QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS
AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

compiled by
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INTRODUCTION

This annotated bibliography should be seen as a starting point and not as a comprehensive guide to the literature available on qualitative research methods. It is meant to help researchers find material on designing, implementing, analyzing, and reporting qualitative research. Because a wide range of techniques is used in qualitative research, this bibliography concentrates on specific methods, such as observation and interviewing and on approaches that emphasize the use of more than one technique.

An effort has been made to collect material that is free of jargon, deals with practical concerns, provides detailed descriptions of the actual techniques and defines the type of data that can be collected. Where possible, material that was written in condescending language or that shows a strong American or European bias has been deliberately excluded. Literature that concentrates on "within-discipline" fine tuning or critiques has also been left out.

This book is divided into two main sections. The first, Topics and techniques, is organized so that it follows the steps necessary for developing and executing a research project. It begins with a general discussion of theory and methods; then goes on to research design; the use of multiple methods and specific techniques; the questions of analysis, quality, validity, rigor, bias, and evidence; and ends with a section on report writing. Each section contains a short discussion of the pertinent references and a list of related readings on the subject.

Most of the books and articles mentioned under General discussion of theory and methods provide a practical overview of qualitative research methods. Although a few look at the theoretical underpinnings of various methods, most deal with a wide range of techniques and approaches and provide specific discussions of the value and limitations of each.

Research using qualitative methods requires a modified design, so Research design includes sources that discuss a wide range of applications. There are various ways in which multiple methods can be integrated into a research project: various qualitative methods can be used, a range of quantitative methods, or a mixture of the two approaches can incorporated. The section on Integrating multiple methods focuses on integrating methods, with emphasis on combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Rapid assessment procedures are discussed as a discrete topic under this heading as these are common in development work. The case study approach, on the other hand, is listed as a subheading because it is possible to use any of the combinations mentioned above.
Although they can be dealt with as discrete topics, *Observation and interviewing* have been presented together because they are most widely used in conjunction. The major books and articles that discuss both techniques are mentioned here. There are also three main subheadings under observation and interviewing: observation, which includes participant observation and direct observation; interviewing, which encompasses semi-structured interviewing, group interviewing, open-ended interviewing, and conversational interviewing; and focus group research, which is a specific interview technique.

For many researchers who are new to qualitative research methods, the analysis of qualitative data can seem daunting. The books and articles recommended under the heading *Analysis* reflect comprehensive approaches. Where analysis is discussed for a specific technique, these references have been grouped under the specific technique.

In qualitative research, *Quality, rigor, validity, and evidence* must be dealt with differently than in quantitative research. As in the section on analysis, books and articles that deal with these issues in detail are mentioned in this section, but discussions pertaining to specific techniques are found under those headings. The section ends with a section on *Report writing* because it is important to understand how to report the results of research using qualitative methods.

The full references for each source listed in the *Topics and techniques* section are given in *Annotated bibliography*. The references are organized in alphabetical order by author and many include a list of the topics and subtopics they cover and a short summary of their content.
I. TOPICS AND TECHNIQUES

GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THEORY AND METHODS

The following books and articles provide the most accessible, least discipline-bound look at research methods. Each book discusses how to plan, design, implement, analyze, and report qualitative research. Of all these excellent books, Patton (1990) and Strauss and Corbin (1990) offer the most comprehensive examination of the subject from two different theoretical perspectives. On the other hand, Werner and Schoepfle (1987a,b) has been included for researchers who are familiar with the use of qualitative methods.

Bryman (1988), Kirk and Miller (1986), and Tesch (1990) concentrate on specific problems, such as validity, integrating methods, or computer analysis, but each of these books presents an excellent introduction to the field of qualitative research. The manuals by Kumar (1987a), Yoddumnern-Attig et al. (1991) and the volume edited by Crabtree and Miller (1992) provide a short overview of most of the techniques listed and touch on research design, analysis, and report writing. Goetz and LeCompte (1984), Lofland (1971), Murphy (1980), and Monette et al. (1986) concentrate on specific research techniques, while Goetz and LeCompte (1981), Mechanic (1989), and Zelditch (1982) highlight some potential problems with poorly designed qualitative research.

Although this bibliography has been weighted toward techniques rather than theoretical issues, methods have theoretical roots. Readers who wish to pursue this area will find that Bryman (1988), Guba and Lincoln (1981), Johnson (1975), Strauss and Corbin (1990), and Tesch (1990) have dealt clearly with these issues in light of specific methods.

