### 3.4 ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES

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As is the case with all theoretical approaches in sociology, there are significant advantages and disadvantages that we need to consider when it comes to interpretivism.

#### **Advantages:**

By using qualitative research methods, interpretivists can ensure a high level of **validity** in their research findings. This is because they can clarify certain concepts with the respondent, and seek out information that they might have missed out on if they were asking closed-questions.

Furthermore, the interpretivist approach considers the **social context** of the phenomena they are studying, which is particularly relevant in sociology.

Another key benefit of interpretivist research methods is that they allow the researcher to find out, in depth, the meanings and interpretations which people attach to the world around them.

#### **Disadvantages:**

Just as interpretivists critique the positivist approach, there are several criticisms of interpretivism put across by positivists as well.

The qualitative research methods that interpretivists value, are expensive and time-consuming to implement. The conducting of in-depth interviews, for example, takes much longer than administering a simple, closed-question survey online. Research which seeks to use interviews as a main method will also require skilled interviewers, many of whom must be specifically trained.

Furthermore, information that is collected using the interpretivist approach cannot be generalized to the wider population, but only represents a small fraction of it. The lack of a standardized approach means that interpretivist research methods are not replicable - they can't be repeatedly conducted to confirm the initial results.

#### **Check Your Progress:**

1. What are the advantages of Interpretivist approach?

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## 3.5 SUMMARY

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Interpretivism is “associated with the philosophical position of idealism, and is used to group together diverse approaches, including social constructivism, phenomenology and hermeneutics; approaches that reject the objectivist view that meaning resides within the world independently of consciousness”. Moreover, interpretivism studies usually focus on meaning and may employ multiple methods in order to reflect different aspects of the issue.

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## 3.6 QUESTIONS

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- What are the disadvantages of Interpretivist approach?
- Compare Positivism and Interpretivism.
- What is the significance of Interpretivism?

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## 3.7 REFERENCES

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### **DISTINCTION BETWEEN QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH**

#### **Unit Structure**

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Difference between Qualitative and Quantitative research
- 4.3 Mixed methods
- 4.4 Summary
- 4.5 Questions
- 4.6 References

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#### **4.0 OBJECTIVES**

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- To learn about the distinction between qualitative and Quantitative research
- To learn the differences through some examples of real-life situations.

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#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Data for research is obtained through a wide range of approaches and arrives in a variety of formats. Many people believe that data-driven research occurs mostly in the sciences. It is frequently pictured as involving a spreadsheet containing numerical data. Both of these assumptions are false. All academic disciplines gather and use research data, which might be in the form of numbers in a spreadsheet or a variety of other media like videos, photos, artifacts, and diaries. Scholarly research in all academic subjects is becoming more data-driven, whether it's a psychologist gathering survey data to better understand human behavior, an artist using data to create images and sounds, or an archaeologist using audio recordings to record observations about diverse cultures.

In the last chapter we had discussed in detail about Qualitative Research like understanding its nature, characteristic, usefulness. In this chapter we will further look into the distinction between Qualitative and Quantitative research as both stand as unique. Through this chapter the idea is to introduce you to both these methodologies and help you in making choice so that whenever you are having a project, dissertation to write you can choose the best one which suits both the topic and based on your comfort. Both Quantitative and Qualitative are multidisciplinary topics which is studied by Arts, science, Commerce studies hence its very useful not just

for understanding research but also in day-to-day life. Like the research skill sets can help you understanding human behavior in a better way, help you to frame better questions to ask to people of authority like in a job interview etc.

When a researcher wants to answer the "what" or "how many" questions in a research topic, they use quantitative data. It consists of information that may be compared numerically or counted. For instance, it may be the proportion of first-year students at college or the evaluations of the calibre of the food at Cafe Mac on a scale of 1-4. This information is typically acquired utilising tools, such as a questionnaire with a rating scale or a thermometer to capture meteorological information. Quantitative data analysis frequently involves the use of statistical analysis tools like SPSS.

Qualitative information describes traits or attributes. It is gathered by observation, interviews, or questionnaires and frequently takes the shape of stories. For instance, it might be the answers to an open-ended survey or notes from a focus group on the calibre of the food at Cafe Mac. Qualitative data may be challenging to measure and analyse with accuracy. The information could take the form of descriptive words that can be coded or otherwise analysed for patterns or significance. The researcher can undertake quantitative analysis and categorise qualitative material using coding to find themes that relate to the research topics. Qualitative information describes traits or attributes. It is gathered by observation, interviews, or questionnaires, and it frequently appears in narrative (Source – Libguide).

Qualitative research has some key differences from quantitative research. Most obviously, qualitative research prefers to focus on words than numbers, but three more characteristics stood out as particularly notable.

1. An inductive view of the relationship between research and theory, in which the latter is generated from the former;
2. An interpretivist epistemological position, where the emphasis is on gaining knowledge through an examination of how its respondents interpret it, as opposed to using a natural scientific model in quantitative studies.
3. A constructionist ontological stance, which holds that social qualities result from interactions between people rather than being independent realities. It suggests that social phenomena are outcomes of the interaction between people.

Instead of providing a cursory account of a wide sample of a population, qualitative research seeks to get a thorough insight of a particular organisation or event. It seeks to give a clear representation of the organisation, sequence, and overarching trends among a group of participants. Field research or ethnomethodology are other names for it. It produces information on socially situated human groups.

In qualitative research, no interventions are used, variables are not changed, and participants are not forced to use the operational definitions of the variables. Instead, it allows the participants to create the meaning. It is more adaptable since it can change to the environment. As the research develops, concepts, data collection instruments, and data collection techniques can be changed.

### **Methods of Qualitative research:**

Qualitative research can be conducted in a variety of ways, each with its own philosophical underpinnings. For certain projects, various strategies work well. For instance: For solitary people, case studies and narrative studies work best. These entail a thorough examination of every facet of a person's life. The goal of phenomenology is to explain phenomena. This kind of writing tries to examine and describe various occurrences as they are consciously and personally experienced. Models and processes are developed and described using grounded theory. Using this method, scientists can build a theory from evidence that is gathered, examined, and compared to make new discoveries. Cultural groups are described in ethnography. This strategy involves researchers becoming fully assimilated into a community or group in order to study behaviour.

### **Methods of Quantitative Research:**

For Auguste Comte's positivist theory, is the one that holds that factual knowledge which is gained by observation and is reliable, that it eventually became recognized as a "scientific method."

#### **An investigator must:**

- Create a theory or hypothesis to explain what might occur in an experiment and identify the variables required to provide the answer to their query.
- Create tools to measure the phenomenon. (Such as a survey etc.)
- Construct tests to alter the variables
- assemble empirical (measurable) data
- data analysis
- measurable methods

## **4.2 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE**

	<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>Qualitative</b>
Keywords	Complexity, contextual, inductive logic, discovery, exploration	Experiment, random assignment, independent/dependent variable, causal/correlational, validity, deductive logic

Purpose	Understand a phenomenon	Discover causal relationships or describe a phenomenon
Sample	Purposive sample, small	Random sample, large
Data	Focus groups, interviews, field observation	Tests, surveys, questionnaires
Methods/ Design	Phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic, case study, historical/narrative research, participatory research, clinical research	Experimental, quasi-experimental, descriptive, methodological, exploratory, comparative, correlational, developmental (cross-sectional, longitudinal/prospective/cohort, retrospective/ex post facto/case control)

Source – Stevenson website

### Work vs. Numbers:

- Qualitative researchers are perceived as employing words to convey analyses of society, whereas quantitative researchers are frequently represented as being focused with applying measuring techniques to social life.
- Participants' perspectives vs. those of the research- The investigator is in charge of quantitative research. The investigation is framed by the collection of concerns the subject brings. In other words, in qualitative research, the point of direction is determined by the perspective of the subjects—what they value and consider meaningful.
- Relationship between researchers and research participants- In quantitative research, researchers have little interaction with their subjects and, in some situations, none at all, especially if the study is based on postal surveys or paid interviewers. Because they believe that their neutrality can be affected if they become very engaged with the persons they study. Quantitative researchers occasionally view this lack of a relationship with the investigation's participants as desirable. Though this is not the case with that of qualitative researcher's they tend to reside in a place, learn the language of the people upon the study is conducted and try to become one of them and then write about the society. In other words, in order to truly grasp the world through the perspective of the persons being studied, the qualitative researcher aims for close connection with them.
- In qualitative research, concepts and theoretical reasoning develop from the data gathering process. While in quantitative researchers frequently apply pre-established concepts to the research equipment they use.



**Static vs. Process:**

Due to its emphasis on the relationships between variables, quantitative research is frequently portrayed as offering a static depiction of social reality. Change and links between events rarely appear in a non-mechanistic way throughout time of research in quantitative method. In many cases, qualitative research is portrayed as being attentive to how things develop through time and how people interact in social settings.

- Highly structured vs. unstructured research: Quantitative research is frequently highly structured in order to examine the precise concepts and issues that are the study's focus. Qualitative research approaches are invariably unstructured in order to increase the possibility of understanding actors' meanings and of concepts emerging from data collection.
- Generalization vs. Contextual understanding-While investigators conducting quantitative studies want their findings to be transferable to the relevant people. Qualitative researchers strive to understand behavior, values, beliefs, and other aspects of subjects' lives in the context of their study.
- Due to the accuracy provided by measurement, quantitative data are frequently portrayed as "hard" in the sense of being robust and unambiguous. This contrasts with rich, deep data. Contrarily, qualitative researchers assert that the rich data they acquire comes from their contextualize approach and frequently long involvement in a situation.

**Macro vs. Micro:**

Quantitative researchers are frequently portrayed as active in identifying broad social trends and connections between variables, whereas qualitative researchers are perceived as focused on minute details of social reality, such as interaction.

- It has been suggested that the qualitative researcher is concerned with the meaning of action, whereas the quantitative researcher is linked to people's actions.
- Artificial vs. natural environment: Quantitative researchers study people in artificial settings, whereas qualitative researchers study people in real-world settings.

**Inside vs Outside:**

Researchers that use either quantitative or qualitative inquiry approach empirical research in a different way, even though both are valid techniques to study. Everet and Louis (1981) describe the presumptions that underpin each both "inquiry from the inside" and "inquiry from the outside," which are frequently carried out through qualitative investigations. The level of the researcher's immersion in terms of experiential involvement, personal interaction with the people, and

physical involvement in the location varies among these methodologies. The researcher seeks to provide a comprehensive picture using the "inside" or qualitative technique from historically specific circumstances, when peculiarities are crucial for meaning. Utilizing an inductive approach, the researcher lets the data speak. Traditional "outside" or quantitative researchers, on the other hand, seek to isolate the phenomenon, to simplify the analysis, and to test already developed assumptions (Ospina, 2004).

### Check Your Progress

1. Write in your own words Qualitative research

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2 Does quantitative research use in depth interview comment?

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Quantitative	Qualitative
Numbers	Words
Point of view of researcher	Point of view of participants
Researcher distant	researcher close
Theory testing	Theory emergent
Static	Process
Structured	Unstructured
Generalization	Contextual Understanding
Hard, reliable data	Rich, deep data
Macro	Micro
Behaviour	Meaning
Artificial Setting	Natural Setting
Large sample	Small sample

### Usefulness of Quantitative and Qualitative for Industries:

In the fields like Market research the Quantitative research is used for the examination of a brand's position, services, or potential offerings through marketing tactics. It used for recognising the dynamics of the choice to buy. It is used for investigating market segments such a particular

demographic, age range, and many others. It is also used for gaining access to the usability of numerous interactive services or goods on the internet. To design a quantitative survey, the most crucial stage is to ascertain the customer's language. To creation and development of a fresh product idea. To create Brands' and products' weaknesses and strengths. To study public attitudes, feelings, and concerns relating to social affairs and to have a complete comprehension of how the business views a particular brand, product, or category.

While Qualitative research may be able to explain something that numbers alone are unable to do so, if the replies do not match the researchers' assumptions. With qualitative research, the researchers have more scope in deciding which segments to focus on and how to investigate them. It enables prompt data collection in line with the researcher's intuitive or gut thoughts, where valuable information may be provided. Qualitative research records the changing attitudes of the target group, such as the attitudes of office workers or the service or product for consumers. Qualitative research provides a method that is more adaptable. Researchers can modify their queries to change the settings or variables if the findings are not useful.

