

Exploratory research design: definition, types and ways to implement

[Business](#)



An exploratory research is conducted when it is necessary to understand the general nature of the problem, identify possible alternatives to the solution, as well as relevant variables that need to be taken into account.

Usually the amount of information that serves as the basis for the research papers is negligible. Methods of data collection should be flexible, unstructured, and qualitative - since the researcher starts to work, often without a clear idea of ?? what information he can get. The main task of such research is the search for ideas and hypotheses, understanding the situation. Its principal usefulness lies in the possibility of concretizing general and ambiguous definitions of the problem by reducing them to laconic working hypotheses. Search researches are especially important in breaking up a broad and unclear formulation of the problem into more precise subproblems, ideally formulated in the form of hypotheses or statements about how two or more measurable quantities are interconnected.

What is Exploratory Research?

An exploratory research is the research that helps to learn the essence of the problem; to make sure that there is a problem, and to find out the character of this problem. This is the simplest kind of research. They are carried out in the form of free discussions with experts specially selected for this purpose or analysis of secondary information. The hypotheses of such research are vague or absent at all. At this stage of research, the marketer has a very rough idea of the required information.

The results of exploratory research example are usually considered as preliminary or output for further, detailed research. Therefore, the results

should be carefully interpreted in view of the risk of misrepresentation of the subject of the study. Exploratory research is generally concerned with finding ideas and information that helps to understand the problem. The objectives of the research study are as detailed as possible studying the problem or situation facing the enterprise or organization, and forming an understanding of its essence. Creativity and resourcefulness, education and professionalism of the researcher play a major role in the exploratory research. This type of research often starts a stable research work with problems and is the basis for further, structured projects.

Types of Exploratory Research

Since the problem is known to be very limited, the research is flexible in relation to the methods used to understand the problem and to put forward hypotheses. The research procedure may change according to the transformation of the initial concept into a series of more precise and structured narrow subproblems. Major ways to implement exploratory research are literature search, expert surveys, focus groups and case analysis. Literature search is one of the fastest and cheapest methods of hypothesis referral. Search should be based on conceptual literature, commercial or official statistics. Sometimes the theoretical sources are more useful than practical reviews.

Expert surveys, which are also called key informational conversations, they are aimed at obtaining information from persons who are knowledgeable with the subject of the study. Such information should be owned by senior management of the company, sales managers, managers of individual

goods, and also involve independent experts. The focus group is used to put <https://assignbuster.com/exploratory-research-design-definition-types-and-ways-to-implement/>

forward hypotheses and obtain information useful for further research phases. The open and natural discussion format of a focus groups allows for a wider variety of perspectives in a shorter period of time. Case analysis involves intensive study of selected examples related to the phenomenon that is the purpose of the study. Researchers can check existing records, observe how the phenomenon works, and conduct interviews.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Exploratory Research

Exploratory research like any phenomenon has good and bad sides. As for advantages, they are:

- design is a useful approach for gaining background information on a particular topic;
- exploratory research is flexible and can address research questions of all types (what, why, how);
- it provides an opportunity to define new terms and clarify existing concepts;
- In the policy arena or applied to practice, exploratory studies help establish research priorities and where resources should be allocated;
- it can be characterized by specificity, target nature and controllability of information gathering processes.

As for disadvantages, they are:

- exploratory research generally utilizes small sample sizes and, thus, findings are typically not generalizable to the population at large;

- the exploratory nature of the research inhibits an ability to make definitive conclusions about the findings. They provide insight but not definitive conclusions;
- the research process underpinning exploratory studies is flexible but often unstructured, leading to only tentative results that have limited value to decision-makers;
- design lacks rigorous standards applied to methods of data gathering and analysis because one of the areas for exploration could be to determine what method or methodologies could best fit the research problem.

Consequently, exploratory research designs, unlike the descriptive research or casual, are often used to establish an understanding of how best to proceed in studying an issue or what methodology would effectively apply to gathering information about the issue.