Related readings

Agar 1980
Bernard 1988
Bogdan and Biklen 1982
Bogdan and Taylor 1990
Bolton 1982
Brownstein 1990
Burgess 1982b
Buzzard 1984
Campbell 1955
Cernea 1985
Chambers 1987

Corbin and Strauss 1990
Crane and Angrosino 1974
Devault 1990
Douglas 1976
Elinson 1985
Emerson 1987
Engel 1992
Fetterman 1989
Foster 1987
Glaser and Strauss 1967
Guba 1985

Qualitative research methods
Gubrium 1988
Hammersley 1981
Hammersley and Atkinson 1983
Heggenhougen and Clements 1987
Husband and Foster 1987
Janes et al. 1986
Joekes and Kabeer 1991
Lee and Shute 1991
Leininger 1991
Lincoln 1985
Miller 1990
Mosley and Chen 1984
Norton et al. 1991
Peacock 1986
Pelto and Pelto 1978, 1992
Pelto et al. 1990
Peshkin 1988
Ramakrishna and Brieger 1987
Rothe 1993
Sanders 1976
Sanjek 1990
Silverman 1989
Skrtic 1985
van Maanen 1983
Walker 1985
Wax 1971
Webb et al. 1991
Whiting 1968
Williams 1986
Wills et al. 1990
RESEARCH DESIGN

Each of the following authors provides the researcher with a clear means to start planning a project using qualitative techniques. *Marshall and Rossman (1989)* and *Yin (1984)* cover research design in the clearest manner and in the most exhaustive detail. *Patton (1990), Strauss and Corbin (1990), Weller and Romney (1987),* and *Fielding and Fielding (1986)* all provide good sections on research design; *Werner and Schoepfle (1987), Brewer and Hunter (1989), Miles and Huberman (1984),* and *Monette et al. (1986)* address research design in less-detailed fashion. *Johnson (1990)* looks specifically at the question of selecting informants and representative samples. In addition to research design, most of these authors consider the kinds of questions that are most effectively addressed through the use of the various methods.

Related readings

*Foster 1987*
*Whiting 1968*
INTEGRATING MULTIPLE METHODS

Ideally, a variety of methods will be used by most researchers in most research projects. The exact form of this mix varies with researcher, research question, the intended outcome of the project, and the time constraints under which the project is carried out. Some projects incorporate a mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches; others use several qualitative techniques. Some use methods that require a long time frame; others emphasize "rapid" data gathering. The "case study" approach has been included in this section because it can be accomplished through a wide variety of methods.

Related readings

Bogdan and Biklen 1982
Brannen 1992
Buchanan 1992
Cohen 1973
Davies et al. 1985
de Vries et al. 1992
Drake 1973
Ianni and Orr 1979
Joekes and Kabeer 1991

Ragin 1987
Reichardt and Cook 1979
Rossman and Wilson 1985
Roter and Frankel 1992
Smith 1987
Steckler et al. 1991
Steckler et al. 1992
Van den Berghe 1973
Mixing quantitative and qualitative approaches

The authors highlighted in this section all discuss various aspects of designing projects that use both qualitative and quantitative methods. Some are very specific whereas others consider general issues from this sort of approach. Brewer and Hunter (1989) deal with broader questions in the design of projects that integrate qualitative and quantitative methods. Fielding and Fielding (1986), Bryman (1988) and Whyte (1984), on the other hand, concentrate on research design, implementation, data analysis, and the presentation of results in studies using qualitative and quantitative methods. Readers who wish to find a short introduction to this type of research will find the articles by Mechanic (1989) and Rosman and Wilson (1985) valuable. Each of these writers assumes that it is possible to use qualitative and quantitative research in a single project, although they discuss some of the problems inherent in undertaking this form of research.

There is a hotly contested and long-standing debate between practitioners of both approaches about this type of mix. Trend (1979) considers these in a short article and Bleek (1987), Davis (1986), and Ward et al. (1991) furnish some examples of research in which qualitative and quantitative approaches have produced markedly different results.

Rapid assessment methods

Rapid data collection techniques have become increasingly popular over the last few years. Various approaches have been suggested. The works mentioned here includes an article by Chambers (1985), who is an important proponent of these methods. The Scrimshaw and Hurtado (1987) manual has become a classic for health science research, explaining various techniques and illustrating them with examples. Croll (1984), Coreil et al. (1989), Sollis and Moser (1991) and the various authors in Scrimshaw and Gleason (1992) document specific examples of the use of this approach. Both Kumar (1987a) and the World Health Organization (1988) provide short overviews of various rapid assessment methods targeted for development projects.

Related readings

Ashe 1978
Bentley et al. 1988
Cernea 1985
Joekes and Kabeer 1991

Kashyap and Young 1989
Longhurst 1981
Manderson and Aaby 1992
Smith 1989

Qualitative research methods
Case studies

Case study research can be undertaken through a variety of methods, both qualitative and quantitative. Yin (1984) has written the clearest and most complete discussion about designing, implementing, analyzing, and reporting case studies. Merriam's (1988) book also deals with all aspects of case study research, using examples drawn from research on education. Patton (1990) has a good chapter on this topic whereas Strauss (1987) and McClintock et al. (1983) address specific aspects of case study research.

Related readings

Ballard 1986  Casley and Lurie 1987
Bennis 1968   Rosenblatt 1981
Campbell 1975  Van Velsen 1967
OBSERVATION AND INTERVIEWING

These two qualitative techniques are most commonly used together and this is reflected in most of the literature. A wide variety of material is available on these topics. The books mentioned here provide some of the most practical discussions. Patton (1990), Spradley (1979), and Whyte (1984) have all written on these two techniques in detail. Other books, such as Murphy (1980), Guba and Lincoln (1981), Goetz and LeCompte (1984), Lofland (1971), and Scrimshaw and Hurtado (1987) include discussions of observation and interviewing. Becker's (1970) book collects some influential early articles written on the subjects; the Bleek (1987) article poses some excellent questions about the limitations of observation and interviewing.

