

6 STEPS TO PERFECT QUAL

The L&E trust guide to ensure the success of your project

STEP 4

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

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STEP FOUR: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

In a world focused on 'how much,' it's qualitative analysis that digs deep to uncover the truth in consumer behavior. If the goal of qual is to explore rather than confirm, then the best qualitative research is in the art of asking the right questions, with the right people, and sharing the journey they take you on, in order to result in true insight.

Our series of six white papers and webinars is designed to support you every step along the way in your project – to provide a guide to the key elements that will drive success and how we at L&E can help you.

This fourth paper will guide you through qualitative analysis best practices to provide you with the best sample to achieve the best insight.

INTRODUCTION TO DATA ANALYSIS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The ultimate goal of qualitative data analysis is to grasp the bigger picture - to gain an in-depth understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations, and insight into the setting of a problem.

At the same time, it frequently generates ideas and hypotheses for later quantitative research. Qualitative analysis takes each individual and intricate response and turns it into something valuable that can connect a brand or company to its consumers. The output is the true voice of the customer and a framework for how a company can understand its audiences.

But it's worth bearing in mind that this next step in our series is only as good as the preceding steps. It takes a proper grounding in the three previous areas detailed in the series - design, recruitment and data collection - to deliver excellent analysis. The effort placed

in these areas can have a huge impact, and therefore every step needs to be conducted in the right way for maximum efficiency and optimal insight.

It's also at this stage that the strategic, creative and intellectual mind of the researcher plays a crucial part. This paper will walk you through practical tips in categorizing and structuring data, the technology used to speed up the analysis, and the ins and outs of good thinking by the qualitative researcher.

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PRACTICAL INFORMATION IN CATEGORIZING AND STRUCTURING INFORMATION FOR CONTENT AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Now that qualitative data can often compete with the scale of quant, there's more information than ever to structure.

Qualitative research works through different types of analysis; it's a combination of content analysis, discourse analysis and sentiment analysis. Content analysis is based on the qualification of language through systematic text analysis. It attempts to understand how participants' explain their ideas, thoughts and feelings based on the analysis, grouping and laddering of recorded information. It extracts valuable data by examining the content produced by all respondents.

On the other hand, discourse analysis is used to understand the way language is used in context; it relates what is being said to different representations of the social world. Discourse analysis investigates the conversation and the interaction between the moderator and the participants. This approach relies not only on what was said, but also how it was said and who said it. Discourse analysis provides a considerable range of techniques for studying different textual formats. This type of analysis is more advanced and much more demanding, but these techniques have the potential to go to greater lengths, to explore cognitive, social and emotional responses.

Then there's sentiment analysis, which explores the views, opinions and feelings through attitudes and emotions expressed – the deeper part of qualitative research. Sentiment analysis attempts to understand whether those emotions and attitudes toward the product or brand are positive, negative or neutral.

Above all, the approach to qualitative data analysis involves the construction of themes, frameworks and categories. In some cases the themes or hypotheses are decided in the research design and planning stage, and data are used to support and drive them. But in other cases the themes come out of the data as they are being collected, working in parallel

and evolving throughout the project. In this way the researcher is able to identify new areas of focus to direct the course of the study, which is a benefit of the flexible nature of qual. The process of coding in qualitative analysis involves grouping responses into categories to string together the similar concepts, ideas and themes that have been identified. The themes and categories help to support the main findings of the study, put the study deliverables into better context, and identify meaningful areas for the brand to address with actionable outputs. Some practical tips for identifying themes and categorizing involve the use of common office supplies such as highlighters and sticky notes. Highlighters allow the researcher to identify the themes, and sticky notes help the researcher to categorize the information based on colors and organization.



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TECHNOLOGY TO REFINE AND PACKAGE FIELDWORK BETTER

Of course, there's software available to highlight and categorize with sticky notes online, but the technology backing qualitative analysis has advanced into much more. AI and machine learning has come a long way.

Although it was previously quantitative researchers who feared losing their jobs to robots, automation has now entered the qualitative side. In data collection, bots now have the ability to act as the interviewer, the ethnographer and even the prober. But it doesn't stop there. Machine learning and automation has now entered the stage of qualitative analysis, a stage formerly ran from all aspects by human brains.

But fearful or not, with new technology such as mobile and video becoming the norm at

the data collection stage, the industry must rely on greater support from technology at the analysis stage.

Text analytics. In-depth interviews collect a lot of data, and even the most extensive interviews can now be transcribed quickly. So technology is needed to help analyse this large amount of information. Speech-to-text technology translates real human behavior into insight with speech, actions, and sentiment. Not only do these transcription services translate, but they also start to interpret the data to assist researchers in highlighting keywords and themes. Although sentiment analysis tools are often useful in supporting the researcher, the human language is very complex, so teaching a machine to analyse the complexities of cultural variations, slang, grammar nuances, tones (especially sarcasm) prove difficult. Machine

learning the tools often fail to pick up on these caveats of sentiment analysis, but humans are pretty intuitive and can easily pick up where the machine leaves off.