### **Nature of questions:**

Imagine you have to conduct a study of a consumption patterns of a particular junk food. The below given are based on quantitative in nature.

- Does a market exist for your goods and services?
- How popular is your product or service in the market?
- How many individuals are considering acquiring your good or service?
- What kind of folks make up your ideal clients?
- What sort of things do they buy?
- What changes are there in the needs of your target market?
- How long are people browsing your website for, and which page do they leave from?

As many answers for these questions can be answered in the yes or no or can be rated in a single scale. One could observe that the common word about all these is that questions is how, what. In a way one is talking about quantity.

Now look at the questions of Qualitative research for the same topic

- Why do you think this product outperforms its rivals, in your opinion? Why do you believe it isn't?
- What changes would you make to this new service to increase your interest in it?

- How do you feel about this new business logo?
- How would you describe the layout of this website? How user-friendly and simple to use is it?
- How do you feel about this print advertisement?

The nature of questions here is that of descriptive, asking the experience, opinion. In a way, you can see the difference that the answers are more personal in nature than objective and distance.

(Source – hartford website)

### **Example-Survey (Quantitative method) vs Interview (Qualitative method)**

Imagine you have to study a domestic abuse. The first step would be to select the people whom you have to study. Do you think it would be wise to take a questionnaire and going to the people who have faced domestic abuse? The immediate reaction is that the respondent would immediately close the door. As in this instance, there is lot of emotional issues involved, trauma too exists.

During census you must have witnessed where a census interviewer comes at your door, asks you few set of questions and you are expected to answer them. The whole interview lasts for two to three minutes. Rarely someone invites these officers inside the home. They asks questions like do you have fridge, washing machine in your home.

Do you think in the same way one can speak to a person who has undergone through abuse. The answer is no. As its unethical and lack of empathic behavior. The researcher has to spend enough time for the person to open up, develop a sense of rapport, bond with the person. A sense of trust has to be developed only in that the participant would trust and then reveal the details. Enough confidence has to be developed among the participant, as every time she is narrating her story, she might have to recall her experiences which is painful in nature. Hence, even though quantitative research method is a effective method in its own but in sensitive issues qualitative approach like in-depth interview helps.

However, the same quantitative method can be used to large scale survey like to check the records, large scale mapping to see which areas there are large scale abuses taking place, whether it is slums, any specific age groups, type of relations. Based on the qualitative data too further quantitative research can be applied. In a way, the point here is that both methods are distinct but each has its relevance.

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## **4.3 MIXED METHODS**

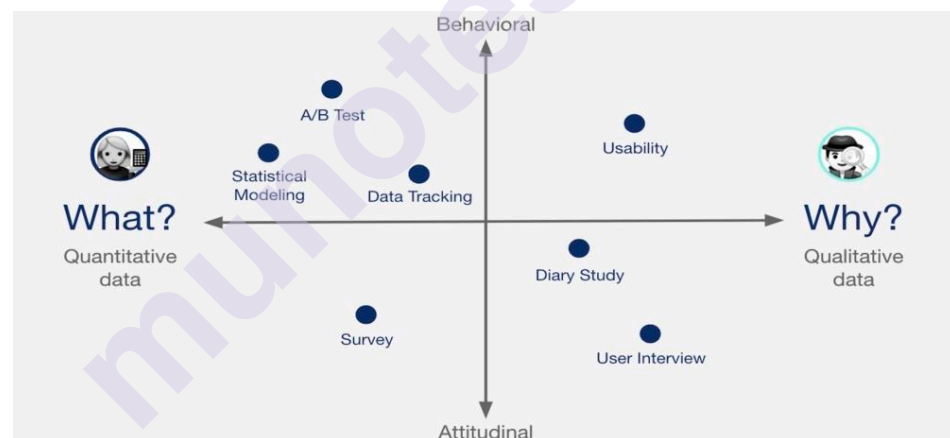
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In today's time several research has been using the mixed methods let us look into it in detail. Mixed methods systematically combine quantitative and qualitative research methods. In the Postpositivist times quantitative researchers are primarily engaged in gathering and using organised ways

to analyse numerical data. With a focus on narrative data collection and analysis employing open-ended (holistic) methodologies, qualitative researchers adopt a more constructivist perspective. Mixed-methods investigators are realistic, gather both narrative and numerical data, use both structured and emergent designs, analyse their data using both statistical as well as content analysis, and then combine the inferences drawn from both their qualitative and quantitative findings to come up with meta-inferences as answers to their research questions (Tashakkori,2010).

### Case study of Spotify:

Spotify is a podcast application which is very much popular these days. This application works in an android mobile which one downloads through a google play store app. Spotify is used for listening to songs which are by different artists or you also can create your own songs, talks, discussions, record your own voice and use it. In today's time though for an lay person Spotify looks like a social media application but for you as a research student one can see it how it collects data – large scale throughout the world. This data is used by researchers further to understand culture, discussions, topics, languages etc. These data are called as Big data. Below given is the diagram as to how Spotify collects data. It uses both Quantitative and Qualitative.



One of the first step an individual does to open an account is uses his or her email id- now the email id which is often Gmail. This Gmail account consists details like your name, place of birth, birth date, location. Further, Spotify uses both quantitative methods like

At present Spotify has more than over 100,000 hours of audio, and over 1 billion transcribed words and 100,000 episodes. The episodes span a variety of lengths, topics, styles, and qualities. The estimated size is 2 tb which is available for research. So the actual amount of data that Spotify would have is far larger. The method to bring customers is through machine learning, advertisement, and then using statistical models i.e., quantitative methods. Yet they could periodically interview, questions to understand user experience of both applications. This draws to the point that companies today is often using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

## Check Your Progress

1. List out some methods of Qualitative research

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2. List out some methods of Quantitative

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## 4.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter we learnt about the difference between qualitative and quantitative research. Both have its unique characteristics like quantitative is useful for large scale study, while qualitative is useful for micro in-depth studies. Quantitative is more cheap while conducting qualitative research is expensive in nature. A process called qualitative research is made for gathering non-numerical data in order to achieve understanding. It is unstructured or semi-structured and non-statistical. It is based on data gathered using a research design that provides an explanation for why. Information that aims to describe a topic rather than measure it is collected using qualitative data. Instead of using precise data that would be displayed in a graph or chart, this form of research evaluates opinions, perspectives, and characteristics.

To gather numerical data that can be utilised to measure variables, quantitative research techniques are developed. Quantitative data is statistically organized, and its findings are certain and conclusive. It employs a approach that depends on gathering and carefully analysing evidence. Quantitative research is an approach that offers assistance when you need to extrapolate broad findings and forecast consequences from your investigation. Surveys are an excellent instrument for quantitative research because they are flexible, affordable, and enable data collection from very large sample sizes. Qualitative research can be conducted in a variety of ways, each with its own philosophical underpinnings. For certain projects, various strategies work well. For instance: For solitary people, case studies and narrative studies work best. These entail a thorough examination of every facet of a person's life. The goal of phenomenology is to explain phenomena. This kind of writing tries to examine and describe various occurrences as they are consciously and personally experienced. Models and processes are developed and described using grounded theory. Using this method, scientists can build a theory from evidence that is gathered, examined, and compared to make

new discoveries. Cultural groups are described in ethnography. This strategy involves researchers becoming fully assimilated into a community or group in order to study behaviour. While the methods used by that of Quantitative is that of survey, structured questionnaire etc.

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## 4.5 QUESTIONS

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1. Write a note on some differences of qualitative and quantitative
2. Discuss mixed methods
3. Discuss the usefulness of Quantitative and Qualitative for Industries

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## **MAIN STEPS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

### **Unit Structure**

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 What is Qualitative Research?
- 5.3 Steps in Qualitative Research
- 5.4 Significance
- 5.5 Summary
- 5.6 Questions
- 5.7 References and Further Readings

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### **5.0 OBJECTIVES**

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- To understand what it means to do qualitative research
- To familiarize students with its main steps

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### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Qualitative research is a process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural setting. It focuses on the "why" rather than the "what" of social phenomena and relies on the direct experiences of human beings as meaning-making agents in their everyday lives. Rather than by logical and statistical procedures, qualitative researchers use multiple systems of inquiry for the study of human phenomena including biography, case study, historical analysis, discourse analysis, ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology.

Seen in an historical light, what is today called qualitative, or sometimes ethnographic, interpretative research – or several other terms – has more or less always existed. At the time the founders of sociology – Simmel, Weber, Durkheim and, before them, Marx – were writing, and during the era of the Methodenstreit (“dispute about methods”) in which the German historical school emphasized scientific methods, we can at least speak of qualitative forerunners.

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### **5.2 WHAT IS QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?**

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Qualitative research aims to address questions concerned with developing an understanding of the meaning and experience dimensions of humans’ lives and social worlds. Central to good qualitative research is whether the

research participants’ subjective meanings, actions and social contexts, as understood by them, are illuminated.

Qualitative research is about interpretation, or Verstehen [understanding]. It is “multi-method,” involving the collection and use of a variety of empirical materials and approaches. It focuses not only on the objective nature of behavior but also on its subjective meanings: individuals’ own accounts of their attitudes, motivations, behavior, events and situations – what people say and do in specific places and institutions in social and temporal contexts. For this reason, following Weber, it can be described as an interpretative science.

There are many definitions of research, but what they all have in common is the notion of inquiring into, or investigating something in a systematic manner. In everyday life we talk about “ doing research ” to inform our decisions and to decide on a particular course of action. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences. The key concern is understanding the phenomenon of interest from the participants’ perspectives, not the researcher’s. This is sometimes referred to as the emic or insider’s perspective, versus the etic or outsider’s view.

Qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena. It aims to help us to understand the social world in which we live and why things are the way they are. It is concerned with the social aspects of our world and seeks to answer questions about:

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

**Check Your Progress**

1. Write a note on qualitative research.

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**5.3 STEPS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

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Drawing from the philosophies of constructionism, phenomenology, and symbolic interactionism, qualitative researchers are interested in how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, what meaning they attribute to their experiences. The overall purposes of

qualitative research are to achieve an understanding of how people make sense out of their lives, delineate the process (rather than the outcome or product) of meaning - making, and describe how people interpret what they experience.

It is important to remember that there are no standard or specific steps in doing qualitative research. Of course, there are broad guidelines that need to be followed. One source of potential confusion is that there are many different approaches to doing qualitative research. This is because not all qualitative research questions are of the same type, and because different qualitative researchers come from a wide range of researching traditions. It is important to understand this because different approaches imply different “world views”,

### **1. Research Questions:**

Research questions are important because they guide the whole research process. A qualitative research project usually begins with a general overall area of investigation. All the areas can involve identifying what is happening or being experienced, rather than measuring how much of something exists, or focusing on the way changing one thing produces a change in another, which is why qualitative approaches are appropriate. At this stage, review of literature is very important.

For the research to proceed, it is crucial to become more precise. A qualitative research question is unlike a quantitative research experimental hypothesis in that it does not make the same type of prediction, but in both approaches the research question and method are intimately linked: the method needs to be selected so as to address the question, while fitting with the resources and expertise of the researchers.

### **2. Qualitative Approaches:**

The research process will reflect the methodological approach which a team of researchers decides to adopt. Many methodological approaches are described in terms of the type of analysis they imply, as can be seen from the list of approaches below. Different approaches also involve different sets of assumptions about what sorts of information (or knowledge) are important. At this stage, the most useful message to remember is that there are many different types of qualitative research.

- Ethnography
- Grounded theory (or some component of this, such as constant comparative approaches)
- Interpretative phenomenological analysis
- Discourse analysis
- Conversation analysis
- Content analysis (this term can refer to a quantitative technique)

- Narrative analysis
- And others

### **3. Qualitative Data Collection Methods:**

The main methods are:

- 1) interviews
- 2) focus groups
- 3) observation
- 4) collection of documented material such as letters, diaries, photographs
- 5) collection of narrative
- 6) open ended questions in questionnaires.

### **4. Qualitative Sampling and Selection:**

In qualitative research, sampling can occur at several stages, both while collecting data and while interpreting and reporting on it. Sampling while collecting data for qualitative research is not the same as sampling in quantitative research because researchers are not interested in being able to generalize at a statistical level – instead the key is purposive or strategic sampling. Many would therefore argue that probability-based sampling (e.g. random sampling) is inappropriate. Sampling strategies can be determined in advance and/or evolve during the research process (gradual definition of sample structure). Sampling issues differ depending on the approach being adopted.

