



*Grundtvig Learning Partnership project
“Application of Qualitative Research in
Consumers’ Organizations”*

METHODOLOGY OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FOR CONSUMERS ORGANIZATIONS

Handbook

2010

INTRODUCTION

Research – it is careful and systematic investigation the aim of which is to know needful information in order to find answers to important questions and, if possible, to change situation.

Qualitative research uses the form of an interview with open-ended questions for researching and understanding attitudes, opinions, feelings and behaviours of an individual or groups. Qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena. That is to say, it aims to help us to understand the 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 about:

- ✓ Why people behave the way they do
- ✓ How opinions and attitudes are formed
- ✓ How people are affected by the events that go around them
- ✓ How and why cultures have developed in the way they have
- ✓ The differences between social groups

Qualitative research is concerned with finding the answers to questions which begin: why? how? in what way?

Qualitative research:

- involves small samples of consumers which are not necessarily representative of larger populations;
- employs a wide variety of techniques to collect data, not simply a structured question-and-answer format;
- relies on interpretation of the findings which is an integral part of the data collection and indeed begins well before the fieldwork commences at the briefing;
- allows access to the ways in which consumers express themselves.

Qualitative research is mostly used for:

- ✓ **Generating ideas**

Qualitative methods are successful in stimulating new ideas and bringing out new concepts. A group discussion can help us debate a certain problem or product.

- ✓ **Motivational research**

Motivation helps us discover why a certain behaviour occurs, considering characteristics such as demographic (gender, age, socio-economic class), behavioural (periodical, medium or regular user), personal and life-style variables.

✓ **Research of attitudes**

A large proportion of qualitative research seeks information on consumers' thoughts on different products, services, etc. The most popular form of researching attitudes is an evaluation of service quality. This kind of research asks the participants how are they satisfied with certain services, politeness, professionalism, knowledge, accessibility etc. Research of attitudes is frequent in public relation agencies. With the help of this research, they can shape more efficient advertising campaigns, targeting the general public.

✓ **Research of habits and usage**

Acquiring basic information about usage of different products and services.

✓ **Study of a new product and development**

We examine consumers' reactions to a products or its concept, and the advantages and disadvantages they see in it. The study can be followed by qualitative or quantitative form of research, which helps us evaluate reactions to a modified version of the product or concepts.

✓ **Packaging evaluation**

We examine consumers' response to packaging, which can be in its development phase or already in its final version. We focus on the advantages and disadvantages of the packaging elements. On the basis of the resulting data, the designers can modify specific elements. Evaluation of packaging also helps copywriters in shaping a memorable, visible and credible text and slogan. It is usually followed by quantitative research.

✓ **Evaluation of advertising elements and advertising campaigns**

Qualitative methods of research can be used already in the creative stages of developing a new advertising campaign, for evaluating a raw campaign idea, or in campaigns that the consumers were already exposed to.

✓ **Evaluation of promotional activities**

It is useful in development stages of a promotional program and also in later evaluation of promotional efficiency. As with successful advertising, the creation of successful promotion requires information about the consumer and qualitative research is very effective for that. We test the reactions to the promotional concepts with the purpose of possibly redefining the idea in the future, to make it more interesting, attractive and easier to understand.

✓ **Research of positioning**

The main purpose is to find out the best ways of communicating with the target group of a certain product, service or institution. We examine the advantages and disadvantages of the existing image and obtain reactions to the new directions of positioning. With this research we also help advertisers determine the most appropriate communication channel, which results in a unique and rich content message.

Basic, qualitative studies are most frequently conducted in the following cases:

- When detailed information is required about the nature and elements of a market in order to look for opportunities for *new product development*.
- When consumer markets change and/or develop and up-to-date information is required to understand changing attitudes and behavior.
- When new markets require descriptive information in order to aid marketing or advertising development programmes.
- When manufacturers, for related to acquisition or new product development, require information on a market which is new to them.

