

# PG TALK SERIES: Qualitative Research Design and Approaches

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# Agenda

- Introduction
- Research Approaches, Research Design and Research Methods
- Philosophical Worldviews
- Qualitative Research Approach
- WHY a Qualitative Study?
- HOW to conduct a Qualitative Study?
- Choosing a Qualitative Research Design
- Quality of a Qualitative Research
- Conclusion



# RESEARCH APPROACHES, RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODS: ARE THEY THE SAME?



**RESEARCH APPROACHES**



**RESEARCH DESIGN**



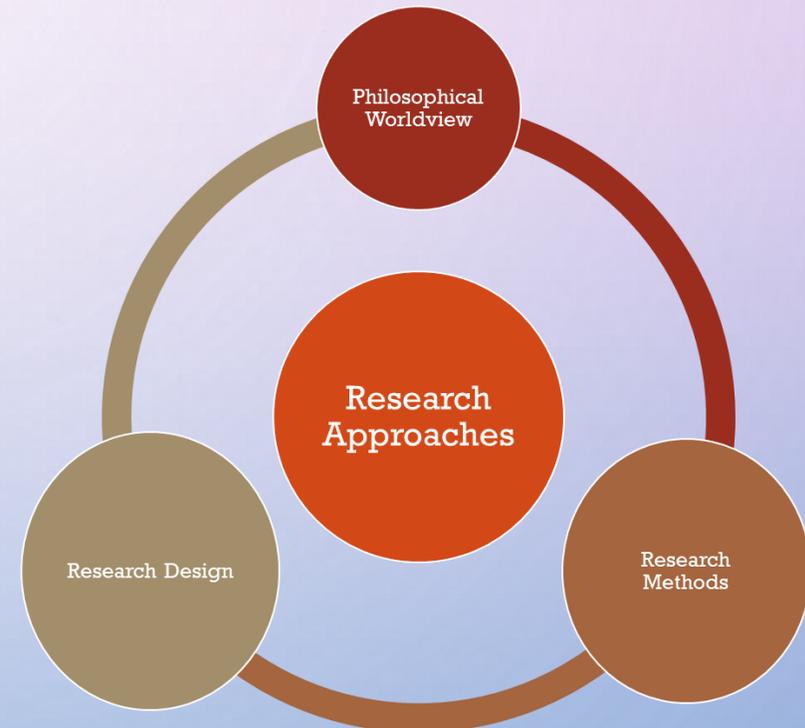
**RESEARCH METHODS**

# RESEARCH APPROACHES, RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODS:

## ARE THEY THE SAME?

### RESEARCH APPROACHES

- Plans and procedures for the research.
- From broad philosophical assumptions to strategy of inquiry/research design and to specific methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation.
- What are the types of research approaches? Which approach to study? When to decide on the appropriate research approach?
- 3 Components underlying the decision of research approach:



# PHILOSOPHICAL WORLDVIEWS (PARADIGM)

- Philosophical worldview indicates why researcher choose a particular research approach (qual/quan/mixed).
- How the worldview shaped the approach to research?
- Positivist --- **interpretivist** ---- critical/postmodernist
- Positivism: assuming social science and natural science research are the same; social reality is composed by objective facts; value free research (can precisely measure reality and use statistics to objective facts to test theory).
- Interpretivism: social life differs from natural world; social reality is constructed based on meanings given by people; reality is fluid and filled with shifting perceptions and subjectivity; value laden nature of research (depends on interpretation). Therefore, reality is hard to measure objectively.
- Critical: similar to interpretivism but blend with constructionist view of social reality. Query the system and search for disguised contradictions in ideology.
- **The decision of a paradigm/worldview will lead to selection of research approach and determine research design.**



## **Research Approach: What is Qualitative Research Approach?**

*Qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured objectively (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013).*

***What are the common characteristics of a Qualitative Research Approach?***

# FEATURES OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

## Intense - Naturalistic

- Involve Intense/prolonged contacts with participants in naturalistic setting to investigate (everyday/exceptional) lives of individuals/society/organisations.

## Flexible

- Little standardised instrumentations used. Researcher as the main instrument in the study.

## Contextual

Emphasizes understanding the context in which the phenomena occur. Context helps to explain why an individual acted as he did. The context(s) best understood by talking to people.

## In-Depth

- Attempts to capture data on perceptions of local participants from the inside through a process of deep attentiveness, empathetic understanding while suspending preconceptions of the topic.