### **5. Qualitative Analysis:**

Analysis of data in a research project involves summarizing the mass of data collected and presenting the results in a way that communicates the most important features. In qualitative research we are interested in discovering the big picture but use different techniques to find it. For the most part we are interested in using the data to describe a phenomenon, to articulate what it means and to understand it. Different approaches require different types of analysis.

Most types of analysis involve the categorization of verbal or behavioural data, for purposes of classification, summarization, and tabulation. The content can be analysed on two levels. The basic level of analysis is a descriptive account of the data: this is what was said, documented or observed with nothing read into it and nothing assumed about it. Some texts refer to this as the manifest level of analysis. The higher level of analysis is interpretative: it is concerned with what was meant by the response, what was inferred or implied. It is sometimes called the latent level of analysis.

## 6. Record Keeping and Being Organized:

Whatever qualitative approach is involved, it is very important to be organized when keeping records of data or reflexive notes or memos, or documents. As in all (qualitative or quantitative) research it is crucial to maintain a good audit trail which could in theory be inspected by others. It is also important to ensure that any saved records are kept in accordance with data protection regulations. This often involves careful anonymization procedures in labelling digital or analogue recordings or documents and text.

### Check Your Progress:

1. What are qualitative data collection methods?

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## 5.4 SIGNIFICANCE

Qualitative research attempts to broaden and/or deepen our understanding of how things came to be the way they are in our social world. If the research question involves exploring how people experience something, or what their views are, exploring a new area where issues are not yet understood or properly identified, assessing whether a new service is implementable, looking at 'real-life' context, or a sensitive topic where you need flexibility to avoid causing distress, then probably qualitative methodology is required.

Qualitative research has a rich tradition in the study of human social behaviour and cultures. Its general aim is to develop concepts which help us to understand social phenomena in, wherever possible, natural rather than experimental settings, to gain an understanding of the experiences, perceptions and/or behaviours of individuals, and the meanings attached to them. The effective application of qualitative methods to other disciplines, including clinical, health service and education research, has a rapidly expanding and robust evidence base. Qualitative approaches have potential in most social research, singularly and in combination with quantitative methods.

### Check Your Progress:

1. Explain the significance of qualitative research.

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## 5.5 SUMMARY

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Thus, qualitative methods are designed to reveal what is going on by describing and interpreting phenomena; they do not attempt to measure how often an event or association occurs. Research conducted using qualitative methods is normally done with an intent to preserve the inherent complexities of human behaviour as opposed to assuming a reductive view of the subject in order to count and measure the occurrence of phenomena.

Qualitative researchers utilize purposive sampling, whereby research participants are selected deliberately to test a particular theoretical premise. The purpose of sampling here is not to identify a random subgroup of the general population from which statistically significant results can be extrapolated, but rather to identify, in a systematic way, individuals that possess relevant characteristics for the question being considered. Qualitative research has been established for many decades in the social sciences and encompasses a valuable set of methodological tools for data collection, analysis and interpretation.

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## 5.6 QUESTIONS

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- What are the steps in qualitative research?
- Differentiate between qualitative and quantitative research design.
- What is qualitative research analysis?

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## **RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

### **Unit Structure**

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research
- 6.3 Strategies for Creditability
- 6.4 Summary
- 6.5 Questions
- 6.6 References and Further Readings

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### **6.0 OBJECTIVES**

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- To understand what entails reliability and validity in research
  - To familiarize students with these aspects for qualitative research
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### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

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“Reliability and validity are tools of an essentially positivist epistemology” (Watling, as cited in Winter, 200, p. 7). The use of reliability and validity are common in quantitative research and now it is reconsidered in the qualitative research paradigm. Since reliability and validity are rooted in positivist perspective then they should be redefined for their use in a naturalistic approach.

Insofar as the definitions of reliability and validity in quantitative research reveal two strands: Firstly, with regards to reliability, whether the result is replicable. Secondly, with regards to validity, whether the means of measurement are accurate and whether they are measuring what they are intended to measure. However, the concepts of reliability and validity are viewed differently by qualitative researchers who strongly consider these concepts defined in quantitative terms as inadequate. In other words, these terms as defined in quantitative terms may not apply to the qualitative research paradigm. The question of replicability in the results does not concern them, but precision, credibility, and transferability provide the lenses of evaluating the findings of a qualitative research. In this context, the two research approaches or perspectives are essentially different paradigms.



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## 6.2 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

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Qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such as real-world setting [where] the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest. Unlike quantitative researchers who seek causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings, qualitative researchers seek instead illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations. However, both qualitative and quantitative researchers need to test and demonstrate that their studies are credible.

Guba and Lincoln (1981) stated that while all research must have "truth value", "applicability", "consistency", and "neutrality" in order to be considered worthwhile, the nature of knowledge within the rationalistic (or quantitative) paradigm is different from the knowledge in naturalistic (qualitative) paradigm. Consequently, each paradigm requires paradigm-specific criteria for addressing "rigor" (the term most often used in the rationalistic paradigm) or "trustworthiness", their parallel term for qualitative "rigor". They noted that, within the rationalistic paradigm, the criteria to reach the goal of rigor are internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. On the other hand, they proposed that the criteria in the qualitative paradigm to ensure "trustworthiness" are credibility, fittingness, auditability, and confirmability.

While the credibility in quantitative research depends on instrument construction, in qualitative research, "the researcher is the instrument". Thus, it seems when quantitative researchers speak of research validity and reliability, they are usually referring to research that is credible while the credibility of a qualitative research depends on the ability and effort of the researcher. Although reliability and validity are treated separately in quantitative studies, these terms are not viewed separately in qualitative research. Instead, terminology that encompasses both, such as credibility, transferability, and trustworthiness is used.

Although the term 'Reliability' is a concept used for testing or evaluating quantitative research, the idea is most often used in all kinds of research. If we see the idea of testing as a way of information elicitation then the most important test of any qualitative study is its quality. A good qualitative study can help us "understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing". This relates to the concept of a good quality research when reliability is a concept to evaluate quality in quantitative study with a "purpose of explaining" while quality concept in qualitative study has the purpose of "generating understanding".

Reliability can be described as 'the consistency or constancy of a measuring instrument', or 'the degree of consistency or dependability with which an instrument measures the attribute it is designed to measure'. There seems to be a growing popular movement within qualitative circles to insist that 'dependability' is a more appropriate term than reliability for qualitative research. However, the concern at the root of dependability is

the same as that for reliability: to ensure that data collection is undertaken in a consistent manner free from undue variation which unknowingly exerts an effect on the nature of the data.

The concept of validity is described by a wide range of terms in qualitative studies. This concept is not a single, fixed, or universal concept, but rather a contingent construct, inescapably grounded in the processes and intentions of research methodologies and projects. Although some qualitative researchers have argued that the term validity is not applicable to qualitative research, but at the same time, they have realized the need for some kind of qualifying check or measure for their research.

The traditional criteria for validity find their roots in a positivist tradition, and to an extent, positivism has been defined by a systematic theory of validity. Within the positivist terminology, validity resided amongst, and was the result and culmination of other empirical conceptions: universal laws, evidence, objectivity, truth, actuality, deduction, reason, fact and mathematical data to name just a few.

Some scholars argue that the quality of a study in each paradigm should be judged by its own paradigm's terms. For example, while the terms Reliability and Validity are essential criterion for quality in quantitative paradigms, in qualitative paradigms the terms Credibility, Neutrality or Confirmability, Consistency or Dependability and Applicability or Transferability are to be the essential criteria for quality.

The concept of validity is described by a wide range of terms in qualitative studies. This concept is not a single, fixed, or universal concept, but “rather a contingent construct, inescapably grounded in the processes and intentions of particular research methodologies and projects”. Although some qualitative researchers have argued that the term validity is not applicable to qualitative research, but at the same time, they have realized the need for some kind of qualifying check or measure for their research.

### Check Your Progress

1. What is ‘reliability’ in research?

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Assessing the reliability of study findings requires researchers and health professionals to make judgements about the ‘soundness’ of the research in relation to the application and appropriateness of the methods undertaken and the integrity of the final conclusions. Qualitative research is frequently criticized for lacking scientific rigour with poor justification of the methods adopted, lack of transparency in the analytical procedures and the findings being merely a collection of personal opinions subject to researcher bias.

Unlike quantitative researchers, who apply statistical methods for establishing validity and reliability of research findings, qualitative researchers aim to design and incorporate methodological strategies to ensure the ‘trustworthiness’ of the findings. There will be some concerns or issues that one might need to anticipate or tackle, and thereby develop some strategies to overcome these, which include:

1. Accounting for personal biases which may have influenced findings;
2. Acknowledging biases in sampling and ongoing critical reflection of methods to ensure sufficient depth and relevance of data collection and analysis;
3. Meticulous record keeping, demonstrating a clear decision trail and ensuring interpretations of data are consistent and transparent;
4. Establishing a comparison case/seeking out similarities and differences across accounts to ensure different perspectives are represented;
5. Including rich and thick verbatim descriptions of participants’ accounts to support findings;
6. Demonstrating clarity in terms of thought processes during data analysis and subsequent interpretations;
7. Engaging with other researchers to reduce research bias;
8. Respondent validation: includes inviting participants to comment on the interview transcript and whether the final themes and concepts created adequately reflect the phenomena being investigated;
9. Data triangulation, whereby different methods and perspectives help produce a more comprehensive set of findings.

In summary, it is imperative that all qualitative researchers incorporate strategies to enhance the credibility of a study during research design and implementation, although there is no universally accepted terminology and criteria used to evaluate qualitative research.

### Check Your Progress

1. What are the strategies one can use to ensure creditability in qualitative research?

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## 6.4 SUMMARY

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There is general agreement that all research studies must be open to critique and evaluation. Failure to assess the worth of a study – the soundness of its method, the accuracy of its findings, and the integrity of assumptions made or conclusions reached – could have dire consequences. Evaluation of studies, then, is an essential pre-requisite of the application of findings. Traditionally, such evaluation has centred on assessment of reliability and validity.

Although the tests and measures used to establish the validity and reliability of quantitative research cannot be applied to qualitative research, there are ongoing debates about whether terms such as validity, reliability and generalizability are appropriate to evaluate qualitative research. In the broadest context these terms are applicable, with validity referring to the integrity and application of the methods undertaken and the precision in which the findings accurately reflect the data, while reliability describes consistency within the employed analytical procedures.

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## 6.5 QUESTIONS

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1. What is 'validity' in qualitative research?
2. What are the arguments against having reliability and validity in qualitative research?

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## ETHNOGRAPHY

### Unit Structure

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Past and Present of Ethnography
- 7.3 Advantages and Disadvantages
- 7.4 Significance
- 7.5 Summary
- 7.6 Questions
- 7.7 References and Further Readings

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### 7.0 OBJECTIVES

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- To understand the significance of ethnography
- To familiarize students with its strategies and aspects

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### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

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Ethnography strives to understand the interaction of individuals not just with others, but also with the culture of the society in which they live. Of the various types of qualitative research, ethnography is likely to be the most familiar to researchers. Its history can be traced to late nineteenth - century anthropologists who engaged in participant observation in the “field”. Anthropologists “do” ethnography, a research process, as well as write up their findings as an ethnography, a product.

Thus, ethnography is both a process and a product. Although ethnography originated in the field of anthropology, nowadays researchers from many fields and disciplines might engage in an ethnographic study. Further, there are now many forms of ethnography, including life history, critical ethnography, autoethnography, and feminist ethnography. The factor that unites all forms of ethnography is its focus on human society and culture.

Ethnography has a background in anthropology. The term means “portrait of a people” and it is a methodology for descriptive studies of cultures and peoples. The cultural parameter is that the people under investigation have something in common. Examples of parameters include:

- Geographical - a particular region or country
- Religious

- Social / familial
- Shared experience

Ethnographic studies entail extensive fieldwork by the researcher. Data collection techniques include both formal and informal interviewing, often interviewing individuals on several occasions, and participant or non-participant observation. Ethnography is extremely time-consuming because it involves the researcher spending long periods of time in the field.