Related readings

Achterberg 1988
Agar 1980
Babchuk 1961
Becker and Geer 1970
Biklen and Moseley 1988
Bogdan and Biklen 1982
Bourdillon 1991
Brenner et al. 1985
Bruyn 1970

Devault 1990
Frankenberg 1982
Friedrichs and Ludtke 1974
Gans 1982
Hyman 1975
Joekes and Kabeer 1991
McCall and Simmons 1969
Oakley 1981
Seidman 1991
Observation — techniques and analysis

Aside from Jorgensen (1989), few books deal solely with observation as a technique, although Monette et al. (1986), Johnson (1975), Salmen (1987), and Becker and Geer (1982) deal with aspects of observation as a separate topic. Walker and Lidz (1977) and Schwartz and Schwartz (1955) raise important questions for researchers to consider when designing and implementing qualitative research emphasizing observation.

Interviewing — techniques and analysis

Focus groups and group interviews

Conducting group interviews, of which focus groups represent a special case, requires different skills and different research designs. Ashby (1990) has written one of the most practical discussions on the design and implementation of group interviews. This manual is particularly good because of its emphasis on understanding researcher-informant interaction and group dynamics. Kumar (1987b) has dealt with a variety of group interview techniques from a development project perspective.

Krueger (1988), Simard (1989) and Dawson et al. (1993) have written valuable guides to all aspects of focus group research. Scrimshaw and Hurtado (1987), Folch-Lyon and Trost (1981), Irwin et al. (1991), and Eng et al. (1990) discuss the use of focus groups in health research; Ward et al. (1991) compare the results of work done with focus group research and surveys.

Related readings

Academy for Educational Development 1989  Greenbaum 1987
Achterberg 1988     Morgan 1988
Byers and Wilcox 1991 Morgan 1992
ANALYSIS

Patton (1990) and Miles and Huberman (1984) have examined techniques for analyzing qualitative data in the most detailed fashion. Lofland (1971), Murphy (1980), Strauss and Corbin (1990), and Weller and Romney (1988) cover this topic particularly well as part of a discussion on techniques. Becker (1970), Goetz and LeCompte (1984), Johnson (1975), Werner and Schoepfle (1987), and Whyte (1984) look at more specific forms of data analysis, whereas Sollis and Moser (1991) provide a good example of on-site analysis as part of a participatory research project. Silverman (1993) has produced a clearly written text on the analysis of data obtained through interviews and by observation.

Related readings

Bogdan and Biklen 1982
Burgess 1982a, b 1984
Burnard 1991
Devault 1990
Holsti 1969

Ianni and Orr 1979
Sanders 1976
Stubbs 1983
Van Velsen 1967

Qualitative research methods
Data collection and analysis using computer software

Tesch (1990) covers the topic of data collection, recording, and analysis using computer software in the most systematic and straightforward manner. Pfaffenberger (1988) provides a comprehensive look at microcomputer application in qualitative research. Gladwin (1989) covers the use of computers in data collection and analysis as part of a specific research method.

Related readings

Cooke 1992  Hesse-Biber et al. 1991
Fielding and Lee 1991  Taft 1993
Heise 1992  Tallerico 1991
QUALITY, RIGOR, VALIDITY, EVIDENCE

Data quality, rigor, validity, error, bias, and evidence are issues in all research; however, the means by which qualitative and quantitative research can be judged differs. Yin (1984), Kirk and Miller (1986), and Silverman (1993) deal with these topics in a clear and exhaustive way. Brewer and Hunter (1989), Fielding and Fielding (1986), Guba and Lincoln (1981), Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Weller and Romney (1988) all have substantial discussions of these topics; Becker (1970) and Marshall and Rossman (1989) provide short overviews of the issues.

Related readings

Bernard et al. 1984 \hspace{1cm} Romney and Batchelder 1986
Krefting 1991 \hspace{1cm} Romney and Weller 1984
Kuzel and Like 1991 \hspace{1cm} Sandelowski 1986
Maxwell 1992 \hspace{1cm} Silverman 1989
Miller 1990, 1992 \hspace{1cm} Steckler 1989
Ratcliffe and Gonzalez-del-Valle 1988 \hspace{1cm} Ward and Johnson 1993
REPORT WRITING

Clear reporting of the results of qualitative research is as important as its design. Kamil et al. (1985) is the most complete guide to this process; Murphy (1980), Patton (1990), and Strauss and Corbin (1990) also contain valuable sections on writing results.

Related reading

Becker 1986
OTHER METHODS, OTHER ISSUES — RELATED READINGS

Agar 1986
Andrew 1985
Becker 1978
Daly and McDonald 1992
Deyhle et al. 1992
Langness 1965
Lidz and Ricci 1990
Oakley 1981
Punch 1986
Purvis 1985
Scott 1986
Smith 1987
Tomm 1989
Watson and Watson-Franke 1985
II. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
(alphabetical listing by author)

USING THIS SECTION

Each annotated entry has four sections and looks like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major topics:</strong> Analysis, Validity, Research design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtopics:</strong> In-the-field analysis, Cross-site analysis, Matrix analysis, Drawing conclusions and testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summary:</strong> This well-organized, coherent look at the analysis of qualitative research covers a wide range of methods and techniques. Techniques and strategies for data analysis are discussed in detail and guidelines for verification, validity, and rigor are presented.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bibliographic reference.** The entry begins with the full bibliographic reference listed alphabetically by author and year of publication

**Major topics.** This section lists the major topics covered by the author, which usually correspond to topics covered in the annotated subject index. If the author deals with a topic related to health sciences this is denoted under the heading "Health science research."

