EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

- Initial research conducted to clarify and define the nature of a problem
- Does not provide conclusive evidence
- Subsequent research expected

WHAT IS EXPLORATORY RESEARCH?

QUANTITATIVE DATA

QUALITATIVE DATA

WHY CONDUCT EXPLORATORY RESEARCH?

- Diagnose a situation
- Screening of alternatives
- Discover new ideas

CATEGORIES OF EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

- Experience surveys
- Case studies
- Pilot studies
- Secondary data analysis
EXPERIENCE SURVEYS
(Expert Interviews)

- Ask knowledgeable individuals
- About a particular research problem
- Most are quite willing

CASE STUDY METHOD

- Intensely investigates one or a few situations similar to the problem
- Investigate in depth
- Careful study
- May require cooperation

PILOT STUDY

- A collective term
- Any small scale exploratory study that uses sampling
- But does not apply rigorous standards

PILOT STUDIES

Projective Techniques
Focus Group Interviews
Depth Interviews
Exploratory Research

> Qualitative Research Methods

- **Projective techniques**
  - *indirect form of questioning, respondents “project” their underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes or feelings by interpreting behavior of others rather than themselves*
  - Appropriate for...
    - information that can’t be accurately obtained by direct methods
    - objective is exploratory - gaining insights and understanding
  - Needs experts for design and analysis

### PROJECTIVE TECHNIQUES

- WORD ASSOCIATION TESTS
- SENTENCE COMPLETION METHOD
- THIRD-PERSON TECHNIQUE
- ROLE PLAYING
- T.A.T

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### WORD ASSOCIATION

- **SUBJECT IS PRESENTED WITH A LIST OF WORDS**
- **ASKED TO RESPOND WITH FIRST WORD THAT COMES TO MIND**

### WORD ASSOCIATION EXAMPLES

- GREEN
- CHEESE
- MONEY
- KRAFT
**SENTENCE COMPLETION**

People who drink Non Caffeine Sodas are ________________

A man who drinks Diet Sodas is ________________

Regional brands of sodas are most liked by ________________

The woman in the commercial ________________

**THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TEST**

TAT

**Exploratory Research**

* Qualitative Research Methods

• Projective Techniques
  – Advantages
    • can elicit responses subjects are unable or unwilling to give
      – information is personal, sensitive or subject to social norms
      – information is subconscious, can’t be easily expressed
  – Disadvantages
    • requires highly trained interviewers and interpreters
    • one-on-one - time consuming and expensive like depth interviews
    • analysis difficult and subjective - serious risk of interpretation bias

**FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

• UNSTRUCTURED
• FREE FLOWING
• GROUP INTERVIEW
• START WITH BROAD TOPIC AND FOCUS IN ON SPECIFIC ISSUES
GROUP COMPOSITION

• 6 TO 10 PEOPLE
• RELATIVELY HOMOGENEOUS
• SIMILAR LIFESTYLES AND EXPERIENCES

Exploratory Research

> Qualitative Research Designs

• Focus Groups
  – nonstructured interview/discussion conducted by a trained moderator with a small group of respondents
  – purpose is to gain insights by listening to people from target group talk about issues of interest
  – value lies in unexpected findings

Exploratory Research

> Qualitative Research Designs

• Focus Groups - Planning and Conducting
  – define research problem
  – specify objectives of qualitative research
  – state objectives/questions to be answered by group
  – write a screening questionnaire
  – develop a moderator’s guide/outline
  – recruit and screen participants
  – conduct the focus group interview
  – review tapes and analyze data
  – summarize findings and plan follow-up research

• How many focus groups? Depends on...
  • nature of the issue
  • number of distinct market segments
  • number of new ideas generated by each group
  • time and cost
  – Resources permitting - conduct groups until the moderator can predict what will be said (usually three or four, but at least two)
**Exploratory Research**  
> **Qualitative Research Designs**

- **Focus Groups - Advantages - “The 10 S’s”**
  - Synergism
  - Snowballing
  - Stimulation
  - Security
  - Spontaneity
  - Serendipity
  - Specialization
  - Scientific Scrutiny
  - Structure
  - Speed

- **Focus Groups - Disadvantages -“The 5 M’s”**
  - Misuse
  - Misjudge
  - Moderation
  - Messy
  - Misrepresentation

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**Exploratory Research**  
> **Qualitative Research Methods**

- **Depth Interviews**
  - unstructured (but planned), direct, personal, probing interview with a single respondent
  - purpose is to uncover underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes, feelings, knowledge
  - depth interviews often conducted with:
    - decision-makers
    - customers
    - experts
    - employees

- **Depth Interviews - Procedure**
  - one-on-one with single respondent
  - normal duration: 30 minutes to more than one hour
  - open with general question, subsequent direction determined by responses
  - rough outline used, to assure topics are covered
  - PROBE!
### Exploratory Research  
**Qualitative Research Methods**

**Depth Interviews - Appropriate for...**
- Detailed probing of behavior/beliefs/attitudes/needs/etc
- Information that is sensitive, confidential, embarrassing
- Situations where strong social norms exist
- Interviews with professionals
- Detailed understanding of complicated behavior

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**Depth Interviews - Advantages**
- Greater depth of insights than focus groups
- Direct attribution of response to specific respondent
- Less social pressure to conform to group response

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**Depth Interviews - Disadvantages**
- Many of the same as focus group and to greater extent
- Skilled interviewers are few and costly
- Susceptible to interviewer influence due to lack of structure
- Data often difficult to analyze and interpret
- High cost - usually results in small numbers

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**THE MODERATOR**
- Develops rapport - makes people relax
- Interacts
- Listens to what people have to say
- Everyone gets a chance to speak