



Using a qualitative design for health research

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Module objectives

- At the end of this module, participants should be able to:
 - Formulate research questions on mental health that are suited to a qualitative research design;
 - Select at least one method for qualitative data collection and discuss its advantages and limitations;
 - Identify and discuss some of the issues surrounding the production of good quality qualitative research on mental health.




What is qualitative research design?





Thinking about research design

- What do I want to know?
 - Why do I want to know it?
 - What assumptions am I making about research and knowledge?
 - What types of data would best answer these questions?
 - What type of data will I use to tell me what I want to know?
 - How much data will I need?
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Thinking about research design

- How will I collect my data?
- If my research involves participants:
 - Who will I need to collect data from?
 - How will I access and recruit these participants
- How will I analyze my data in order to answer my questions?
- What particular ethical issues do I need to consider?
- Are there any pragmatic factors I need to take into account?



Qualitative research designs

- Interpretive/phenomenological, critical
- Theory as framework, for helping describe or explain phenomena, or as output of the study
- Non-linear process
- Non-probability sampling
- Text as data
- Best for providing a detailed picture of social phenomena, investigating processes, meanings, constructions, identifying what and how factors become relevant.




Qualitative research designs

- Are about meaning, not numbers
- Do not provide a single answer
- Treat context as important
- Can be experiential or critical
- Are underpinned by ontological and epistemological assumptions
- Use all sorts of data
- Value subjectivity and reflexivity

Types of research questions

- Experience-type questions
- Understandings and perceptions
- Practices/accounts of practice
- Influencing factors
- Representation, construction, and language practice




Mental Health Research Agenda in the Philippines

- Outcome 1: Improved Mental Health Information System
- Outcome 2: Strengthened Leadership and Governance
- Outcome 3: Accessible, Affordable, Responsive, and
- Outcome 4: Holistic Mental Health Services



Activity 1

- Looking at the types of questions qualitative research can be good for, think of questions based on any one of the four outcomes of the Mental Health Research Agenda. Explore the potential of research questions regarding experience, understandings and perceptions, practices/accounts of practice, influencing factors, and on representation, construction, and language practice for contributing to the mental health research agenda.
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What are some examples of qualitative
data collection methods?



Interactive data collection methods

- Interviews
- Focus Group Discussions



Textual data collection methods

- Qualitative surveys
- Story-completion tasks
- Researcher-directed diaries
- Collecting pre-existing textual data




What makes for high quality qualitative
mental health research?




A good sample: some sampling techniques

- Purposive sampling
 - Deviant case sampling
 - Theoretical sampling
- Snowball sampling



A good sample: some points to remember

- Size alone does not determine a good sample! The final size can be determined by: theoretical and methodological concerns as well as practical concerns.
 - The criteria for selection/participation must be logical; they can be based on the theoretical framework, established criteria in the literature, or an identified gap in the literature your research would like to address.
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■ Fulfilling the Criteria for Quality Research: A slightly different orientation

- Reliability
 - Generating the same results when the same measures are administered
- Validity
 - The research is able to show what it claims to show, is able to capture 'reality'.
 - 4 forms of validity
 - Construct validity
 - Internal validity
 - External validity
 - Ecological validity
- Generalizability

Trustworthiness
Ecological Validity
Transferability


■ Fulfilling the Criteria for Quality Research: Some techniques

- Member checking
- Triangulation
- Using a research journal
 - an accounting of the research process
 - documentation of thoughts, decisions made, analytic notes




Doing research ethically: Some general principles

- Protection from harm
 - Respect for individual dignity
 - Right to self-determination
 - Right to privacy
 - Protection of confidentiality
 - Honesty and integrity
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Doing research ethically: Some basic guidelines

- Informed consent
- Confidentiality
- Right to withdraw
- Assessing risk of harm
- Researcher safety
- Deception
- Debriefing
- Limitations to researcher's role
- Use of incentives
- Honesty and integrity in the research process



Doing research ethically: Additional issues for online research

- Establishing participant identity
- Effects of visual anonymity
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Managing online relationships



Activity 2: Research Pitch

1. What is your research topic?
2. Is it possible to use a qualitative design for this topic?
Revisit the questions most suited to qualitative research and see if such questions can be asked in relation to your topic.
3. What methods for data gathering do you plan to use?
What sampling strategy? Why?
4. Do you have any specific practical and ethical concerns?