**Subtopics.** This part of the entry provides specific information on subcategories of techniques or approaches, area of research, or both. The terms used in this section are not standardized.

**Summary and comments.** The last section of the entry consists of a summary of the work or comments on it.
BIBLIOGRAPHIC ENTRIES


Major topics: Interviewing, Research design, Focus groups, Analysis

Subtopics: Participatory research, Specific interviewing techniques, Communication skills, Informant selection, Farmer evaluations

Summary: Few authors lay out the basics of interviewing as well as Ashby in this handbook. She covers the dynamics of the interview process, introducing the research, the means by which rapport may be established, the interactions between informants in group interviews and between interviewers and interviewed. She also provides clear examples of the techniques used and data collection methods. Although the handbook deals specifically with farmer evaluations, the advice and techniques are easily applied to other sorts of projects.


Babchuk, N. 1961. The role of the researcher as participant observer and participants-as-observer in the field situation. Human Organization, 21, 225-228.


*Major topics:* Observation, Case studies, Health science research, Analysis, Validity, Rigor, Bias

*Subtopics:* Participant observation, Social observation, Evidence, Life histories

*Summary:* Becker has collected a number of his most influential articles on research methods and techniques in one book. These articles, written between 1955 and 1970, cover many aspects of fieldwork from the basics of observation and constructing case studies to analysis, questions of evidence, validity, and bias. He supports all of these discussions with examples drawn from his extensive research.

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*Major topics:* Interviewing, Observation, Analysis, Validity, Health science research

*Subtopics:* Participant observation, In-the-field analysis, Final analysis, Report writing

*Summary:* The authors discuss ways to analyze data gathered through observation and interviewing. They use the study of a medical school as an example and provide concrete methods for analyzing and validating research results.


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*Qualitative research methods* 17


Major topics: Health science research, Observation, Interviewing, Qualitative-quantitative debate

Subtopics: Critique of survey methods, Participant observation, Key informant interviews, Lying

Summary: This "fieldwork note" addresses a number of important issues involved in the research of sensitive topics. In this witty and succinct article, the author compares the results obtained from survey methods and open-ended interviewing of key informants. He draws from his own experiences to underscore the problems of "participant observation" and of survey methods for gathering data on sexuality, fertility, and abortion in Ghana.


Bolton, R. 1982. We all do it but how? A survey of contemporary fieldnote procedure. Pomona College, Claremont, CA, USA.


Major topics: Integrating methods, Report writing, Research design, Rigor, Validity, Bias
Summary: This general introduction to the use of multiple methods in social research presents a cogent argument for the value of this approach and discusses its implementation at all stages of the research process. The authors examine the effects of the choice of method on the nature of the results a study can produce, arguing that the shortcomings of any one method can be compensated by the use of a multimethod approach. This book should be used in conjunction with other sources that describe specific methods.


Major topics: General discussion, Integrating methods, Qualitative–quantitative debate

Subtopics: Education, Problems

Summary: In this book, Bryman addresses the various means by which qualitative and quantitative methods can be used to complement each other. He illustrates these with concrete examples drawn from the fields of small group research, education, and research on schools.


**Major topics:** Integrating methods

**Subtopics:** Strengths and limitations, Participant observation, Direct observation, Key informant interviews, Group interviews, Informal interviews

**Summary:** This witty, practical article highlights the drawbacks of both overly "quick and dirty" and traditional anthropological and sociological studies. The author proposes a commonsense, flexible middle ground, provides useful suggestions, and frankly discusses the limitations inherent in this approach. Although the article is addressed to the rural development worker, it is written from a general perspective and so has wider relevance.


**Major topics:** Rapid assessment methods, Health science research, Integrating methods, Focus groups, Observation, Interviewing, Analysis

**Subtopics:** Immunization, Haiti, Epidemiology, Ethnographic methods

**Summary:** The authors present a succinct case study of the use of various methods to gain information about immunization for an epidemiological project.


**Major topics:** General discussion, Health science research, Research design, Observation, Interviewing, Focus groups, Computers, Analysis, Validity, Report writing

**Subtopics:** Sampling, Participant observation, Key informant interviews, Codebooks, Text analysis, Historical method, Hermeneutic research

**Summary:** Crabtree and Miller have compiled a useful collection of articles about doing qualitative research on health and health-related topics. They begin with a clear overview, which provides a series of typologies of various research and analysis techniques. They supplement this with a good discussion of the sorts of questions that can be posed and answered using various methods. Individual authors discuss different aspects of research techniques, research strategies, and research data analysis ending with an overview of the future of qualitative research in health science research.


