

UNIVERSITY OF GUYANA

Qualitative Data Collection Methods

-Part 1-

Presenter:

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Qualitative Data Collection Methods

Part 1: Topics

- **Evolution of Qualitative Research**
- **Characteristics of Qualitative Research**
- **Approaches to Qualitative Research**
 - **Narrative**
 - **Phenomenology**
 - **Grounded Theory**
 - **Ethnography**
 - **Case Study**

The Evolution of Qualitative Research

Denzin and Lincoln (2005a; 2018) as cited in Butler-Kisber (2018) mapped out a series of what they called ‘nine moments’ in qualitative research that corresponded to a description of the modern era and its transition to the postmodern way of thinking.

- The first of these was the ‘traditional phase’ (1900–1942), where work was presented as objective, but actually was colonizing depictions of reality that led to misunderstandings about other people and their cultures.

The Evolution of Qualitative Research

- The second was the ‘modernist phase’ (1940–1970s), where qualitative researchers attempted to develop their work in ways that matched the rigour of quantitative research.
- The third was the ‘blurred genres phase’ (1970–1986), during which time researchers experimented with narrative ways of doing and knowing and attended to relational aspects of research.
- The fourth phase was the ‘crisis of representation’ (mid-1980s–1990) that emphasized how all phases of the research process are a series of constructions made and interpreted by the researcher and called for the researcher to situate himself/herself reflexively in the work.

The Evolution of Qualitative Research

- The Fifth was the ‘postmodern phase’ (1990–1995), where researchers engaged in what was then considered experimental forms of writing and participatory inquiry.
- The Sixth was the ‘post-experimental phase’ (1995–2000), during which time new arts-based ways were used to study and portray lived experience.
- The Seventh was the ‘methodologically contested phase’ (2000–2004), where methods were being questioned.
- The eighth moment they called ‘the fractured qualitative inquiry has had to confront conservative measures attempting to rein in qualitative inquiry and align it more closely with positivistic orientations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, pp. 14–20 cited in Butler-Kisber, 2018).

The Evolution of Qualitative Research

The ninth moment (2017–) is a ‘punctuation point’ ... not a period, not the end of the page. While keeping our eyes on issues of social justice, we must also contrive how to represent multiple findings from multiple studies in order to achieve presence and voice at the policy table ...

to talk with those who speak quantitatively, but to do so with consonance, coherence and suasion ...

and make transparent the changes that are overtaking the world, so that we understand the futures we have chosen and are empowered to choose others if we so wish ...

we are in fact at the edge of a new colonialism, a new era, one that we did not fully choose, and one that we must begin to understand more fully than we have to this point. (p. 927).

The Evolution of Qualitative Research

By the 1990s, and after a long, hard struggle, qualitative inquiry began to receive acceptance as a legitimate form of research (Butler-Kisber, 2018).

The future for qualitative inquiry holds much promise; it will not disappear. But there are concerns about the backlash associated with the ‘evidence-based’ research movement that is taking place. It puts pressure on qualitative researchers to adopt a more ‘quantitative’ methodology or ‘mixed methods’ to make qualitative inquiry ‘less anecdotal and to ‘improve’ the quality and robustness of the work ’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, cited in Butler-Kisber, 2018).

Discussions about quality and how to evaluate qualitative inquiry, and ways to deal with the backlash, will be issues confronting qualitative inquirers for the remainder of this decade and beyond (Butler-Kisber, 2018).

Table 1 provides various classifications of qualitative approaches that have surfaced over the years. This list is not meant to be exhaustive of the possibilities; it is intended to illustrate the diversity of approaches recommended by different authors and how the disciplines might emphasize some approaches over others.

Evolution of Qualitative Research

Table 1:

Qualitative Approaches Mentioned by Authors and Their Disciplines/ Fields

Authors	Qualitative Approaches		
Jacobs (1987)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological psychology • Ethnography of communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic ethnography • Symbolic interactionism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive anthropology
Munhall (1986) and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phenomenology • Historical research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grounded theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnography
Lancy (1993)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anthropological perspectives • Case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sociological perspectives • Personal accounts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biological perspectives • Cognitive studies • Historical inquiries

Source Creswell, J. W.; Poth, C. N. (2018).

