**Chapter Four: Sampling and Ethics in qualitative research**

**Sampling**

Researchers make the distinction between a **populations,** the universe of people to which the study could be generalized, and a **sample,** the subset of people from the population who will participate in the current study.

Sampling is important because, in almost all cases, it is not practical to study all the members of a population. Sampling techniques offer a range of methods to reduce the quantity of data that needs to be collected by considering only data from a subgroup rather than all possible cases. If data is collected and analyzed from every possible case or group, it is a census. Sampling offers a valid alternative to a census when: it would be impractical to survey the full set of cases (the population), the cost would be too high, not enough time is available and /or results are needed quickly from already gathered data.

**Sampling process**

**Stage 1: Clearly Define Target Population:**

The first stage in the sampling process is to clearly define target population. Population is commonly related to the number of people living in a particular country.

**Stage 2: Select Sampling Frame:** A sampling frame is a list of the actual cases from which sample will be drawn. The sampling frame must be representative of the population.

**Stage 3: Choose Sampling Technique**

Prior to examining the various types of sampling method, it is worth noting what is meant by Sampling, along with reasons why researchers are likely to select a sample. Taking a subset from chosen sampling frame or entire population is called sampling. Sampling can be used to make inference about a population or to make generalization in relation to existing theory. In essence, this depends on choice of sampling technique.

In general, sampling techniques can be divided into two types:

* Probability or random sampling
* Non-probability or non-random sampling

**Probable or random sampling:** Probability sampling means that every item in the population has an equal chance of being included in sample. One way to undertake random sampling would be if researcher was to construct a sampling frame first and then used a random number generation computer program to pick a sample from the sampling frame (Zikmund, 2002).

**Non-probability sampling:** refers to sampling techniques for which a person’s (or event’s or researcher’s focus’s) likelihood of being selected for membership in the sample is unknown.

**Types of Non-probability Samples**

There are several types of non-probability samples that researchers use. These include purposive samples, snowball samples, quota samples, and convenience samples. While the latter two strategies may be used by quantitative researchers from time to time, they are more typically employed in qualitative research, and because they are both non-probability methods, we include them in this section of the chapter.

**Purposive sample:** Purposive sampling, one of the most common sampling strategies, where participants are selected according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question. Sample sizes, which may or may not be fixed prior to data collection, depend on the resources and time available, as well as the study’s objectives. Purposive sample sizes are often determined on the basis of theoretical saturation (the point in data collection when new data no longer bring additional insights to the research questions). Purposive sampling is therefore most successful when data review and analysis are done in conjunction with data collection.

## **Advantages of Purposive Sampling (Judgment Sampling)**

1. Purposive sampling is one of the most cost-effective and time-effective sampling methods available
2. Purposive sampling may be the only appropriate method available if there are only limited number of primary data sources who can contribute to the study
3. This sampling technique can be effective in exploring anthropological situations where the discovery of meaning can benefit from an intuitive approach

**Disadvantages of Purposive Sampling (Judgment Sampling)**

1. Vulnerability to errors in judgment by researcher
2. Low level of reliability and high levels of bias.
3. Inability to generalize research findings

Because of these disadvantages purposive sampling (judgment sampling) method is not very popular in business studies, and the majority of dissertation supervisors usually do advice selecting alternative sampling methods with higher levels of reliability and low bias such as [quota](https://research-methodology.net/sampling/quota-sampling/), [cluster](https://research-methodology.net/sampling/cluster-sampling/), and [systematic](https://research-methodology.net/sampling/systematic-sampling/) sampling methods

**Snowball sampling:** In this case, a researcher might know of one or two people she/he’d like to include in her/his study but then relies on those initial participants to help identify additional study participants. Thus the researcher’s sample builds and becomes larger as the study continues, much as a snowball builds and becomes larger as it rolls through the snow.

