



# FROM RESEARCH TO PRACTICE: TRAINING COURSE IN SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RESEARCH 2013

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## GENEVA WORKSHOP SEPTEMBER 2014

Qualitative Research: Introduction, Sampling and Approaches  
Part I

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# INTRODUCTION

“Those who tell the stories rule the world.”—  
Hopi American Indian Proverb

“Stories are a communal currency of humanity” –Tahir  
Shah in *Arabian Nights*

“Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying  
with a purpose.” Zora Neale Hurston

# What is qualitative research?

- Research that attempts to answer a question
- Uses a pre-defined process for systematically answering questions
- Collects evidence
- Produces new findings
- Produces findings that can be applied outside the limits of the study

# Advantages of Qualitative Research

- meaningful and culturally pertinent to the participant
- unanticipated by the researcher
- explanatory in nature
- flexible structure/follow-up

# Strengths

- “Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations.”
- How do people experience this research problem
- Describes/informs on behaviors, opinions, emotions, relationships
- Gives an idea of “human” aspect of science: social roles, socioeconomic factors, gender roles, cultural roles-ethnicity & religion
- Can use it in conjunction WITH quantitative research

# Flexibility

- Great strengths of Qualitative research
- Capacity of the researchers drives research
- Can change/alter methods and approaches
- Can add/detract from interview, go deeper

# Quantitative vs. Qualitative

Qualitative Research	RESEARCH ASPECT	Quantitative Research
Discover Ideas, with General Research Objects	<b>COMMON PURPOSE</b>	Test Hypotheses or Specific Research Questions
Observe and Interpret	<b>APPROACH</b>	Measure and Test
Unstructured. Free Form	<b>DATA COLLECTION APPROACH</b>	Structured Response Categories Provided
Research is intimately involved. Results are subjective	<b>RESEARCHER INDEPENDENCE</b>	Researcher uninvolved Observer. Results are Objective
Small samples –Often in Natural setting	<b>SAMPLES</b>	Large samples to Produce Generalizable Results [Results that Apply to Other Situations]

# Bias.....

- Holding a one-sided viewpoint that lacks neutrality; close-minded.
- Seeing only PART of the truth and acting as if that is the WHOLE truth
- We are ALL biased, we just do not see it, or it would not be bias! We want to prove our beliefs.
- In qualitative research there should be “an explicit acknowledgement of bias”

# Decreasing Bias

- If we know it exists what can we do about it?

Design bias, measurement bias, sampling bias

- Triangulation: helps establish validity, or “truth”  
Do the findings accurately describe or reflect the situation I am studying?

Analyzes research question from multiple perspectives

# Types of Triangulation

- Data Triangulation: using different sources for information
- Investigator Triangulation: several different investigators gather information
- Theory Triangulation: ask colleagues outside of your field to interpret findings (nutritionists, social scientists, psychologists)
- Methodology triangulation: different data collection tools (interviews, focus groups, surveys)
- Environmental triangulation: go to different locations and settings at different times of day and year

# How do we evaluate qualitative research?

- Differently than quantitative (validity, reliability)
- Different methods and approaches are used
- Sometimes the goal is to *make* a hypothesis from the research not to test one

# Trustworthiness

- “the extent to which something or someone deserves trust, or is dependable”
- What makes someone trustworthy?

# Trustworthiness

- 1. Truth Value
- 2. Applicability
- 3. Consistency
- 4. Neutrality

# Truth Value

- Internal Validity—quantitative research
- Subject-oriented
- Is the researcher confident in the findings according to the research design, context, and sources
- Is it credible?
- “a qualitative study is credible when it presents such accurate descriptions or interpretation of human experience that people who also share that experience would immediately recognize the descriptions”
  - L. Krefting (1991)

# Applicability

- External validity—quantitative research
- Can we expand this to other situations? To larger populations?
- Can this be applied to situations outside of the research setting?
- “Transferability”
- Often depends on which sampling method used

# Consistency

- Reliability—quantitative research
- Would the findings be the same if the research were done in a similar situation with similar informants with a different researcher?

# Neutrality

- Objectivity—quantitative research
- Free from bias
- “the degree to which the findings are a function solely of the informants and conditions of the research and not of other biases, motivations, and perspectives.”

- Guba, 1981