The researcher attempts to interpret data from the perspective of the participants, at the same time as acknowledging that it is difficult to know just how far it is possible to give a “true” account of a perspective other than one’s own. In order to understand the culture of a group, one must spend time with the group being studied. In terms of data collection methods, immersion in the site as a participant observer is the primary method of data collection. Interviews, formal and informal, and the analysis of documents, records, and artifacts also constitute the data set along with a fieldworker’s diary of each day’s happenings, personal feelings, ideas, impressions, or insights about those events.

At the heart of an ethnography is “thick description” — a term popularized by Geertz (1973). “Culture,” Geertz writes, “is not a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly — that is, thickly — described” (p. 14). The write - up of an ethnography is more than description, however. While ethnographers want to convey the meanings, participants make of their lives, they do so with some interpretation on their part.

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## 7.2 PAST AND PRESENT OF ETHNOGRAPHY

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The description of other ways of life is an activity with roots in ancient times. Herodotus, the Greek traveler, and historian of the 5th century BC, wrote of some 50 different peoples he encountered or heard of, remarking on their laws, social customs, religion, and appearance. Beginning with the age of exploration and continuing into the early 20th century, detailed accounts of non-European peoples were rendered by European traders, missionaries, and, later, colonial administrators.

Modern anthropologists usually identify the establishment of ethnography as a professional field with the pioneering work of both the Polish-born British anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski in the Trobriand Islands of Melanesia (c. 1915) and the American anthropologist Margaret Mead, whose first fieldwork was in Samoa (1925). Ethnographic fieldwork has since become a sort of rite of passage into the profession of cultural anthropology.

Contemporary ethnographies usually adhere to a community, rather than individual, focus and concentrate on the description of current circumstances rather than historical events. Traditionally, commonalities

among members of the group have been emphasized, though recent ethnography has begun to reflect an interest in the importance of variation within cultural systems. Ethnographic studies are no longer restricted to small primitive societies but may also focus on such social units as urban ghettos. The tools of the ethnographer have changed radically since Malinowski's time. While detailed notes are still a mainstay of fieldwork, ethnographers have taken full advantage of technological developments such as motion pictures and tape recorders to augment their written accounts.

### **Check Your Progress:**

1. Write a note on the history of ethnography.

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## **7.3 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES**

As like any other research methods, Ethnography has its own advantages and disadvantages. Some of these include -

### **Advantages:**

- The main aim of the participatory observation is to be immersed within the society under study and then record everything. This experience may open people under study in a more comfortable manner to the anthropologist which enables him to see more than an etic perspective of the way of life.
- It is a highly accurate and the data collected is absolutely first hand.
- Also, while conducting research in participatory mode, you can get unexpected results and observation which were never perceived by the researcher.
- This methodology allows the cultures to speak for themselves. It provides them a voice.
- Ethnographies can also help the policy makers to think in an alternate way about having the social perspective of various actions.

### **Disadvantages:**

- The task to be both participant and researcher may lead the analysts to be subjective.
- Another important drawback is the length of time required to conduct the ethnographic studies.



- Fieldwork demands more effort, commitment, and sincerity from the researcher and as such participant observation is the most personally demanding and analytically difficult method of social research to undertake.
- The wellbeing of the researcher could be at risk.
- Another important aspect of adverse repercussion is the breach of privacy.
- One more criticism of the ethnographic approach is related to the quality of the research conducted and the effectiveness of the methodology. It remains highly questionable.

### Check Your Progress:

1. What are the advantages of ethnography?

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### 7.4 SIGNIFICANCE

It might also be pointed out that just as is the case with phenomenological qualitative studies, sometimes studies are labeled “ethnographic” because of qualitative research’s historic link to ethnography. However, to be an ethnographic study, the lens of culture must be used to understand the phenomenon.

Ethnography, descriptive study of a particular human society or the process of making such a study. Contemporary ethnography is based almost entirely on fieldwork and requires the complete immersion of the anthropologist in the culture and everyday life of the people who are the subject of his study.

Ethnography, by virtue of its intersubjective nature, is necessarily comparative. Given that the anthropologist in the field necessarily retains certain cultural biases, his observations and descriptions must, to a certain degree, be comparative. Thus, the formulating of generalizations about culture and the drawing of comparisons inevitably become components of ethnography.

### Check Your Progress:

1. Explain the significance of ethnography.

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## 7.5 SUMMARY

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Next to basic qualitative studies, ethnographic studies are quite common and examples can be found in many journals and fields of practice. Hence, ethnography is research precisely about individuals, societies, and their culture. It aims to study social and cultural aspects of a society and the researcher focusses to collect information for that. It focusses on behaviour of people with respect to the social setup they live in. The outcome of a field study mirrors the learning and the arrangement of implications in the lives of a social gathering.

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## 7.6 QUESTIONS

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- Explain ‘ethnography’ as a qualitative research method.
- What are the pros and cons of ethnography?
- Why is ethnography useful?

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## 7.7 REFERENCES

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## CASE STUDY METHOD

### Unit Structure

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Definition of case study
- 8.3 Characteristics of a case study
- 8.4 Case study technique
- 8.5 Assumptions
- 8.6 Sources of data for case study
- 8.7 Significance of case study
- 8.8 Limitations
- 8.9 Summary
- 8.10 Questions
- 8.11 Reference

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### 8.0 OBJECTIVES

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- To acquaint student with method of investigation and importance of Case study in research paper
- To familiarize students with the purpose to understand the life cycle or an important part of the life cycle of the unit

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### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

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In social science research, the case study method is Widely adopted one in carrying our research in the field. The credit for introducing case study goes to Fredrick replay. The English social philosopher, herbert Spencer, was among the first to adopt case study method in comparative studies of different cultures, The comparative studies of different culture, the problem of juvenile delinquency was complex to understand simply on the basis of available statistical data. It was Healey, who supported the case study method which afforded a deeper understanding of the juvenile delinquency phenomena. Later, sociologists, psychologists, anthologist, technologists and educationists interested in the study of primitive as well as modern cultures by case study method. H. Gisbrians have had restored. To this method while portraying historical character of a particular historical period and describing the developments today, many a novelist and dramatist have used some resemblance of the case study method for presenting a word picture of character.

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## 8.2 DEFINITION OF CASE STUDY METHOD

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P. V. Young defines case study as “a comprehensive study of a social unit, be it a person, a group of person, an institution, or an community is called a case study”, According to Goode and Hatt,” it is an approach which views any social unit as a whole. It is a way of organizing social data so as to preserve the unitary character of the social object being studied.” In the word of charles Horfon Coolye, Case study depends our perception and gives us a clear insight into life It gets at behaviour directly and not by an indirect approach.” Bay the above definition, it is clear that the case study method is qualitative, inclusive, intensive, insight stimulating and comprehensive approach. The field study is comparatively limited but has more of depth in it. It aims at studying everything rather than something about everything as in case of statistical method. In other words, it is study of Micro problem at macro level.

The approach to a case study research may not be based on hypothechs is or on any well established conclusions but the study itself may help in formulating a well founded hypothesis for further investigation. This approach to research is , therefore, an open and objective investigation of a particular unit with a view to develop a hypothesis in character so the researcher has complete freedom in selecting problem that be considered as describe and fruit bearing. And it is used not necessary for proving or disproving a hypothesis. Thus, the case study methods work as a micro scope in understanding the complex behaviour of social problem

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## 8.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF A CASE STUDY

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- 1) The case study method aims at deep and detailed investigation of a unit.
- 2) It covers a sufficient wide cycle of time.
- 3) It is continuity in nature.
- 4) It is qualitative in character and it may equally be quantitative.
- 5) The number of units to be studied is small.
- 6) It is flexible with which the researcher has independence in selecting the problem.
- 7) The data is to be scientifically synthesized which should be as much prognostic as diagnostic.

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## 8.4 CASE STUDY TECHNIQUE

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The case study is often termed as method, sometimes as technique and at others an approach to social reality. It is in fact, a technique which considers all potential aspects of situation intensively investigating it. The technique of gathering and processing data are related to three phases, viz

- 1) Choice of case
- 2) Recording of data
- 3) Data interpretation

The choice of case consists of two elements, first selection of 'representative unit'. Representativeness of the case is important with a view to studying as a specimen in a culture rather than as a definite entity, for e.g- the factors which are influencing the successful functioning of the commercial bank, it is needless to say that a representative group of the sample- Second, identifying the situation thought case unit has an outlook, the problem must be selected carefully and well defined the situation of the case unit being studied.

Organizing the social data in such a way to preserve the unitary character of the social aim which is the essential feature in recording of data. In practical sense, the wholeness of case can be preserved as Goode and Hatt started, in for headings namely,

- 1) Breadth of data,
- 2) Level of data,
- 3) Formation of index / indices,
- 4) Interaction in a time dimension

The breadth of data refer to the fact of data collection, level of data concerns to many facts of life of the unit, and that is available, index relates the various traits that are actually used in characterizing the unit and time dimension emphasis upon the process and time, the time provided may be short or long.

The interpretation of data is a equally and challenging as the selection of the case and gathering information about the case. The researcher must closely guard against the subjective interpretation of the facts of a case being studied.

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## 8.5 ASSUMPTIONS

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In selection of a problem for research under case study method one should keep in mind. The following assumptions. They are -

- 1) The unit is indivisible and cannot be studied in piece meal and in programmatic.
- 2) A Particular unit has its own uniqueness' but it is not different from other unit in all respects. In other words, it is representative of a group and can be studied as a type rather a pure individual. This means underlying unit. This underlying unit makes it possible to apply the inferences, for the unit / units to the group as a whole. It is because of

this assumption, the case study method can be applied and possible to predict and control of social phenomenon.

- 3) Social phenomena is a complex indeed, no- technique that can bring in uniformity and consequently ensure the complex totality ie, human life
- 4) The real motives behind the action is being influenced by time. So that worker has to study the problem in its historical perspective.
- 5) Case study depends upon the efficiency of the 'recall' of others as to what has happened earlier

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## 8.6 SOURCES OF DATA FOR CASE STUDY

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Following are the main sources of data for case study research.

- 1) The personal documents, viz. dairies, autobiographies, memories, letter, etc of an individual which contain the description of remarkable events of the life of an individual as well as his reactions towards them. Although they sufficiently subjective in nature but are important for social research. In the words of P.N. Young "personal documents represent continuity of experience which helps to illuminate the individual personality. Social relations and Philosophy of life often expressed in objective reality or subjective appreciation.
- 2) Life history is another course for case study at reveals the respondent life with the significance of social movements.

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## 8.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF CASE STUDY

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- 1) Case study helps in formulating valid hypothesis A thorough study and careful analysis can derive various generalizations which may be developed into useful hypothesis. Infact, study of relevant literature and case study are the two potent sources of hypothesis.
- 2) It helps in framing questionnaire or schedule Through case study, it can be known the prolites of the unit of individual with which a better and suitable questionnaire or schedule can be framed in order to get rich response.
- 3) It aids in sampling, by studying the individual units thoroughly it can PST them in definite type or class.
- 4) It locate deviant cases. The deviant case are those units that behave against the proposed hypothesis .The tendency is to ignore them but for scientific analysis they are important.
- 5) Case study method is a process rather than an incident. The problem under study forms a process rather than one incident EG- Courtship process , clique formation , etc.

- 6) Case study method enlarge the range of personal experience of the researcher. In statistical method, generally, a narrow range of topic is selected and the researcher's knowledge is limited to the particular aspect only. In case of case study, the whole of range of subjective life is studied and the range of knowledge is naturally enlarged. With this personal gain, he gets an intimate knowledge of many aspects of the units.
- 7) Since the case study covers the entire life of the unit, it is inclusive and intensive in nature. Under this, there is possibility of studying the various aspects of a problem.
- 8) The significance of the case study is recorded this nature of recording the data within the life of an individual and later on, within the life of the class of individuals. This means the researcher comes into contact with different classes of people, a thief, a pick-pocket and a like.

