



## TYPES OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

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### **Abstract:**

Qualitative research has been informed by several strands of philosophical thought, and it examines the aspects of human life, including culture, expression, beliefs, morality, life stress, and imagination. Several branches of philosophy, for example, positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism, have influenced contemporary qualitative research. The historical transitions or 'moments' in qualitative research and the notion of 'paradigms' have received widespread popularity over the past decades. However, some scholars have argued that adopting paradigms may be counterproductive and lead to less philosophically engaged communities. The six primary forms are the Phenomenological Method (deriving from phenomena), Ethnographic Model, Grounded Theory Method, Case Study Model, Historical Model, and Narrative Model. In this regard, Pernecky proposed an alternative way to implement philosophical concerns in the qualitative inquiry so that researchers can maintain the needed intellectual mobility and elasticity.

**Key Words:** Action Research, Phenomenological, Ethnographic, Case Study, Narrative Model, Grounded Theory, Focus Groups, and Historical

### **Introduction:**

Qualitative research is a type of research that aims to gather and analyze non-numerical (descriptive) data to gain an understanding of individuals' social reality, including understanding their attitudes, beliefs, and motivation. This type of research typically involves in-depth interviews, focus groups, or observations to collect data that is rich in detail and context. Qualitative research is used to explore complex phenomena or to gain insight into people's experiences and perspectives on a particular topic. It is beneficial when researchers want to understand the meaning that people attach to their experiences or when they want to uncover the underlying reasons for people's behavior. Qualitative methods include ethnography, grounded theory, discourse analysis, and interpretative phenomenological analysis. Qualitative research methods have been used

### **What is Qualitative Research?**

Qualitative research is a market research method that focuses on obtaining data through open-ended and conversational communication. This method is about "what" people think and "why" they believe. For example, consider a convenience store looking to improve its patronage. A systematic observation concludes that more men are visiting this store. Conducting an in-depth interview with potential customers is one suitable method to determine why women did not see the store.

### **Advantages of Qualitative Research:**

Qualitative research often tries to preserve the voice and perspective of participants and can be adjusted as new research questions arise. Qualitative research is suitable for the following:

- Flexibility: The data collection and analysis process can be adapted as new ideas or patterns emerge. They are not rigidly decided beforehand.
- Natural settings: Data collection occurs in real-world contexts or naturalistic ways.
- Meaningful insights: Detailed descriptions of people's experiences, feelings, and perceptions can be used in designing, testing, or improving systems or products.
- Generation of new ideas: Open-ended responses mean researchers can uncover novel problems or opportunities they would not have thought otherwise.

### **Types of Qualitative Research Methods with Examples:**

#### **1. Action Research:**

In action research, the researcher participates in a situation and collects data on it. The researcher uses this data to analyze the situation and collects more data if they want to adjust the scope of the study or its results. Action research is cyclical, meaning each step involves collaboration between the study participants and the researcher. We can conduct action research at any level, including the individual, group, or community. This type is appropriate when learning how something works within its natural environment. For example, if you want to understand people's challenges while using technology at work, you can collaborate with teams in different departments to study this topic.

## **2. Phenomenological:**

The phenomenological method is a qualitative research technique that seeks to understand the meaning that people give to their experiences. This type of research uses the phenomenological inquiry method, which focuses on how individuals experience events. Phenomenological researchers focus on subjective understanding and biases to look at what people say about themselves rather than on objective interpretations of what participants say. This helps the researchers to understand people's experiences better.

## **3. Ethnographic:**

Ethnographic research is a qualitative method that focuses on understanding human behavior. Ethnographers are interested in a phenomenon's social context while learning about cultural norms and beliefs. In ethnographic research, the researcher frequently lives with the research subjects and studies their culture. Ethnographers interview the most knowledgeable people about their roles and responsibilities within the society or community. Data collection and analysis coincide as researcher's record their observations in field notes. These notes serve as raw data for future research.

## **4. Case Study:**

Case studies are in-depth examinations of people or groups of people. They help researchers to understand an intervention's context, process, and outcomes. Case studies also allow researchers to understand the cause-and-effect relationships between variables and the change process. For a case study to qualify as qualitative research, the researcher must focus on the meaning of experiences to subjects. They then use content analysis to evaluate the data from case studies.