**Major topics:** Integrating methods, Rapid assessment methods

**Subtopics:** Women/gender issues, Household surveys, Practical applications

**Summary:** Evaluating various research methods that she used in a rapid survey of households, sex roles, and family consumption in China, Croll demonstrates the value of rapid appraisal techniques and the application of a mixed-method approach to research questions.


Major topics: Health science research, Surveys, Interviewing, Qualitative-quantitative debate

Subtopics: Critique, Menopause

Summary: Davis examines the subject of researching menopause from various perspectives. She compares the academic and health research approaches (*etic*) to the local understanding of the phenomenon (*emic*) and the use of various research techniques. Her section on attempts to apply a standardized questionnaire in a unique North American setting underscores the problems of translation inherent in this form of research.


Major topics: Health science research, Research design, Observation, Interviewing, Focus groups, Analysis, Report writing

Subtopics: Training, Moderating

Summary: All aspects of focus group research are covered in this manual. It is particularly valuable because the authors consider the strong points as well as the limitations of the approach. They examine the types of questions that can be effectively addressed through the focus group method and they illustrate their text with good practical examples drawn from health-related research.


Emerson, R.M. 1987. Four ways to improve the craft of fieldwork. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 16(1), 69–89.


*Major topics:* Focus groups, Health science research

*Subtopics:* West Africa, Development, Health education research, Social marketing, Training, Participatory research, Project implementation, Community-based action

*Summary:* The authors document the training of personnel, the research process, the research results, and the effects of a health education project that used focus groups as a primary research tool. They conclude that the method contributed substantially to the success of the program for vaccination, in part because of the "democratization" of the process of planning and evaluation of the campaign.


*Major topics:* Integrating methods, Research design, Analysis, Rigor, Validity, Bias

*Subtopics:* Triangulation, Logic

*Summary:* In this short book, Fielding and Fielding have clearly stated the case for combining research methods. They consider various forms of combining qualitative and qualitative research methods, using well-developed examples. The strengths and weaknesses of various approaches and techniques are discussed by the writers as well as designing integrated research projects and the analysis of data.


**Major topics:** Focus groups, Health science research, Analysis

**Subtopics:** Mexico, Family planning

**Summary:** This article can be seen as a step-by-step guide to choosing, establishing, and running focus groups, as well as a discussion of analysis of the data obtained. It also examines the benefits to social action projects.


**Major topics:** Computers, Analysis

**Subtopics:** Decision tree modeling, Ethnographic methods

**Summary:** Ethnographic decision tree modeling is a technique used for understanding and mapping decision-making processes. The author outlines the technique carefully, using practical examples drawn from studies in Malawi, Mexico, and the United States. This technique should be used in conjunction with both interviewing and observation techniques.


**Major topics:** Analysis

**Subtopics:** Ethnographic methods, Analytical deduction, Constant comparative method, Typological analysis, Enumerative systems, Standardized observational protocols, Education
Summary: Goetz and LeCompte provide a cogent overview of a variety of analytical tools that can be used to interpret qualitative data. They posit a continuum of methods ranging from inductive and generative ones, such as analytical induction and the constant comparative method, to those that are much more deductive and verificative. They discuss each method using clear examples drawn from educational research.


Major topics: Analysis, Observation, Interviewing, Sampling, Validity, Rigor

Subtopics: Ethnographic methods, Education

Summary: Drawing from examples in educational research, the authors outline how to use qualitative research methods. Their discussion of methods of sampling and selection and of evaluating the quality of qualitative research done by others is especially valuable.


Major topics: General discussion, Interviewing, Case studies, Observation, Rigor, Research design

Subtopics: Naturalistic methods, Data management, Report writing, Rigor, Validity, Evaluation

Summary: Guba and Lincoln furnish us with an excellent overview of a naturalistic approach to research. The authors discuss the uses of naturalistic inquiry, appropriate data collection techniques, the problem of rigor, and validity and evaluation.


Major topics: Focus groups, Health science research
Subtopics: Knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs research, Strengths and limitations
Summary: This article shows the value of using focus groups for the study of knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs. The authors discuss the results of such a study in Zaire. The article draws out the implication of the research results for policy and research and addresses the strengths and weaknesses of the approach.


*Major topics:* Research design

*Subtopics:* Informants

*Summary:* This well-organized book concentrates on the various issues involved in the selection of informants for ethnographic research.


*Major topics:* Observation, General discussion, Recording, Analysis

*Subtopics:* Participant observation, Gaining entry, Ethics, Theory

*Summary:* Johnson provides an excellent and practical overview of the issues involved in participant observation. He examines such issues as entry into the field setting, truth, objectivity, the nature of informant–researcher relationships, collecting data and recording it, and data analysis. He also provides a good discussion of positivism and objectivity in this form of research.


*Major topics:* Research design, Observation, Analysis, Validity, Bias, Report writing

*Subtopics:* Participant observation, Data management

*Summary:* This book serves as a good, general introduction to all aspects of research involving participant observation. Jorgensen deals with each aspect clearly, providing examples to illustrate each point.


*Major topics:* Report writing, Interviewing, Observation

*Subtopics:* Ethnographic methods, Education

*Summary:* This book addresses the reading and writing of reports. The authors suggest report structures for both qualitative and quantitative research. Each chapter outlines some of the expectations that the reader should have when reading the results of different types of studies and considers the limitations of each technique. Well laid-out examples illustrate the discussion.


