

Lecture 10

Qualitative Research Proposal

When to Use Qualitative Methodology

qualitative methodology is used when:

- Little is known about the topic.
- The research context is poorly understood.
- The boundaries of the domain are ill-defined.
- The phenomenon under investigation is not quantifiable.
- The nature of the problem is unclear.
- The researcher suspects the phenomenon needs re-examination.

Researcher's Preparation

Researchers should:

- Have a clear understanding of the issues and questions they want to investigate.
- Be open to improvising, revising, and adjusting their approach during the research.

Challenges in Writing a Qualitative Proposal

- Qualitative researchers design studies by conducting them, unlike quantitative researchers who follow a predefined design.
- Quantitative researchers often know what they expect to discover, while qualitative researchers enter the study without predefined knowledge.
- The qualitative proposal writer can only anticipate the study's progression.

Qualitative Research Approach

- Accepts that there are different ways of understanding the world.
- Focuses on discovering the meanings seen by those being researched.
- Aims to understand the participants' perspective rather than the researcher's.

Process of the Qualitative Proposal

- Researchers often need to outline data analysis plans without knowing the data.

- Researchers must convince proposal evaluation committees or funding agencies of their study's worth.

Proposal Development

1. Practicality: Indicate how the research will address the identified problem or issue.
2. Persuasiveness: Make a compelling argument that the research question is interesting and important.
3. Broader Links: Demonstrate the broader implications of the research.
4. Clarity: Write in simple language that non-specialists can understand.
5. Planning: Plan thoroughly before writing to ensure time management and adherence to the proposal's requirements.

Structure of the Qualitative Proposal

Cover Page

- Title of the proposal.
- Name and affiliation of the researcher and co-investigators.
- Signature lines for the researcher and university authorities.
- Contact details.

Abstract

- Synopsis of the proposal.
- Introduction to the research problem, question, purpose, and objectives.
- Research design and method.
- 250-300 words, often dictated by committee guidelines.
- Include up to 5 keywords.

Introduction

- Start with an interesting element to capture attention.
- Introduce the research question and explain the interest in the topic.
- State the significance of the study and why it is needed.

Review of the Literature

- Cite relevant literature to demonstrate the need for the research.
- Describe how the current study will address shortcomings in previous research.
- Explain how the literature review provides a theoretical context for the study. but is not a conceptual framework, as it does not drive the study or provide an outline for the analysis.

The literature review is not necessarily a separate heading, as it could be integrated in the introduction, providing a rationale for the planned study.

Research Problem and Research Questions

- Clearly define the research problem. - Conclude with the research question(s) to be answered.
- research questions clearly delineate the research (sometimes with sub-questions), and the scope of the research questions(s) needs to be manageable within the time frame and context of the study

Research Objectives

- State the broad goal of the research. - The purpose usually indicates the type of study to be conducted
- List specific objectives that guide the study.

Research Design "also see the picture in page 4"

- Define the research design and its components (qualitative/quantitative, exploratory, descriptive, comparative, explanatory, contextual, universal).
The research design is the plan or blueprint that the researcher will use in conducting the research.
• The aim of the research design is to align the pursuit of a research goal with the practical considerations and limitations of the project
- Provide a description of the context or setting for the research.

Research Method

Population and Sample

- Describe the population and how participants will be selected.
- Explain the sampling technique and justify its use.
- Project the size of the sample.

Data Collection :- Describe what you aim to find out and how data will be collected.

- Explain the kind of data to be collected (e.g., documents, field notes, interviews).- Justify the use of each data collection method.

- It is inadequate to simply refer to data that will be collected using "participant observation, field notes or diaries".
- A description with the justification of each method and how the method contributes to the understanding of the phenomenon under study must be presented. If an interview guide will be used, include the questions in the proposal or attach as an appendix.

Ensuring Rigor

- Must Address rigor throughout the proposal.

Data Analysis

- Detail the intended data analysis procedure (coding, sorting, etc.).
- For the description of data analysis, relevant methods with citations must be included

Ethical Considerations

- Address protection of participants' rights, informed consent, and ethical approval.

Dissemination Plan

- Describe how results will be disseminated (peer-reviewed journals, conferences).

Timeline

- Provide a schedule for research activities.
- Consider using a Gantt chart (A Gantt chart is a standard tool that can be used by the researcher to structure the timeline of the project) to structure the timeline.

- Morse and Field (1996:43) advise that the researcher should estimate how long each activity will take and then triple the time. Such leeway is important when funds are requested, to ensure that there is adequate funding for staff and for the completion of the project.

Budget

- Include all aspects of the research costs and justify each item.
- Account for unpredictable delays and rising costs.

Appendices

- Include supporting documents such as informed consent forms, verification of the research site, letters of permission, and curricula vitae of the research team members.

research design

- Qualitative studies are always contextual, as the data is only valid in a specific context.
- The researcher can then follow with a short description of each component.
- In the description of a contextual study it is important to include a description of the context or setting in which the research will be conducted. Also explain why this setting was chosen.