Strengths of Qualitative Research

- Depth and detail--may not get as much depth in a standardized questionnaire
- Openness--can generate new theories and recognize phenomena ignored by most or all previous researchers and literature
- Helps people see the world view of those studies--*their* categories, rather than imposing categories; simulates their experience of the world
- Attempts to avoid pre-judgments. Goal is to try to capture what is happening without being judgmental; present people on their own terms, try to represent them from their perspectives so reader can see their views, always imperfectly achieved--it is a quest.

Weaknesses of Qualitative Research

- Fewer people studied usually
- Less easily generalized as a result
- Difficult to aggregate data and make systematic comparisons
- Dependent upon researcher's personal attributes and skills (also true with quantitative, but not as easy to evaluate their skills in conducting research with qual)

- Participation in setting can always change the social situation (although not participating can always change the social situation as well)

QUALITATIVE vs QUANTITATIVE

| Qualitative research | Quantitative research |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Open-ended, dynamic, flexible. ○ Depth of understanding. ○ Taps consumer creativity. ○ Database – broader and deeper. ○ Penetrates rationalized or superficial responses. ○ Richer source of ideas for marketing and creative teams. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Statistical and numerical measurement. ○ Sub-group sampling or comparisons. ○ Survey can be repeated in the future and results compared. ○ Taps individual responses. ○ Less dependent on research executive skills or orientation. |

Why perform qualitative research?

Although the final results are not capable of projection in the statistical sense, qualitative research represents the unique possibility of an in-depth view into the researched contents. The role of qualitative research is important in that it helps understand the consumer better, which leads to efficient marketing strategies.

Who should carry out qualitative research?

An independent professional research agency. There are two main reasons for that:

- To avoid bias, which could occur if the research is carried out by a moderator from the company that is ordering the research.
- To use the advantages and experience of a professional moderator. Although it may seem that performing a qualitative research is fairly easy, a professional moderator uses different techniques (also projective techniques) to overcome psychological, language and social barriers. Expert data analysis and interpretation is also important and is often interlaced with the psychological issues and analysis.

METHODOLOGY OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

1. Main types of qualitative research:

- a. Case study
- b. Grounded theory
- c. Ethnography
- d. Phenomenology

2. The main methods of collecting qualitative data:

- a. Observation
- b. Content Analysis
- c. Interviewing
- d. Focus Groups

3. Projective Techniques

1. MAIN TYPES OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

a. Case study

Case study research excels at bringing us to an understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research. Case studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships.

6 steps that should be used in case study:

1 STEP. *Determine and define the research questions.*

The research object in a case study is often a program, an entity, a person, or a group of people. The questions are targeted to a limited number of events or conditions and their inter-relationships. To assist in targeting and formulating the questions, researchers conduct a literature review.

2 STEP. *Select the cases and determine data gathering and analysis techniques.*

- **Selecting multiple or single cases** is a key element, but a case study can include more than one unit of embedded analysis (for example, a case study may involve study of a single

industry and a firm participating in that industry). A key strength of the case study method involves using **multiple sources and techniques** in the data gathering process (tools to collect data can include surveys, interviews, documentation review, observation, and even the collection of physical artifacts).

- **Construct validity** requires the researcher to use the correct measures for the concepts being studied.
- **Internal validity** demonstrates that certain conditions lead to other conditions and requires the use of multiple pieces of evidence from multiple sources to uncover convergent lines of inquiry.
- **External validity** reflects whether or not findings are generalizable beyond the immediate case or cases; the more variations in places, people, and procedures a case study can withstand and still yield the same findings, the more external validity.
- **Reliability** refers to the stability, accuracy, and precision of measurement. Exemplary case study design ensures that the procedures used are well documented and can be repeated with the same results over and over again.

3 STEP. *Prepare to collect the data.*

Researchers prepare databases to assist with categorizing, sorting, storing, and retrieving data for analysis. Exemplary case studies prepare good training programs for investigators, establish clear protocols and procedures in advance of investigator field work, and conduct a pilot study in advance of moving into the field in order to remove obvious barriers and problems.

