

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS



INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

In-depth one-to-one conversations with participants on a chosen topic. Ideal when researching the attitudes, beliefs or perspectives of a particular sample.

Consider: The stimulus used during the interview. Will you have a set of questions, pre-recorded video or photographs (see visual methods) to guide and enhance the interview discussion. Also consider how the stimulus may impact the structure, or lack of structure, your interview may have.

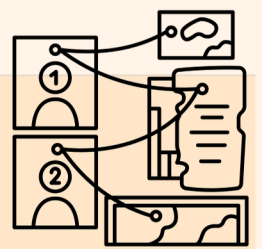
FOCUS GROUPS



Small group discussions led by a moderator. Anonymity is not absolute when in a group setting.

Consider: The group dynamics and how encouraging discussion between participants may impact data generation.

CASE STUDY



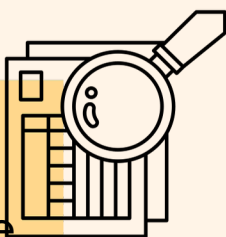
In-depth investigation of a specific case, or cases to gain holistic understanding of the phenomenon.

Consider: How in-depth data will be collected. Will multiple methods of data generation be used, such as logs, interviews or observations?

OBSERVATIONS

Aims to observe people / events in their natural environment, also known as naturalistic research.

Consider: How observations will be recorded and whether participants behaviours may be impacted by the observer.



Participants must be aware they are observed!

SURVEYS

A method of asking questions to a larger sample through a streamlined, usually online, medium.

Consider: How open or closed questions may produce varying forms of data. Likert scales can be used to manage responses, but consider the statements and number to be used,



VISUAL METHODS

The use of video, image and other visual materials to generate or stimulate data collection.

Consider: Whether visual materials are pre-determined or whether participants can choose their own material. Allowing participants to choose their own material may enhance their responses.



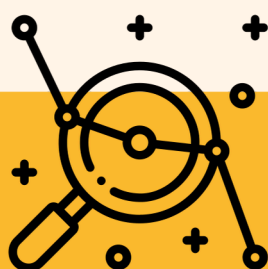
NETNOGRAPHY



The study of online communities and cultures. Typically data will be collected from online forums, social media (also known as social media research) and blogs. This could include text, image and other forms of online media to understand attitudes, perceptions or trends.

Consider: How you will constrain your data search. Parameters, such as target audience, forms of media and amount of data collected, may help keep data gathering manageable.

ETHNOGRAPHY



Observations and interviews enable holistic data gathering on the chosen topic. It is important to acknowledge whether the researcher will participate in the setting or observe.

Consider: Will the researcher be an active participant during observations. This may lead to high-quality data, but the researchers impact on the setting should be considered.

Participants must be aware they are being researched!

All research must maintain the ethics of informed consent.

DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH



Conducted through the use of official or personal documents as the source of information. Can include text (newspapers, diaries) and image (artwork, paintings, photographs).

Consider: The source of your information. How might the authenticity of a document impact the value of data gathered for your research.

INTERNET-BASED RESEARCH



Collection of information from the internet. Netnography and surveys can fall within this category.

Consider: How ethics will be incorporated into the online domain. Informed consent, or the effects of covert research, will be essential.

PRIMARY OR SECONDARY RESEARCH?

When selecting a method, it is important to consider whether your research is primary or secondary. Primary research is first-hand and data is gathered through your own efforts. Secondary research uses pre-existing data to be analysed and interpreted through your own processes.