Snowball sampling is sometimes referred to as chain referral sampling. One research participant refers another, and that person refers another, and that person refers another—thus a chain of potential participants is identified. In addition to using this sampling strategy for potentially stigmatized populations, it is also a useful strategy to use when the researcher’s group of interest is likely to be difficult to find, not only because of some stigma associated with the group, but also because the group may be relatively rare.

**Disadvantage of snowball sampling**

* These approaches may still not provide the diversity required within the study group
* They are also time-consuming, and because sample generation and fieldwork take place concurrently, they make systematic sample selection very difficult

Rather than relying solely on snowballing or chain sampling, it is therefore better to use these approaches to supplement other methods of generating a sample frame.

**Quota sampling** is another non-probability sampling strategy. This type of sampling is actually employed by both qualitative and quantitative researchers. When conducting quota sampling, a researcher identifies categories that are important to the study and for which there is likely to be some variation. Subgroups are created based on each category and the researcher decides how many people (or documents or whatever element happens to be the focus of the research) to include from each subgroup and collects data from that number for each subgroup.

**Convenience sampling:** is another non-probability sampling strategy that is employed by both qualitative and quantitative researchers. To draw a convenience sample, a researcher simply collects data from those people or other relevant elements to which he or she has most convenient access. This method, also sometimes referred to as haphazard sampling, is most useful in exploratory research. It is also often used by journalists who need quick and easy access to people from their population of interest. If you’ve ever seen brief interviews of people on the street on the news, you’ve probably seen a haphazard sample being interviewed. While convenience samples offer one major benefit—convenience—we should be cautious about generalizing from research that relies on convenience samples.

**Data collection methods in qualitative research**

**Concept of Data Collection**

* Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes.
* It vary from discipline to discipline
* The goal for all data collection is to capture quality evidence that then translates to rich data analysis and allows the building of a convincing and credible answer to questions that have been posed.
* Both the selection of appropriate data collection instruments (existing, modified, or newly developed) and clearly delineated instructions for their correct use reduce the likelihood of errors occurring.

**Types of data**

Data are organized into two broad categories: qualitative and quantitative.

* **Qualitative Data:** Qualitative data are mostly non-numerical and usually descriptive or nominal in nature. This means the data collected are in the form of words and sentences. Often (not always), such data captures feelings, emotions, or subjective perceptions of something.
* ‘How’ and ‘why’ of a program and tend to use unstructured methods of data collection to fully explore the topic.
* They tend to be open-ended and have less structured protocols (i.e., researchers may change the data collection strategy by adding, refining, or dropping techniques or informants);
* they rely more heavily on interactive interviews; respondents may be interviewed several times to follow up on a particular issue, clarify concepts or check the reliability of data;
* they use triangulation to increase the credibility of their findings (i.e., researchers rely on multiple data collection methods to check the authenticity of their results);

**Quantitative Data:**

* Quantitative data is numerical in nature and can be mathematically computed.
* Quantitative data measure uses different scales, which can be classified as nominal scale, ordinal scale, interval scale and ratio scale.
* Often (not always), such data includes measurements of something. Quantitative approaches address the ‘what’ of the program. They use a systematic standardized approach and employ methods such as surveys and ask questions

**Mixed Methods:**

Mixed methods approach as design, combining both qualitative and quantitative research data, techniques and methods within a single research framework. Mixed methods approaches may mean a number of things, i.e. a number of different types of methods in a study or at different points within a study or using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods.

There are many ways of classifying data. A common classification is based upon who collected the data.

**Primary data**

Data that has been collected from first-hand-experience is known as primary data. Primary data has not been published yet and is more reliable, authentic and objective. Primary data has not been changed or altered by human beings; therefore its validity is greater than secondary data.

**Importance of Primary Data:**

* Data is highly reliable and
* May have less biases because primary data are less manipulated by human beings

**Sources of Primary Data:** Experiments, Survey, Questionnaire, Interview, Observations, FGD.

**Advantages of Using Primary Data:**

* The investigator collects data specific to the problem under study.
* There is no doubt about the quality of the data collected (for the investigator).
* If required, it may be possible to obtain additional data during the study period.

