

# Writing Grants that Incorporate Qualitative Methods

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# QUALITATIVE

**INDUCTIVE** or theory-  
development driven

Helps **elucidate processes**  
(especially emerging over time)

Provides **detailed information**  
about setting or context &  
meanings of experiences

Emphasizes voices of  
participants (quotes)

# QUANTITATIVE

**DEDUCTIVE**

**Tests theories or hypotheses**

Provides **measurable evidence**)  
& gathers descriptive  
information

Examines relationships among  
variables

# STRENGTHS

## QUAL

Facilitates collection of data when measures do not exist

Provides a depth of understanding of concepts

Allows identification of previously unknown processes

Explanations of “why” and “how” phenomena occur

Elucidate range of effects of phenomena

## QUANT

Yields efficient data collection procedures

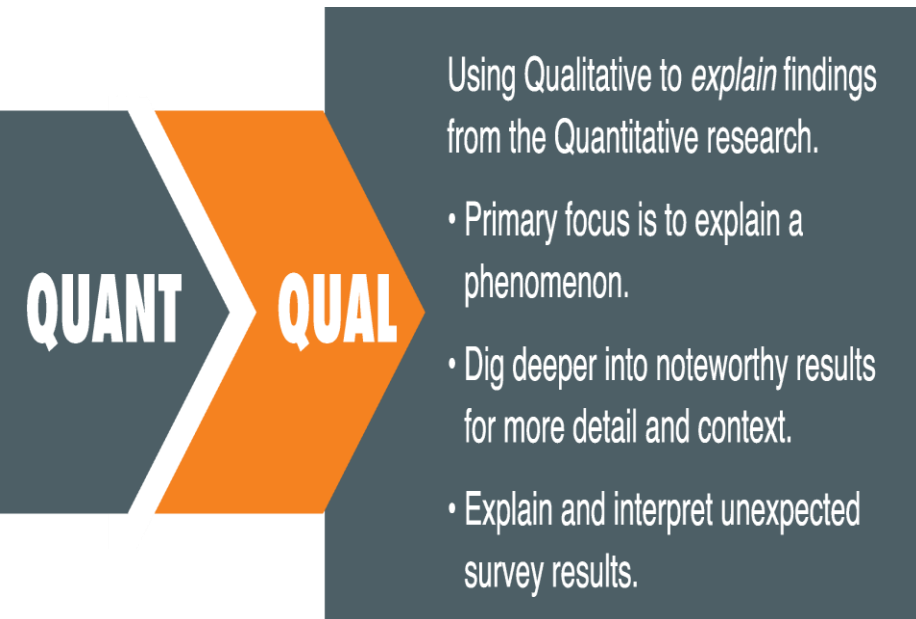
Generalizability: creates possible replication

Facilitates comparison groups

Measures pervasiveness of “known” phenomena

Helps establish (probable) cause and effect

# Mixed Methods



# Utility of Qualitative Data

1. Utilize qualitative themes to differentiate individuals (how).
2. Identify important factors involved in processes.
3. Develop new items for a quantitative instrument.
4. Collect data regarding participant experiences.
5. Collect data to inform development of procedures.
6. Collect data to help explain results.
7. Evaluate process of an intervention.

# Qualitative Methods: WHEN

- Research methods **MUST** fit research problem or question
  - ▣ New questions and initiatives
  - ▣ Complex phenomena
  - ▣ Hard-to-measure constructs
  - ▣ Interactions in specific, everyday settings
  
- An example: ***Why are certain external and internal factors significant or not significant predictors of students' success in school?***

# Qualitative Methods: WHY

- Choice of qualitative methods should be informed by:
  - ▣ A theoretical and conceptual orientation that supports the overarching science
  - ▣ Needs of the study
  
- An example: ***Are you drawing from learning theory (interested in how people learn), ecological theory (social and structural factors that impact learning), etc.***

