

Qualitative Research Questions

Qualitative research raises research questions and research hypotheses. The research questions have mainly two forms: central questions, and sub-questions.

The **central research questions** asked about a specific phenomenon but in general, or a concept in a study. The question should be consistent with the methodology followed in the area of research, and

Central questions can be raised to verify the accuracy of the data, in ethnographic research. They have been discussed by a few researchers; you can re-ask similar questions to compare your own findings, for example you investigate behaviour of adults on Facebook using anglophonic words, and you want to compare your results with the published ones. These questions will guide you in your project (Thomas, 1993), this approach is mainly used in critical ethnography. In phenomenology, questions can be raised in general, without any reference to published studies. In a qualitative case study, questions are raised to describe the study or to address the **themes** (check your handout on thematic analysis) that emerge from the study.

Question Types

Begin the research questions with the **what** or **how** to give a sense that it is an open and emerging study, nothing is finite or clear to the researcher until the research achieves the findings section, as these questions will primarily appear in the abstract, the general introduction, and the methodology chapter, before they are addressed in the discussion and summarised in the general conclusion as main findings.

Why researchers in *qualitative research* cannot raise **why** question?

Researchers often focus on a specific context, a phenomenon to explore in qualitative research, and their final goal is not to connect variables, as this would convey the context of a quantitative research. They ask questions that begin with identifying the concept, the influencing factors, but not reasons of why a specific phenomenon occurred, our studies designed in qualitative approaches are exploratory rather cause-effect relationships.

Questions Process

Questions in qualitative research are not final, they are rather continual, as the researcher explores further, questions can be reformulated, this is awkward to quantitative researchers who are accustomed to not change research questions until they finish their study. The research question should be specific and includes the context of the study.

Parts of the question

Question from a narrative

Zekri (2020) investigated women identities in EFL context through narrative writing. She examined students' narratives, exploring how the women develop their learning identities through three main time periods (past, present, and the future).

Structure

What/how are(story of narrative research),(meaning of the phenomenon/story).....(case of the study)(context of the study).

Example; What are the experiences of the past, which influence the self-identities of the women students in Department of English at Tlemcen University?

Question from ethnographic research

Finders (1996) used ethnographic procedures to document the reading of teen magazines by middle class European American seventh-grade girls. By examining the reading of teen zines (magazines), the researcher explored how the girls perceive and construct their social roles and relationships as they enter junior high school. She asked one guiding central question in her study.

Structure

How (single concept; literature).....(participants)(area of research; fiction)

Example;

How do early adolescent females read literature that falls outside the realm of fiction? (p. 72)