

Research Methods Cheat Sheet

by holly6901 (holly6901) via cheatography.com/126769/cs/24705/

Types of data			Types of data (cont)			Stages of research				
Data collected by the researcher themselves i.e. experiments / surveys / observ- ations.	Relevant Inform- ation - Can Control method- ology	- Time Consuming - Can be costly dependant on the methods used	Qualit ative data	Type of data that is focused around opinion, feelings and why something is happening.	- Detailed inform- ation that explores reasonings- Based on human experience which	- Longer process to analyse the data as it all varies due to subjective nature If not	1. Choice of topic	Deciding whether the research will focus on • social problems • sociol- ogical problems	They need to know what they're studying	
Data collected by other people & organi- sations	Already gathered so quicker - Usually	- Inform- ation may be old and inaccurate - Questi- onable	Complex data and harder to analyse. Subjective Data.	better researcy validity can have a negate impact	careful,- researcher can have a negative impact on the results	2. Aim	Considering the main research goal in their study	It is important to have a research goal		
	to access	can be applied	Positiv	riem ve intern	retivism	behaviour	3. Operationalise research	Breaking down the hypothesis	Precise measur- ement of	
Numerical, statistical information that is objective. Answers factual questions instead of giving reason-	- Best for repres- entati- veness and genera- lisability - Broader study -	- Harder to analyse and give reasonings - Can't explore why	analyse and give reasonings - Can't explore	POSITI Theory based of and fact idea su objectiv positivis statistic tative d	appraoch on natural ctual causes - rrounds vity and ests want cal, quanti- lata that	INTERPRE Approach w see explana sujects pers They want (Meaning) a ative data w	which tries to ations from spective. Verstehen and qualit- with reasons	values	or aim into concrete values that can be measured	social phenomena cannot occur without it and it allows others to replicate your research
ings.	greater number of subjects		method tative, (tics, Sc	ds: Quanti- Offical Statis- ocial Surveys,	methods: Q Personal De Participant	ocuments, Observ-	4. Choose target population	Choosing people with the character- istics you want to	It is important to have a defined research population	
	Data collected by the researcher themselves i.e. experiments / surveys / observ- ations. Data collected by other people & organi- sations Numerical, statistical information that is objective. Answers factual questions instead of giving reason-	Data collected Relevant by the Inform- researcher ation - themselves Can i.e. experi- ments / method- surveys / ology observ- ations. Data - collected Already by other gathered people & so organi- sations Usually cheaper to access Numerical, - Best statistical for information repres- that is entati- objective. veness Answers and factual genera- questions lisability instead of giving Broader reason- ings. greater number of	Data collected Relevant liferman by the researcher themselves i.e. experi- ments / mothods surveys / observ- ations. Data collected Already by other people & so organi- sations Usually cheaper to access Alplied Numerical, statistical information that is objective. Answers factual questions py the collected of giving genera- fings. Para - Time Consuming Consuming costly themselves Can dependant ine conthe heaper methods methods used on the methods methods ation may be old and inaccurate onable whether it to can be access applied Numerical, for analyse information repres- and give reasonings objective. veness - Can't explore why lisability instead of giving Broader reason- ings. greater number of	Data collected Relevant Consuming by the Inform- researcher ation - themselves Can i.e. experi- ments / method- surveys / observ- ations. Data - Inform- collected Already by other gathered people & so organi- sations Usually cheaper whether it to can be access applied Numerical, statistical information repres- information repres- information repres- and give that is entati- reasonings objective. Answers and genera- questions lisability instead of giving Broader reason- ings. Gualit ative data Consuming data Already dependant ine methods used On the methods used On the methods used On the methods aused Positiv Theory based of idea su objectiv positivic statistic autive of tative, of tics, So tics, So	Data collected Relevant Consuming by the Inform- researcher ation - costly themselves Can dependant i.e. experi- ments / method- surveys / ology used Data - Inform- collected Already by other gathered people & so inaccurate organi- sations Usually onable cheaper whether it to can be access applied Numerical, - Best - Harder to statistical for analyse information repres- that is entati- rosaonings objective. veness - Can't Answers and explore factual genera- questions lisability instead of giving Broader reason- ings. Positivism vs interp POSITIVSM - Theory appraoch based on natural and factual causes - idea surrounds objectivity and positivists want statistical, quanti- tative data that reveals the truth. Preferred research methods: Quanti- tative, Offical Statis-	Data - Time	Data - Time Collected Relevant Consuming by the Inform Can be researcher ation - costly themselves Can dependant i.e. experiments / method- methods surveys / ology used observations. Data - Inform- obe old and people & so inaccurate organi- gations (Usually cheaper to a access applied for membration that is entati- for analyse and statistical information that is entati- repressible and factual genera- questions instead of giving Broader reason- study - ings. Ings. experiment Control on the methods at a feelings ings- varies due and why Based on to something information attion may be old and and people & so inaccurate organi- guicker - Questi- to can be access applied on the results of satistical information that is entati- reasonings objective. Numerical, statistical information that is entati- reasonings objective. Answers and explore interess and explore factual genera- giving Broader reason- study - ings. Ings. greater number of subjects in the tatis of preferred research methods: Quantitative, Offical Statis- tics, Social Surveys, Participant Observ-Participant Observ	Data Time collected Relevant Consuming by the Inform- coat be researcher ation - costly themselves Can dependant i.e. experi- collected Already observations. Data - Inform- collected Already by other gathered be old and peopole & so inaccurate organi- gations (beaper that is entati- access applied charactistical is entati- reasonings objective. Veness and explore and give that is entati- reasonings objective. Veness and explore gathered giving Broader reason study - lings. Positivism vs interpretivism vs interpretivism as to why something happened. They want Verstehen objectivity and officated in genera- why objectivity and officated of giving Broader reason study - lings. Preferred research methods: Quantition, and is data that is inform- process to data focused ation that analyse explores the data and why Based on to to which not the reason in the reason in the reson in the research validity can have an explore that is entati- reasonings objective. Veness and explore gives and explore objectivity and objective and objectivity and	Data - - Time Collected Relevant Consuming by the Inform- - Can be carearcher themselves Can dependant i.e. experi- Control on the method- surveys / ology used observ- ations. - Inform- collected Already by other gathered be old and people & so onable cheaper to can be access applied cheaper tatistical for analyse can be access analyse careful, can be access applied can be access analyse careful, can be access analy	

