

Use Audio-Visual Data in the Qualitative Research Work

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Ethnographic research and participatory research are the major research methods used in the social science. The said methods are popular in the situation where human emotions and feelings are involved. The popular justification is emotions could not be expressed in numbers. Hence the researcher participates in the community/group and makes observations and often conducts interviews. All the data is maintained in the written form i.e. diary or notes. Latter on these notes are converted into research article or dissertation. All the documentation is in the form of words, written words. The strong question is "Can words be sufficient to express the human emotions or feelings?" the answer could be both yes and no. If you have creative writing skills you can. But the impact or the interpretation will be always subjective. More ever one has to spent more time in developing his creative writing skills to achieve certain levels.

Broadly it will be accepted by every one that human feelings and emotions are difficult to express in words. Words written on the paper could not be substituted for human emotions. But a video recording of the same could communicate a lot. Video recording will communicate the actual situation of the subject. Video is nothing but an image recorded in a sequence. It is a popular saying that "Humans lie, images don't.... Even if the quality of the video is poor, visuals communicate. Visuals give the essence of reality. Its is because of this reason the film makers spend huge money to develop sets, location, and make-up to give the realistic feeling to the audience.

Now a day's smart phones are becoming popular among the youth. These phones are embedded with cameras. Camera system in the mobile phone has become so much popular that we can't imagine a mobile phone without a camera. Some of the smart phones are know for the good quality of camera, indeed that are very costly. The popular camera system records videos and photos both. Almost every one is having a mobile phone, and research scholars definitely have one. Research scholars conducting field visits definitely have a mobile because in current scenario it helps. In the modern world mobile is an essential thing to survive. According to latest findings by TRAI, there are 867.80 million mobile phones at the end of March 2013, registering a monthly growth of 0.71%.¹ If mobiles are so commonly assessable then why not use it as a tool for data collection. One could easily record the reality around and also record the interviews. The quality of the video recorded in the mobile will not be of a good quality but it will be authentic documentation. Such kind of documentation will help the researcher to even analyse the data. The data is recorded in the digital format hence it could be stored properly for the long duration and reference could be taken any time. We could list down the benefits of video documentation for the purpose of research, following is the list.

- 1) **Easy to use:** Mobile is commonly used by the people. The interface for recording the video is very simple and accessible.
- 2) **Could be stored for longer duration:** The digital format recording could be transferred to the computer any time. The videos could be also uploaded on the social networking websites. Hence storage and transfer of data is easy.
- 3) **Cheap tool to use:** No additional expenditure as the camera system is the part of mobiles today.
- 4) **Authentic Record:** Actual images always communicate more and people tent to believe images then the words. Authenticity becomes an embedded component of video. The scope of copying or plagiarism also becomes limited.
- 5) **Research presentation could be in Audio-video format:** One could develop a small documentary film or develop a visual presentation to communicate the research findings. Video editing could be done easily in the computers. One may not achieve the professional quality but reasonable quality could be achieved with the help of software's like Windows Movie Maker, etc.

¹http://www.telecomtiger.com/PolicyNRegulation_fullstory.aspx?passfrom=PolicyNRegulation&storyid=17660§ion=S174

- 6) **More access and spared amongst the people:** The reading is becoming less and less popular². People rarely read now days. But younger generation is watching lots of videos on social networking sites and is also reacting to it. Video has become the language of the younger generation³. Hence video should be given a status a research tools in academics.

It's high time for to include video as a tool for data collection with reference to qualitative research. Video documentation becomes a very effective too when combined with ethnography methods of research. Academicians are more found of books and written materials. The dissertations are also written, people prefer to write more and more and increase the pages. The question remains who will read those pages? Visuals is the languages of the new generation and academics should adopt it. Like pens, cameras are becoming popular for recording data. New tools are available for research and we should be open to use it. Indeed there are limitations to the use of video as a tool of research, but every tool has them. Nothing is foolproof and in social sciences, it's not possible. The need of the time is to include the new technologies and improve the quality and authenticity or work. Young Research scholars should be given liberty to use the tools which they are comfortable with, writing and note taking is surely not welcomed.

Biography of Author:

Mr. Rohit Pawar, Asst. Professor, Dept. of Communication Studies University of Pune, Pune -7. Has been teaching subject related to Video-Production, in the said department from the past 8 years. Have produced couple of documentary films in the past few years. Also currently working on the Phd. dissertation related to children and TV.

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² <http://www.studymode.com/subjects/research-papers-of-newspaper-reading-habits-page1.html>

³ cn.nielsen.com/.../Nielsen-Social-Media-Report_FINAL_090911.pdf