4 STEP. *Collect data in the field.*

The researcher must collect and store multiple sources of evidence **comprehensively and systematically**. Exemplary case studies use **field notes** and databases to categorize and reference data so that it is readily available for subsequent reinterpretation. Maintaining the **relationship** between the **issue** and the **evidence** is mandatory.

5 STEP. *Evaluate and analyze the data.*

- The researcher examines raw data using many interpretations.
- Accurate and reliable findings.
- Specific techniques.

6 STEP. *Prepare the report.*

The goal of the written report is to portray a complex problem in a way that conveys a vicarious experience to the reader. Techniques for composing the report can include handling each case as a separate chapter or treating the case as a chronological recounting. Some researchers report the case study as a story.

b. Grounded theory

The phrase "*grounded theory*" refers to theory that is developed inductively from a corpus of data. If done well, this means that the resulting theory at least fits one dataset perfectly. Grounded theory takes a case rather than variable perspective, although the distinction is nearly impossible to draw. Part and parcel of the case-orientation is a comparative orientation. The grounded theory approach consists of a set of steps whose careful execution is thought to "guarantee" a good theory as the outcome. Grounded theorists use categories drawn from respondents themselves and tend to focus on making implicit belief systems explicit.

The basic idea of the grounded theory approach is to read (and re-read) a textual database (such as a corpus of field notes) and "discover" or label variables (called categories, concepts and properties) and their interrelationships. The ability to perceive variables and relationships is termed "theoretical sensitivity" and is affected by a number of things including one's reading of the literature and one's use of techniques designed to enhance sensitivity. Of course, the data do not have to be literally textual -- they could be observations of behavior, such as interactions and events in a restaurant. Often they are in the form of field notes, which are like diary entries.

Open coding.

Open coding is the part of the analysis concerned with identifying, naming, categorizing and describing phenomena found in the text. Essentially, each line, sentence, paragraph etc. is read in search of the answer to the repeated question "what is this about? What is being referenced here?" These labels refer to things like hospitals, information gathering, friendship, social loss, etc. They are the nouns and verbs of a conceptual world. Part of the analytic process is to identify the more general categories that these things are instances of, such as institutions, work activities, social relations, social outcomes, etc. We also seek out the adjectives and adverbs --- the properties of these categories. Whether these properties or dimensions come from the data itself, from respondents, or from the mind of the researcher depends on the goals of the research. It is important to have fairly abstract categories in addition to very concrete ones, as the abstract ones help to generate general theory.

Grounded Theory: Axial Coding

| Element | Description |
|------------------------|---|
| Phenomenon | This is what in schema theory might be called the name of the schema or frame. |
| Causal conditions | These are the events or variables that lead to the occurrence or development of the phenomenon. It is a set of causes and their properties. |
| Context | It is the specific locations (values) of background variables. A set of conditions influencing the action/strategy. |
| Intervening conditions | Similar to context. |
| Action strategies | The purposeful, goal-oriented activities that agents perform in response to the phenomenon and intervening conditions. |
| Consequences | These are the consequences of the action strategies, intended and unintended. |

Grounded theory: Selective Coding.

Selective coding is the process of choosing one category to be the core category, and relating all other categories to that category. The essential idea is to develop a single storyline around which all everything else is draped. There is a belief that such a core concept always exists. Selective coding is about finding the driver that impels the story forward.

Grounded theory: Memos.

Memos are short documents that one writes to oneself as one proceeds through the analysis of a corpus of data. Equally important is the **theoretical note**. The final theory and report is typically the integration of several theoretical memos.

c. Phenomenology

Phenomenology literally means the study of phenomena. It is a way of describing something that exists as part of the world in which we live. Phenomena may be events, situations, experiences or concepts. We are surrounded by many phenomena, which we are aware of but not fully understand. Our lack of understanding of these phenomena may exist because the phenomenon has not been overtly described and explained or our understanding of the impact it makes may be unclear.