Evolution of Qualitative Research

Table 1: Qualitative Approaches Mentioned by Authors and Their Disciplines/ Fields Cont'd

Authors	Qualitative Approaches		
Strauss and Corbin (1990)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grounded theory • Life histories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnography • Conversational analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phenomenology
Morse (1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phenomenology • Grounded theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnoscience
Moustakas (1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnography • Empirical phenomenological research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grounded theory • Heuristic research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hermeneutics • Transcendental • Phenomenology
Denzin and Lincoln (1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies • Ethnomethodology • Biographical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnography • Interpretative practices • Historical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phenomenology • Grounded theory • Clinical research

Characteristics of Qualitative Research

(1) Definition of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a type of research in which the researcher relies on the views of participants; asks broad, general questions; collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants; describes and analyzes these words for themes; and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner (Airasian & Gay, 2008).

(2) Definition of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/ theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.44).

Characteristics of Qualitative Research

To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes.

The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or a call for change. (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 44)

Approaches to Qualitative Research

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), **five** qualitative approaches reflect the types of qualitative research that we most frequently see in the social, behavioral, and health science literature, namely: **narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case studies.**

Narrative research

Narrative researchers collect stories from individuals (and documents, and group conversations) about individuals' lived and told experiences. These stories may emerge from a story told to the researcher, a story that is co-constructed between the researcher and the participant, and a story intended as a performance to convey some message or point (Riessman, 2008).

Approaches to Qualitative Research

Narrative Research Cont'd

- **Narrative stories tell of individual experiences, and they may shed light on the identities of individuals and how they see themselves.**
- **Narrative stories occur within specific places or situations. Temporality becomes important for the researcher's telling of the story within a place. Such contextual details may include descriptions of the physical, emotional, and social situations.**
- **Narrative stories are gathered through many different forms of data, such as through interviews that may be the primary form of data collection but also through observations, documents, pictures, and other sources of qualitative data.**

(Creswell & Poth, 2018)

Approaches to Qualitative Research

Phenomenological Research

Whereas a narrative study reports the life of a *single individual*, a *phenomenological study* describes the meaning for several individuals of their *lived experiences* of a concept or a phenomenon.

Phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon (e.g., grief is universally experienced). The basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence (a “grasp of the very nature of the thing (Creswell, 2006)

Approaches to Qualitative Research

Phenomenological Research Cont'd

To this end, qualitative researchers identify a phenomenon (an “object” of human experience. This human experience may be phenomena such as insomnia, being left out, anger, grief, or undergoing coronary artery bypass surgery.

The inquirer then collects data from persons who have experienced the phenomenon, and develops a composite description of the essence of the experience for all of the individuals. This description consists of “what” they experienced and “how” they experienced it ((Creswell, 2006).

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Approaches to Qualitative Research

Grounded Theory Research

Although a phenomenology emphasizes the meaning of an experience for a number of individuals, the intent of a *grounded theory study* is to move beyond description and to *generate or discover a theory*, an abstract analytical schema of a process (or action or interaction).

Participants in the study would all have experienced the process, and the development of the theory might help explain practice or provide a framework for further research (Creswell, 2006).

Approaches to Qualitative Research

Grounded Theory Research

A key idea is that this theory-development does not come “off the shelf,” but rather is generated or “grounded” in data from participants who have experienced the process.

Thus, grounded theory is a qualitative research design in which the inquirer generates a general explanation (a theory) of a process, action, or interaction shaped by the views of a large number of participants (Creswell, 2006).

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Approaches to Qualitative Research

Ethnographic Research

An ethnographer is interested in examining these shared patterns, and the unit of analysis is larger than the 20 or so individuals involved in a grounded theory study. An *ethnography* focuses on an entire cultural group.

Granted, sometimes this cultural group may be small (a few teachers, a few social workers), but typically it is large, involving many people who interact over time (teachers in an entire school, a community social work group) (Creswell, 2006).

Approaches to Qualitative Research

Ethnographic Research Cont'd

Ethnography is a qualitative design in which the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, *behaviors*, beliefs, and language of a *culture-sharing group*.

As both a process and an outcome of research, ethnography is a way of studying a culture-sharing group as well as the final, written product of that research (Creswell, 2006).

Approaches to Qualitative Research

Case Study Research

The entire culture-sharing group in ethnography may be considered a case, *but the intent in ethnography is to determine how the culture works rather than to understand an issue or problem using the case as a specific illustration.* Thus, *case study* research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (i.e., a setting, a context).

Although the case study research is not a methodology but a choice of what is to be studied (i.e., a case within a *bounded system*), others present it as a strategy of inquiry, a methodology, or a comprehensive research strategy (Creswell, 2006)

Approaches to Qualitative Research

Case Study Research Cont'd

Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a *case*) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case *description* and case-based themes. For example, several programs (a *multi-site* study) or a single program (a *within-site* study) may be selected for study (Creswell, 2006).

Approaches to Qualitative Research

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