Disadvantages of Using Primary Data

* Cost of obtaining the data is often the major expense in studies.
* Ensuring the data collected is of a high standard- here is no fake/ cooked up data; unnecessary/ useless data has not been included.

**Secondary data:**

Data collected from a source that has already been published in any form is called as secondary data. The review of literature in any research is based on secondary data

**Sources of Secondary Data:** The following are some ways of collecting secondary data

* Books
* Records
* Biographies
* Newspapers
* Published censuses or other statistical data
* Data archives
* Internet articles
* Research articles by other researchers (journals)
* Databases, etc

Importance of Secondary Data:

* Sometimes it is difficult to obtain primary data; in these cases getting information from secondary sources is easier and possible
* Sometimes primary data does not exist in such situation one has to confine the research on secondary data.
* Sometimes primary data is present but the respondents are not willing to reveal it in such case too secondary data can suffice.
* For example, literature reviews, case studies might have been carried out, published texts and statistics could have been already used elsewhere, media promotion and personal contacts have also been utilized.

**Advantages of Using Secondary Data**

* No hassles of data collection.
* It is less expensive.
* The investigator is not personally responsible for the quality of data (‘I didn’t do it’).

Disadvantages of Using Secondary Data

* The data collected by the third party may not be a reliable party so the reliability and accuracy of data go down.
* Data collected in one location may not be suitable for the other one due variable environmental factor.
* With the passage of time the data becomes obsolete and very old.
* Secondary data collected can distort the results of the research. For using secondary data a special care is required to amend or modify for use.
* Secondary data can also raise issues of authenticity and copyright.

**Issues to be considered for data collection:**

Any research should adopt the following ethical principles:

* **Informed consent** is a mechanism for ensuring that people understand what it means to participate in a particular research study so they can decide in a conscious, deliberate way whether they want to participate. Informed consent is one of the most important tools for ensuring respect for persons during research.
* **Respect for persons**requires a commitment to ensuring the autonomy of research participants, and, where autonomy may be diminished, to protect people from exploitation of their vulnerability. The dignity of all research participants must be respected. Adherence to this principle ensures that people will not be used simply as a means to achieve research objectives.
* **Beneficence**requires a commitment to minimizing the risks associated with research, including psychological and social risks, and maximizing the benefits that accrue to research participants. Researchers must articulate specific ways this will be achieved.
* **Justice**requires a commitment to ensuring a fair distribution of the risks and benefits resulting from research. Those who take on the burdens of research participation should share in the benefits of the knowledge gained. Or, to put it another way, the people who are expected to benefit from the knowledge should be the ones who are asked to participate.
* **Respect for communities** should be added. Respect for communities “confers on the researcher an obligation to respect the values and interests of the community in research and, wherever possible, to protect the community from harm. We believe that this principle is, in fact, fundamental for research when community-wide knowledge, values, and relationships are critical to research success and may in turn be affected by the research process or its outcomes.
* **Honesty:** Strive for honesty in all scientific communications. Honestly report data, results, methods and procedures, and publication status. Do not fabricate, falsify, or misrepresent data. Do not deceive colleagues, granting agencies, or the public.
* **Objectivity:** Strive to avoid bias in experimental design, data analysis, data interpretation, peer review, personnel decisions, grant writing, expert testimony, and other aspects of research where objectivity is expected or required. Avoid or minimize bias or self-deception. Disclose personal or financial interests that may affect research.
* **Integrity:** Keep your promises and agreements; act with sincerity; strive for consistency of thought and action.
* **Carefulness**: Avoid careless errors and negligence; carefully and critically examine your own work and the work of your peers. Keep good records of research activities, such as data collection, research design, and correspondence with agencies or journals.
* **Openness:** Share data, results, ideas, tools, resources. Be open to criticism and new ideas. Respect for Intellectual Property: Honor patents, copyrights, and other forms of intellectual property. Do not use unpublished data, methods, or results without permission. Give credit where credit is due. Give proper acknowledgement or credit for all contributions to research. Never plagiarize.
* **Responsible Publication:** Publish in order to advance research and scholarship, not to advance just your own career. Avoid wasteful and duplicative publication.
* **Social Responsibility:** Strive to promote social good and prevent or mitigate social harms through research, public education, and advocacy.
* **Non-Discrimination:** Avoid discrimination against colleagues or students on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, or other factors that are not related to their scientific competence and integrity.
* **Legality:** Know and obey relevant laws and institutional and governmental policies.