Phenomenological research begins with the acknowledgement that there is a gap in our understanding and that clarification or illumination will be of benefit. Phenomenological research will not necessarily provide definitive explanations but it does raise awareness and increases insight.

Seven Widely Accepted Features of the Phenomenological Approach

1. Phenomenologists tend to oppose the acceptance of unobservable matters and grand systems erected in speculative thinking.
2. Phenomenologists tend to oppose naturalism (also called objectivism and positivism), which is the worldview growing from modern natural science and technology that has been spreading from Northern Europe since the Renaissance.
3. Positively speaking, phenomenologists tend to justify cognition (and some also evaluation and action) with reference to what Edmund Husserl called *Evidenz*, which is awareness of a matter itself as disclosed in the most clear, distinct, and adequate way for something of its kind.
4. Phenomenologists tend to believe that not only objects in the natural and cultural worlds, but also ideal objects, such as numbers, and even conscious life itself can be made evident and thus known.
5. Phenomenologists tend to hold that inquiry ought to focus upon what might be called "encountering" as it is directed at objects and, correlatively, upon "objects as they are encountered" (this terminology is not widely shared, but the emphasis on a dual problematic and the reflective approach it requires is).
6. Phenomenologists tend to recognize the role of description in universal, a priori, or "eidetic" terms as prior to explanation by means of causes, purposes, or grounds.
7. Phenomenologists tend to debate whether or not what Husserl calls the transcendental phenomenological epocha and reduction is useful or even possible.

Tendencies and Stages within Philosophical Phenomenology Thus Far.

The phenomenological movement began with Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen* (1900-1901).

Realistic phenomenology emphasizes the search for the universal essences of various sorts of matters, including human actions, motives, and selves.

Constitutive phenomenology involves suspending acceptance of the pre-given status of conscious life as something that exists in the world and is performed in order to secure an ultimate intersubjective grounding for the world and the positive sciences of it.

Existential phenomenology is often traced back to Martin Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* of 1927, the project of which was actually to use an analysis of human being as a means to a fundamental ontology.

Hermeneutical phenomenology chiefly stems from the method set forth in Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*, according to which human existence is interpretative.

Intentionality. Every experiencing has its reference or direction toward what is experienced and, contrarily, every experienced phenomenon refers to or reflects a mode of experiencing to which it is present. All experiences have both an objective and a subjective component, and so understanding a phenomenon means understanding both. Intending acts might include seeing, hearing, feeling, thinking, judging and intended objects the sights seen, the words heard, the feeling felt, the thoughts thought, the ideas judged, and so on.

Bracketing, also called phenomenological reduction, means setting aside all our usual, "natural" assumptions about the phenomena. Bracketing ultimately means a suspension of belief in the existence or non-existence of the phenomenon: We must not be concerned with explanations of what the phenomenon "really" might be.

d. Ethnography

Ethnography is a form of research focusing on the sociology of meaning through close field observation of sociocultural phenomena. Typically, the ethnographer focuses on a community (not necessarily geographic, considering also work, leisure, and other communities). This process is intended to reveal common cultural understandings related to the phenomena under study. These subjective but collective understandings on a subject are often interpreted to be more significant than objective data. Ethnography is a branch of cultural anthropology.

The ethnographic method:

- selection of a culture, review of the literature pertaining to the culture, and identification of variables of interest
- observational transcripts and interview recordings
- data analysis and theory development.

Macro-ethnography is the study of broadly-defined cultural groupings, such as "the English" or "New Yorkers."

Micro-ethnography is the study of narrowly-defined cultural groupings, such as "members of Congress."

Emic perspective is the ethnographic research approach to the way the members of the given culture perceive their world. The emic perspective is usually the main focus of ethnography.

Etic perspective, is the ethnographic research approach to the way non-members (outsiders) perceive and interpret behaviors and phenomena associated with a given culture.

Situational reduction (the cosmos is best understood in microcosm). It enables us to discover which macro-concepts and explanations are empirically groundable, and which are not.