Stages of research (cont)

5.	Choosing	The sampling
Choose	between	method is
sampling	random	crucial to
method	and non-	ensure the
	random	sample is
	sampling	generalisable



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Stages of research (cont) (cont)

6. Choose research method	Choosing between qualitative and quanti- tative methods	It is important to choose the correct research method for your aims
7. Conduct research	Carry out your chosen method on your sample	Carrying out the method correctly improves the validity of your data
8. Analyse data	Looking for patterns in the data	Spotting patterns correctly can allow for new discoveries

Ethics and access

- 1.Informed consent research subjects should be fully aware of the study and its aims
- No deceit sociologists should not keep information or lie about the purpose of the study
- 3. Privacy is kept the privacy of the research subjects should be safeguarded as much as possible
- 4. Protection from harm protection from physical harm, emotional harm and professional harm
- 5. No illegal or immoral behaviour sociologists need to avoid situations where they could be drawn into illegal behaviour

Access – some groups have the power to resist sociologists such as the rich and powerful therefore, data on these groups is usually secondary data using statistics.

Gatekeeping – A gatekeeper has contact with the research subjects and will check any interview for sensitive subjects

Ethics and access (cont)

Funding – This may affect the research method, if lots of funding is available the researcher may employ a team and be able to complete in-depth interviews, if funding is low the researcher may need to choose a cheaper option such as postal questionnaires.

Triangulation strengths and weaknesses

- The methods cancel out the disadvantages and allow sociologists to guarantee validity
 - Can be expensive and time-consand uming depending sts to on the methods chosen
- Can reveal new information and hypotheses
- The methods
 have to
 complement one
 another and cancel
 out the disadvantages
- Provides a better understanding of the problem
- More skills are needed to analyse the vast amounts of data

Sampling methods

Random:	 Lack of 	• Time-consuming
names	bias as it	and expensive due
are	is	to the information
picked	randomly	needed • Sample
randomly	chosen •	selection bias can
from a	Simplicity	occur when a
list	as there	sample chosen is
	are no	not representative
	additional	
	steps	

Sampling methods (cont)

System-	• IVIOST	• Large
atic:	represent-	sample
randomly	ative as it	needed to
choosing	relies in	ensure that
a number	statistical	statistically it
and	odds • It is	is likely to be
picking	easy to	representative
every 10th	execute and	 Not truly
e.g.	understand •	random • by
7,17,27	Provides	chance might
e.c.t	control	get same
		results.

Stratified: Relatively dividing small the sample • can population be used with confidence into sampling that it's still frames representand using ative • systematic Requires a sampling smaller sample than random sampling

random • by
chance might
get same
results.
• Requires
sampling
frame which
includes
details of
significant
characteristics
of population
being studied
• Timely • May
take a lot of
researchers

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Published 8th October, 2020. Last updated 8th October, 2020. Page 2 of 5.



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Sampling methods (cont)

Snowball: • Used When mainly one with person groups leads you who are hard to to another identify or access (e.g. criminals) • The process is cheap, simple and costefficient. • This sampling technique needs little planning and fewer workforce compared to other sampling techni-

ques.