Major topics: Validity, General discussion

Subtopics: Reliability, Objectivity, Fieldnotes, Fieldwork

Summary: Kirk and Miller outline the means by which reliability and validity can be judged in qualitative work. After an excellent introduction to the field of qualitative research, they cover forms of validity and reliability as well as the process of taking fieldnotes and establishing fieldwork. They illustrate their arguments with good examples.


Major topics: Focus groups, Interviewing, Analysis, Research design, General discussion, Report writing, Validity

Summary: Krueger provides an excellent guide to all aspects of research using focus groups in this practical and well-organized book. He uses summaries to present the main points of each chapter and clear and varied examples to illustrate each step of the process. The book focuses on North America but the information applicable to other situations.


Major topics: Rapid assessment methods, Interviewing, Observation, Research design

Subtopics: Definition, Informal surveys, Key informant interviews, Focus groups, Community interviews, Direct observation, Strengths and limitations

Summary: In this guideline on rapid assessment methods, the author outlines the specific situation in which each method is most appropriate, evaluates each technique’s strengths and limitations and the skills and time required to use it effectively.


Major topics: Interviewing, Focus groups, Bias, Research design

Subtopics: Group interviews, Community interviews, Planning research, Interview guides, Sampling

*Qualitative research methods*
Summary: This short guide to two forms of group interviewing — focus groups and community interviews — is clearly written and well organized. It covers research planning and design, interviewing techniques, sampling methods, and potential forms of bias using clear examples drawn from research in developing countries. The section on the uses, advantages, and limitations of these techniques is especially valuable.


Major topics: Interviewing, Observation, Analysis
Subtopics: Participant observation, Interviewing, In-the-field analysis, Quantifying qualitative data, Error, Bias
Summary: Structured to be useful for "in-the-field" analysis of various forms of research data, this book covers various research techniques as well as the quantification of qualitative data. Each technique is discussed separately and note taking, sorting, ordering, selecting, and writing up are emphasized.


Major topics: Research design

Subtopics: Data management, Managing time and resources, Validity, Logic, Research techniques

Summary: The authors focus on the framing of research questions, design of the study, selection of techniques, the allocation of time and resources, and questions of validity, using clear examples and cases drawn from a number of fields.


Major topics: Analysis, Case studies, Integrating methods, Research design

Subtopics: Quantifying qualitative data, Case cluster method, Educational research

Summary: Drawn from the evaluation literature, this article deals with questions of rigor and validity in the case study approach. It provides guidelines for designing qualitative research that can be analyzed, in part, using quantitative procedures.


Major topics: Interviewing, Research design, Report writing, Integrating methods, Qualitative-quantitative debate, Analysis, Rigor, Validity, Bias

Subtopics: Questionnaires, Quality

Summary: All aspects of conducting research using the long interview are discussed in this concise book. McCracken covers a wide range of issues from research design to implementation and analysis. In addition, the sections on the development of questionnaires, validity and bias, writing up, and research management make this book invaluable.


Major topics: Health science research, Integrating methods, Rapid assessment methods, Research design, Observation, Interviewing, Qualitative-quantitative debate

Subtopics: Triangulation, Theory, Surveys, Psychiatry, Measurement, Validity, Contextual analysis
Summary: The author takes a balanced look at the uses and drawbacks of qualitative and quantitative research in medical sociology and at measures that can be taken to narrow the gap between the various methods.


*Major topics:* Case studies

*Subtopics:* Education, Research design, Methods, Analysis, Validity, Reliability, Ethics

*Summary:* This is a good overview of the literature on case study material and a discussion of the relevant literature on qualitative methods. Research design, data collection, analysis at all stages of research, questions on validity, reliability and ethics are covered as well as a section of report writing. A selected series of detailed case studies illustrates various techniques.


*Major topics:* Interviewing

*Subtopics:* Focused interviewing

*Summary:* This classic text provides a detailed, practical discussion of the means by which focused interviews should be conducted. It covers specific interview techniques and a variety of problems, using clear examples in all cases.


*Major topics:* Analysis

*Subtopics:* Data management, On-going analysis, Team research

*Summary:* In this succinct article, the author discusses the steps in designing and implementing a research project, then specifies the various tools used to analyze the data both during its collection and during writing up. Problems encountered in team work are also discussed.


*Major topics:* Analysis, Validity, Research design

*Subtopics:* In-the-field analysis, Cross-site analysis, Matrix analysis, Drawing conclusions and testing

*Summary:* This well-organized and coherent look at the analysis of qualitative research covers a wide range of methods and techniques. Techniques and strategies for data analysis are discussed in detail and guidelines for verification, validity, and rigor are presented.


*Major topics*: Observation, Research design, Analysis

*Subtopics*: Participant observation, Unobtrusive observation, Ethics, Theory

*Summary*: The section on observation in this text provides a cogent introduction to various observation techniques and their theoretical underpinnings. Moreover, it covers some of the ethical considerations in designing research that uses these techniques and a discussion of documenting and analyzing observed data, illustrated with practical examples.


