

# Practice exam

## Qualitative Research Methods

No answers

### Instructions

This is a **practice** exam, for the course Qualitative Research Methods IB 2012-2013. The exam consists of **22 multiple choice** questions and **one open** question, the open question containing a number of sub-questions.

NB. In the “real” exam, 40 multiple choice questions and three open questions will be provided.

**Good luck!**

## Multiple choice questions

- 1 If a researcher is actively involved in consumers' discussions about an advertising commercial, than we are dealing with:
  - A. Complete participation.
  - B. Participatory observation.**
  - C. Observational participation.
  - D. Complete observation.
  
- 2 One of the main advantages of observational research is:
  - A. It is easy to get access to people and situations to observe.
  - B. It requires a relatively small labor effort.
  - C. It allows for the observation of the phenomenon of interest in a natural setting.
  - D. It is nearly impossible to have an impact on the outcome, so small risk of bias.**
  
- 3 One of the criteria used to assess the quality of a document, is "credibility". This concept refers to:
  - A. Is the object what it claims it is?
  - B. To what extent can the author be believed?**
  - C. To what extent is the document a good example of a larger set of documents?
  - D. None of the above.
  
- 4 The case study research method can be used:
  - A. To test theories.
  - B. To develop causal explanations.
  - C. To compare theories.
  - D. For all of the above.**
  
- 5 What makes an exemplary case study?
  - A. The case study must be 'interesting', it must display sufficient evidence, and it should contribute to knowledge.
  - B. The case study must be 'interesting', it must use sample logic, and it should contribute to knowledge.
  - C. The case study must be 'complete', it must be representative, and it should contribute to practice.**
  - D. The case study must be very specific, it must consider alternative perspectives, and it should contribute to practice.

- 6 Proposition 1: Action research should combine scientific enquiry with practical problem solving.

Proposition 2: Action research should make abstraction of the context.

- A. Both proposition 1 and 2 are correct.
- B. Neither proposition 1 nor 2 is correct.
- C. Only proposition 1 is correct.
- D. Only proposition 2 is correct.

- 7 Is the following statement correct?

“Ethnographic research differs from case study research in the sense that it requires much more time, it has a different research orientation as researchers do not *study* people but *learn from* people (e.g. their language, habits), and that it adds participatory observation as a data source besides e.g. documents, interviews.”

- A. No, ethnographic research does not require more time than case study research.
- B. No, ethnographic research replaces all other data sources by participatory observation.
- C. No, both types of research learn from people and use participatory observation besides other data sources.
- D. Yes, this statement is correct.

- 8 The authenticity of a document is questionable when:

- A. Different versions of the same original document are current;
- B. The document is known to have been transmitted via many copyists;
- C. The document contains internal inconsistencies;
- D. All of these choices are true.

- 9 Proposition 1: The purpose of grounded theory research in business and management is to develop new concepts and theories of business related phenomena, where these concepts and theories are firmly grounded in qualitative data.

Proposition 2: The purpose of grounded theory research in business and management is to test theories of business related phenomena, where these theories are based on different data samples.

- A. Both proposition 1 and 2 are true;
- B. Neither proposition 1, nor proposition 2 are true;
- C. Only proposition 1 is true;
- D. Only proposition 2 is true.

- 10 Which approach to qualitative data analysis can be characterized as “the analysis of exceptions, cases which are deviant to the hypothesis”?
- A. Hermeneutics;
  - B. Semiotics;
  - C. Analytic induction;
  - D. Discourse analysis.
- 11 Proposition 1: One of the key benefits of qualitative research is that it allows a researcher to see and understand the context within which decisions and actions take place.  
Proposition 1: Qualitative research is good for exploratory research, when the topic is new and there is not much previously published research on that topic.
- A. Both proposition 1 and 2 are true;
  - B. Neither proposition 1, nor proposition 2 are true;
  - C. Only proposition 2 is true;
  - D. Only proposition 1 is true.
- 12 A research methodology is characterised by:
- A. A preference for certain research results;
  - B. A preference for using computers or not;
  - C. A preference for certain methods;
  - D. All these choices are true.
- 13 Which of the probing techniques mentioned below are best suited for the task-oriented role of an interviewer?
- A. Reflecting on the answer;
  - B. Paraphrasing the opening question;
  - C. Repeating or summarizing the answer;
  - D. Nodding and looking at the interviewee expectantly.
- 14 In case of theoretical sampling for qualitative research:
- A. One establishes which specific cases should be investigated at the beginning of the study;
  - B. One takes a random sample from the target population;
  - C. One performs first a data analysis step, and collect more data if needed;
  - D. None of these choices.
- 15 Methodological triangulation can be implemented as following:
- A. Interviews are consistently conducted by two interviewers;
  - B. The results of a survey are discussed and supplemented by those of a focus group;
  - C. Two or more experts are being interviewed;
  - D. The coding of the interview transcripts is discussed by the researchers at several points in time.

