

Chapter 2

Qualitative Research Methods: Harnessing Interviews, Focus Groups, Observations, and Document Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the different data collection methods in qualitative research. The data collection method is based on the complexity and depth of human experiences that one needs to capture while doing research. This article explores a range of the most popular qualitative data collection methods, including interviews, focus groups, participant observations, and document analysis. Each of the data collection methods comes with its own sets of detailing unique characteristics, strengths, and potential limitations. This article therefore aims to understand those prerequisites of data collection methods and understand the different data collection methods. It also discusses the context of its suitability for different research designs and objectives. This chapter offers insights into how researchers can strategically select and apply these methods to gather rich, meaningful data. It also aims to equip researchers with

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the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively navigate the process of qualitative data collection, thereby enhancing the quality and impact of their research.

1. INTRODUCTION

Qualitative research involves various stages of performing the research before reaching to the data analysis. The usage of data collection is actually an important element of qualitative research. Data collection is an extremely critical component of qualitative research. Data collection is an important part of the research process (Taherdoost, 2021). But even before proceeding with data collection, certain prior requirements are to be fulfilled. The data collection method provides the foundation upon which insights and understanding of the entire research are built upon. There is a remarkable difference between quantitative and qualitative research. Qualitative research only focuses on exploring phenomena in-depth in contrast to quantitative research that relies on numerical data only. Through this type of research tries to capture the richness and complexity of human experiences, behaviours, and perceptions. This chapter delves into the various data collection methods which are popularly used in qualitative research. These include interviews, focus groups, observations, and document analysis. There are many other methods also involved however the purpose of this article is to only understand these few. Each of these methods offers a unique advantage for capturing the nuances of social and cultural contexts. By understanding these methods, researchers can make informed decisions about which techniques best align with their research questions, ensuring the integrity, depth, and validity of their findings. However, before even proceeding for the data collection there are certain issues to be dealt with like seeking relevant permissions (Creswell & Poth, 2016) from different authorities/organizations/individuals from where the data is to be collected.

Creswell and Poth (2016) suggest that certain issues need to be addressed which are mentioned below. All these are relevant issues as they all involve ethical considerations across different phases of data collection.

- Visiting the location from where the data is to be collected
- Seeking relevant permissions
- Sampling strategy
- Means for recording information
- Issues in data storage
- Issues while data collection in field

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