Video analytics. High quality, 360° video streaming solutions are essential in placing stakeholders in the room with the consumers, but high quality video needs high quality analysis. This is where video analytics come into play. Algorithms can analyze content at scale to relay the voice of the consumer directly to the stakeholders. These tools structure the data so that it becomes easily searchable and readily available, making it easier to find the story. The researcher can then clip videos and quotes to highlight concepts to share the story with the decision makers.





Mobile tools. In-the-moment online tools offer data in real-time. This means we need analysis tools that work in real time. Online platforms not only provide participants with collaborative tools such as Word Trees at their fingertips, but they also put the management and analysis tools in the hands of the researcher. This leads the researcher to the story, allowing them to extract the rich data. But still, these platforms don't do all of the work, they simply assist the researcher in structuring and analysing the data easier, and much quicker than before.

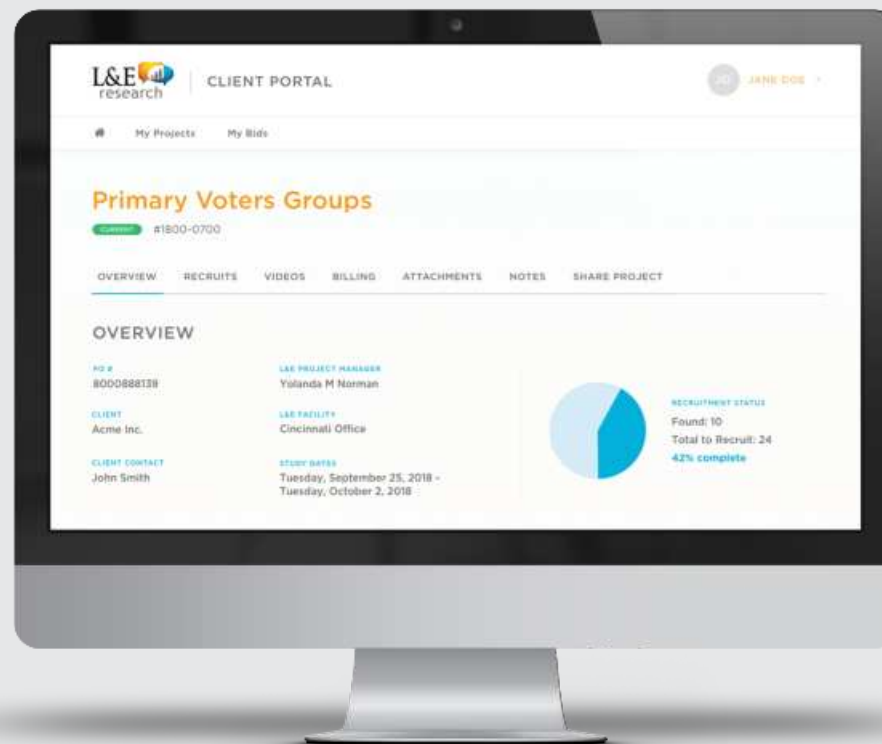
Robots. Robots are able to create reports and analyse data, but they can only go so far (at least for now). Researchers have been experimenting with bots and analysis. They want to know how far we can take them, and more importantly, whether they're a threat or an opportunity for Qualities. The conclusions are generally the same. Machines can structure even the most unstructured information and analyse the data to a point, and it can certainly speed up the process, but it takes the researcher to create the most valuable insight to tell the full story. The qualitative researcher is able to use the machine output to start the human analysis, rather than starting from scratch, which usually cuts 50-80% of the time. The robot cannot replace a researcher's skills, but automated processes should be seized as an opportunity for qualitative research.

Overall, the future of analysis means more time for the good stuff. The qual discourse may be narrowing around tech, but we need humans to read between the lines and provide depth and real insight. Understanding people is a people's job, not a robot's. So the future of qualitative analysis means finding the perfect balance of human and machine – to increase not only the speed and scale of qual, but also the quality. Strategic human thinking now has the opportunity to become more powerful than ever. The automation of the mundane, tedious tasks allow the researcher more time to get to the good stuff – the real analysis involving our skills and experience to get to the heart of the information.

HOW L&E CAN HELP

L&E Research has secured the most reliable partners to provide the latest technology in support of high-speed, quality analysis for researchers.

For example, we utilize the video capture and intelligence platform from LivingLens to unlock the power of video for insight with deep levels of analysis. And Aha's online qual platform incorporates in-the-moment analysis tools on one simple platform to improve the ease and speed of analysis. L&E's partnerships offer a one-stop shop to provide small, independent research consultants with the best price and ultimate business convenience. Plus, all the different technologies and tools from our partners can be utilized on a single platform using the L&E Client Portal. At L&E, we support research consultants with the latest technology for qualitative analysis to capitalize on scale, reach, cost, depth and speed.





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