SÉISSMO

What level of <u>maturity</u> is necessary in a company to run Qual research?

Summary of an interactive workshop of 45 minutes with industrial market researchers at the Succeet 23

Succeet • October 2023

Séissmo – Markt und Forschung · Inh. Natacha Dagneaud · G 7, 34 · D-68159 Mannheim · Germany · Tel. +49 621 762123-0 · www.seissmo.com



"Qualitative market research is great for creating and forming hypotheses. By using this wording, you can explain what qualitative research is about quite well to your internal stakeholders, especially if they tend to have a very rational way of thinking."

Comment of a workshop participant



WHAT ARE WE GOING TO TALK ABOUT TODAY?

- About the correct understanding of the specifics of qualitative research
 - About the process of qualitative research
 - About problems that may arise at each stage and how to deal with them
 - Sharing experience of problem-solving practices in practice
 - Discuss your cases with difficulties in qualitative research
 - Together we will decide what are the most important things to always keep in mind when conducting qualitative research

1

2

3

5

6





Before you start thinking about conducting qualitative research in your company

BE SURE YOUR INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS KNOW WHAT QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IS ABOUT

About "how many consumers think/ support/ need"? NO!!!	Large samples (100/ 500/ 1000 or more respondents) to have reliable data? NO!!!	Reports include figures, tables and graphs NO!!!
About figures/ percentages/ "2 consumers said that…" NO!!!	About representativeness and sample error? NO!!!	About market share, size of your target group or volume of your sales growth? NO!!!

1





Before you start thinking about conducting qualitative research in your company... BE SURE YOUR INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS KNOW IT WILL BE ABOUT...

> ... a written report that presents ideas, opinions, models, needs, expectations, problems related to your product/ service

... a sample with a small number of respondents that fits the criteria of your target audience well

... "why consumers think/ support/ need this..."

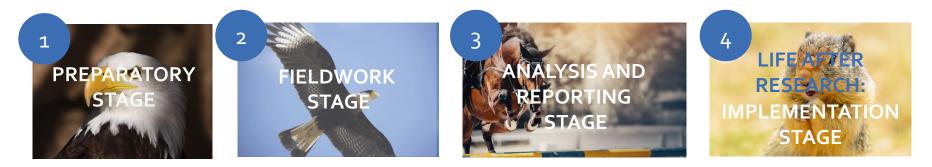
Qualitative research is needed when you want to discover the unknown and gain a deeper understanding of your target audience Qualitative research is about people and their behavior, emotions, feelings and beliefs

1





The qualitative research (and quantitative research too) process consists of 4 stages





For you, as a client, this is the most time-consuming stage and very important for research, as it creates the basis for obtaining valid results

PREPARATORY STAGE

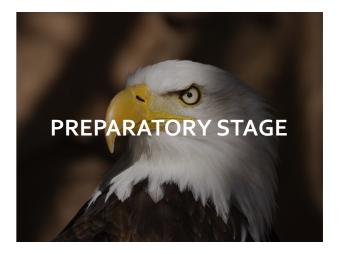
SÉISSMO





The process of qualitative research: preparatory stage



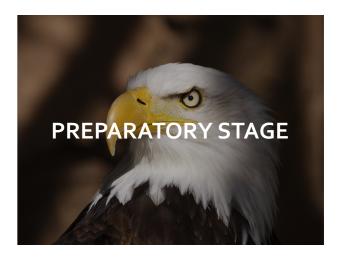


At this stage you should:

1st Identify the unknown
2nd Define the right problematic & the research objectives
3rd Write a good briefing
4th Choose the target audience
5th Choose the methodology (did you think of semiotics?)

!!! Don't forget about the specific of qualitative research: it is about WHY consumers think/ support/ need... not about "how many" In the preparatory stage, internal market researchers are often confronted with too high expectations on the part of their internal stakeholders

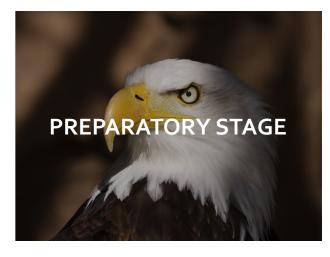




It is quite difficult to identify the unknown You only know what you know after the research is done. And if you don't truly identify the unknown, internal stakeholders often complain afterwards saying their questions are left unanswered.

Having the right question is also key for choosing the right method and, thus, for a successful research Often, the marketing department asks for a quantitative or conjoined study. When asked what they want to find out, they present a long list of questions.

That is why a research request template can be useful Internal stakeholders fill it out, but it is the market research department that decides which is the appropriate methodology to use. Internal market researchers who do not have their own budget are careful when proposing methodologies like semiotics that require a certain maturity **SÉISSN**



Inexperienced stakeholders are quickly overwhelmed by methodologies they do not know Methodologies like semiotics require a great deal of educational effort and can seem like horoscopy to immature stakeholders. If there is a certain openness, semiotics can be embedded in a wider approach.