## **5. Narrative Model:**

Narrative research is a popular qualitative method because it helps you understand how people live and make decisions. You collect data about subjects by tracking them as they go through different stages of your study. By understanding these experiences through observations of participants over time, businesses can create buyer personas for their products and services based on these narratives. Researchers explore a few participants' experiences by collecting information on their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors during specific situations. This method allows researchers to simultaneously gather data from several sources to identify themes or patterns. The narrative research method involves collecting stories from participants to share later. This process involves asking questions like:

- What was happening?
- How did it feel?
- Why was this important?
- What did you do next?

## **6. Grounded Theory:**

Grounded theory is a qualitative research method that systematically reviews existing data to develop theories about why events happened the way they did. The grounded theory method uses inductive and deductive approaches to theory development. Rather than using probability sampling procedures, researchers use purposeful sampling to select specific subjects who may share new perspectives on the phenomenon under study.

## **7. Focus Groups:**

Focus groups are an essential tool in qualitative research. They reveal people's attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs to enhance researchers' knowledge of a particular topic. For instance, moderators might conduct focus groups with eight to 12 participants who meet at set times over several weeks or months. Participants may test out a new product, and researchers can observe subjects and conduct interviews about their experience. For example, a beverage company may plan to launch a new brand of energy drinks. It invites people of different ages and backgrounds to taste the drink over multiple days. The researchers then conduct follow-up interviews asking each person what they think about the new glass relative to other available beverages.

## **8. Historical:**

Historical studies identify, locate, evaluate, and synthesize data from the past. Historical research helps the researchers understand why something happened and its impact. Researchers can use this data to predict the future or understand history better. You can find data for historical research in documents or relics and artifacts. These include books, published works such as newspapers and older texts, and letters from people who lived during specific periods. Historical data sources can be primary and secondary sources. Primary sources provide direct information or evidence, while secondary sources contain indirect information.

## **Qualitative Data Collection:**

Qualitative data collection allows the collection of non-numeric data, helps us explore how decisions are made, and provides detailed insight. The collected data should be holistic, rich, and nuanced to reach such conclusions, with findings to emerge through careful analysis.

- Whatever method a researcher chooses for collecting qualitative data, one aspect is clear the process will generate a large amount of data. In addition to the variety of plans available, there are different methods of collecting and recording the data. For example, handwritten notes or video-recorded tapes

will be collected if the qualitative data is collected through a focus group or one-to-one discussion. If there are records, they should be transcribed before the process of data analysis can begin.

- As a rough guide, it can take a seasoned researcher 8-10 hours to transcribe the recordings of an interview, which can generate roughly 20-30 pages of dialogue. Many researchers also like to maintain separate folders to maintain the recording collected from the different focus groups. This helps them categorize the data collected.
- In case running notes are taken, also known as field notes, they help maintain comments, environmental contexts, environmental analysis, nonverbal cues, etc. These field notes are helpful and can be compared while transcribing audio-recorded data. Such messages are usually informal but should be secured similarly to video recordings or audio tapes.

#### **Benefits of Qualitative Research:**

There are many benefits of qualitative research, including:

- **Flexibility:** You can choose to perform a small or large study and easily adjust your research plan to reflect new learning and insights.
- **Depth:** Qualitative researchers invest time in understanding complex phenomena from multiple perspectives. This means they can get deeper insights than quantitative studies often provide.
- **Customization:** Qualitative methods allow you to adapt your methodology to suit your research question and goals. You can customize the study duration, participants, and research methods.
- **Meaning:** Qualitative research focuses on meaning rather than facts and statistics. Qualitative methods allow people in studies, such as customers or employees, to share their perspectives without the limitations of facts and numbers.

#### **Conclusion:**

Qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research. Qualitative research is the opposite of quantitative research, which involves collecting and analyzing numerical data for statistical analysis. Qualitative research is commonly used in the humanities and social sciences, in subjects such as anthropology, sociology, education, health sciences, history, etc.

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