6 Features of Qualitative Study

- Field focused
- Self as instrument
- Interpretative
6 Features of Qualitative Study continued...

- Expressive use of language
- Attention to details
- Transfer
  - Coherence
  - Insight
  - Instrumental utility
Why Qualitative Research?

- Social inquiry is complex and requires a variety of tools
- Realities are multiple, constructed, & holistic
Why Qualitative Research?
Continued...

- Research should be time and context bound
- All entities are constantly changing, so it is impossible to establish relationships
Uses of Qualitative Research

- Clarify/illustrate quantitative findings
- Create instruments
- Develop policy
- Evaluate programs
- Guide practice
- Develop theory
Sampling in Qualitative Research

- Qualitative research uses purposeful sampling—the emphasis is on studying a phenomena in depth
- This is different from probability sampling used in quantitative research, in which the purpose is to study a phenomena and generalize the findings to a population
Sampling: Probability vs. Purposeful

- **Representational**
  - **Goal:** Enable generalizations from study samples to populations.
  - **The sample displays variables (e.g., age, gender) in similar proportions and patterns to the total population about which you wish to make generalizations. Statistical conventions are used to calculate the probability that patterns observed in the sample will exist in the wider population.**
Sampling: Probability vs. Purposeful

- **Purposeful**
  - **Goal:** To understand a phenomenon, not to represent a population.
  - **The selection of information-rich cases for intensive study.** Commonly used in qualitative research.
Purposeful Sampling

- Sample size is small
- Participants are *information-rich* resources
- Selection is deliberate
- Goal is to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomena
Types of Purposeful Sampling

1. Extreme or deviant case sampling
2. Intensity sampling
3. Typical case sampling
4. Maximum variation sampling
5. Stratified purposeful sampling
6. Homogeneous sampling
7. Critical case sampling
8. Snowball or chain sampling
9. Criterion sampling
10. Theory-based or operational construct sampling
11. Confirming and disconfirming case sampling
12. Purposeful random sampling
13. Sampling politically important cases
14. Convenience sampling
15. Opportunistic sampling
Selected Types of Purposeful Sampling

- Criterion
- Maximum variation
- Stratified
- Typical case
- Deviant case
- Random
Criterion Sampling

- A generic form of sampling involving the selection of cases on preconceived empirical or theoretical criteria. Sometimes called selective sampling.

- Criteria may entail other kinds of sampling, such as typical or deviant case sampling. Criteria can be a score on a measure (qual/quant combined study).
Maximum Variation

- Selection of cases to represent a set of variations on specified aspects of a phenomenon (variables) that are relevant to your phenomenon of interest.
  - Equality of number is not relevant.
  - What is important is that you have information so you can say something about that variable.
  - Phenomenal, not demographic, variation
  - Phenomenal variation can be demographic

- Researchers choose which and how many features to vary (heterogeneity) and which features to fix (homogeneity).
  - More variation = larger sample size.
Stratified Purposeful Sampling

- Selection of cases showing combinations of pre-selected variables.
- Can use stratified purposeful sampling in grounded theory when there’s already theory development.
Random Purposeful Sampling

- Used when there is a very large pool of potentially information-rich cases and no obvious reason to choose one case over another.
Typical Case Sampling

- Selection of cases conforming to a specified standard, or pre-conceived norm.
  - Comparatively typical: Within the sample you have selected, they are typical.
  - Normatively typical: Typical in relation to something out there, e.g., a measure.
Deviant Case Sampling

- Selection of cases departing from a specified standard, or pre-conceived norm.
  - Comparatively atypical: Within your study, something stood out.
  - Normatively atypical: Not typical according to a standard outside your study.
Theoretical Sensitivity

- The researcher’s ability to
  - have insight
  - give meaning to data
  - distinguish between what is pertinent and what is not
Theoretical Sensitivity continued...

- Dependent upon the researcher’s
  - Methods
  - Professional experience
  - Personal experience
  - Analytic rigor
Conducting Qualitative Research

- Observations
- Interviews
- Document collection
Observations

- Utilize focus factors
- Shift your focus as time and reason seem to dictate
- Look for patterns
Observations continued...

