

## Qualitative Research Terms

### Qualitative Research in study of leadership by Karin Klenke

**Axiology** – values and ethics in research; seeks research that is unbiased and value-free

**Congruent** – in agreement or harmony; sharing the same opinion; being equal

**Content analysis** is a form of analysis that counts and reports the frequency of concepts/words/behaviors held within the data. The researcher develops brief descriptions of the themes and meanings, called codes. Similar codes may be grouped together to form categories.

**Context sensitivity** is an awareness by a qualitative researcher of factors such as values

**Contextualization** – researchers must be sensitive to the context by immersed in setting and situation. Both personal and social contexts are important. Subjects' lives or work affect their behavior. This is needed to learn how it affects outcomes and applications in clinical situations

**Convenience sampling** – the cases that can be studied most easily, cheaply or quickly, but it is the least credible. Thematic analysis – see content analysis  
Transferability is the ability to apply the results of research in one context to another

**Data analysis** is a systematic process of working with the data to provide an understanding

**Data collection** – in-depth, non-standardized interviews, may also be semi-structured interviews; participant observation/fieldwork; discovery-oriented immersion; and documents, diaries, photographs, videos.

**Epistemological** – how view of nature affects reality and beliefs about nature; deals with the ways of knowing and focuses on the relationship of the researcher's belief system about the nature of knowledge – debates issues of objectivity, subjectivity, causality, validity and generalizability. It is intimately related to ontology and methodology

**Ethnographers** focus on culture and customs. Researchers spend time - hours, days or weeks - observing and/or interacting with participants in areas of their everyday lives. This contrasts with interview-based research in which interaction with respondents is limited to a conventional interview or group discussion format, is more limited in time, and often takes place outside the participant's own environment.

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**Ethnography** is the study of groups and/or cultures over a period of time. The goal of this type of research is to comprehend the particular group/culture through observer immersion into the culture or group.

**Field Notes** - Notes made by the researcher in the course of qualitative fieldwork, often observations of participants, locations or events. These may constitute the whole data collected for a project (as in an observational project) or add to it (as when field notes supplement conventional interview data).

**Field Observation** is the observation of participants in their natural setting.

**Grounded theory** aims to generate a theory that is 'grounded in' or formed from the data and is based on inductive reasoning. This contrasts with other approaches that stop at the point of describing the participants' experiences. In terms of data analysis grounded theory refers to coding incidents from the data and identifying analytical categories as they emerge from the data, rather than defining them a priori

**Grounded theorists** investigate social processes and interactions

**Hawthorne effect** is the impact of the researcher on the research participants or setting, notably in changing their behaviour.

**Heuristics** are mental shortcuts (or rules of thumb) that aid our decision-making, judgments and problem-solving in everyday life. Since our mental computing power is limited, we developed heuristics allowing us to make decisions faster and more frugally than a rational analysis of all the information available. Many of these heuristics have developed over time such as the principle of "expensive = good" where price alone is the indicator of quality.

**Holistic** means exploration of a research question multi-dimensionally, exhaustively and in its entirety, preserving the complexity of human behaviour.

Knowledge and Information Service Inductive analysis is a form of analysis based on inductive reasoning; a researcher using

**Inductive analysis** is a form of analysis based on inductive reasoning; a researcher using inductive analysis starts with answers, but forms questions throughout the research process. Interviews are one of the main means of conducting qualitative research. Interviews are usually:

- Focus groups - interviews of groups of people with something in common.
- Semi-structured – follow a topic guide but allows for follow-up of points
- Unstructured – aims to discuss a limited number of topics in great depth – no structure or pre-conceived plan.

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**Johari window** -In the adapted form, it suggests two dimensions. That is, some material is easily accessible to participants themselves and other material is more difficult to access or articulate; also there is material people will be willing to disclose and that which they are less willing to share. Combining these dimensions gives four kinds of material:

- accessible/will share
  - inaccessible/will share
  - accessible/won't share
  - inaccessible/won't share
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**Laddering** - major themes or beliefs through which they interpret the world and their own lives. Usually applied within an individual interview, it involves asking about a dimension or attribute of relevance to the research field, then repeatedly asking, for each subsequent answer, why that is important to the individual.