Symbols, always a focus of ethnographic research, are any material artifact of a culture, such as art, clothing, or even technology.

Cultural patterning is the observation of cultural patterns forming relationships involving two or more symbols.

Tacit knowledge is deeply-embedded cultural beliefs which are assumed in a culture's way of perceiving the world, so much so that such knowledge is rarely or never discussed explicitly by members of the culture, but rather must be inferred by the ethnographer.

Ethnography assumes the principal research interest is primarily affected by community cultural understandings, an ability to identify the relevant community of interest, the researcher is capable of understanding the cultural mores of the population under study, has mastered the language or technical jargon of the culture, and has based findings on comprehensive knowledge of the culture.

While not inherent to the method, cross-cultural **ethnographic research** runs the risk of falsely assuming that given measures have the same meaning across cultures.

2. THE MAIN METHODS OF COLLECTING QUALITATIVE DATA

a. Observation

Rather than relying solely on people self-reports of events, or physiological or institutional data, many researchers prefer to make their own observations. Observations can be made for both qualitative and quantitative research. In observation, we are generally interested in **individual behavior, social behavior, and the material environment**. **Naturalistic observation** - Sechrest (1979) suggested that social attitudes like prejudice are best studied through observation in natural, real-life situations (e.g., observe seating patterns of black and white students in college classes). Observation is time-consuming, especially if using multiple observers (for inter-observer reliability).

Observation is a method of data gathering in which a qualified person watches, or walks through, the actual processing associated with a system

- Best for studying processes, e.g. manufacturing
- Useful for studying the work flow through an office for example

- Could be active or passive

Nonbehavioral observation

- Record analysis
 - Analysis of historical or current records and public or private records.
- Physical condition analysis
 - Audits of merchandise availability, studies of plant safety compliance, etc.
- Process or activity analysis
 - Time/motion studies, financial flows in a banking system, paper flow in office systems, etc.

Behavioral observation

- Nonverbal analysis
 - E.g., Monitoring eye movement in user-interface studies.
- Linguistic analysis
 - E.g., study of a sales presentation's content or the study of what, how, and how much information is conveyed in a training situation.
- Extralinguistic analysis
 - E.g., study of the linguistic content of the interaction between supervisors and subordinates.
- Spatial analysis
 - E.g., a study of how salespeople physically approach customers.

Advantages of the observational method:

- Collect the original data at the time it occurs
- Secure information that participants would ignore because it's so common it is not seen as relevant
- Only method available to collect certain types of data
- Capture the whole event as it occurs in its natural environment
- Subjects seem to accept an observational intrusion better than they respond to questioning

Limitations of the observational method:

- Observer or recording equipment must be at the scene of the event when it takes place
- Slow process
- Expensive process
- Most reliable results are restricted to information that can be learned by overt action or surface indicators

- Research environment is more likely suited to subjective assessment and recording of data than to quantification of events
- Limited as a way to learn about the past
- Cannot observe rationale for actions, only actions themselves

Relationship between Observer and Subject:

- Direct or indirect observation

Direct observation: observer is physically present to monitor.

Indirect observation: observations are recorded (audio, video or other).

- Observer's presence known or unknown to the subject

Observers use concealment to shield themselves from the object of their observation.

- Observer is involved or not involved with the respondent

The type of Observational Study:

- Simple Observation

Exploratory, found in most studies, goal of discovery.

- Employs standardized procedures, trained observers, schedules for recording and other devices for the observer that mirror the scientific procedures for other primary data collection methods.

Conducting the Study: Observation Data Collection

Event Sampling: observer records selected behavior that answers the investigative question.

Time Sampling: observer may record data at fixed points in time for a specified length, at specified intervals, or continuously.

b. Content Analysis

- Content analysis is about essence, capturing the essence, the nature of the phenomenon.
- A technique used to study written material by breaking it into meaningful units, using carefully applied rules.
- Use objective and systematic coding to produce a quantitative description of the observed material.
- Can analyze common myths.