**METHODS OF PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

Data collection approach for qualitative research usually involves:

1. Direct interaction with individuals on a one to one basis
2. Or direct interaction with individuals in a group setting

Qualitative research data collection methods are time consuming, therefore data is usually collected from a smaller sample than would be the case for quantitative approaches - therefore this makes qualitative research more expensive. The benefit of the qualitative approach is that the information is richer and has a deeper insight into the phenomenon under study.

The main methods for collecting qualitative data are

1. Individual interviews
2. Focus groups
3. Observations
4. Focus group discussion

**Interview method**

* Interviewing involves asking questions and getting answers from participants in a study. Interviewing has a variety of forms including: individual, face-to-face interviews and face-to-face group interviewing. The asking and answering of questions can be mediated by the telephone or other electronic devices (e.g. computers). Interviews can be:

A. Structured,

B. Semi-structure or

C. Unstructured.

**Structured Interviews**

**Characteristics of the Structured Interview**

* The interviewer asks each respondent the same series of questions.
* The questions are created prior to the interview, and often have a limited set of response categories.
* There is generally little room for variation in responses and there are few open-ended questions included in the interview guide.
* Questioning is standardized and the ordering and phrasing of the questions are kept consistent from interview to interview.
* The interviewer plays a neutral role and acts casual and friendly, but does not insert his or her opinion in the interview.
* Self-administered questionnaires are a type of structured interview.

**When to Use a Structured Interview:** best used when the literature in a topical area is highly developed or following the use of observational and other less structured interviewing approaches that provide the researcher with adequate understanding of a topic to construct meaningful and relevant close-ended questions.

**Recording Interviews:** Audio/video recording and writing are some the best known recording way.

**Benefits**: Structured interviews do not require the development of rapport between interviewer and interviewee, and they can produce consistent data that can be compared across a number of respondents.

**Semi-structured Interviews:**

* The interviewer and respondents engage in a formal interview.
* The interviewer develops and uses an ‘interview guide’. This is a list of questions and topics that need to be covered during the conversation, usually in a particular order.
* The interviewer follows the guide, but is able to follow topical trajectories in the conversation that may stray from the guide when s/he feels this is appropriate.

**When to Use Semi-structured Interviews:** is best used when you won’t get more than one chance to interview someone and when you will be sending several interviewers out into the field to collect data.

**Recording Semi-Structured Interviews:** tape-record, notes to capture respondents’ answers

**Benefits:** Unstructured interviews allow researchers to focus the respondents’ talk on a particular topic of interest, and may allow researchers the opportunity to test out his/her preliminary understanding, while still allowing for ample opportunity for new ways of seeing and understanding to develop.

**Unstructured/qualitative/ or in depth Interviewing:**

Characteristics of Informal interviewing

* The interviewer talks with people in the field informally, without use of a structured interview guide of any kind.
* The researcher tries to remember his/her conversations with informants, and uses jottings or brief notes taken in the field to help in the recall and writing of notes from experiences in the field.
* Informal interviewing goes hand-in-hand with participant observation.
* While in the field as an observer, informal interviews are casual conversations one might have with the people the researcher is observing.

**When to Use Informal Interviews:** Informal interviewing is typically done as part of the process of observing a social setting of interest. The researcher engages in fieldwork - observation and informal interviewing - to develop an understanding of the setting and to build rapport.

**Recording Informal Interviews:** s/he should make jottings or notes of the conversation

**Benefits:** Interviews can be done informally, and **‘on the fly’** and, therefore, do not require scheduling time with respondents.

