

## Unit 8: Research Methodology for Health and Social Care

### Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods

#### Types of Research Methods:

When we are researching a particular subject or item within Health and Social Care as well as many other situations we tend to use a range of different research methods. These can be placed into two different categories, for example: qualitative and quantitative. For someone to understand this, one should look at it in much greater detail.

#### Qualitative Research:

This type of research gives the researcher a more in-depth answer to the questions in which they are trying to find out. Its meanings are mainly expressed through actions or language. To put that in a much simpler form, there isn't a certain answer to the question for the participant, its more views and opinions than anything else. For example, you wouldn't find a tick box question in this type of research. The most important thing when it comes to collecting qualitative research is that the data collected is valid. We must be able to analyse any type of research which we conduct. Qualitative data can be analysed by explaining and describing. When we explain, we must cover the basic's which could be why we are doing this? What beliefs do we have? And we must justify our actions. When we have a description, we must make sure all the things we've covered come together, by this I mean making complicated things or subjects easy to understand.

#### Advantages of Descriptive Observations:

- More information is covered and understood.
- It involves more detail.

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- Less chance of forgetting what has been said.

### Disadvantages of Descriptive Observations:

- It's time consuming.
- Can cost a lot of money.

### Methods Used to Gather Valid Data:

Unstructured / in-depth interviews are one of the methods used to collect valid data. This usually takes place during interviews where the interviewer has a list of topics or themes to cover at some point. There are three main ways in which the interviewer would contact the interviewee for preparation of the meeting point; these are a letter, a telephone call or arrangement by asking. The interviewee should show an interest in what the interviewer has to say, this will put forward a positive image of them, which may result in further contact. Another method of valid data would be direct observation. This is when the behaviour of a certain individual or group is watched. But the observers do not get involved in the subject.

### In-depth Interviews:

An in-depth interview is when the interviewee goes into greater detail. He or she does this because the information they are research requires much more information than usual. An example of an in-depth interview would be if someone were applying for a job. Although more information may seem like a good thing, like everything else, there are advantages and disadvantages that are as follows.

### Advantages of In-depth Interviews:

- Questions can be explored in much more greater detail.
- Questions are not limited or fixed.
- No strict guidelines - opportunity for exploring ideas.
- A welcoming environment to build up self-esteem.
- You can observe facial expressions and body language

### Disadvantages of In-depth Interviews:

- The questions are not as reliable as quantitative research.
- Good communication skills are required.
- Invasion of privacy questions may occur.
- People tend to act different.
- Can be time consuming.

### Quantitative Research:

This type of research is consistent with its data. This type of research is written in numerical form (systematic), questionnaires and experiments. Like everything else, this has its advantages and disadvantages. For example, if we were trying to discover the health issues surrounding smoking, then it would be easy to collect data but a disadvantage would be, it can be time consuming, it could cost a lot of money, and it may be easy to make a mistake. When we collect quantitative research, it's much easier as we are only writing it in numerical form. If we were to repeat the same research twice then we would get similar results. If this does not happen then it means the researcher has failed to produce the needed reliable results. In order to get the most reliable results we must make sure that the researchers' questionnaire is written correctly. When I say this I mean that, he/she's questions are simple but to the point,

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otherwise similar but wrong answers may be put down; resulting in the information given to be invalid. Quantitative research can be analysed by using spread-sheets, charts and diagrams.

### Advantages of Quantitative Research:

- Easy to collect
- Easy to put down

### Disadvantages of Quantitative Research:

- Can make mistakes easy
- Time consuming
- Cost money

### Methods Used to Collect Valid Data:

The simplest way to collect valid data for quantitative research would be to use a questionnaires or doing experiments. This method is very popular in this type of research.

### Advantages of Using Questionnaires:

- It's a quick method when collecting research.
- Timing isn't an issue (people involved may spend as much time answering questions as they like.)
- Cheap way of collecting data.

### Disadvantages of Using Questionnaires:

- They attract a low response (not as much detail).
- Some research may be too personal.
- May result in biased answers.

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- Research may not be valid.
- No control over who gives the information (may be done as a joke).
- You cannot observe the participant.

### Advantages of Doing Experiments:

- Find your own research out
- First hand research
- You are in control of what goes on

### Disadvantages of Doing Experiments:

- Time consuming
- Cost money
- You may have a biased view on what you are experimenting

### Systematic Observations:

Within quantitative data is a research method called systematic observations. This attempts to collect reliable data. The research requires collecting numerical information. This means that the result can be recorded as a percentage or real numbers. An example of this would be, the number of times a patient calls for the attention of a nurse in a hospital, it has to be noted down. This can be analysed by using statistical data.

### Advantages of Systematic Observations:

- You know if the results are correct or not as you collected them yourself.
- You can do it in your own time

Disadvantages of Systematic Observations:

- Time consuming
- May be biased