- Can also be used in a qualitative way – employ semiotic techniques.

Using Content Analysis can be studied any written material or audio/visual information.

Content Analysis is useful for 3 types of research:

1. Define problem/identify the issue to be studied.
2. Select the media that will be used.
3. Derive coding categories.
4. Sampling strategy – which sources will you use?
5. Train the coders.
6. Code the material.
7. Analyze the data.

Human vs. computer coders.

Computer can often utilize the process:

- Internet searches
- Automated text search
- Great for extremely large sets of data
- Personal judgment not part of the process

Humans:

- Useful for coding complex concepts
- More flexibility
- Costs more time and money

Coding systems

Before you decide specifically on coding categories, you must specify what you are going to measure. Also you have to set the rules on how to systematically observe and record content from text.

The unit of analysis is:

- One word
- One paragraph
- One theme

Characteristics of text content:

1. Frequency.
2. Direction.
3. Intensity.
4. Space.

Other things that should be counted:

- Characters
- Specific individuals

Can also consider semantics – the meaning of the text:

- Requires interpretation
- Must make judgment calls

Or concepts:

- Crime, mental illness

Manifest and Latent Content

- Manifest – overt or visible material (can count)
- Latent – symbolic content uncovered by semantic analysis – needs to be coded first (inductive process) and then counted.

Can use both deductive and inductive approaches to find categories (codes) for content analysis:

- Divide sample in sections
- Use grounded theory on a smaller portion to develop categories
- Use those categories on the rest of the sample

Deductive and Inductive Category Formation

Deductive:

- Reasoning from the general to the specific
- Forming categories to score based on theoretical ideas

Inductive:

- Reason from the specific to the general
- Come up with categories from data
- Can obtain categories by using grounded theory

c. Interviewing

Interviewing is one of the most common methods for collecting data in qualitative research. Interviews allow participants to provide rich, contextual descriptions of events. The process of interviewing is time-consuming, and the quality of data often is dependent on the attitude of the interviewer.

I. Preparing for interviews.

Why the researcher would want to interview the same person more than once?

First is the perspective of temporal knowledge. The term temporal is a philosophical term that defines how a person's current situation and knowledge have been influenced by his or her experiences and how the current situation will partially determine his or her future. **The second** reason for conducting more than one interview is to meet methodological rigor criteria for prolonged engagement.

II. Implementing interviews.

1. The first step in all research is to conduct a pilot study.
2. Accessing the sample.
3. Finding the participants of the study.
4. Preinterview contact or introduction usually is made via telephone.
5. Conducting the interview.
6. The type of interview will be determined by the research question, methodology, and literature insight. Interviews can either be structured or unstructured.
7. The first stage of interviews includes introductions, provides an overview of the process, and builds trust. The middle of the interview usually is where the bulk of useful data is derived. The final stage of interview is summary of the participant's responses and confirmation or additional information.

Dialogue/Discussion

The dialogue is a session in which participants share relevant information in order to arrive at an informed, mutually-agreed commitment. The goal is not to collect data, but to share viewpoints. There is no "interviewer" or "facilitator" leading the discussion, although, there may be process consultant present to help participants build trust, listen with respect, and speak with authenticity.

Advantages:

- Highly collaborative, resulting in high “buy in” from all involved and the creation of deep partnerships;
- A key feature of any “learning environment”.

Disadvantages:

- Requires a high degree of trust by all parties;
- Requires a high degree of individual skill in both listening with respect and speaking with authenticity.

d. Focus Group

A focus group is a group interview with approximately 4 to 10 participants. A skilled facilitator leads the discussion. It is used to gather, in a short time, valid information from members of the target population (such as subject matter experts) familiar with a problem or situation. The format can be highly structured, semi-structured or free form. The structured format is designed to elicit specific kinds of responses to specific, often closed-end questions. A semi-structured format is designed to gather information within certain parameters using open-ended questions, and free form is completely open and is designed to allow participants to bring to the surface issues that might otherwise stay hidden.