Under specific circumstances, internal stakeholders are more open to take a risk

The reduction of overall costs to show marketing what results a methodology can deliver without them having to pay full price can be eye opening.

At the end of the financial year, there might be some budget leftover that can be spent for pilot studies. The results often convince even skeptical stakeholders.

Preparatory stage: 1. Identify the unknown

A QUAL RESEARCH IS REQUIRED WHEN...

... there is a lack of knowledge of your market/ consumers/ brand

> ... you want to facilitate the launch of a quant research & sharpen the questions ... there is a need to brief a design

agency better

... you want to know how people understand your advertisement

... etc.

... you want to receive new ideas about your product portfolio AVOID THE FOLLOWING MISTAKES AT THIS STAGE:

- Trying to find information through qualitative research that **cannot be obtained** through this method (think back to the previous slides)
- Looking for information without understanding how you will use it and why you need it

SFISSMO

Preparatory stage: 2. Define the right problematic & the research objectives



FOCUS AND TRY TO CLEARLY DEFINE YOUR PROBLEM ...

... what problem/ task do you really have

... why you need to solve this problem/ perform this task now and how much time & money you have to do it

... what you need to know to solve this problem/ perform this task

... make a list of research objectives, simplify the issue to a few main topics and organize your questions

... how can you get this information: through internal research, an independent research company, studying current reports ... etc. AVOID THE FOLLOWING MISTAKES AT THIS STAGE:

Trying to solve ALL problems in one study: too many questions / concepts / goals / markets, etc.

Setting unrealistic or too strict deadlines

BE CLEAR AND FOCUSED!!! Qualitative research is about depth more than breadth

Preparatory stage: 3. Write a good briefing

SÉISSMO

HOW TO MAKE THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE FULLY UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEMATIC?

Define the contours of the unknown & the problematic

Be clear about the aim and the objectives of the research

... etc.

Clearly define the questions, to give a direction to the nature of the answers needed

Explain the context and the future implementation of research

AVOID THE FOLLOWING MISTAKES AT THIS STAGE:

- Sending hundreds of abstract questions or remain very vague
- Giving a research agency only very short time to prepare a proposal
- Expecting a qualitative study for 100 euros because "qualitative research is cheaper than quantitative research"

A good brief is a matter of your reputation and shows respect for your contractors!!!

Preparatory stage: 4. Choose the target audience

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT TARGET AUDIENCE?

Gain a clear understanding of the audience to which your research objectives relate: your customers? competitors? Industry experts? Your employees? All of them?

> Select the most important target audience / audiences that you need in the first place / can be reached within your time and financial capabilities

Go for the most important criteria for selecting respondents (brand use/non-use, age, gender, location, and in some cases, lifestyle and social class)

> Accept some flexibility (and surprise) in the choice of the target(s)/ profiles

SÉISSMO

AVOID THE FOLLOWING MISTAKES AT THIS STAGE:

- If you have no idea who the target is, make the agency responsible for defining the target
- Insist on finding a specific profile that may not exist/ not be representative of the market reality
- Select too many targets for research in too short a time and without the necessary funds

Valid data in the report starts with the right targets consulted!!!

... etc.

Preparatory stage: 5. Choose the methodology and sample



HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT METHODS AND SAMPLE?

Focus groups, in-depth interviews, home visits, observations are the base of qualitative methods. The choice depends on the target and research objectives

> Discuss with the agency about offline or online modalities. The choice depends on the target and research objectives

> > ... etc.

2-3 focus groups or 12-15 in-depths interviews/home visits will be enough for 1 homogeneous target

AVOID THE FOLLOWING MISTAKES AT THIS STAGE:

- Choose a method that is not adapted to your target
- Insist on conducting offline research for multinational studies with low target audience reach
- Choose online research for a target audience with low internet usage

Insist on too small/ too big samples

Directing the methodology & sizing the sample will not only bring validity but save you time & money!!!

Methodologies: A word about semiotics

Semiotics is used to **decode explicit & implicit messages** and to recognize what others can only guess







What we **see**





SÉISSMO

What it **means**

Obviously, BLUE does not always mean fresh!





Semiotics is a very strong tool, but completely unknown at most German companies

SÉISSMO

Unlike in France, the private sector and academia are much more separate in Germany. While semiotics in Germany is mainly an academic subject, there are also many semiotics students with an interest in business in France.

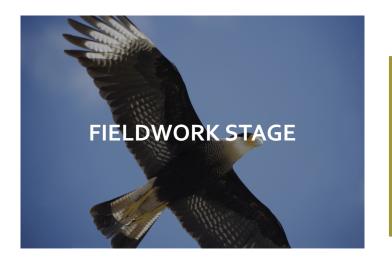
Therefore, it cannot be sold too aggressively to internal stakehoders. It requires more educational work to show what a powerful tool semiotics is, for example by emphasizing examples like Crystal Pepsi or green ketchup.