* allow respondents to speak more freely and openly
* Helpful in building rapport with respondents and in gaining their trust as well as their understanding of a topic, situation, setting, etc.
* It can provide the foundation for developing and conducting more structured interviews.

Issues to be considered during interview as interviewer:

**FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD)**

A focus group discussion (FGD) is an in-depth field method that brings together a small homogeneous group (usually six to twelve persons) to discuss topics on a study agenda.

* Data is collected through a semi-structured group interview process.
* The discussion is conducted in a relaxed atmosphere to enable participants to express themselves without any personal inhibitions.
* Participants usually share a common characteristic such as age, sex, or socio-economic status that defines them as a member of a target subgroup.
* The discussion is led by a trained moderator/facilitator (preferably experienced), assisted by an observer who takes notes and arranges any tape recording.
* The aim of the focus group is to make use of participants’ feelings, perceptions and opinions. The design of focus group research
* Standardization of questions - focus groups can vary in the extent to which they follow a structured protocol or permit discussion to emerge.
* Number of focus groups conducted - or sampling will depend on the ‘segmentation’ or different stratifications (e.g. age, sex, socioeconomic status, health status) that the researcher identifies as important to the research topic.
* Number of participants per group - the rule of thumb has been 6-10 homogeneous strangers, but as Morgan (1996) points out there may be reasons to have smaller or slightly larger groups.
* Level of moderator involvement - can vary from high to low degree of control exercised during focus groups (e.g. extent to which structured questions are asked and group dynamics are actively managed).

**The advantages of focus group discussion are as follows:**

* Free and open discussion among the respondents results in generation of new ideas that can be very useful for decision-making.
* A focus group is not static. The moderator can bring any changes in order to better facilitate the discussion during the group discussion. This dynamism allows better results in terms of information derived by a focus group.
* Expressions other than those in verbal form such as gestures and stimulated activities can provide researcher with useful insights.

**The disadvantages of using focus group discussion are as follows:**

* Though moderator can control the discussion, the extent to which he/she can control the discussion depends on his/her experience. Inexperienced moderator may face problems in controlling some participants who try to dominate the group.
* Respondents may be reluctant to share some sensitive Ideas and concerns publicly.
* Due to small sample size and heterogeneity of individuals, the findings may not be adequate to make projections or the composite picture of the situation
* An FGD can be a very artificial set-up that influences the respondents to express and act unnaturally. The findings may be far from the actual.

**Analyzing Qualitative Data**

In qualitative research we continue collecting data until **saturation point** is reached. **Data Saturation** stands for the quality and quantity of information. At this point “no new information or themes are observed in the data”.

To help you with the analysis of qualitative data, it is useful to produce an interview summary form or a focus group summary form which you complete as soon as possible after each interview or focus group has taken place. This includes practical details about the time and place, the participants, the duration of the interview or focus group, and details about the content and emerging themes. It is useful to complete these forms as soon as possible after the interview and attach them to your transcripts. The forms help to remind you about the contact and are useful when you come to analyse the data.

There are many different types of qualitative data analysis. The method you use will depend on your research topic, your personal preferences and the time, equipment and finances available to you. Also, qualitative data analysis is a very personal process, with few rigid rules and procedures.

**Formats for analysis**

To be able to analyse your data you must first of all produce it in a format that can be easily analysed. This might be a transcript from an interview or focus group, a series of written answers on an open-ended questionnaire, or field notes or memos written by the researcher. It is useful to write memos and notes as soon as you begin to collect data as these help to focus your mind and alert you to significant points which may be coming from the data. These memos and notes can be analysed along with your transcripts or questionnaires.

**The qualitative continuum**

It is useful to think of the different types of qualitative data analysis as positioned on a continuum. At the one end are the highly qualitative, reflective types of analysis, whereas on the other end are those which treat the qualitative data in a quantitative way, by counting and coding data.