Focus groups are useful for gathering information on what is actually going on, why things are that way, how participants feel about the situation, and what possibilities for change exist. Focus groups are also sometimes referred to as “sensing sessions” because the facilitator uses the focus group to develop an intuitive sense of the problem or situation.

Advantages:

- Can reach more people in a shorter time than with interviews
- Participant interaction can increase the amount and validity of the information gathered
- Can help to build consensus for causes and solutions
- Can include short surveys distributed during the session to collect quantifiable data
- Can include structured brain-storming

Disadvantages:

- Costly and time consuming
- Difficult to schedule
- Capturing data is difficult. Writing during the session interrupts the flow. Relying on tape recordings is like doing the focus group twice.
- Data collected from unstructured focus groups is difficult to quantify.

3. PROJECTIVE TECHNIQUES

- These techniques became generally known as *motivation research*.
- Motivation research shares many techniques with other consumer research areas using qualitative rather than quantitative research approaches.
- Projective techniques may be classified as a structured-indirect way of investigating the whys of situations.
- They are not used to measure, but to uncover feelings, beliefs, attitudes and motivation which many consumers find difficult to articulate.

Projective techniques in consumer research

- Projective techniques - a way of transcending communication barriers.
- Instead of questioning directly, the subjects may be asked to respond indirectly, either talking about other people, these other people's feelings, attitudes and opinions, or about objects or situations.
- In talking about a third party or an object, the subjects project their covert feelings to the third party or object, and once these are in the open they may be discussed.
- In consumer and marketing **research** applications, **projective techniques** should constitute relatively ambiguous stimuli to permit the subjects to interpret the stimuli in terms of their own perceptions and in their own words.

Types of projective techniques:

1. The first category is **association**.
2. The second category – **construction**.
3. A third projective technique is **completion**.

4. A fourth projective technique is termed “**expressive**”.
5. **Choice ordering** is a last type of projective technique.

Reliability

- **Reliability** refers to the stability with which a technique yields information.
- In temporal reliability projective techniques must yield data that are stable over time.
- If the responses are affected by situational factors, the technique is unreliable and the data are generally unusable.
- Reliability may be established through triangulation, that is the use of two or more methods of data collection.

Validity

- **Validity** refers to the degree in which the technique measures what it is supposed to measure.
- This implies that the researcher must be skilled to categorise and interpret response protocols.

Disadvantages:

- The complexity of the data and the corresponding skills required of the researcher.
- Projective techniques are expensive to administer because highly skilled research staff have to be employed.
- It may be difficult to get the subjects to project themselves into the roles the researchers wish them to assume.
- The reliability of measures is very difficult to establish.

Advantages:

- Projective techniques can make a significant contribution if the research is concerned with beliefs, values, motivation, personality or other aspects related to individuals, their unique cognitions and behavior.
- Projective techniques may be used as a way of "breaking the ice" in a focus-group discussion at the start of a qualitative research project.
- Projective techniques supplement and verify intuition in generating hypotheses.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Qualitative research may be used optimally in situations that would increase understanding, expand knowledge, clarify the real issues, generate hypotheses, identify a range of behaviours, explain and explore consumer motivations, attitudes and behaviour, identify distinct behavioural groups, and provide input for future research.
2. Qualitative research is mainly used for answering “how”, “why” and “what” questions. It is not used for "how many" questions, that is the provenance of the quantitative research schools of thought.

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Research & Consultancy Institute (Cyprus)*

Grundtvig Learning Partnership Project **„Application of Qualitative Research in Consumers‘ Organizations“**

The **purpose** of project is to enable consumers‘ protection organizations with little or no previous experience of research to gain a basic understanding of qualitative research and the potential for this type of research in consumers‘ organizations.

