

UNRAVELING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: BREAKING BARRIERS?

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to assist the researchers at Surya Nusantara Adventist College in gaining knowledge about qualitative research methods. The goal is to encourage respondents to conduct research using qualitative approaches in their respective fields of expertise. The workshop covered the following topics: What is qualitative research methodology, and how does it differ from quantitative methodology? What are the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research, and how can one effectively conduct qualitative research (tips)? Prior to the workshop, the respondents admitted to having difficulty with qualitative research due to a lack of understanding. However, after the workshop, the respondents reported a better understanding of qualitative research concepts and felt motivated to consider qualitative research as an alternative method. 75% of participants stated that the material presented met their needs, and 81% said that it broadened their insights. They expressed motivation to apply qualitative research in their future projects.

Keywords: Qualitative, Research

1. Introduction

Qualitative inquiry plays a vital role in understanding the intricate nuances of human behavior, perceptions, and phenomena often overlooked by quantitative approaches. Unlike quantitative studies, which focus on numerical data and statistical analysis, qualitative research delves deeply into the subjective aspects of human existence, offering profound insights into attitudes, beliefs, motivations, and societal contexts. Spanning disciplines such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, education, and healthcare, qualitative research serves as a powerful tool for unraveling complexities and capturing the essence of human experiences.

Due to its adaptable and iterative nature, qualitative research provides a dynamic avenue for exploration, allowing researchers to tailor methodologies to suit each investigation's unique attributes. Methodologies such as interviews, focus groups, and observations empower researchers to probe subjects extensively, revealing latent meanings and fresh perspectives (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

While some researchers may perceive qualitative research as challenging, its difficulty varies depending on several factors (Brannen, 2017). Dealing with subjective data such as opinions, beliefs, and experiences requires a deep understanding of context, culture, and individual perspectives. Human behavior and social phenomena are complex and ever-evolving, posing challenges in capturing and comprehending all relevant factors. Qualitative researchers often navigate ambiguity and complexity in their data, complicating the research process. Mastering qualitative research demands a diverse skill set, including interviewing, observation, and

qualitative data analysis, which requires time and practice to develop. However, despite these obstacles, qualitative research offers unique opportunities for generating rich insights and addressing complex research questions.

To foster innovation in research, researchers must continually expand their knowledge within their field and remain open to exploring new approaches. While quantitative research is more prevalent and often perceived as easier, each approach has its advantages and disadvantages. The key lies in selecting the approach that best suits the research problem at hand. Encouraging the exploration of qualitative approaches can lead to diverse and progressive research, enriching the research landscape and expanding methodological options for future studies. Providing insights and guidance on qualitative research methodologies aims to inspire researchers to consider qualitative approaches in their future endeavors, thereby contributing to the advancement of knowledge and understanding in their respective fields.

2. Literature Review

Qualitative research plays a crucial role in exploring the intricacies of human behavior, experiences, and phenomena. Unlike quantitative methods, which rely on numerical data and statistical analysis, qualitative research aims to uncover the underlying meanings, motivations, and perspectives shaping individuals' lives within their social and cultural contexts. Methodologies such as ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, narrative analysis, and case study offer diverse avenues for data collection and analysis, allowing researchers to tailor their methods to fit each study's unique characteristics (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Prioritizing depth over breadth, qualitative research provides detailed insights into the complex nuances of human behavior and social contexts often overlooked by quantitative approaches. Its flexible and adaptive nature enables researchers to explore unforeseen paths of inquiry and adjust to evolving research needs. Moreover, qualitative research centers on the voices and experiences of participants, fostering empathy and reflexivity among researchers.

However, qualitative research presents several challenges. Its inherent subjectivity may introduce bias into the research process, potentially influencing data collection and interpretation. Additionally, reliance on small, non-random samples limits the generalizability of findings. Qualitative research is also time-intensive, requiring extensive data collection, transcription, and analysis. Ensuring the validity and reliability of findings can be complex due to the interpretive nature of qualitative analysis, necessitating rigorous methodological approaches.