# **Writing Great Grant Applications**



# Research Goal

- ❑ State an overall goal that addresses overarching research problem or question
- ❑ Types of Goals that lend themselves to qualitative methods:
  - ❑ Gain a deeper understanding of “how” and “why”.
  - ❑ Providing detailed information about experiences and life courses
  - ❑ Understanding why certain individuals or groups of individuals experience different outcomes
- ❑ Ensure that the goal informs the specific aims and research questions, leading naturally to a qualitative methods approach

# Specific Aims

- ❑ Aims are driven by the research question, NOT by the methodology
- ❑ Methods should flow naturally from the aims and Research Question
- ❑ For each aim, identify methodological approach to be used to accomplish it/to tie methods with goals

# Specific Aims

Aims that call for a qualitative approach are:

- ❑ Inductive in nature
- ❑ Emphasize exploration
- ❑ Contextualize individual behavior, group behavior, organizational dynamics and cultural influences
- ❑ Convey openness for learning from participants and data sources

# Specific Aims - Examples

## **2.1. Specific Aim 1: Perform formative research to develop \_\_\_\_\_ that convey the importance of \_\_\_\_\_ in King County, Washington.**

- 2.1.A. Our research team will conduct focus group and key informant interviews with members from highly-affected communities: a) \_\_\_\_\_ and b) \_\_\_\_\_, who form the majority of incident HIV among \_\_\_\_\_ in King County.
  - Subaim 2.1.1. Our research team will continue to inform ourselves about best practices in community-participatory research, by holding brown bag seminars with leading practitioners and discussing approaches that draw from community strengths.
- 2.1.B. Develop a multimedia tool that illustrates the principles \_\_\_\_\_ for use in community discussions. This video/animation tool will be designed so that it can be accompanied by narrated text in different languages and will be iteratively piloted in English, Kiswahili, and Amharic.
- 2.1.C. Identify message dissemination channels in the target populations (xx and yy). These channels may include social network approaches (person-to-person communication), civil society approaches (churches, community events, and community-based organizations), and the media (radio, TV, and print).

# Specific Aims - Examples

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- Develop a community curriculum to educate the community about...
- Evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of...

# Significance

- ❑ Review literature with a focus on methods.
  - ❑ Consider adding critiques related to methods that have not been used to study the topic.
- ❑ Identify gaps in the extant knowledge that suggests need for gathering qualitative data to address the research question.
- ❑ Identify rationale for using qualitative methods
  - ❑ establish importance of the problem
  - ❑ establish how your investigation will enhance scientific knowledge

# Approach

## Data Collection:

- ❑ Qualitative design/approach
- ❑ Purposeful sampling strategy
- ❑ Sample size considerations
- ❑ Participant recruitment
- ❑ Data sources
- ❑ Data collection protocols
- ❑ How data will be recorded
- ❑ Procedures
- ❑ Relevant ethical Issues

# Approach

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## Data Analysis:

- Data preparation procedures
  - ▣ Transcription
  - ▣ Coding and theme development strategies
- Qualitative data analysis software tools



# Approach

IMPORTANT: Detailed AND specific strategies to ensure rigor of qualitative approach. Must ensure high levels of:

- Trustworthiness
- Credibility
- Transferability
- Accuracy of the qualitative findings and conclusions

# Approach

Strategies to ensure rigor of qualitative approach:

- **Triangulating** multiple data sources or investigators when applicable
- **Member checking** results when participants are available to provide feedback and/or additional data at a later time
- **Inter-coder agreement** checks when reliability of codes is important
- **Prolonged engagement** when data are collected in the field.

# Sampling Considerations

- If using saturation explain this concept thoroughly:
  - “sampling to a point where no new information is obtained from participants”
- Consider estimating an upper limit of expected need for participants

# IRB Considerations

- ❑ Be prepared to educate IRB reviewers about qualitative research.
- ❑ Present research in phases or stages.
  - ❑ Each subsequent stage will be accompanied by a modification to the initial IRB approval.
  - ❑ Title modifications according to stage or phase referring back to original approval and informing IRB of what to expect for next phase/stage.

# Examples

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What are the research grants that you are working on?

**THANK YOU**