

Qualitative Research

1. Qualitative research....

Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data.

When to use qualitative research?

1. To explore a problem
2. To provide a complex detailed understanding of an issue
3. To empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, or minimise power relationships
4. To write in a literary, flexible style that conveys stories, or theatre, or poems, without the restrictions of formal academic structures
5. To understand the context or settings in which participants address an issue or a problem
6. To develop theories when partial or inadequate theories exist, or existing theories do not adequately address the complexity of a problem
7. To study problems that do not fit quantitative measures and statistical analyses .

Qualitative Data Collection

1. Interviews
2. Observations
3. Documents

Qualitative Data Collection

1. Interviews:

- Open-ended questions and probes yield in-depth responses about people's experiences, opinions, perceptions, feelings and knowledge.
- Data consist of verbatim quotations with sufficient context to be interpretable.
- Questioning Route:
 - * Opening Questions
 - * Introductory Questions
 - * Transition Questions
 - * Key Questions
 - * Ending Questions

Qualitative Data Collection

2. Observations:

- Fieldwork descriptions of activities, behaviors, actions, conversations, interpersonal interactions, organizational or community processes, or any other aspect of observable human experience.
- Data consist of field notes: rich detailed descriptions, including the context within which the observations were made.

Observational Studies

What can be observed?

- Human behavior and action
- Verbal behavior
- Expressive behavior
- Spatial relations
- Temporal patterns
- Physical objects



Qualitative Data Collection

3. Documents:

- Written materials and other documents, programs records; memoranda and correspondence; official publications and reports; personal diaries, letters, artistic works, photographs, and memorabilia; and written responses to open-ended surveys.
- Data consists of excerpts from documents captured in a way that records and preserves context.

Documents

- E-mails, Letters, Memos, reports and minutes of committees
- Annual reports
- Could ask participants to keep journals (case studies and narrative research)



Qualitative Research Design

1. Narrative Research
2. Phenomenological Research
3. Grounded Theory
4. Ethnography
5. Case Study

1. Narrative research

In **narrative research**, researchers describe the lives of individuals, collect and tell stories about people's lives, and write narratives of individual experiences. As a distinct form of qualitative research, a narrative typically focuses on studying a single person, gathering data through the collection of stories, reporting individual experiences, and discussing the meaning of those experiences for the individual.

How do you use narrative designs?

1. When individuals are willing to tell their stories
2. Want to report personal experiences in a particular setting
3. Want a close bond with participants
4. When participants want to process their stories
5. When you have a chronology of events
6. When you want to write in a literary way and develop the micro picture

2. Phenomenological Research..

- Phenomenology is a school of thought that emphasizes a focus on people's subjective experiences and interpretations of the world. Phenomenological theorists argue that objectivity is virtually impossible to ascertain, so to compensate, one must view all research from the perspective of the researcher.

2. Phenomenological Research

- Phenomenologists attempt to understand those whom they observe from the subjects' perspective. This outlook is especially pertinent in social work and research where empathy and perspective become the keys to success.

3. Grounded Theory....

- Based on Symbolic Interactionism which posits that humans act and interact on the basis of symbols, which have meaning and value for the actors.
- The intent of grounded theory is to generate or discover a theory that relates to a particular situation. If little is known about a topic, grounded theory is especially useful

3. Grounded Theory....

- Usually have a question, don't do a literature review in the beginning.
- Usually do 20-30 interviews (maybe more than one time for each person)
- Data collection and analysis occur simultaneously, until “saturation” is reached.
- Data reviewed and coded for categories and themes.

3. Grounded Theory

- Data analysis generates a visual picture, a narrative statement or a series of hypotheses with a central phenomenon, causal conditions, context and consequences.
- The researcher needs to set aside theoretical ideas or notions so that analytical or substantive theories can emerge from the data.
- Systematic approach

4. Ethnography...

- A description and interpretation of a cultural or social group or system. The researcher examines the group's observable and learned patterns of behavior, customs, and ways of life.
- Involves prolonged observation of the group, typically through participant observation.

4. Ethnography...

- Ethnography emphasizes the observation of details of everyday life as they naturally unfold in the real world. This is sometimes called naturalistic research.
- Ethnography is a method of describing a culture or society. This is primarily used in anthropological research.

4. Ethnography

- Need extensive time to collect data
- Many ethnographies may be written in a narrative or story telling approach which may be difficult for the audience accustomed to usual social science writing.

5. Case Study...

- A case study is an exploration of a “bounded system” or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context.
- The context of the case involves situating the case within its setting. which may be physical, social, historical and/or economic.

5. Case Study

- Data collection strategies include direct observation, interviews, documents, archival records, participant observation, physical artifacts and audiovisual materials.
- Analysis of themes, or issues and an interpretation of the case by the researcher.