*Major topics*: General discussion, Observation, Analysis, Report writing

*Subtopics*: Policy analysis, Evaluation, Error, Bias

*Summary*: Geared to evaluators and policy analysts, this manual covers a wide range of topics from research design to writer's block. The sections dealing with bias and error are concise and practical, offering excellent advice. Analysis and writing up constitute major themes. There is a valuable section on framing recommendations. The most innovative method delineated is "transient analysis," in which the short-term involvement of the researcher forms the basis of the techniques used.


Major topics: Research design, Analysis, Integrating methods, Observation, Interviewing, Case studies, Validity

Subtopics: Triangulation, Evaluation, Report writing

Summary: In this excellent and very comprehensive book, Patton reviews qualitative research methods, research design, analysis, and presentation. Specific techniques are presented in detail using clear examples.


Major topics: Analysis, Software

Subtopics: Fieldnotes, Data management, Retrieval

Summary: Pfaffenberger looks at the claims made for the use of computers in qualitative research, the limitations and the advantages. He reviews various forms of data entry, retrieval, and analysis using clear social science examples.


*Major topics:* Health science research, Validity, Qualitative-quantitative debate  
*Subtopics:* Health education, Nigeria, Translation  
*Summary:* In this concise discussion of the problems involved in the uncritical use of quantitative methods in a non-Western context, the authors take a close look at various qualitative methods. They consider the goals and limitations of the various methods discussed and illustrate their arguments with clearly presented case studies.


*Major topics:* Qualitative-quantitative debate, Integrating methods, Analysis, Research design, Validity  
*Subtopics:* Evaluation  
*Summary:* The authors argue that integrating methodological approaches gives researchers a more complete understanding of any question. They use specific examples to illustrate their points about research design, data analysis, and validation.


*Major topics*: Analysis
*Subtopics*: Ethnographic methods, Lying

*Summary*: Salamone examines the question of the lying informant in a new light. He stresses the value of following up the context of lies to elucidate important research questions.


*Major topics*: Analysis, Observation, Interviewing, Integrating methods
*Subtopics*: Development, Community participation, Evaluation

*Summary*: The central focus of this book arises out of the experiences of the author during evaluation of two World Bank development projects. Salmen documents the use of participant observation in a practical development-oriented context. Arguing for the value of this technique, Salmen proposes a practical framework for designing, implementing, and analyzing this form of research to meet development needs.


*Major topics*: Health science research, Observation, Interviewing, Bias, Recording
*Subtopics*: Problems, Participant observation

*Summary*: This short article gives a clear introduction to participant observation and a frank discussion of its limitations.


Major topics: Health science research, Integrating methods, Rapid assessment methods

Subtopics: General discussion, Specific cases

Summary: This volume of collected papers on rapid assessment procedures provides a good introduction to the value of these methods in various regions of the world and in various types of research projects. Many of the influential researchers who developed these methods have contributed to this collection.


Major topics: Health science research, Rapid assessment methods, Integrating methods, Focus groups, Analysis, Report writing, Observation, Interviewing, Research design

Subtopics: Nutrition, Primary health care, Anthropology, Data management, Research techniques, Ethnographic methods, Taxonomies, Notetaking

Summary: This manual is a well-organized, practical guide to rapid assessment procedures for health-related issues. The authors discuss basic techniques for research design, data collection, analysis, and report writing, and illustrate these points with clear examples.


Major topics: Analysis, Validity

Subtopics: Research design, Observation, Interviewing, Ethnographic methods, Language, Triangulation, Reliability, Practical applications

Summary: In this thorough and thoughtful text, Silverman deals specifically with the analysis of qualitative data and with the questions of reliability and validity of data. He concentrates on data collected through observation, interview, and as texts. The result is an accessible and sophisticated look at the topic.

*Major topics*: Focus groups, Analysis

*Subtopics*: Africa

*Summary*: Simard provides a comprehensive look at focus groups in this short manual which is written in French. Her considerable research experience in Africa is evident in her discussion and in her emphasis on the value of this technique in societies that still have a strong oral tradition. She also deals with research planning, implementation, and the analysis of data in clear and practical terms.


*Major topics*: Analysis, Integrating methods, Rapid assessment methods

*Subtopics*: Analysis in the field, Household level research, Impact of structural adjustment, Gender issues, Example of application of research strategy, Strengths and limitations

*Summary*: Through the illustration of a concrete example, the authors of the article draw out the strengths and limitations of a rapid research approach and pinpoint the value of participatory research and on-going, on-site evaluation of results. It is especially valuable because it shows the means through which a flexible research design can be developed.


*Major topics*: Observation, Interviewing, Analysis

*Subtopics*: Ethnographic methods, Research techniques, Translation

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Summary: Although this book has been written with students in mind, Spradley has managed to produce a good, general introduction to the subject of the ethnographic interview and to the choice of informants. He analyses various informant–researcher interactions, common pitfalls in choosing informants, and various forms of interviews using clear cases drawn predominantly from Western societies. He also touches on the unexpected difficulties that can arise even when researchers and interviewees ostensibly share a common culture.