- 16 An example of an activity leading to high “inter-rater reliability” is:
- A. The analysis of the same data by multiple researchers after which the differences are analysed and discussed systematically;
  - B. Giving quotes from the interviewees in an article, by discussing the differences between interviewees perceptions;
  - C. Testing of interview questions in a pilot study prior to the actual research;
  - D. The selection of deviant cases, by performing analytic induction.
- 17 Qualitative research methods
- A. Can be applied in problem analysis, conceptual analysis and empirical analysis of the regulative cycle;
  - B. Can only be applied in the empirical analysis of the regulative cycle;
  - C. Can only be applied in the problem analysis of the regulative cycle;
  - D. Cannot be applied to any phase of the regulative cycle.
- 18 In qualitative data analysis, theoretical coding consists on the following procedures:
- A. Segmenting, categorizing, and tree construction;
  - B. Open, axial, and selective coding;
  - C. Open, thematic, and semantic coding;
  - D. Segmenting, categorizing, and syntactic coding.
- 19 A consultancy company specialized in business and management research, got from one of its clients the following research question:
- “Why customer data is not yet actively shared and used in our company, despite the existence of large amount of available data?”*
- The researchers will use the following type of scientific research approach to answer to the research question:
- A. They will apply a theory-based research approach, and employ the empirical cycle, because such a problem is generic, and the results are relevant to more than one situation.
  - B. They will apply a quantitative research approach, because data can be always translated into numbers, and statistical analysis provides rigorous results.
  - C. They will apply a grounded theory research approach, because customer data can be coded and categorised, and a theory can be build.
  - D. They will apply a design-focused research approach, and employ the regulative cycle, because this is a specific problem, which needs interventions.
- 20 In qualitative research, saturation means that:
- A. The researcher collects enough data, in order to have enough material for data analysis;
  - B. The researcher performs all stages of coding, namely open coding, axial and selective coding;

- C. The researcher performs many rounds of constant comparison steps, and stops when there are no new insights based on data;
  - D. The researcher sets an a-priori fixed numerical threshold of constant comparison steps, and checks regularly whether this threshold is exceeded.
- 21 The fact that concepts and theory are supposed to emerge from data is a specific characteristic of:
- A. Research methods used in economics and business;
  - B. Research method called grounded theory;
  - C. Research method called statistical inference;
  - D. Research methods used in social sciences.
- 22 The advantages of grounded theory are:
- A. It gives researchers ample evidence to back up their claims;
  - B. It encourages a constant interplay between data collection and analysis;
  - C. It has an intuitive appeal for novice researchers, since it allows them to become immersed in the data at a detailed level;
  - D. All of the above are true.

*(continued on next page)*

## Open Question (max 20 pts)

Below are proposed four excerpts of interviewing situations to use in answering to point a) below.

**Situation 1:**  
**Interviewer:** You just stated that you are very satisfied with your present job. Can you tell me what it is that makes it satisfying?  
**Interviewee:** Sure, It's a part-time job which is something I have wanted for some time. I really like it.

**Situation 2:**  
**Interviewer:** Could you tell me how decisions are made in your team?  
**Interviewee:** That is hard to say, but you can be sure that it is always a matter of consensus.

**Situation 3:**  
.....  
(Interviewer interrupts).  
.....

**Situation 4:**  
**Interviewer (asking):** What made you decide to come and live in this squat?  
**Interviewee (responding):** Well, eh... I don't know.  
**Interviewer (probing):** Try to think back to the time you came to live here.  
Try to think of the things you thought then.

a) Read the four excerpts of interviewing situations provided above. Fill in the empty spaces, or choose the correct alternative (of the two underlined possibilities).

In Situation 1, the answer is complete / incomplete.

The interviewee does / does not mention relevant aspects of the job.

Therefore, ..... is warranted here.

In Situation 2, there are reasons to suspect that answer is .....

Situation 3 is / is not an example of probing behaviour.

In Situation 4, the interviewer is probing the answer, which is an acceptable / bad example of probing.

b) Consider the following four questions from a question-based interview guide.

Q1: *To what extent is your job demanding?*

Q2: *You will be able to cope with a heavier workload, won't you?*

Q3: *Do you like the current position/layout of the machine or would you prefer to change it?*

Q4: *Could you tell me about your actual job?*

Determine the type for each of these questions. Provide the definition for each question type you identified.

Q1 –

Q2 –

Q3 –

Q4 –

*(continued on next page)*

- c) Data collection and research methods can be used with a different purpose, depending on the chosen qualitative or quantitative approach. Fill in the cells of the table below, as following:
- i. Explain the purpose of using each method, in the context of both the qualitative and the quantitative approach.
  - ii. Illustrate with a concrete example of a potential research, the usage of each method discussed above at point i.

<b>Method</b>	<b>Approaches</b>	
	<b><i>Quantitative research</i></b>	<b><i>Qualitative research</i></b>
<b><i>Focus groups</i></b>		
<b><i>Observation</i></b>		
<b><i>Text (content) analysis</i></b>		

- - - END OF THE PRACTICE EXAM - - -