This technique can be very intrusive and stressful for the respondent, so needs to be handled with care and applied sensitively.

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**Mapping** - involves asking interviewees or group participants to sort or 'map' objects (or representations of objects) according to how they are seen or thought of. A very powerful enabling technique, it allows people's own categorizations and understandings of an issue or a market to be exposed and explored.

**Maximum variation** – identify the diverse characteristics of the population and then sample people that match these characteristics • **Snowball** – ask people who else might be usefully interviewed.

**Narrative** - audio tape that describes and explains an advertising idea and ensures that there is consistency in the way in which rough ideas are presented to research participants across a research project.

**Neuro-psychology** - theories and knowledge about brain structure and function; their relationship to human phenomena such as memory, emotion, and consciousness; developed rapidly since MRI scanning technology

**Neuroesthetics** - attempt to combine neurological research with aesthetics by investigating the experience of beauty and appreciation of art on the level of brain functions and mental states. This recently developed field seeks the neural correlates of artistic judgment and artistic creation. This new area of study, includes the neural mechanics of perception, the interpretation of what we "see" and what we experience as awe-inspiring (in the sense of admire, enjoy, respect, appreciate).

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**Non-directive interviewing** - interviewing that avoids leading questions, like a particular answer as 'preferred' by the interviewer. Non-judgmental approach

**Non-verbal communication** - expression that does not rely on words. These include features of interaction such as the use of space, the use of timing in the pacing of speech and silences, body movements and postures, and variation in volume, pitch, and quality of voice.

**Objectivity** - assumes that a truth or independent reality exists outside of any investigation or observation. The researcher's task in this model is to uncover this reality without contaminating it in any way. In qualitative research, a realistic aim is for the researcher to remain impartial; that is, to be impartial to the outcome of the research, to acknowledge their own preconceptions and to operate in as unbiased and value-free way as possible.

**Observation** can be direct or indirect, participatory or non-participatory. Framework analysis is where the objectives of the investigation are set in advance and shaped by the information requirements of the funding body; the thematic framework for the content analysis is identified before the research commences (a priori).

**Ontology** – nature of reality or how knowledge is constructed; what is the nature of reality

**Order effects** - techniques used to minimize any bias introduced by the order in which questions are asked. In qualitative research it is important to ensure that the order in which topics are introduced and discussed does not impact later question areas, often moderators are consciously introducing new elements during the discussion to understand whether and how specific issues impact opinion.

**Phenomenology** seeks to describes or explains phenomena. Reflexivity is the open acknowledgement by the researcher of the central

**Positivism** is a research approach based on the philosophical notion that the only way to discover the truth is through application of the objective scientific method; assumes the researcher to be objective with no personal impact on the collection or interpretation of data; in other words, entirely independent of his research. This contrasts to the Interpretivist approach, which assumes the researcher to play a subjective role in his research, with some personal involvement in the observation and drawing of conclusions, which may involve inductive reasoning and the consideration of social constructs.

**Purposive sampling** is the selection of participants who have knowledge or experience of the area being investigated.

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**Qualitative approach:** 1) is broadly focused - not predetermined but derived from the data; 2) is context bound and context sensitive; 3) immersed in the natural setting of people's situation, behavior, and thoughts to explore; 4) focuses on inside view of the people studied and their perceptions, meanings, and interpretations; design is reflective or flexible

**Qualitative Research** – Social inquiry, focusing on ways people make sense of their experiences and understand, describe and interpret social phenomena as perceived by individuals, groups and cultures; explore behaviors, feelings, and experiences of people and what is their core values; and used in exploring change and conflict.

**Qualitative sample** – participants are the informants; purposive and theoretical; flexible that can develop during the research study

**Quota** -specification to which respondents for interviews or group discussions are recruited. This involves specifying the numbers of interviews or groups (and of people per group) and a range of criteria such as respondent age, sex, and usership of particular brands or products, attitudinal or psychographic factors, geographic location or other variables.