## Holistic

Holistic: systemic, encompassing and integrated perspectives. Considers multiple dimensions and viewpoints of a phenomenon

## Source of data

Source of Data: experience (through observation), enquiry (in interviews) or examination (of documentation and material produced by others including video recordings, photographs, drawings)



(Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014)

# COMMON DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES



# COMMON DATA ANALYSIS APPROACHES

Coding

Thematic  
Analysis

Content  
Analysis

Narrative  
Analysis

Constant  
Comparison

# CHOOSING A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

The decision on Research Design is guided by the **philosophical assumptions** or research paradigm (in this case: Interpretivist) and **Research Problems and Research Question**.

Research Design: What strategy of inquiry employs by the researcher (assumptions, practices) to be performed to understand reality.

Research Design connects researcher to methods (data collection and analysis).

# QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGNS



# CASE STUDY DESIGN

- **Description:** In-depth exploration of a single case or multiple cases within a specific context.
- **Objective:** To understand the complexity of a case or phenomenon and provide detailed insights.  

To answer “what: the case/reality”, “how” and “why” a particular business decision was made or how/why the business process works the way it does?
- **Method:** Interviews, observations, document analysis.
- Shed light on a phenomenon by studying in depth a case (individual, group, event, institution) example of phenomenon. (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995)

# PHENOMENOLOGICAL DESIGN

**Description:** Aims to understand and **describe how people experience a particular phenomenon** or event.

**Objective:** Investigate and interpret the **meaning of lived experience** of people to identify its core essence of human experience or phenomena from participants' perspective.

**Method:** In-depth interviews and participant observations.

**Research Question** Example: What is the lived experience of being a caregiver for a family member with Alzheimer's disease?

# ETHNOGRAPHIC DESIGN

**Description:** Study **sociocultural phenomena** through close observation of customs and way of life in naturalistic setting; first-hand experience - immersion in community (Van Maanen, 2006).

The approach is related to study about relationships between people and several aspects of their life, such as socio-political, culture and history

**Objective:** To comprehend **cultural phenomena** within a particular social context.

**Method:** Participant observation, interviews, and document analysis.

**Example:** Studying the daily lives and rituals of a specific indigenous community.

# GROUNDED THEORY DESIGN

**Description:** Researcher explore events, interactions and situations; immerse in data generation, discover theory of the process from data. **Inductive theory development**

**Objective:** To generate theories from the data, allowing them to emerge naturally during the research process. Developing new theories from data.

**Method:** Constant comparison, coding, and theoretical sampling.

**Example:** Developing a theory of coping mechanisms used by individuals facing chronic illness.

*Research Question Example: How do individuals diagnosed with a chronic illness adapt to their new lifestyle and self-management routines over time?*

# NARRATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

**Description:** Researcher uses people's personal stories/biographical materials to understand personal life, histories, societies.

**Objective:** To understand how people construct meaning through storytelling and narratives.

**Method:** In-depth interviews, analysis of personal narratives, and storytelling.

**Example:** Analyzing personal narratives of individuals who survived in tsunami disaster.

**Research Question Example:** What is the meaning and significance of the life stories of individuals who have survived a natural disaster?

# ACTION RESEARCH DESIGN

**Description:** Involves collaboration between researchers and participants to identify, address and **solve practical problems** or challenges within a specific context, while expanding knowledge.

**Methods:** Iterative cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection, aiming for practical solutions and improvements. Researcher deliberately intervenes and at the same time studies the effects of intervention.

**Research Question Example:** How can implementing a mindfulness program in a school setting impact students' attention span and overall well-being?

Variations: Grounded Action Research, Participatory Action Research

# ANALYSING AND INTERPRETING

Qualitative research is a set of creative and interpretive activities. Qualitative interpretation is constructed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Analysing (first level) --- coding and producing findings (set of codes – categories – themes).  
Provide description of themes/findings.

Interpreting (second level) – scrutinising findings; discovering meanings.

Interpretation involves attaching significance to what was found, **making sense of findings**, considering different meanings and offering potential explanations of the phenomenon; leading to new dimension of understanding.

## WRITING UP FOR DEEPER ANALYSIS

*“Write-up is an end product of qualitative research, or on strategies for presenting qualitative findings that will be read, make sense, and have impact. There is no one style for reporting the findings from qualitative research. Qualitative researchers must choose not only what “story” they will tell, but also how they will tell it. Qualitative researchers must select from an array of representational styles, formats, and “language(s) of disclosure” those that best fit their research purpose, methods, and data.”*

(Sandelowski, 1998).

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