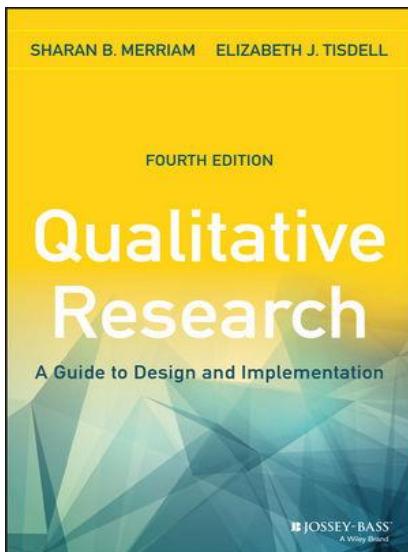


Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation (Fourth Edition)



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Publisher: Jossey-Bass: A Wiley Brand

Year of publication: 2016

ISBN 978-1-119-00361-8 (paperback)

Pages: 346 pp.

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Saying that there is a vast array of books on qualitative research is stating the obvious. But one would be remiss if he were to pay scant attention to *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (4th edition). Divided into three main parts and ten chapters, this book will help novice researchers, especially postgraduate students, to feel confident that research is doable. That is, they will obtain a panoramic view of and a practical insight into what qualitative research entails. Below I will be briefly discussing the nuts and bolts of the ten chapters.

Chapter One emphasizes the contrast between two major research traditions: quantitative and qualitative foci, including a brief discussion on underpinning philosophies. The chapter ends with a delineation of major characteristics of qualitative research, for example, that the researcher is the primary instrument in data collection and analysis.

Chapter Two discusses six types of qualitative research, all of which aim at gaining a better understanding of a phenomenon, something that cannot and should not be quantified because "lived experience" does not lend itself to numerical explication per se.

Chapter Three extends the edge of knowledge in qualitative research by introducing the expanded qualitative paradigm of research, outlining what mixed methods, action research and arts based research entail. More specifically, the reader is informed of the strong tendency on the part of qualitative researchers to pursue "intertextuality" in their research design. For example, "arts based approaches can be incorporated into action research, critical research, or other types of studies."

Chapter Four delves into basic yet crucial components of research. In so doing, the authors discuss the following: topic selection, the theoretical framework of a study, selecting the sample and a succinct discussion of sample size. Taken together, the reader will not have unnecessary difficulties in plowing through a jargon-laden explanation because it is clearly written.

Chapter Five takes the reader through qualitative interviewing procedures, beginning with a straightforward explanation of types of qualitative interviews, followed by detailed information on how to ask good questions and avoid ineffectual ones, and the mechanics of recording interview data.

Chapter Six helps the reader to appreciate the breadth and width of being a careful observation. Because qualitative researchers want to gain a better understanding of a phenomenon, observation is a must in most qualitative cases. This is because without observation, the researcher will miss something important that will eventually help in the final stage of data analysis. In this chapter, the reader is also introduced to the importance of ethics in doing research, using observation as one of the data collection techniques.

Chapter Seven touches on another key aspect of data collection and analysis in qualitative research, documents and artifacts. Because documents and artifacts usually precede a study, they have to be used cautiously through "... the researcher's flexibility in construing the problem and the related questions" (p. 189).

Chapter Eight revolves around data analysis. The reader is introduced to necessary steps in analyzing data that would strike a proper balance between the researcher's stance and what the data indicates. All the steps discussed are meant to ensure reliability and validity (although qualitative research uses other terms such as dependability and credibility or transferability). The chapter rounds up with a discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of using software programs in qualitative data analysis such as CAQDAS.

Chapter Nine focuses on a research aspect that, in my opinion, is most important, validity, reliability and ethics. Of the three words, ethics is at the forefront, for reliability and validity must always be conducted in an ethical manner. The authors capture the essence of this aspect most professionally. In addition, the authors clearly explain the strategies for promoting validity and reliability, which helps the reader to understand the nuances involved in augmenting the issues. Some of the subtopics being discussed are audit trail, triangulation and maximum variation.

Chapter Ten wraps up the whole book in which the authors discuss how to best write qualitative research. The chapter helps the reader to see the importance of succinct writing, which I admit is easier than done, but the authors manage to provide practical suggestions to achieve the desired result.

Overall, this book should be a required reading for postgraduate students, especially those keen on qualitative research. Written in a reader-friendly style, it will certainly help students to fathom the breadth and width of qualitative research with ease. It is a book not to be missed, really.