- Define patterns as early as possible
- Create taxonomy to check against continued patterns
- Ask questions to continue defining patterns
Observations continued…

Focus Factors

- Interactions
- Language
- Individuals
- Groups
- Routines
- Interpretations by participants
- Rituals

- Social organization
- Time sequences
- Nonverbal communication
- Symbolic space
- Setting
- Unplanned activities
- What does not happen
Interviewing

- Closed, fixed response interview
- Informal conversational interview
- Guided interview
- Standardized open-ended interview

- See p. 268 in your text for an overview of each of these strategies
Conducting Interviews

- Experience/behavior questions
- Opinion/values questions
- Feeling questions
- Knowledge questions
- Sensory questions
- Background/demographic questions
- Time frame questions
Issues in Qualitative Interviewing

- Sequencing of questions
- Wording
- True open-ended questions
- Singular questions
Issues in Qualitative Interviewing continued...

- Avoid “Why?”
- Remain neutral
- Probe and follow-up
- Support and recognize
- Maintain control
Making sense of your data

- Scan your data
- Return to any word, phrase, sentence, or idea that struck you as significant, important, or of interest
Making sense of your data

- Ascertain frequency of word, phrase, sentence, or idea—it is a pattern?
- List all possible meanings
- Validate possible meanings—use theory
Coding

- Open—scanning and returning
- Axial—organizing into initial patterns
- Selective—validated the categories and developed a theory
Trustworthiness

- Trustworthiness is to qualitative research what reliability and validity are to quantitative research.
- Does the data show a pattern?
- Was it collected truthfully and accurately?
- How did you reduce bias?
Trustworthiness

- Prolonged engagement
- Persistent engagement
- Triangulation
- Peer debriefing
- Member checks
- Audit trail
Prolonged engagement

- The documentation of patterns over time
- Must show adequate time and resources in the study.
Persistent engagement

- Dealing with discrepant data
- Resolving inconsistent data with pattern data
- Why was some data deemed not worthy of consideration?
**Triangulation**

- Comparison of data from different sources
  - Data
  - Researcher
  - Theory
  - Methodological
Peer debriefing

- Subjecting your data and interpretations to scrutiny by qualified individuals
- How often?
- How thorough?
Member checks

- Allowing participants to read the data you collected and the conclusions you drew from them
- When were they performed?
- Did you include their reactions?
- Why or why not?
Audit trail

- Have you made a clear reference trail back to your raw data?
Aspects of poor qualitative research

- Inadequate amounts of evidence
- Inadequate variety in kinds of evidence
- Faulty interpretative status of evidence
- Presence of disconfirming evidence
- Inadequate discrepant case analysis
Writing a Qualitative Methods Section

- You will have the following headings under methods
  - Theoretical Sensitivity
  - Participants
  - Data Collection
  - Trustworthiness
  - Data Analysis
Theoretical Sensitivity

- Explain why you are a good instrument for this study.
- What experiences do you bring that make you an ideal researcher for your proposed project?
- See slides 19-20.
Participants

- Who are your participants in the study?
- Summarize the qualities you expect from your participants (why are they an information rich source? Provide any pertinent demographic information)
Participants

- How will you solicit participants?
- Describe purposeful sampling procedure
- See slides 11 – 18 and Purposeful Sampling under Doc Sharing in ecollege.
Data Collection

- What observations will you conduct? What will be your focus factors (i.e. slide 24). You should identify at least 4 focus factors.
Data Collection

- What type of interview will you conduct? Include 10 (minimum) open-ended interview questions in an appendix section of your project.
Data Collection

- What type of documents will you collect. What information do you need to gather that will be important for your study?
Trustworthiness

- Discuss how all six aspects of trustworthiness (slides 32-39) will be addressed in your study.
Data Analysis

- Discuss your procedure for identifying patterns through open, axial, and selective coding.