

CHAPTER 3

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN DAILY LIFE

In this lesson, you will:

1. Define qualitative research.
2. Explain what qualitative research is.
3. Differentiate a quantitative research from a qualitative research.



Lesson 3.1
What is Qualitative Research?

Qualitative Research

DEFINITION, CHARACTERISTICS, STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES, AND ITS KINDS

Qualitative Research

- The naturalistic method of inquiry of research which deals with the issue of human complexity by exploring it directly (Polit and Beck, 2008).
- Research studies that investigate the quality of relationships, activities, situations, or materials are frequently referred to as qualitative research.

Qualitative Research

- This type of research has a greater emphasis on holistic description—that is, on describing in detail all of what goes on in a particular activity or situation rather than on comparing the effects of a particular treatment (as experimental research), or on describing the attitudes or behaviors of people (as in survey research).

The Value

Qualitative data provides both context and meaning. It provides not only the who, what, when, and where but also the why and the how.

If quantitative represents the skeleton, the qualitative represents the flesh.

The value of qualitative research comes from its focus on the lived experiences of the participants, which enabled development of a greater understanding concerning the outcomes that are important, relevant, and meaningful to the people involved.

Recall:

What is the nature of reality according to qualitative researcher?

Recall:

In qualitative research, what is the relationship of the researcher to the researched?

Recall:

In qualitative research, what is the role of values?

Recall:

In qualitative research, what is the language of research?

Recall:

In qualitative research, what is the process of research?

Quantitative or Qualitative

A COMPARISON

Comparison Between QN and QL

Quantitative

- Aims to characterize trends and patterns.
- Usually starts with neither a theory nor hypothesis about the relationship between two or more variables.

Qualitative

- Involves processes, feelings, and motives (the whys and the hows) and produces in-depth and holistic data.
- Usually concerned with generating hypothesis from data rather than testing a hypothesis.

Comparison Between QN and QL

Quantitative

- Uses structured research instruments like questionnaires or schedules.
- Uses large sample sizes that are representative of the population.

Qualitative

- Uses either unstructured or semi-structured instruments.
- Uses small sample sizes chosen purposely.

Comparison Between QN and QL

Quantitative

- Has high output replicability.
- Used to gain greater understanding of group similarities.

Qualitative

- Has high validity.
- Used to gain greater understanding of individual differences in terms of feelings, motives, and experiences.

Comparison Between QN and QL

Quantitative

- Uses structured processes.
- Methods include census, survey, experiments, and secondary analysis.

Qualitative

- Uses more flexible processes.
- Methods include field research, case study, and secondary analysis.

In this lesson, you will:

1. Enumerate and explain the characteristics of qualitative research.
2. Enumerate and explain the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research.
3. Discuss how the characteristics and strengths & weaknesses contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of qualitative research.



Lesson 3.2 Qualitative Research
Characteristics/Strengths & Weaknesses

Qualitative Research

CHARACTERISTICS

First Characteristic of Qualitative Research

The natural setting is the direct source of data, and the researcher is the key instrument in qualitative research.

Take note:

Qualitative researchers go to the particular setting of interest because they are concerned with context—they feel that activities can best be understood in the actual settings in which they occur.

Second Characteristic of Qualitative Research

Qualitative data are collected in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers.

Take note:

Gestures, jokes, conversational gambits, artwork or other decorations a room—all are noted by qualitative researchers. To a qualitative researcher, no data are trivial or unworthy of notice.

Third Characteristic of Qualitative Research

Qualitative researchers are concerned with process as well as products.

Take note:

Qualitative researchers are especially interested in how things occur.

Fourth Characteristic of Qualitative Research

Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively.

Take note:

As Bogdan and Biklen suggest, qualitative researchers are not putting together a puzzle whose picture they already know. They are constructing a picture that takes shape as they collect and examine the parts.

Fifth Characteristic of Qualitative Research

How people make sense out of their lives is a major concern to qualitative researchers.

Take note:

Assumptions, motives, reasons, goals, and values—all are of interest and likely to be the focus of the researcher's questions.

Qualitative Research

STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

Strengths:

Anderson (2010), in her article "Presenting and Evaluating Qualitative Research" lists the following strengths of a qualitative research:

1. The study requires a few cases or participants. Data collected are based on the participants' own categories of meaning.
2. It is useful for describing complex phenomena.
3. Issues can be examined in detail and in depth.

Strengths:

4. Interviews are not restricted to specific questions and can be guided or redirected by the researcher in real time.
5. Subtleties and complexities about the research subjects or topic are often missed by more positivistic questions.
6. It provides individual case information.
7. Cross-case comparisons and analysis can be conducted.
8. It provides understanding and description of people's personal experiences of phenomena (the insider's viewpoint)

Strengths:

9. It can describe in detail the phenomena as they are situated and embedded in local contexts.
10. The researcher usually identifies contextual and setting factors as they relate to the phenomenon of interest.
11. The researcher can study dynamic processes (documenting sequential patterns and changes).
12. The researcher can use the primarily qualitative method of grounded theory to inductively generate a tentative but explanatory theory about a phenomenon.

Strengths:

13. It can determine how participants interpret constructs (self-esteem and IQ).
14. Data are usually collected in naturalistic settings.
15. Qualitative approaches are specially responsive to local situations, conditions, and stakeholders' needs.
16. Qualitative data in the words and categories of participants lend themselves to exploring why and how particular phenomena occur.