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## 8.8 LIMITATIONS

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The data collected in case study method is incapable of verification and the generalizations drawn from it leads to unsystematic procedure. Secondly, due to inaccurate observations and faulty inference, selection of a case may not be typical of the group. In other words, the case study is susceptible to post hoc fallacy in memory, unconscious omission or repression of unpleasant facts which describes what is more imaginary than real. Thirdly, the researcher tends to find some common sense explanations to a particular phenomena. This is so happened as he is so over confident to his intimate knowledge of the unit. This brings to presume even his common sense or intuitive explanations are most scientific, such explanation being incapable of verification which are hardly reliable. Fourth thing the case study method is qualitative in nature. It deals with only the psychological aspects of a human being. Quantitative of the results may be difficult. In the case study method They are

- 1) The subject of study must be 'representative' as a specimen in a series of similar problem.
- 2) The life-history material should be organized and properly conceptualized.
- 3) The technique of elaboration of organic materials into social behaviour must be properly specified.
- 4) The groups or institutions which are responsible for transmitting a culture should be recognized.
- 5) A continuous related experience from childhood should be stressed if the study is related to an individual.



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## 8.9 SUMMARY

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Important qualitative Information which may not be given any statistical treatment but may be pressured and interrupted in a disruptive way by survey and case study method. The surely agency should conduct the surely in a completely objective fashion without pre-determined finding case study method problem cases or abnormal situations for purposes diagnosis and remedy. It studies normal situations to serve as the basis of preventing difficulties.

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## 8.10 QUESTION

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1. Explain case study and its advantages and disadvantage
2. Explain in your own words a case study method.
3. Define case study.
4. Discuss Characteristics of case study.
5. What are the significance of case study method?

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## 8.11 REFERENCE

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## FEMINIST APPROACH

### Unit Structure

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 What is Feminist Approach in Qualitative Research?
- 9.3 Significance of Feminist Qualitative Research
- 9.4 Summary
- 9.5 Questions
- 9.6 References

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### 9.0 OBJECTIVES

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- To understand the need for feminist research
- To familiarize students with critical understanding of feminist research

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### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

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Feminism refers to a worldwide movement for the redistribution of power. Feminism is:

- a) a belief that women all over the world face some form of oppression or exploitation,
- b) a commitment to uncover and understand what causes and sustains oppression and
- c) a commitment to work individually and collectively in everyday life to end all forms of oppression, whether based on gender, class, race, or culture.

The normative historiography of feminist theory and activism in the United States is broken into three waves. First-wave feminism primarily focused on women's suffrage and women's rights to legally exist in public spaces. The second wave worked to extend some of the rights won during the first wave. Activists of this time period focused on women's rights to enter the workforce, sexual harassment, educational equality, and abortion rights. The third wave is often characterized as the intersectional wave, as some feminist groups began utilizing Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality to understand that oppression operates via multiple categories (e.g., gender, race, class, age, ability) and that intersecting oppressions lead to different lived experiences.

Critical research often draws from feminist theory. Critical feminist research focuses on issues of power and oppression in terms of gender; the

politicizing of women's experience is central in critical feminist research. Feminist research focuses on the experiences of women in natural social settings, where the aim is to 'make women visible, raise their consciousness and empower them'. Adopting a feminist approach influences what questions researchers ask and how they think about their data, but it does not usually influence how data is managed or analysed.

Feminist influences to research undoubtedly have a contribution to make in increasing our understanding of the world. These approaches to research were a reaction against positivism and traditional research strategies, which were perceived to be male-dominated and oppressive of women. Feminist researchers focused on research endeavours that would raise issues of power and oppression. The aim was to generate new knowledge and understanding to empower women.

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## 9.2 WHAT IS FEMINIST APPROACH IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?

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Feminist qualitative research begins with the understanding that all knowledge is situated in the bodies and subjectivities of people, particularly women and historically marginalized groups. Feminist qualitative research spans the range of qualitative methodologies, but much early research emerged out of the feminist postmodern turn in anthropology, which was a response to male anthropologists who ignored the gendered implications of ethnographic research.

However, just because research examines gender does not mean that it is feminist. Simply using gender as a category of analysis does not mean the research project is informed by feminist theory, ethics, or methods, but it is often a starting point for researchers who are interested in the complex ways gender is constructed and the ways it operates in social research.

Much of the theoretical work that informs feminist qualitative research today emerged out of second-wave feminist scholarship. Standpoint epistemology, posits that knowledge comes from one's particular social location, that it is subjective, and the further one is from the hegemonic norm, the clearer one can see oppression. This was a major challenge to androcentric and Enlightenment theories of knowledge because standpoint theory acknowledges that there is no universal understanding of the world. This theory aligns with the second-wave feminist slogan, "The personal is political," and advocates for a view of knowledge that is produced from the body.

Crenshaw (1991) and Collins (2000) challenged and expanded standpoint theory to move it beyond an individual understanding of knowledge to a group-based theory of oppression. Their work, and that of other black and womanist feminists, opened multiple spaces of possibility for feminist scholars and researchers because it challenged hegemonic feminist thought. They advocated for feminists to attend to all aspects of oppression rather than flattening them to one of simple gender-based oppression.

To make it more precise, one can say that feminist research is one that follows these three basic principles:

1. Putting women's experiences at the center of its investigation
2. Locating researcher within the research.
3. Transformation of gender relations.

Thus, feminist research centers around and problematizes women's diverse situations; and examines various institutions and structures that frame those situations. With the aim of conducting transformative research, feminist research approaches attempt to create non-hierarchical and participatory relationship between the researcher and the participants of the research.

### Check Your Progress:

1. What is feminist methodology?

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## 9.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF FEMINIST QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Feminist research methodology challenges the existing mainstream knowledge and thereby represents an epistemological revolution which asks for transformation of oppressive structures. Feminist research paradigm is based in the recognition that knowledge is power, in Foucauldian terms. It is an attempt to deconstruct existing mainstream knowledges and claims to have the power to make new knowledge claims arising out of woman's standpoint.

Feminist research promotes social justice and works to initiate social change in women's lives. Feminist research praxis emphasizes issues of power and authority between the researcher and the researched, offsetting the influence of these factors through the practice of reflexivity throughout the research process. Feminist research seeks to create new knowledge, challenge beliefs and practices that limit human potential, explore the lives of women and other marginalized groups, and facilitate social critique and action to reduce inequities. Further these can be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods; can use varied theories and strategies; and can address diverse topics. Qualitative inquiry is a common approach feminists use to study the lived experiences of marginalized groups and the forces that limit human potential.

In other words, the general principles that guide feminist research include a spirit of critique; a challenge to claims of objectivity in research;

consciousness of gender as a force that organizes social life and thought; ethical and equitable research practices; and an action orientation focused on personal, institutional, theoretical, and social transformation.

### Check Your Progress

1. What is the significance of feminist approach?

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## 9.4 SUMMARY

Although, too little is written in the methodological literature about feminist influences on research decision making or how feminist theories might influence the conduct of research, it remains a promising methodology within qualitative research. The questions that drive feminist projects often emerge from women's lived experiences, such as childbearing or sexual harassment, from revisiting common assumptions and practices through the lens of gender, and from considering the perspectives of diverse groups rendered invisible in history and research. Just as feminism, the quest for gender equity, involves diverse groups, beliefs, and practices, feminist research involves diverse researchers, beliefs, and practices.

## 9.5 QUESTIONS

1. What types of questions might lend themselves to a feminist perspective?
2. Why is feminist approach significant?
3. Trace the history of feminism.

## 9.6 REFERENCES

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## INTERVIEW: UNSTRUCTURED, SEMI-STRUCTURED, IN-DEPTH

### Unit Structure

- 10.0 Objectives
- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Meaning of Interview
- 10.3 Different types of Qualitative Interviewing
  - 10.3.1 Structured Interviews
  - 10.3.2 Unstructured Interviews
  - 10.3.3 Semi Structured Interviews
  - 10.3.4 In-depth Interviews.
- 10.4 Steps for conducting Qualitative Interviews
- 10.5 Advantages and Disadvantages of Interview.
- 10.6 Summary
- 10.7 Questions
- 10.8 References and Further readings

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### 10.0 OBJECTIVES

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- To learn about the different process involved while conducting interview.
- To understand the different types of interview method and to acquire the necessary skill sets to conduct an independent interview.

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### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

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After your Graduation/ Post Graduation you might be applying for jobs. One of the first thing for getting selected for a job is clearing the interview round. In other words, imagine you would be a job seeker and the interviewer could be someone else. The process could last 10 to 15 minutes too. So, this is an example of interview in terms of real-life situation. However, in this chapter we are going to discuss about the meaning of interview and the different process involved, from the point of view of research, specifically as a tool of data collection. Imagine this situation when you are travelling in the bus or train, due to some reason you start talking to the other person who is a stranger, you speak few questions, get clarified about certain details, this is interview. You share some ideas and, the other person also shares somethings. In this situation if you make some notes, inform the other person and even record it then it is a interview. Especially when ethics and proper procedure is followed. In

other words, everyday we interview, interact and are in the process of interviewing consciously/ unconsciously. The aim of this chapter is to equip you with the skill set required for conducting an interview independently.

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## 10.2 MEANING OF INTERVIEW

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According to Collins dictionary, interview is a type of formal meeting in which someone asks questions in order to find out some answers. Interview comprises of discussion on vocal answers between two people or between multiple people, claims Lindman. Interview is a technique of field study which is used to watch the behaviour of individuals, and an attempt to document the tangible impacts of social group interaction, writes Pauline Young. Young also notes that an interview may be thought of as a methodical way for someone to enter more or less imaginarily into the life of other human being. It functions like a tape recorder, replaying incidents, emotions, and responses from the past for the interviewer to listen to while conducting a scientific interview. Asking individuals questions during an interview is important, but so is paying close attention to their responses.

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## 10.3 DIFFERENT TYPES OF QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWING

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Many types of interviews have been categorised in a variety of ways by various individuals. S. Among the crucial categories are -

- a) One on interview (individual interview)
- b) Group interview, in which a single interviewer conducts many interviews with a large group of interviewees.
- c) Classification based on the data gathered: Intense interview; simple interview.
- d) Interviews may even occasionally be categorised according to the tasks they complete or the aims for which they are used.
- e) Diagnostic interviews.
- f) Psychiatric interviews
- g) Interviews for employment.

### 10.3.1 Structured Interviews:

A Structured interview is a very rigid type of a tool. The structured interview as characterised by Gill et al. (2008) is a verbally delivered questionnaire which do not use prompts and has very limited room for follow-up questions. It has no scope for exploring replies that call for further in-depth and detailed investigation.

They are also referred to as controlled guided interviews. These interactions feature a predetermined set of question formats that are



closely adhered to. In structured interviews, closed-ended, predetermined questions are frequently used. The interviewer does not change any order of the questions or the language used. If the subject does not comprehend the question, the interviewer is only free to repeat it or give more explanation but cannot change the question. In these interviews the researcher strictly follows the interview protocol. Only the questions listed in the interview protocol are asked, which makes it more of a formal interview approach.

In structured interview there is very few possibilities to delve further into and to further examine the subjects that participants raise in response to the interview questions. This approach can be helpful since it helps focus on the particular phenomenon or experience that the researcher is examining when they have a thorough set of interview questions. There shouldn't be much of a requirement for you to do follow-up interviews to address omitted or forgotten questions because it speeds up interviewing and ensures that you have the necessary information.

### Check Your Progress:

1. Explain structured Interview in few lines.

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2. List out the different types of Interview Method.

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### 10.3.2 Unstructured interviews:

Uncontrolled, unguided, or non-direct interviews are other names for unstructured interviews. With this kind of interview, there is no set structure for the questions. The researcher is given a list of general themes to gather information on, and free talks are held to do so. This type of interview is unique as it is a more adaptable method of questioning the respondents. It is more popular too as it gives scope for respondents to openly share their personal experiences. These interviews allow for an open-ended description of the societal and personal circumstances of beliefs and emotions.

The interviewer has far more latitude to vary the order of questions, ask additional questions, or even provide classifications and explanations. In a slightly different perspective, Gill et al. (2008) notes that unstructured interviews “do not reflect any preconceived theories or ideas and are

performed with little or no organisation,” implying that the process of conducting unstructured interviews can occasionally be a little chaotic with little structure or planning.

Despite the fact that the talk is about the research under consideration, they frequently proceed as a typical conversation would. Researchers utilise this informal interviewing technique to build rapport and comfort with participants. It is especially useful when discussing delicate subjects. In order to gather the most detailed and rich information from participants, the researcher is obliged to question them extensively. If you choose this interview method, while conducting any study bear in mind that it can take numerous rounds of interviews with your participants to get all the data you require. Participants’ narratives may occasionally steer the discourse away from other areas of the study topic you want to examine because you do not follow a set interview methodology, hence the skilled interviewer will bring back the discussion to the topic.