For those at the highly qualitative end of the continuum, data analysis tends to be an on-going process, taking place throughout the data collection process. The researcher thinks about and reflects upon the emerging themes, adapting and changing the methods if required. For example, a researcher might conduct three interviews using an interview schedule she/he has developed beforehand. However, during the three interviews she/he finds that the participants are raising issues that she/he has not thought about previously. So she/he refines her/his interview schedule to include these issues for the next few interviews. This is data analysis. She/he has thought about what has been said, analysed the words and refined her/his schedule accordingly.

**Thematic analysis**

When data is analysed by theme, it is called thematic analysis. This type of analysis is highly inductive, that is, the themes emerge from the data and are not imposed upon it by the researcher. In this type of analysis, the data collection and analysis take place simultaneously. Even background reading can form part of the analysis process, especially if it can help to explain an emerging theme.

**Comparative analysis**

Closely connected to thematic analysis is comparative analysis. Using this method, data from different people is compared and contrasted and the process continues until the researcher is satisfied that no new issues are arising. Comparative and thematic analyses are often used in the same project, with the researcher moving backwards and forwards between transcripts, memos, notes and the research literature.

**Content analysis**

For those types of analyses at the other end of the qualitative data continuum, the process is much more mechanical with the analysis being left until the data has been collected.

Perhaps the most common method of doing this is to code by content. This is called content analysis. Using this method the researcher systematically works through each transcript assigning codes, which may be numbers or words, to specific characteristics within the text. The researcher may already have a list of categories or she/he may read through each transcript and let the categories emerge from the data.

This type of analysis can be used for open-ended questions which have been added to questionnaires in large quantitative surveys, thus enabling the researcher to quantify the answers.

**Discourse analysis**

Falling in the middle of the qualitative analysis continuum is discourse analysis, which some researchers have named conversational analysis, although others would argue that the two are quite different.

These methods look at patterns of speech, such as how people talk about a particular subject, what metaphors they use, how they take turns in conversation, and so on. These analysts see speech as a performance; it performs an action rather than describes a specific state of affairs or specific state of mind.

Much of this analysis is intuitive and reflective, but it may also involve some form of counting, such as counting instances of turn-taking and their influence on the conversation and the way in which people speak to others.

**Writing a Research report**

Traditional written reports tend to be produced in the following format.

**Title Page**

This contains the title of the report, the name of the researcher and the date of publication. If the report is a dissertation/thesis/senior essay, the title page will include details about the purpose of the report.

**Contents Page**

In this section the contents of the report is listed either in chapter or section headings with sub-headings, if relevant, and their page numbers.

**List of Illustrations**

This section includes title and page number of all graphs, tables, illustrations, charts, etc.

**Acknowledgements**

You may wish to acknowledge the help of your research participants, tutors, employers and/or funding body.

**Abstract/Summary**

This tends to be a one page summary of the research, its purpose, methods, main findings and conclusion.

**Introduction**

This section introduces the research, setting out the aims and objectives, terms and definitions. It includes a rationale for the research and a summary of the report structure.

**Background**

This section includes all your background research, which may be obtained from the literature, from personal experience or both. You must indicate from where all the information to which you refer has come, so remember to keep a complete record of everything you read.

If you do not do this, you could be accused of plagiarism which is a form of intellectual theft. When you are referring to a particular book or journal article, find out the accepted standard for referencing from your institution.

**Methodology and Methods**

This section includes a description of, and justification for, the chosen methodology and research methods. The length and depth of this section will depend upon whether you are a student or employee. If you are an undergraduate student you will need to raise some of the methodological and theoretical issues pertinent to your work.

**Findings/Analysis**

This section includes your main findings. The content of this section will depend on your chosen methodology and methods. If you have conducted a large quantitative survey, this section may contain tables, graphs, pie charts and associated statistics. If you have conducted a qualitative piece of research this section may consist of descriptive prose containing lengthy quotations.

**Conclusion**

In this section you sum up your findings and draw conclusions from them, perhaps in relation to other research or literature.