Project Coordinator

Education, Research & Consultancy Center
(Lithuania)
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- Providing the society with employment services;
- Organising internships;
- Helping with staff selection;
- Organising courses, workshops and seminars for business enterprises and individual subjects;
- Organising conferences, exhibitions and fairs;
- Giving consultations on law, business, psychological, project preparation and management and other issues;
- Implementing applied scientific and research activities in different fields;
- Taking part in national and international projects in the field of youth, culture, inter-cultural issues, consumers‘ rights and etc.

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Research and Consultancy Institute (RCI) is an established company based in Limassol, Cyprus. Its experience in Research and Consultancy spans a period of 14 years and it specialize in the following fields:

- **Market Research:** Consumer Research, Advertising and Media Research, Business to Business surveys Qualitative Research, Public Opinion Research
- **Management Consultancy:** Diagnostic Analysis of Human Resource Issues, Selection and Recruitment of Personnel, Employee Satisfaction Surveys, Training Needs Analysis and Design of Tailored Seminars, Development of Performance Management Systems, Development of Business Strategy and Plans
- **Marketing Consultancy:** Market Assessment Studies, Development of Marketing Strategy, Segmentation Studies, SWOT Analysis, Development of MIS, Sales Analysis and Forecasting, Development of Promotional Plan, Studies and Research in Political and Social Matters, Vocational Training, Regional and Communal Development, Technology and Environmental Studies.

RCI has also experience in European Programs participation and takes part in Mobility and Pilot projects.

Zemgale NGO Center (Latvia)

www.zemgalei.lv



Zemgale NGO support center was founded in 1998 by the initiative of Jelgava consumer protection club and its main tasks are to: support NGOs in Zemgale region (4th part of Latvia) by giving consultations, information, organising educational events, creating strategic documents; to promote co-operation between NGOs, state institutions and business structures; promote fundraising for NGOs; **consultations for individuals in field of consumer protection in cooperation with Latvian National Association for Consumer Protection**; develop voluntary service; inform Zemgale region inhabitants on NGO sector work and development. Zemgale NGO support centre is an umbrella organisation for about 200 NGO but mainly is working with 60 most active NGOs.

Generation Europe, o.s. (Czech Republic)

www.generation-europe.cz



Generation Europe (GE) is a think-tank type non governmental organization working mainly in the field of consumer education. Main activities of GE focus on preparing of educational materials in the area of citizenship, financial education and sustainable consumption. GE has rich experience in organizing of various educational events such as seminars, workshops and conferences on the above-mentioned topics.

GE is a part of a network coordinated by Generation Europe Foundation within which it prepares and distributes “The Europa Diary – Wise Choices”. This publication is intended for high school students and its goal is to promote consumer and environmental education in schools.

GE has also concluded an agreement with EUCEN to manage and maintain Dolceta – Modules 1, 2, 4, projects that carry out on line consumer education tools for adults and useful materials for educators in the consumer field.

GE manages a web – based project Europe2045, which is meant for high school students – it is a digital simulation designed as a supporting educational material for social sciences' courses, attempting to familiarize the players with the political, economic and social issues of the united Europe and the present-day World.

NGO Tartu Consumer Advice and Information Center (Estonia)

www.tartutarbija.ee



Tartu Consumer Advice and Information Centre is a NGO founded 22.02.2001.

The objectives of Tartu Consumer Advice and Information Centre is to protect and to represent consumer interest by advising and informing consumers in consumer rights issues and by educating them in various issues of consumer protection. The target group of our activities are consumers in various ages: adults and young consumers. We inform and educate schoolchildren, young parents, country people, disabled people and other consumers in Tartu, in Tartu country, in South-East- and in Nord-East Estonia.

This organisation co-operates with Estonian State Consumer Board, with Health Protection Inspection, with Tartu Municipality, with Tartu Countrywomen Union, with Tartu Disabled People Association, with Tallinn Consumer Advice and Information Centre, with Tartu Medical Highschool, with Tartu Voluntaries Centre and with others NGOs. Oorganisation's foreign cooperation partners are Finnish Consumer Protection Union, VerbraucherService Bayern in Germany, Consumer Society (OAGV) Aachen in Germany and Western Lithuania Consumer Federation.