### **10.3.3 Semi-structured interviews:**

In a semi-structured interview, the researcher establishes the general themes to be addressed, but the interviewee’s responses define the direction in which the interview will go. The strategy in which a middle ground between structured and unstructured interviews, is used is described by Gill et al. (2008) as a Semi structured interview. There are few key questions that help the researcher the option to pursue an idea in a response in greater detail. In order to give researchers, the opportunity to gain a thorough understanding of the subject of interest necessary for developing pertinent and insightful semi-structured questions, semi-structured interviews are frequently preceded by observation, informal interviewing, and unstructured interviewing.

The inclusion of open-ended questions and training of interviewers to explore pertinent themes helps to uncover fresh perspectives on any subject. Hence the researcher is guided through a interviewing process by an interview protocol. Even while there may be some conversational elements included, the focus is primarily on the researcher and participant’s guided interaction. Although it does preserve some structure (thus the name semi structured), allows the researcher to prompt additional information from the subject. Be aware that this interview technique allows you as a researcher a great deal of options if you want to use it. Hence, analysing data becomes bit difficult.

Here you don’t need to conduct numerous rounds of interviews as long as you stick to the interview protocol in order to gather all the information needed to thoroughly address your research issue. The goal of an interview procedure is to collect information from participants about their feelings, thoughts, and opinions; however, you may need to ask more questions to do so.

### 10.3.4 In-depth interviews:

The goal of in-depth interviews is to gain a richer, more in-depth understanding of the subject of interest. They typically include an anthropological approach and are a supplement to approaches like participant observation or action research.

In-depth interviews allow the researcher to delve deeply into a participant's experience, behaviour, feelings, and/or attitudes to uncover underlying concepts and develop a theory about the research issue. Since the researcher will guide the conversation and it is less likely to feature stories or personal histories, in-depth interviews are more structured than narrative interviews. In-depth interviews, as opposed to semi-structured interviews, do, however, give the participant a lot more freedom to speak freely and to give more thorough details. Being in depth interview were depending upon the conversation, flow the nature of questions are many a times asked

When conducting in-depth interviews, interviewers occasionally avoid disclosing all the specifics of the research hypothesis since doing so might "lead" or "affect" the qualitative data gathered. Instead, as part of recruiting and permission, the overall area of interest is explained to the participant, and the interviewer then directs the interview based on the responses.

Focused, unstructured, or ethnographic interviews are other names for in-depth interviews. The goal of this interviewing technique is to engage the interviewee in conversation in order to extract their understandings and interpretations rather than using pre-set questions. These interviews are distinguished by an intentional effort to engage the participant in conversation about a particular subject or subject matter pertinent to the research questions or issue under investigation. Participant observation often serves as a complement to in-depth interviews since it gives insight into daily living, while interviews give insight into expressing and understanding social daily life.

#### **Ten Interviewing Requirements:**

Berg proposes the following ten points for conducting interviews based on his significant experience as a qualitative interviewer:

1. Never start out stiff; instead, chitchat with a quick question.
2. Keep your goal in mind
3. Display the interest in learning
4. Display conscious hearing: Be present and appear to be such.
5. Consider your look
6. Conduct the interview in a relaxed setting

7. Don't settle for one-syllable responses; instead, use questions and suggestions.
8. Practice
9. Be respectful
10. Be polite and suitable

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## 10.4 STEPS FOR CONDUCTING QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

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While respondents may perceive qualitative interviews as more of a discussion than an actual interview, the researcher actually guides the dialogue while keeping the objective of learning as much as possible from the respondent. The presence of open-ended questions in qualitative interviews distinguishes them from quantitative interviewing in a significant way. Open-ended questions are inquiries for which a researcher does not offer possible solutions. Since participants must come up with their own words, phrases, or sentences to respond, open-ended questions place a greater burden on them than closed-ended inquiries.

The first step in creating an interview guide is typically **brainstorming**. Include any and all ideas and thoughts that occur to mind while you consider your research question throughout the brainstorming phase. Once you have a relatively decent list, you can start to narrow it down by eliminating questions and topics that seem unnecessary and bundling related ones. You might also wish to create question and topic titles for your grouped categories if you haven't already. To learn what kinds of questions other interviewers have asked in investigations of related themes, you should also look up the academic literature. It is best to avoid using particularly sensitive data, much like with quantitative survey research.

**Planning** before the interview is very much important. Specially in the case of in-depth interview and if the subject is a key informant or an important person who is powerful like a Lawyer, Police officer, Judge etc. enough background reading helps. So, that if the subject asks any question, then one is able to answer. This would also help in understanding the context of the problem in more detail. There are instances where individuals ask the interviewer ok tell me what you know about the topic so far. This is done in order to save time of the interviewee as well as the other person knows the interviewer is serious about the interview.

It is better often to **avoid including really delicate or potentially conflict-ridden questions** at the very start of your qualitative interview guide, and with quantitative survey research. You must give interviewees a chance to become accustomed to the situation and feel at ease speaking with you. Lastly, ask for input on your interview guide. Once you've created what you believe to be a fairly solid guide, ask your friends,

family, and professors for some advice and recommendations. They might notice a few things that you missed.

Interview: Unstructured, Semi-Structured, in-Depth

There are a few rules worth **remembering regarding the particular questions** you include on your guide. First, try to steer clear of questions that can be answered with a straightforward yes or no, or if you must include them, make sure to add follow-up inquiries. Remember, one advantage of qualitative interviews is the ability to bring out additional information from participants; make sure to do this. While asking follow-up questions is a good idea, avoid asking “why,” as this specific inquiry can come across as confrontational, even if that is not your intention. Often times, people won’t know how to answer “why,” perhaps because they themselves don’t understand why answer and they must have not even thought about it before. Instead of “why,” it is recommended that you say something like, “Could you tell me a little more about that?”. Probing the subjects even helps to bring out important information however, depending upon the situation and timing the researcher has to carry this out.

Use of proper language is essential while conducting interview. One has to be aware both of verbal and nonverbal language. You can also use lines like ‘can you say something like, ‘Could you explain me a bit more about that?’ in place of “why.” This enables participants to elaborate further without feeling doubted or interrogated in an aggressive manner. Also, try to refrain from posing leading questions. For instance, you may inquire, “What comes to mind for you when you hear that someone doesn’t want kids,” as opposed to, “Don’t you believe that most people who don’t want kids are selfish?” You may also ask, “How do you feel about underage drinking,” as opposed to, “What do you think about juvenile offenders who drink and drive?” or “How do you feel about driving when intoxicated?”

Last but not least, keep in mind to leave most, if not all, of your questions open-ended, as mentioned before in this section. Giving participants the freedom to express themselves in their own words and in their own ways is the key to a successful qualitative interview. The researcher choose how to gather and keep track of the data that participants offer. Maybe most frequently, qualitative interviewers record the interviews in an audio.

By recording interviews, researchers can avoid being sidetracked by note-taking and instead concentrate on their engagement with interview participants. Naturally, not every participant will feel comfortable having their conversation recorded, and occasionally even the interviewer may feel that the subject is too delicate to capture. If so, then it will be up to the researcher to strike a balance between taking excellent notes, asking excellent questions, and even better listening. Though doing all these things at once is difficult. Hence, it is essential to prepare for the interview whether you will be recording them or not (and especially if you won’t). Hopefully, you can find a friend or two who will take part in a few trials and records it.

Even better, you can meet a friend or two that at least resemble your sample in some respects. They can provide you with the most useful criticism regarding your interview questions and demeanor.

All interviewers should be aware of, considerate, and prepare for a number of other aspects, including where to conduct interviews and how to make interviewees as comfortable as feasible. Because of these issues, both qualitative and quantitative interviewers should take them into account.

Although the focus of this article has been on interviews with a single interviewer and a single responder, there are other ways to conduct qualitative interviews. There may occasionally be more than one interviewer present in addition to multiple respondents. A focus group is a situation in which numerous respondents take part in an interview at the same time. Focus groups can be a great technique to obtain information because other group members may bring up issues or queries that the researcher had not considered.

A great technique to learn more about a subject is to have respondents converse with and question one another. Not only might respondents offer questions that the researcher had not considered, but the researcher can also learn through the respondents' interactions and body language. Of course, gathering data in a group context has some particular ethical issues.

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## **10.5 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF INTERVIEW**

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Although Interview method is one of the prominently used method in research there are certain advantages and disadvantages of this method let us first look into the advantages-

1. Gives participants the freedom to express what is significant or essential to them in their own words rather than being constrained to predetermined categories; this may make participants feel more at ease and open.
2. The results are enriching and there is high creditability and validity reliability generated.
3. Compared to techniques like surveys, interviews might be more responsive to the personalities, styles, and interpersonal interactions between the interviewer and the interviewee.
4. Enables the evaluator to delve further and makes sure that participants are answering questions as planned.
5. Interviews give participants the freedom to explore unanticipated ideas or themes by using their knowledge, expertise, and interpersonal skills.

### Interview Disadvantages:

Interview: Unstructured, Semi-Structured, in-Depth

1. Interviews may be perceived as more intrusive than quantitative methods; as participants may open up more than they intended to and later regret it.
2. As qualitative interviewing calls for expertise and experience, it can be costly to train interviewers and perform interviews.
3. Qualitative interview analysis and interpretation takes a lot longer than quantitative interview analysis and interpretation.
4. Qualitative interview is more subjective in nature than quantitative interviews because the researcher or evaluator chooses which quotes or particular examples to mention while documenting the report leading to a bias chance in the final results.

### Check Your Progress

1. Discuss two advantages and disadvantages of Interview Method.

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2. Discuss Bergs any five points for conducting interviews based on his significant experience as a qualitative interviewer.

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## 10.6 SUMMARY

Interviewing strategies use the conversation that results from research-driven interactions to infer social life. When conducting a qualitative interview, the researcher must pay close attention to the type of questions they pose as well as the location and timing of their encounters. In this chapter, there are four main types of interview discussed namely structured where questions are fixed in nature, unstructured this is also called as open ended questionnaire, the third one is that of semi – structured where few questions are fixed in nature and some one ended question, the last one being in depth interview where depending upon the conversation, flow the nature of questions are many a times asked. The goal of in-depth interviews is to gain a richer, more in-depth understanding of the subject of interest. They typically include an anthropological approach and are a supplement to approaches like participant observation or action research. We also discussed about certain



advantages like giving the participants the freedom to express what is significant or essential to them in their own words rather than being constrained to predetermined categories; this may make participants feel more at ease and open. However, Interview method also has certain disadvantages like Qualitative interview analysis and interpretation takes a lot longer than quantitative interview analysis and interpretation.

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## 10.7 QUESTIONS

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1. Discuss the steps involved for Conducting Qualitative Interviews.
2. Discuss some of the advantages and disadvantages of Interview
3. Explain Structured and Unstructured Interview method.
4. Discuss Semi structured and In-depth interview.

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## 10.8 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

### Unit Structure

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Meaning of Focus group
- 11.3 Understanding Focus Group Discussion
- 11.4 Types of Focus Group Discussion
- 11.5 Major Steps involved in Focus Group Discussion
- 11.6 Advantages and Disadvantages of Focus Group Discussion
- 11.7 Summary
- 11.8 Questions
- 11.9 References

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### 11.0 OBJECTIVES

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- To learn about meaning of Focus Group Discussion
- To learn about the steps, limitations involved in Focus Group Discussion helps in research.

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### 11.1 INTRODUCTION

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Focus Group Discussion also known as FGD is a tool which is used in research as well and it is used in different disciplines. Learning about this tool would help you not only during conducting research but also for any interviews which you may be participant yourself. For example – In day-to-day situation after your studies when you are appearing for a job or higher studies, there is often group discussion conducted like- a round where a topic is given and one has to discuss about it. Before understanding what is Focus group discussion let us first learn about the meaning of Focus group.

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### 11.2 MEANING OF FOCUS GROUP

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The term “focus group” means when people come together which has many a times a small number of participants and a discussion-centred objective. The group’s objective is not to come to a decision or comprehend the topic. Instead, it seeks to understand and recognise consumer perceptions of a brand, a product, or a service or even to discuss a topic, social issue. Focus group is a small group of people who are asked to participate in a conversation. Focus groups are frequently used to learn how others with similar interests feel and perceive a problem, certain goods, or a service, or a concept (1). In the field of Social Sciences, the concept of focus group can be associated with that of Robert Merton.