FIELDWORK STAGE



SÉISSMO

The process of qualitative research: fieldwork stage



At this stage you should:

 1st Attend the focus groups/in-depths interviews etc. (and also have the courage not to recommend this to anyone in the company/ in any case)
 2nd Communicate with the moderation team/ contractor during fieldwork
 3rd Have a short informal debriefing after fieldwork

III FIELDWORK IS A GREAT POSSIBILITY TO SEE AND FEEL YOUR REAL CUSTOMERS. YOU DON'T HAVE THIS WITH QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH I

Fieldwork stage: 1. Attend the focus groups/ in-depth interviews



TO USE THIS TIME EFFICIENTLY?

... Be careful not to be biased: do not form an opinion after attending 2 or 3 interviews

Never forget to get an overview & the whole picture...

... Understand the function of each methodological module (an online diary is not an in-depth interview...)

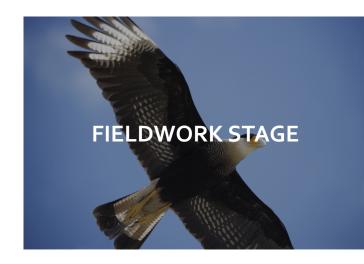
> Adapt your stimulus/ guideline after 1st group/ interview if it is really necessary

AVOID THE FOLLOWING MISTAKES AT THIS STAGE:

 Draw a conclusion before receiving the analytical report
 React emotionally when hearing something unpleasant (it often happens!) about your product/ brand/ ideas >> it is not personal!

> Be curious and enjoy the process!!!

Pros & cons of attending interviews and focus groups live



An neutral market research department that can act independently of marketing is crucial! Pros

Marketing teams like the ethnographic touch. Attending fieldwork live makes the results more tangible. Internal stakeholders better understand the final report if they saw some interviews during fieldwork stage. However, they have to be briefed properly beforehand.

Cons

Some agencies do not allow their clients to participate in interviews to prevent them from drawing their conclusions too quickly. If the marketing team is not neutral but biased/ emotionally involved, or different teams with different briefings attend, they consider individual statements to be universally valid results.

SEISS

Fieldwork stage: 2. Communicate with moderator/contractor during fieldwork



TRULES ARE THERE?

Don't expect the question "WHY" → the questions are formulated in indirect ways. "Why" is used only in some specific cases

> Accept detour questions \rightarrow not directly the topic but necessary to get the answers

AVOID THE FOLLOWING MISTAKES AT THIS STAGE:

Make aware there is a difference between a research objective and a question asked
 Interrupting the moderator too often and asking too many follow-up questions; this has a very negative impact on the interview/ group

Respect the moderator and trust his/her experience!!!

... etc.

Fieldwork stage: 3. Have a short debriefing after fieldwork



WHY IS IT NEEDED?

Exchange and cross views with the moderation team and your team involved into the research

Give clear instructions about the further analytical report: structure, expected insights

... etc.

Make sure you are on the same track as the

moderator

AVOID THE FOLLOWING MISTAKES AT THIS STAGE:

Expect from the moderators the answer to all your questions
 Expect to have conclusions/ solutions fast when the first impressions are equivocal/ require more clarification and interpretation

Briefing helps to have a clear understanding of the results and avoid misunderstandings later with the analytical report!!!



ANALYSIS AND REPORTING STAGE

The process of qualitative research: analysis and reporting stage





At this stage, it is time to relax since you should do almost nothing:

Prepare/ align your stakeholders Think about the circle of people concerned/ potentially interested by the results Fight to obtain a sufficient time slot Prepare your words of introduction (why was this research initiated in the first place)

Do your stakeholders remember they shouldn't be expecting results that tell yes-no-%? ©

Analysis and reporting stage



BE READY THAT...

A report is about sensing, understanding and interpreting data

A professional analyst understands what is masked behind words and sentences

Qualitative reports can be long and detailed

Sometimes the results may be uncertain or not reflect your point of view

Reports do not always provide insights. Real insight is a rare bird

Results of exploratory research are still valid years after the research was conducted

AVOID THE FOLLOWING MISTAKES AT THIS STAGE:

- Too tight deadlines: not enough time for the analysis
- Insist that all key information should be placed on 5-10 slides
- Be grateful for information on topics/ aspects that were not in your initial brief
- Demand recommendations but not to make decisions in your place

The report is food for your further work, not your marketing plan!!! It is essential to allow sufficient time for reporting: good reporting does not only talk about the solution, it also explains how to find the (next) solution





Clients should rather spend less time in the fieldwork stage and invest more time in the presentation of the results

Better listen to a detailed review for 2 hours than build your decisions on a biased view based on a few interviews you attended and only give the final report 30 minutes.

Pre-reading is not always helpful

It allows for more time for questions, and it sparks the discussion during the presentation.

But you lack common grounds because everyone understands the contents differently.



Life after research: IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

We'd love to hear you. How do the results live on inside your organization?

Thank you for your attention