**Rationalization**- psychological defense mechanism in which behaviors or feelings are justified and explained in a seemingly rational or logical manner to avoid or conceal the true explanation. Rationalization happens in two steps:

- 1) A decision, action, or judgment is made for a given reason or no known reason at all.
- 2) A seemingly good or logical reason is given as an attempt to justify the act after the fact for oneself or others.

This process ranges from fully conscious to mostly unconscious. People often rationalize in research because they are asked to provide explanations for behavior that is either irrational or habitual that they have not previously had to consider or verbally justify.

**Reflexivity** is the open acknowledgement by the researcher of the central

**Reliability** -repeatability of a particular set of research findings; that is, how accurately they would be replicated in a second identical piece of research; is arguably of limited relevance to qualitative research, since the experience of the researcher, and his/her professional but subjective interpretation of the research materials, is an essential part of qualitative method.

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**Rigor** - degree to which research methods are scrupulously and meticulously carried out in order to recognize important influences occurring in an experiment.

**Social critique** – linked to the power of the relationship

**Social Listening** is mainly used in quantitative research to supplement and even replace conventional tracking. The term refers to the analysis of comments and images that people put online and into the public domain, e.g. on Twitter or Face book or on specialist blogs or forums. \*There is expected to be a strong future role for the analysis of these forms of data by qualitative researchers. The bulk of comments you will see will seem superficial, trivial or random. But they do provide a window on the informal conversation around your topic across the web, which can usefully supplement data from other methods.

**Synectics** -specific approach to creative thinking and brainstorming, originated by the Synaptic Company in the USA. Using techniques of analogy and metaphor, it is used for idea generation and problem solving. A Synesthetic Approach asks participants to express associations using the senses, but not give direct feedback. Instead, a synesthetic approach asks people to consider a target via the senses. For example, if Starbucks were a smell, what would it be? If it had a theme song or music, what is it? In this way, we understand what deep-seated sensorial associations people hold with brands and experiences.

- A theory of personality and communication, and a psychotherapeutic method. TA suggests that the personality contains three ego states: 'Parent' (containing instructions and moral codes), 'Adult' (which evaluates and acts on information) and 'Child' (the home of playfulness and creativity). Everyone has and may act from all three, though individuals tend to have preferred modes.
- This theory is especially concerned with relationships and transactions and commercial researchers have usefully applied this thinking in a number of ways over the past decades. It can, for example, help understand interactions between members of a group discussion, or help think through people's relationships with brands and/or advertising.

**Theoretical sampling** is one in which the objective of developing a theory or explanation guides the process of sampling and data collection.

**Transferability** is the ability to apply the results of research in one context to another similar context. Also, the extent to which a study invites readers to make connections between elements of the study and their own experiences.

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**Triad** -A form of depth interview involving three participants, who may or may not know each other. It offers some of the advantages of group discussions, but also some of those of depth interviews. As is the case for paired depths, triad participants may be recruited to form a homogenous group, or alternatively to set up a degree of

**Triangulation** Used to ensure that the understanding of an area is as complete as possible or to confirm interpretation through the comparison of different data sources.

**Tripartite**-linkages between ontology, epistemology, and methodology

**Unstructured**- aims to discuss a limited number of topics in great depth – no structure or pre-conceived plan. Iteration relates to the process of repeatedly returning to the source of the data to ensure that the understandings are truly coming out of the data. In practice this means a constant process of collecting data, carrying out a preliminary analysis, and using that to guide the next piece of data collection and continuing this patterns until the data collection is complete.

**Validity**- in its purest sense, this refers to how well a scientific test or piece of research actually measures what it sets out to, or how well it reflects the reality it claims to represent. Like reliability, validity in this sense is a concept drawn from the positivist scientific tradition and needs specific interpretation and usage in the context of qualitative research. Validity asks whether the interpretation placed on the data accords with common sense and is relatively untainted with personal or cultural perspective. (see also credibility)

REF

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