Major topics: Case studies, Analysis

Subtopics: Case study and case history presentation

Summary: The book grows out of the "grounded theory" approach. The section on presenting case materials gives the reader practical advice, a list of "rules of thumb" for data collection and presentation, and two vivid examples of case histories.


Major topics: Research design, Analysis, Rigor, Validity, Bias, General discussion, Report writing

Subtopics: Sampling, Grounded theory, Coding, Use of memos and diagrams

Summary: Strauss and Corbin have produced a simply written, clearly explained discussion of qualitative research techniques based on observation and interviewing. Although the book is centred around the analysis and presentation of results, it provides concrete examples of the process of gathering data as well. It is aimed at graduate students, but is never condescending or overly simplistic. Each chapter begins with a clearly defined list of terms and ends with a succinct summary.


Major topics: Analysis, Software, Computers, General discussion

Subtopics: Review of software packages, Text retrievers, Text data managers, Structural qualitative analysis, Interpretational qualitative analysis, Classification

Summary: The analysis of qualitative research data through the use of computers is the central theme of this book. It is designed to acquaint the user with "the rationale behind the programs" and "the main functions they are designed to perform." Different forms of analysis and different types of programs are discussed in detail and the strengths and weaknesses of various programs are evaluated. The book discusses ETHNO, TAP (Text Analysis Package), QUALPRO, The Ethnograph, TEXTBASE ALPHA and HyperQual in particular. It also provides a brief introduction to the computer and how to read program descriptions.

The author provides a short history of qualitative research in the human sciences, documents the diversity of specific qualitative approaches in sociology and anthropology, psychology, and education and provides a short definition usually in the words of major proponents of various methods. The book is written in a straightforward, systematic fashion. It is extensively cross-referenced, but most of the sections of the book can be used separately.


Major topics: Interviewing

Subtopics: Key informant interviews

Summary: Tremblay provides a good clear discussion of the purpose, design, analysis, and validation of key informant interviews.


Major topics: Integrating methods, Analysis

Subtopics: Evaluation
Summary: The author takes a close look at the "fit" between various forms of collected data and argues that a "healthy disagreement" in findings should provide the basis for a better analysis.


Major topics: Observation, Interviewing
Subtopics: Use of indigenous observers

Summary: Although this chapter centres around the specific experiences of the authors, it raises important questions about the use of "indigenous observers" and identifies the strengths and limitations of this approach.


Major topics: Focus groups, Health science research, Qualitative-quantitative debate, Integrating methods
Subtopics: Zaire, Honduras, Guatemala

Summary: The authors compare the results of the two methods — focus groups and surveys — in three health science projects and point out the effectiveness of the focus group method for collecting certain kinds of information.


*Major topics*: Research design, Interviewing, Analysis, Rigor, Validity  
*Subtopics*: Techniques  
*Summary*: The authors discuss various forms of structured interviewing techniques and various systems for eliciting categories used by informants (as opposed to those used by researchers), opinions, and taxonomies. Each technique is discussed, examples are given, tabulation is explained and the strengths and weaknesses are considered. The final section of the book deals with validity.

*Major topics*: General discussion, Research design, Observation, Interviewing, Analysis, Validity, Bias, Report writing  
*Subtopics*: Ethnographic methods, Data management  
*Summary*: This two-volume work on ethnographic research takes a sophisticated look at all aspects of the research process. Although it is not easily accessible to the beginner, it provides a complex look at this process and is valuable if used along with other books addressing similar topics.


*Major topics*: Interviewing  
*Subtopics*: Open-ended interviews  
*Summary*: Whyte summarizes the techniques for conducting interviews, discusses the nature of collected data, and details the criteria by which the data should be judged.

Major topics: Observation, Interviewing, Integrating methods, Research design, Analysis

Subtopics: Participant observation, Interviewing, Validity, Bias

Summary: Drawing on his rich field experience to provide guidelines for field work, the author undertakes a frank discussion of the value and limitations of various techniques. He stresses the need to use a variety of methods and to collect both qualitative and quantitative data and takes a close look at validity, error, and bias.


Major topics: Health science research, Rapid assessment methods, Observation, Interviewing, Research design, Analysis

Subtopics: Community needs appraisal

Summary: This is a lucid guide to the use of rapid appraisal techniques and training that uses clear case studies.


Major topics: Case studies, Analysis, Research design, Integrating methods

Summary: Written by an experimental psychologist, this clearly laid out, practical book emphasizes design, data collection, and analysis for case study research. The chapters are well organized and each begins with a concise summary of the major points covered. A series of 40 boxes embedded in the text illustrate various case studies and points raised in the text. In a valuable introduction to the subject, Yin distinguishes between various forms of research and discusses the purpose and advantages of the case study method.


Major topics: General discussion, Research design, Observation, Interviewing, Focus Groups, Analysis, Validity, Report writing

Subtopics: Ethnographic methods, Life histories, Interview guides
Summary: The authors of this short collection have covered many of the important issues in qualitative research in a practical and concise manner, using good examples drawn from development research. As a short introduction, it is invaluable.


Major topics: Validity, Bias, Analysis, Observation, Interviewing

Subtopics: Sampling, Error, Guidelines

Summary: Designing, implementing, and judging good qualitative research are the main themes of this cogent summary.