Despite these challenges, qualitative research offers invaluable insights into specific contexts and phenomena, enriching our understanding of human behavior and social dynamics. With careful attention to methodological rigor and transparency, qualitative researchers can overcome these challenges and make meaningful contributions to their respective fields.

3. Research Method

The researcher collected data by distributing questionnaires to 16 lecturers serving as respondents for this research. The questionnaire aimed to gauge their perception of qualitative

research methodology. The respondents consisted of staff, leaders/heads, lecturers, and teachers from Surya Nusantara Adventist College, located in Pematang Siantar, Sumatera Utara. Following the questionnaire distribution, discussions were held to analyze the respondents' understanding of the provided materials.

4. Results and Discussion

The workshop took place on Tuesday, December 6, 2022, 10.00 – 13.00 WIB. During the workshop, participants directly posed questions to the moderator, who then facilitated responses from the resource person. A questionnaire was distributed to all participants to gather feedback on the presented material. Out of the 29 attendees, 16 completed the questionnaire, while some either left early or forgot to fill it out.

The workshop covered the following topics:

1. Definition and distinction between qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.
2. Strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research methodology.
3. Practical tips for conducting qualitative research.

Participants engaged in discussions and interactive sessions to delve deeper into these subjects and clarify any uncertainties.

Prior to receiving the materials and engaging in discussions, a majority of the 16 respondents lacked a comprehensive understanding of qualitative research. Many perceived qualitative research as challenging due to the meticulous time management required and the complexity of data interpretation and analysis inherent to the methodology. Recognizing qualitative research's focus on studying human behavior within social and cultural contexts, participants emphasized the importance of understanding relevant social phenomena. Additionally, they highlighted the necessity for refined interview techniques to ensure respondent engagement with the topic.

Following the delivery of materials, intensive discussions, and question-and-answer sessions, participants were re-evaluated on their perception of qualitative research methodology. 75% of respondents indicated that the provided material adequately addressed their needs, while 81% reported that it significantly expanded their insights. Moreover, participants expressed newfound motivation to incorporate qualitative research methods into their future projects.

To enhance the quality of the training program, participants provided feedback and suggestions for improvement, which were evaluated as follows:

- (1) Strongly Agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Disagree
- (4) Strongly Disagree



Picture 1. Opening and Training Overview



Picture 2. Discussion Session with Each Respondent

Figure 1. Survey Results from Respondents

Narasumber	Materi yang disampaikan mampu menjawab kebutuhan peserta	Materi yang disampaikan mampu menambah wawasan peserta	Pembicara mampu menyampaikan materi dengan baik	Pembicara menguasai materi yang disampaikan	Pembicara mampu menjawab pertanyaan yang diajukan peserta
Pembicara	Sangat Setuju 75% Setuju 25%	Sangat Setuju 81% Setuju 19%	Sangat Setuju 94% Setuju 6%	Sangat Setuju 94% Setuju 6%	Sangat Setuju 75% Setuju 25%
Materi	Ketepatan waktu tim webinar terhadap acara	Ingin kegiatan seminar seperti ini dari dosen UPH di masa mendatang			
Pembicara	Sangat Setuju 75% Setuju 19% Tidak setuju 6%	Sangat Setuju 81% Setuju 19%			

Source: Survey Data (2022)

5. Conclusion

This workshop garnered a positive response and furnished valuable insights for the leaders, lecturers, teachers, and staff of Surya Nusantara Adventist College, amidst significant challenges, aiming to propel performance forward. This endeavor enhances their focus, enabling them to align with the demands of the job market and fostering advancement for the future. Prior to the workshop, participants acknowledged their struggles in conducting qualitative research due to a lack of comprehension. However, upon completion of the activities, they grasped the essence of qualitative research and expressed motivation to embrace it as an alternative research methodology.

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