· Very unlikely to be truly representative since based on people who have contact with one another • Representativeness of the sample is not guaranteed. The researcher has no idea of the true distribution of the population and of the sample. • Sampling bias is also a fear of researchers when using this sampling technique. Initial subjects tend to nominate people that they know well. Because of this, it is highly possible that the subjects share the same traits and characteristics, thus, it is possible that the sample that the researcher will obtain is only a small subgroup of the entire popula-

Sampling methods (cont)

Volunteer: • More · Could take a Particethical long time to ipants because get enough becoming participants people to do part of a have experiment • Rules out study approached because researcher • certain they May have occupations volunteer an interest and types of when in the people asked or subject so unrepresein they are ntative • response less likely to Expensive to give biased place advert to an advert information · Easy to do · Accessibility Advantages of potential of stratified respondents

Quota: Like stratified sampling random but the sampling researcher but can be decides conducted how many without people in variables each being available group are involved from sampling frame • Useful for groups with

of potential respondents affects their chances of being included in the sample.

• May be less representative than random and stratified random sampling • Results may be distorted and not representative

Sampling methods (cont) (cont)

Purposive: • Tends to · Makes no Involves be easiest attempt to be researchers and truly representative, so choosing quickest individuals or way of can't cases from a collecting generalise particular a sample • from the place that may lead findings • Is reflect the to a good open to bias • nature of response It is vulnerable to their rate • Is research affordable researcher judgement • Biased • Opportunity: Less Taking the time Cannot be sample from consuming generalised • people who Researcher Easy to are available use • has control at the time Cheap over selection the study is so may be

Statistics strengths and weaknesses

 They are often extremely easy and cheap to access as they are usually online

being carried

out and fit the

criteria you're

looking for

• They may not be representative of the wider population as they are collected by independent bodies

subjective to

their views



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no sampling

Common in

opinion polls

frame •

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Statistics strengths and weaknesses (cont)

- · They are often up-to-date so give sociologists an understanding of modern behaviour
- · They can be politically massaged to make a country look better
- · They often form the basis of hypotheses that motivate research
- · They tell us very little about the human stories that underpin them so are disliked by interpretivists

Questionnaire strengths and weaknesses

- Used for reaching larger and more representative samples as it can be given to hundreds of people
- · Many people do not respond to questionnaires which can cause low response or no response and can undermine validity

• The questions can be

- · Postal questionnaires are useful when the research population is geographically
- biased or leading spread out
- · They are cheaper and less time-consuming than other methods
- · It is difficult to motivate people to return postal questionnaires

Structured interviews strengths and weaknesses

· Positivists regard the method as scientific as it primarily produces

qualitative data

· They are artificial and not in everyday life so may give false information as they are suspicious

Structured interviews strengths and weaknesses (cont)

- The use of closed questions creates lots of quantitative data which can be converted into charts
- They are inflexible so sociologists cannot focus on other things if they hear something interesting
- · Because of the interview schedule, structured interviews are quick and can allow for a larger sample
- Interpretivists believe they do not produce true data

Unstructured interviews strengths and weaknesses

- · They allow the researcher to build rapport which allows the participants to open up more which can enrich data
- Unstructured interviews create a lot of data and require the researcher to be selective of what they publish

• The qualitative

data is difficult to

analyse as there are no pre-coded

answers

- Unstructured interviews allow the researcher to explain more about the research so they are useful for researching unknown groups
- · They provide richer, more detailed data which is highly valid
- · Studies that use unstructured interviews use less participants which undermines the representativeness to positivists

Semi-structured interview

- · Allows the researcher to explain the research and gain informed consent so is ethical
- · It is time consuming and expensive compared to other methods
- Interpretivists see the data as valid as it allows the researcher to understand the world through the participants eyes
- · Not reliable as it is hard to replicate
- Feminists argue this method gives women an opportunity to express how they really feel
- · Positivists reject this see it as unscientific this method lacks objectivity and reliability and fails to produce representative data that can be generalised to the wider population.

Observations strengths and weaknesses

- The researcher sees things through the eyes of the group so the researcher experiences 'verstehen' or empathy which results in highly valid data
- · Overt forms of research are subject to the researcher effect which may result in the group acting less naturally as the researcher is there which undermines validity



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Published 8th October, 2020. Last updated 8th October, 2020. Page 4 of 5.



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Observations strengths and weaknesses (cont)

- Often what people say and what they do is different, people may lie or not be aware of their actions in interviews
- Some observers get too attached to the research group and show bias towards them reporting the data incorrectly and losing objectivity
- Observation can be supplemented with unstructured interviews to add to the validity
- Covert observation is highly unethical

Content analysis strengths and weaknesses

- It is very cheap as all that is needed is media products
- It can be very timeconsuming
- It is a comparative analysis that can be longitudinal
- It is very subjective as the categories depend on what the researcher thinks is important
- Quantitative content analysis is reliable as it can be repeated by other sociologists
- Sociologists have been accused of analysing text out of context

Ethnography strengths and weaknesses

- Ethnography is usually long-term and in-depth as well as qualitative so produces lots of rich data
- It usually is a study of a specific group and is therefore not representative of wider society
- It allows the researcher to achieve verstehen with the group they study which means they are more likely to open up
- It is subjective to the researcher's opinions so could be biased
- The rapport built means it is high in validity
- Positivists dislike the data as it is not reliable or analysable

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