Merton used focus group in real life social problems too. Like in the Kenneth Clark's historic brief in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court case that resulted in the ending the policy of segregation on racial lines in the public schools, was influenced by his research on an integrated neighbourhood. His use of the focused interview to extract the responses of groups to texts, radio programmes and films led to the "focus groups" that is used today even by politicians, their managers, marketers and hucksters (small item sellers) now find necessary. Even after he had contributed to the methodology's development, Mr. Merton regretted its abuse and misuse while also saying, "I wish I'd get a royalty on it." Merton spent a large portion of his professional life at Columbia University, where Merton created the Bureau of Applied Social Research with his 35-year partner, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, who passed away in 1976 it is this place where the early focus group began (2).

The goal of focus group research is to understand and discover the spectrum of people's opinions and preferences. Instead of assuming or generalising about how respondents could respond. In most cases, participants are asked open-ended questions with no restrictions on their responses in a relaxed and permissive setting, all overseen by a trained moderator. Typically, questions are argumentative or provocative but also simple, direct, and one-dimensional. The goal and nature of the study dictates the focus group's sample type and size. In order to match the focus group with a particular target population, researchers frequently employ purposeful sampling of participants. The ideal group size for different types of social research may range from 6 to 8 participants, whereas a commercial issue group may require between 10 and 12.

Moderators play an important role in the focussed group discussion. It is moderator who explains about the time of the discussion, instructions, subjects. One can even list out the details of the discussion over a board. The Moderator needs to also have some qualities like patience and even proper training and having some expertise in the topic under discussion helps. So, that if some participant is diverting from the main topic, he/she could direct the discussion.

Due to the spontaneity of responders and the setting of a focus group, gathering data from them can be challenging. Some focus groups meet in person, while others convey the information over the phone or online. During group discussions, it's common practise to use transcripts, recordings, notes, and memory-based tools in order to gather important information. The so-called long-table approach, in which researchers analyse responses in terms of frequency, specificity, emotion, and extensiveness, is a typical, well-liked strategy for assessing such qualitative data. Computers have been used by researchers to manage data and find significant terms since the late 20th century. Focus groups are an excellent tool for revealing people's real attitudes and behaviours towards subjective issues, but because it can be challenging to collect subjective information from a small group of homogeneous participants, their external validity may be lower than that of other research methods. It is

therefore still unknown if the opinions expressed in a focus group may be extended to larger groups (Britannica).

Focus groups are a sort of group interview with the goal of capturing participant interaction based on topics supplied by the researcher. Focus group research's main objective is to extract from participants attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences, and reactions that would not otherwise be available when using methods like observation or interviewing. Despite the fact that these opinions, feelings, and beliefs might be partially independent of a group or its social environment, focus groups' social interactions and gatherings increase the likelihood a large amount of information and insights are generated. Focus groups are particularly useful when there are power differences between the participants and decision-makers or experts, as it helps to learn about the cultural norms of particular groups, and even details about a specific topic or subject. Hence, many a times it also helps when the subjects have certain expertise or have certain opinions/information about the subject. While using the focus group method, there are normally at least four interviewers present. It is basically a panel interview. The emphasis of the focus group technique is on group interaction and the collective construction of meaning. Questions are posed regarding a certain, sometimes tightly defined issue.

### **Feminism and Focus Groups:**

Group interviews or collective conversations are other names for focus groups. Focus groups is also used in feminism research. According to Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2011) to reveal data from people who have been subjected to oppression, as focus group participants share similar accounts of wrath, frustration, and struggle, individual voices that had previously been ignored by dominant discourses. Collins (2004) also notes that group collectives are especially empowering for women because they provide a safe environment for discussing their own experiences and coming up with answers to issues relating to social justice. Relationships between participants can also develop over time and trust is also built easily. Due to the variety of perspectives, the subjects and researcher may even become more self-reflective, thinking about their own background and worldview. Even the research process, becomes engaging, collaborative. Though there are scholars like Madriz (1998) who have a different opinion. Madriz points out that the focus group participation might not be reliable owing to cultural issues with moms being expected to prioritise family needs as well as issues with housing, money, a job, and transportation. The main feminist research philosophies, as well as their stances on bias, bias measurement procedures, and data collection methods though needs to be followed while conducting focus group discussion for better insights and data collection.

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## **11.3 UNDERSTANDING FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION**

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A focus group discussion (FGD) is held with participants who have similar backgrounds or experiences to examine a particular topic of interest. In this kind of qualitative research, people are questioned about

their perspectives, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or ideas. Focus group discussions allow participants to interact with other group members, which, in contrast to other research approaches, encourages participant conversation. Group interviews are frequently used, with 8 to 12 participants each group. The debate is moderated by an interviewer and is informally structured, covering a variety of intriguing topics. The group should be carefully selected, and the discussion should be set up to provide a laid-back environment that promotes open communication. Focus groups encourage participants to actively participate in the discussion by actively encouraging them to not only voice their own opinions but also to respond to other group members' ideas and questions. This adds depth, richness, and diversity to the discussion that would not be possible in polls. Because to its organisation, direction, and expressiveness, FGDs may also deliver a lot of information rapidly. FGDs are a great way to get more detailed information about a community's perspectives on a topic. The direction of the debate is frequently predetermined, and the majority of moderators utilise an outline or guide to ensure that all essential topics are covered. Focus group involves holding an organised discussion with a selected group of individuals to find out more about their experiences and points of view on a subject. Focus group aids in gaining insights into people's everyday common knowledge and the ways in which people are affected by others in a group setting. Particularly helpful for gathering several viewpoints on the same subject. The moderator's role is essential since guiding a discussion group in the appropriate path requires good group leadership and interpersonal skills.

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## 11.4 TYPES OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

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Depending upon the topic under study the type of focussed group is chosen. Yet some of the different types of focus group discussion are as follows -

### **Dual moderated:**

There are two moderators for this event, or dual moderator. One assures efficient operation, while the other ensures that each question will be discussed.

### **Two-way:**

In a two-way group, the subject is discussed at various times by two distinct groups. The other group listens in on the talk as one group performs their research. The group that saw the first session performs the dialogue at the conclusion. The second group can go more into the subject and provide further perspective by drawing from observations made while witnessing the first conversation.

### **Mini:**

Participants in this kind of group are limited to 4-5 persons as opposed to the typical 6-10. Utilize this group when consumers inquire about it. Use

this group when clients request that you hold a focus group and invite those who request it.

### **Participant-moderated:**

One or more participants appoint themselves as moderators temporarily.

### **Online:**

These organizations use online platforms to obtain input and thoughts. An online panel consists of three types of participants: observers, moderators, and respondents.

### **Skills required for Conversations in a Focus Group:**

- Like any research and study approaches, focus group talks require a wide range of competencies, including:
- The researcher must be flexible and free of prejudice.
- A deep understanding of the problem, difficulty, or research topic. This includes both practical knowledge and intellectual comprehension.
- Proficiency in the language being spoken helps. A focus group discussion cannot be conducted through an interpreter or by a third party, regardless of the person's skills.
- It takes a lot of group process expertise to lead and facilitate a focus group interview. It's critical to know how to conduct the interview so that no one or two participants monopolize it and that those who are less outspoken may express their opinions.
- Knowledge or practical experience leading group discussions. This is crucial because an inexperienced moderator may unintentionally restrict the flow of conversation and produce unjustified results.

### **Check Your Progress**

1. Discuss the use of Focussed Group Discussion in terms of Feminist research.

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2. Discuss about Merton with reference to Focus Group Discussion.

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## 11.5 MAJOR STEPS INVOLVED IN FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

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### **Recruiting the Participants:**

Participants selection has to be made keeping in view with the topic under study. For example – If you are studying about senior citizens health issue then interviewing children would be of no use.

### **Choose a Moderator:**

Many a times, you as a researcher would be able to conduct the focus group discussion if the participants -field area is nearby. In a way, you would play the role of a moderator. However, if the subjects are staying in a different city and you are in a different city in that case, you will have to either hire or appoint or request someone to become a moderator. The moderator should be having a basic orientation of the researcher. If this too is not available then the moderator should be briefed clearly about his role, duties and dos and don'ts. He/ She should be someone who is capable of handling the participants. In large scale data collection process, there are several moderators required this would save the time. One can take the help of college students from the local areas as this would have a advantage of both the language and familiarity.

### **Use a Recorder:**

It helps to use a recording device either in a phone or as a separate electronic recorder. Many androids have inbuilt voice recorder. However, before recording permission has to be taken from the participants. They have to be informed about the recording prior in advance. A recorder could help the researcher to make notes later on too as it's not possible to make physical notes at a high speed during the discussion.

### **Guidelines:**

Discussing the guidelines prior to beginning of the discussion helps. This gives a clear direction for the subjects.

### **Data Analysis:**

Cleaning and analysing the data is important, i.e., taking out what is important and what is not should be done in this stage of research.

### **Making Report:**

Making points, helps in generating report for the focus group discussion which could be helpful while writing the report or thesis or work.



## 11.6 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

The following are some **advantages** of focus group discussions:

- The responders' free and open discussion results in the creation of novel ideas that are extremely helpful for decision-making.
- The moderator is free to alter anything to better assist the discussion during the group activity.
- Nonverbal expressions, such gestures and triggered activities, can give researchers crucial information. Greater results in terms of focus group information are produced by this dynamic.

Focus groups have the following **disadvantages** when used for discussion:

- The degree to which the moderator directs the discussion relies on his or her level of knowledge.
- Respondents could be reluctant to voice sensitive opinions and concerns in public, which could make it challenging for a novice moderator to control some people who want to dominate the group.
- Due to the small sample size and individual variation, the results might not be sufficient to make forecasts or give a complete picture of the situation.
- An FGD may be a highly manufactured scenario that causes participants to behave and speak strangely. The outcomes might not be entirely reliable.

### Dos and Don'ts in Focus Group Discussion:

Let us first start with **Dos** in research

Be the uninformed spectator or listener; Wear attire that complements theirs.

- Act as if you and the participants are on an equal footing.
- Present yourself as innocent, even if you know anything.
- Have all of your questions ready. You need to do nothing more than organise the focus group. It should practically run itself once you have it on track.
- Start by posing open-ended questions.

The first question should be wide to get everyone warmed up, such as what the participants think about the subject. If someone brings up something you've never heard of before, ask them to elaborate. When someone responds with a general "motherhood" statement, ask them for an example.



- If someone has an opinion, see to it the group as a whole share it.
- Tell them what will happen to whatever information they furnish you with and assure them that you will keep it secret. And invite them to do the same. If there is a report, specify who will get it and how it will be used.
- Explain that you will keep their information private, that you are inviting them to do the same, and what will happen to any information they provide you. Describe who will get the report and how it will be used if there is one.
- Ask everyone to respond to your opening question as you travel around the room to get them involved.
- Keep expressing your gratitude and praising people for their efforts.
- Be understanding of the issues raised by the participants, even if you believe some of them are using the focus group as an outlet to complain.
- To engage certain individuals, ask them questions frequently.
- If a topic is raised that connects to a later question, feel free to change the questions.
- Keep thanking people for their contributions and showing your appreciation.
- Even if you think some of the participants are using the focus group as an occasion to vent, be understanding of the issues they raise.
- Ask specific people questions on a frequent basis to draw people in.
- Be free to rearrange the questions if a subject is brought up that relates to a later one.

### **Don'ts**

- It is better to avoid asking for directions (ones that might suggest you are looking for a particular answer).
- Avoid “yes or no” inquiries because they don’t stimulate discourse; but, if you do mistakenly ask one, you might follow up with “why”?
- Steer clear (avoid) two-part queries at once. One cannot reply to two questions at once.
- Never correct a mistaken person. Don’t correct them.
- Avoid expressing any opinions.
- Avoid interrupting people in general. Accept whatever they provide, no matter what it is.

- Avoid using the phrase “That’s something we’ll chat about later, not now.”
- If you don’t understand something, don’t feel embarrassed; • If someone seems truly shy, don’t force them to speak. If you want an explanation, request one. It is your duty to make sense of the enigmatic, hazy, and unclear.
- Avoid spreading misinformation regarding the focus groups after the study.