Strengths:

17. You can use an important case to vividly demonstrate a phenomenon to the readers.
18. It can determine idiographic causation (determination of causes of a particular event).

Weaknesses:

1. The knowledge produced might not be applicable to other people or other settings.
2. Inflexibility is more difficult to maintain, assess, and demonstrate.
3. It is sometimes not as well understood and accepted as quantitative research within the scientific community.
4. The researcher's presence during data gathering, which is often unavoidable, can affect the subjects' responses.

Weaknesses:


5. Issues of anonymity and confidentiality can present problems when presenting findings.
6. It is difficult to make quantitative predictions.
7. It is more difficult to test hypotheses and theories with large participant pools.
8. It might have lower credibility with some administration and commissioners of programs.

Weaknesses:

9. It generally takes more time to collect the data compared to quantitative research.
10. Data analysis is often time-consuming.
11. The results are more easily influenced by the researcher's personal biases and idiosyncrasies.

In this lesson, you will:

1. Identify the various approaches to qualitative research.
2. Differentiate the various approaches to qualitative research.
3. Discuss the applicability of each approach to research samples.



QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Lesson 3.3
Approaches to Qualitative Research

Qualitative Research

APPROACHES

Approaches to the study

The following are the various approaches to qualitative research based on different fields of inquiry (Merriam, S.B. et al, 2002):

1. Phenomenology
2. Ethnography
3. Historical study
4. Case study
5. Grounded theory
6. Narrative analysis

1. PHENOMENOLOGY

It seeks to find the essence or structure of an experience by explaining how complex meanings are built out of simple units of inner experience. It examines human experiences (lived experiences) through the descriptions provided by subjects or respondents.

Take note:

The goal of phenomenology is to describe the meaning that experiences hold for each subject. Some of the areas of concern are humanness, self-determination, uniqueness, wholeness, and individualism.

Example:

“What are the common experiences encountered by a person with a spouse who is undergoing rehabilitation?”

With the given problem, the researcher has to discover the inner feelings, emotional hardships, and mental disturbances that the respondent is experiencing.

2. ETHNOGRAPHY

It involves the collection and analysis of data about cultural groups or minorities.

In this approach, immersion is the key.

Take note:

During the immersion process, the researcher talks to the key personas called **key informants**, who provide important information for the study.

The main purpose of the study is the development of cultural theories.

Example:

“What is the demographic profile and migratory adaptation of squatter families in Barangay 143, Caloocan City?”

In studying the problem, the researcher immerses with subjects and becomes involved with the activities that exemplify the cultural practices of the respondents.

3. HISTORICAL STUDY

It is concerned with the identification, location, evaluation, and synthesis of data from past events.

Take note:

This is not limited to obtaining data from the past.
You can also relate their implications to the present and future time.

Example:

“What were the roles of women in the Katipunan?”

Sources of data for a historical study:

- Documents
- Relics and artifacts
- Oral reports

Classification of data sources:

- **Primary sources** – materials providing first-hand information
- **Secondary sources** – materials providing second-hand information

Examples of primary data sources:

Oral histories
Written records
Diaries
Eyewitness account
Pictures
Videos
Other physical evidences

Examples of secondary data sources:

Accounts based on a primary source

Material written as an abstract of the primary source material

Validity of data for a historical study:

They are assessed through:

1. **Internal criticism** – establishing the authenticity or originality of the materials by looking at the consistency of the information.
2. **External criticism** – analysis of the material: ink and type of paper used, layout and physical appearance, age and texture of the material.

4. CASE STUDY

It is an in-depth examination of an individual, groups of people or an institution over a period of time.

Take note:

It provides information on where to draw conclusions about the impact of a significant event in a person's life.

Its purposes are to gain insights into a little known problem, provide background data for broader studies, and explain socio-cultural processes.

Example:

“How do cancer survivors look at life?”

The researcher is able to give an overview of the problem by interviewing a cancer survivor about his or her experiences.

5. GROUNDED THEORY STUDY

It involves comparing collected units of data against one another until categories, properties, and hypotheses that state relations between these categories and properties emerge.

Take note:

The hypotheses are tentative and suggestive and are not tested in the study.

The data in a grounded theory study are collected primarily through one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, and participant observation by the researcher.

Example:

“Ten school counselors were given structured interviews to help determine how their professional identity is formed.”

This data was coded first to form concepts. Then, connections between these concepts were identified. A core concept emerged and its process and implications were discussed. School counselors' professional interactions were identified as defining experiences in their identity formation.

6. NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

The main sources of data are the life accounts of individuals based on their personal experiences.

It is the study of the life experiences of an individual as told to the researcher or found in documents and archives.

Take note:

Narrative research is not easy to do, for a number of reasons:

1. The researcher must collect an extensive amount of information about his or her participant.
2. The researcher must have a clear understanding of the historical period within which the participant lived in order to position the participant accurately within that period.

Take note:

3. The researcher needs a “sharp eye” to uncover the various aspects of the participant's life.
4. The researcher needs to be reflective about his or her own personal and political background, which may shape how the participant's story is told and understood.

3 Common Types of Narrative Analyses:

a. **Psychological** –
involves analyzing the story in terms of internal thoughts and motivations. It also analyzes the written text or spoken words for its component parts or patterns.

3 Common Types of Narrative Analyses:

b. **Biographical** –
this takes the individual's society and factors like gender and class into account.

3 Common Types of Narrative Analyses:

c. **Discourse Analysis** –
this studies the approach in which language is used in texts and contexts.

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<http://jcs.weebly.com>



THANK YOU!