**Recommendations**

Some academic reports will not need this section. However, if you are an employee who has conducted a piece of research for your organization, this section could be the most important part of the report. It is for this reason that some written reports contain the recommendation section at the beginning of the report. This section lists clear recommendations which have been developed from your research.

**Further Research**

It is useful in both academic reports and work-related reports to include a section which shows how the research can be continued. Perhaps some results are inconclusive, or perhaps the research has thrown up many more research questions which need to be addressed. It is useful to include this section because it shows that you are aware of the wider picture and that you are not trying to cover up something which you feel may be lacking from your own work.

**References**

Small research projects will need only a reference section. This includes all the literature to which you have referred in your report. Find out which referencing system your university uses. The most popular methods (styles) include APA (American Psychological Association), Harvard system, Chicago style, etc.

**Bibliography**

Large research reports may require both a reference section and a bibliography. As discussed above, the reference section will include all those publications to which you have referred in your report. If, however, you have read other work in relation to your research but not actually referred to them when writing up your report, you might wish to include them in a bibliography.

**Appendices**

If you have constructed a questionnaire for your research, or produced an interview schedule or a code of ethics, it may be useful to include them in your report as an appendix.

In general, appendices do not count towards your total amount of words so it is a useful way of including material without taking up space that can be used for other information. However, do not try filling up your report with irrelevant appendices as this will not impress readers. When including material you must make sure that it is relevant – ask yourself whether the readers will gain a deeper understanding of your work by reading the appendix. If not, leave it out.

Other information which could be included as an appendix are recruitment leaflets or letters; practical details about each research participant; sample transcripts (if permission has been sought); list of interview dates; relevant tables and graphs or charts which are too bulky for the main report.

**Making Presentations: Dos and Don’ts**

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| **Dos** | **Don’ts** |
| * Arrive early and make sure the room is set out in the way that you want. Make sure that all the equipment is available and that you know how to work it. | * Rush in late, find that the overhead projector doesn’t work and that you have no pen for the whiteboard. |
| * When you are for the first time, try to relax and breathe deeply. Acknowledge that this is your first presentation and people will tend to help you along**.** | * Worry about showing your nerves. Everybody gets nervous when they first start giving presentations and your audience should know this. |
| * Produce aide memoirs, either on cards, paper, OHP transparencies or presentation software such as PowerPoint. | * Read straight from a paper you have written. |
| * Make it clear from the outset whether you are happy to be interrupted or whether questions should be left for the end. If you have invited questions, make sure you make every effort to answer them. | * Get cross if you are interrupted and have not mentioned that you don’t want this to happen. Invite questions and then do not answer them or patronize the inquirer. |
| * Look around the room while you are speaking – if it’s a small group, make eye-contact with as many people as possible. | * Look at your notes, never raising your head. |
| * Present interesting visual information such as graphs, charts and tables in a format which can be viewed by everyone. This could be OHP transparencies, slides, PowerPoint or handouts. | * Produce visual information which people can’t see, either due to its size or print quality. |
| * Alter the tone and pitch of your voice, length of sentence and facial/hand gestures to maintain audience interest. Show that you are interested in your subject. | * Present in a monotone voice with no facial/hand gestures. Make it clear that your subject bores the pants off you. |
| * Produce a paper or handout which people can take away with them. | * Let the audience go home without any record of what you have said. |
| * Talk to people after your presentation and ask them how it went, whether there are any improvements they might suggest for future presentations. | * Run away never to be seen again. |

**Producing Oral presentation**

Another method of presenting your research findings is through an oral presentation. This may be at a university or college to other students or tutors, at a conference to other researchers or work colleagues, or in a work place to colleagues, employers or funding bodies. Many researchers find that it is better to provide both a written report and an oral presentation as this is the most effective way of enabling a wider audience to find out about the research, especially if you also reproduce your written report online.

If you want people to take notice of your results, you need to produce a good presentation. PowerPoint is a useful presentation graphics program which enables you to create slides that can be shared live or on-line. You can enhance your presentation with animation, artwork and diagrams which make it more interesting for your audience.