After the focus group discussion one can also offer the results to the participants of the discussion in a relaxed approach, explaining how the session was valuable for the research

### **Limitations of Focus Group Discussions:**

There’s no denying that focus groups have a lot of promise for research on the joint production of meaning.

1. The researcher probably has less control over the procedure compared to an individual interview.
2. Analysing the data is challenging. Data production may be really fast. It is difficult to develop an analytical technique that takes into account both themes in what individuals say and patterns of interaction.
3. They are challenging to arrange. In addition to getting participants to agree to participate in your study, you also need to convince them to show up at a specific time.
4. Because of changes in voice pitch and the requirement to account for who says what, the recordings are likely to take longer to transcribe than similar recordings of individual interviews.
5. Focus groups have problems that individual interviews do not, the main one being the tendency for two or more people to speak at once. The portions of recordings where this has occurred are frequently extremely difficult to interpret and, as a result, impossible to transcribe.

### **Check Your Progress**

1. Discuss two types of Focus Group Discussion

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2. List out three dos and don’ts while conducting focus group discussion

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## 11.7 SUMMARY

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Focus Group Discussion has its roots with the that of Merton the renowned Sociologist. He used it to explain the case of racial segregation among different communities by conducting interviews, observations. Focus Group Discussion in simple words meaning discussion about a topic, issue problem by a small group. This is carried out to generate better insights of a given topic. Feminist research has used Focus group discussion as it provides a safe space for the oppressed and marginalized group to open up themselves and express themselves. There are several advantages and disadvantages of FGD like that of better insights , data are developed through FGD but for collecting the data there needs to be a proper trained moderator who is able to control and guide the discussion so that it saves time and resources. In today's time the field of psychology, marketing research has been using the focussed group discussion to a large extent.

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## 11.8 QUESTIONS

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1. Discuss the Do's and Dont's while conducting Focus Group Discussion
2. Explain in brief the advantages and disadvantages of Focus Group Discussion
3. Discuss the meaning of Focus Group Discussion

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## CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

### Unit Structure

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Conversation Analysis
  - 12.2.1 Assumptions of Conversation Analysis
  - 12.2.2 Basic tools of Conversation Analysis
- 12.3 Discourse Analysis
  - 12.3.1 What is Discourse Analysis?
  - 12.3.2 Version of DA
  - 12.3.3 Themes in discourse analysis
  - 12.3.4 Discourse analysis in action
  - 12.3.5 Critical discourse analysis (CDA)
- 12.4 Summary
- 12.5 Questions
- 12.6 References

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### 12.0 OBJECTIVES

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- To understand the significance of language in qualitative research
- To identify approaches to describe language
- To comprehend conversation analysis from ethno-methodological perspective
- To examine the central idea of indexicality and reflectivity in CA
- To analyse the importance of discourse analysis in qualitative research

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### 12.1 INTRODUCTION

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Language is important for social research. Understanding language is an important component of research. There are two approaches that treat language as that focal point viz:

1. Conversation Analysis (CA)
2. Discourse Analysis (DA)

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## 12.2 CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

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CA is analysis of the talk as it occurs in natural setting. The talk is recorded and transcribed so that the detail analysis can be carried out. The root of CA lies in **ethnomethodology**, a sociological position which developed in USA under Harold Garfinkel and Harvey Sacks. Ethnomethodology is the study of the methods employed in everyday life through which social order is accomplished.

There are two ideas which are central to ethnomethodology and that find expression in CA:

### 1. Indexicality:

It means the meaning of an act. In CA it essentially means spoken words or utterances including pauses and sounds, depends upon the context in which it is used.

### 2. Reflexivity:

It means that spoken words are constitutive of the social world in which they are located. The talk is not mere representation of the social world; it does much more than just stands for something else.

#### 12.2.1 Assumptions of Conversation Analysis:

An initial route to CA begins with analysing and noticing something significant or striking about the way that a speaker says something. Heritage has proposed three such assumptions:

#### 1. Talk is Structured:

Talk comprises invariant patterns-i.e., it is structured. Participants are implicitly aware of the rule that underpin these patterns. As a result CA analyst forgo the attempts to infer the motivation of the speaker from what they say or ascribe their talk to personal characteristics. Such information is necessary, since the conversation analyst is oriented to the underlining structures of action, as revealed in talk.

#### 2. Talk is forged contextually:

Action is revealed in talk and such talk must be analysed in terms of its context. This means that we must seek to understand what someone say in term of the talk that has preceded it and therefore talk is viewed as exhibiting patterned sequences.

#### 3. Analysis is grounded in data:

An analysis refuse all prior theoretical schemes and argue that characteristic of talk and the nature of social order in empirical instances must be induced out of data.

Heritage has written that it is assumed that social action works in detail and therefore the specific details of the interaction cannot be ignored. This

represents the emphasis on fine-grained details (including the length of the pauses, prolongation of sounds and so on) that are the hallmark of CA.

### 12.2.2 Basic tools of Conversation Analysis:

The gradual accumulation of detail analysis of talk in interaction has resulted in recognition of recurring features of the way in which that talk is organized. These features can be regarded as the tools that be applied to sequences of conversation.

#### 1. Turn –taking:

One of the most basic ideas in CA is notion that one of the ways in which order in everyday life can be achieved is through **turn-taking**. This is important in CA as talk depends on shared codes. If such codes do not exist, the smooth transition in conversation will not take place.

**Hutchby and Wooffitt** summarize this model as indicating that

- a. Turn-taking occurs
- b. One speaker tend to talk at a time
- c. Turns are taken with as little gap or overlap between them as possible

This is not to say that turn-taking ‘errors’ do not occur.

#### 2. Adjacency pairs:

The idea of adjacency pair draws attention to the tendency in talk to involve two linked phases: a question followed by an answer, an invitation followed by a response; or a greeting followed by a returned greeting.

The first phase implies that the other part of the adjacency pair will be forthcoming—for example that an invitation will be respond to. The second phase is of the interest to the conversation analyst not just because it is springboard for a response but because compliance with the putative normative structure of the pairing indicates an appreciation of how one is supposed to respond to the initial phase.

#### 3. Preference organisation:

While it is true that the adjacency pair is always anticipated, some responses are clearly preferential to others. An example is that, when an invitation or a request is proffered, acceptance does not have to be justified, whereas a refusal doesn’t has to be justified. A further example is that, when an attempt to be self-deprecating is provided, it will be met with disagreement rather than agreement. In each case the former (acceptance, disagreement) is the preferred response and the later (refusal, agreement) is the dis-preferred response. Thus the preference structure is discovered by the conversation analyst through the response to an initial statement.

#### 4. Accounts:

The important feature to note in the treatment of accounts in CA is that they are analysed in context-that is, the form that they assume is handled as being occasioned by what precedes it (an invitation).

#### 5. Repair mechanisms:

Things do go wrong in conversation, as occurs when turn-taking conversations are not followed so that there is overlapping of people talking. The repair mechanisms noted by **Silverman** are as follows:

- When someone starts to speak before someone else has finished, the initial speaker stops talking before completing his or her turn;
- When a turn transfer doesn't occur at an appropriate point (e.g. when someone doesn't respond to a question), the speaker may speak again, perhaps reinforcing the need for the other person to speak (for example, by reinforcing the question).

The crucial point to note about such mechanisms is that they allow the rules of turn-taking to be maintained in spite of the fact that they have been breached.

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### 12.3 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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DA is an approach to language that can be applied to forms of communication other than talk. It can be and has been applied to forms like texts, such as news paper articles and is more flexible than CA. In DA there is less emphasis on naturally occurring talk. However DA is not totally opposite and contradicts to CA.

#### 12.3.1 What is Discourse Analysis?

DA incorporates insights from the work of Michel Foucault. For him the term discourse denotes the way in which a particular set of linguistic category depict its frame as we comprehend the object. The discourse forms a version of it. Moreover, the version of an object comes to constitute it. For example, a certain discourse concerning mental illness comes to make up our concept of what mentally ill person are like, the nature of their illness, how they should be treated and who is legitimately entitled to treat them. The discourse then becomes a framework for the justification for the power of practitioners concerned with mentally ill and for their treatment regimes. In this way a discourse is much more than language.

#### 12.3.2 Version of DA:

DA has been described as exhibiting two distinctive features at the level of *epistemology* and *ontology*.

1. **It is anti realist;** in other words it denies that there is an external reality.

2. **It is constructionist**; the emphasis is placed on the version of reality propounded by members of social setting being investigated.

### 12.3.3: Themes in discourse analysis:

Gill (2000) has drawn attention to four prominent themes in DA.

#### 1. Discourse is a topic:

This means that discourse is a focus of inquiry itself and not just a means of gaining access to aspects of social reality that lie behind it.

#### 2. Language is constructive:

Discourse is a way of constituting a particular view of social reality.

#### 3. Discourse is the form of action:

Language is viewed 'as a practice in its own right'. Language is a way of accomplishing acts, such as attributing blame, presenting oneself in a particular way or getting an argument across. A person's discourse is affected by the context that he or she is confronting.

#### 4. Discourse is rhetorically organized:

There is a recognition that we want to persuade others when we present a version of events or whatever.

### 12.3.4: Discourse analysis in action:

The study representation of facts in the television programme *Cancer: Your Money or your Life*, used a variety of different sources:

- A video recording of the programme;
- The observation on one of the members of the team making the programme, who acted as a participant observer while it was being made;
- Drafts of the script, shooting schedules and recordings of editing sessions;
- The entire interviews with the various people interviewed for the programme
- Research interviews with some of the latter people;
- Research interviews with some people involved in making the programme.



### 12.3.5 Critical discourse analysis (CDA):

Emphasises the role of language as a power resource that is related to the ideology and socio-cultural change. Foucault uncovers the properties of discourse as vehicle to exercise the power through construction of disciplinary practice.

In an organisational context, one of the things that CDA practitioners seek to trace is how discourses are constructed and maintained in relation to certain phenomena, such as globalization. Analysis seeks to reveal the meaning of a particular phenomenon by explaining how:

- The discourse came to have a particular meaning today when 40 or 50 years ago it may have had none or a quite different meaning;
- The discourse draws on and influences other discourse;
- The discourse is constructed through the text;
- The discourse gives meaning to social life and make certain activities possible, desirable or inevitable;
- Particular actors draw on the discourse to legitimate their positions and actions.

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## 12.4 SUMMARY

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CA is analysis of the talk as it occurs in natural setting. The talk is recorded and transcribed so that the detail analysis can be carried out. The root of CA lies in **ethnomethodology**, a sociological position which developed in USA under Harold Garfinkel and Harvey Sacks. Ethnomethodology is the study of the methods employed in everyday life through which social order is accomplished.

DA is an approach to language that can be applied to forms of communication other than talk. It can be and has been applied to forms like texts, such as news paper articles and is more flexible than CA. In DA there is less emphasis on naturally occurring talk. However DA is not totally opposite and contradicts to CA.

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## 12.5 QUESTIONS

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1. Explain the concept of conversation Analysis.
2. Explain in detail discourse Analysis.

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## 12.6 REFERENCES

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- Bryman Alan (2001) 'Social Research Methods', Oxford University Press.

- Cresswell, J.W., (2007) 'Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design Choosing among five approaches' Sage Publication: New Delhi
- Somekh Bridget & Lewin Cathy (ed), (2005) 'Research Methods in Social Science'
- Uwe Flick (2007), 'Designing Qualitative Research', The Sage Qualitative Research Kit, Sage Publications.
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## Faculty of Humanities

### TYBA

(Choice Based Credit System, CBCS) Semester V and Semester VI Question Paper Pattern for T.Y.B.A (CBCS) applicable to all the papers from Paper IV to Paper IX.

As per University rules and guidelines With Effect From 2018-2019

(Time: 3 Hours)

Note: 1. Attempt all questions

2. All questions carry equal marks

(Total = 100 marks)

Q.1 (Based on Module I)

(20 marks)

a.

or

b.

Q.2 (Based on Module II)

(20 marks)

a.

or

b.

Q.3 (Based on Module III)

(20 marks)

a.

or

b.

Q.4 (Based on Module IV)

(20 marks)

a.

or

b.

Q.5 Attempt any two short notes. (Based on Module I, II, III and IV)

(20 marks)

a.

b.

c.

d.

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