

5216 Qualitative Methods Tables: Outputs, Data Collection, Sampling, Analysis—Please Keep

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1: Qualitative Outputs

Output	Time Period	Description	Example
History	Retrospective (long past)	Understanding how the current situation came to be, suggesting turning points and possible interventions.	Policy history, neighborhood history, environmental history
Evaluation	Retrospective	Determines whether, why, and how well particular goals or outcomes were achieved. For feedback and to improve outcomes.	Process evaluation, output or impact evaluation, outcome (long-term effects) evaluation
Inventory, scan, or review	Contemporary	Compile, synthesize, and assess the range/character of what exists. Systematic understanding of the main issues in some domain.	Policy inventory, regulation inventory, public perception scan, literature review
Case study	Contemporary	Investigate contemporary phenomena, in real world context. Typically uses theory and triangulated data/analysis to deal with having more variables of interest than cases. To understand a situation in some depth; beyond mere description.	Case study of policy implementation. Can be part of other outputs and other outputs can be parts of cases.
Assessment or critique	Contemporary	Assess relative to a standard. Often quantitative but can be qualitative (including participatory). Raises awareness and identifies changes.	Health impact assessment, community needs assessment
Policy Analysis	Prospective	Examines which of alternative policy approach will achieve a given set of goals. Often quantitative but can be qualitative.	Political/stakeholder analysis of potential regulatory change options
Scenario	Prospective	Structured account of plausible future—often includes qualitative (vision/story, prediction) and quantitative (forecast, projection) components. To either identify a preferred scenario or prepare for possible futures.	Regional climate change scenarios

Source: Yin 2014, Thomas 2011; Landis 2014; Gaber and Gaber 2007

Aside Related to Other Part of Class: Definitions Related to Causal Models

- Determinant or cause
- Mediators—intervening variable, how, why e.g. Parent status > child's education > child status
- Moderators—creates interaction; when, where, for whom, under what circumstances
- Outcome or dependent variable—presumed effect
- Statistically significant variable—variable larger or smaller than would be expected by chance
- Magnitude/effect size/strength of association—how big it is

2: Qualitative Data Collection Methods

The first categories can be done by professionals, activists, civic leaders, or local residents/workers alone or in combination. The final category—engaging—needs to involve multiple groups. Observations have a benefit of obtaining data often with less burden to local participants who may suffer from participation fatigue from too many engagement processes.

Category	Possible method	Example or explanation
Compiling	Archival and local history documents	Review of reports, regulations, plans, maps, minutes, databases, organizational records, oral histories
	Media review	Systematic examination of local media: Newspapers, blogs, newsletters, photo collections
	Plan and policy inventory	Systematic analysis of prior work either currently in place (inventory) or over time (review)
	Literature review	Review of academic and professional studies
Observing people and places	Locating physical traces	Identifying evidence of use such as remnants of historic buildings or evidence of desire paths
	Windshield survey	Drive-around observations using a checklist
	Site reconnaissance	Like a windshield survey but on foot
	Site audit	Observation using a highly structured tool like a walkability checklist
	Photographic site survey	Photography of an area using a specific protocol of what will be photographed
	Neighborhood atmosphere photography	Photography to communicate qualitative aspects of place
	Tomography	Multiple photographs on a theme to show range and variation
	Time lapse photography	By speeding up action shows how spaces are used
Asking questions	Participant observations	Observations in organizations and events
	Unstructured interviews	Free form questions for example in a scoping meeting or correspondence
	Semi-structured interviews	Using an interview guide and questions that allow longer answers
	Focus groups, group interviews	Like semi-structured interviews but with interaction in a group
	Questionnaires and structured interviews	In person, over the phone, on paper, and online for a more structured set of answers; includes diaries
	Interactive tours	Visiting and discussing a place
	Creating image	Day-with-a-camera (photovoice) where locals take photographs and note their significance, drawing mental maps
	Reacting to images	Visual preference surveys selecting the best one from a matched pair, voting with dots on preferred images
	Social media responses	Reactions to a blog post
	Interacting with temporary installations	Responding to temporary street furnishings or signage
Collaborative problem identification and solutions	Participatory online activities	Participatory geographic information systems; online prioritizing exercises
	Making maps and models	Annotating a neighborhood map with key assets and problem areas
	Prioritizing workshops	Identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT); conducting a future search, prioritizing health impacts in a workshop
	Developing and prioritizing indicators	Community-developed sustainability indicators

Sources: Adapted from Forsyth et al. 2017; CommunityPlanning.net 2016; Gaber and Gaber 2007; Hancock and Minkler 2005; Krieger 2011; Participation Compass 2016; U.S. CDC 2015; University of Kansas 2015

3: Qualitative Sampling and Selection Approaches

Apart from the samples where the underlying idea is “random” all others can be seen as purposeful samples, identifying information-rich cases (Palinkas et al. 2013).

Underlying Idea	Type of Sampling	Description
Richness	Information rich/intense	Rich data, but case is not extreme; can overlap other strategies
	Criterion	Cases met some criterion to assure quality, comparability. However, apart from the random samples many of the others in this list may be seen as conforming to specific criteria.
Theory	Confirming or disconfirming	Looking for exceptions to better evaluate theory
	Theory based	Using an example (case) related to a theory in order to evaluate/critique theory
	Key/critical case	Information rich; theory can be used to apply to wider range of cases
Uniqueness and variation	Extreme case	Learning from extremes including best/worst cases
	Outlier case	Interesting because of departure from norm
	Typical case	Looks at the normal/average
	Homogenous	Provides focus
	Maximum variation	Demonstrates range
Access	Convenience/ local knowledge	Convenient, easy access—saves time and money
	Opportunistic	Takes advantage of an opportunity that comes along
	Snowball or chain	Uses informants to recommend information rich sources
Hybrid	Quota	Whatever the approach make sure that a certain quote of people/items are from a particular group
	Random purposeful	Creates a universe that does not represent the entire population but uses other methods in this list then randomly samples. Adds credibility but not generalizable
	Stratified purposeful	Illustrates subgroups; stratifies the identified cases and selects from each strata. Enhances variation in the sample though not full maximum variation
Generalizable	Census	Looking at every example
	Simple random sample	Every person/item has an equal chance of being selected; representative
	Stratified random	People/items are divided into important categories and then sampled; ensures important categories are represented
	Cluster	Universe is divided into small groups/areas (like blocks) that are randomly sampled; it is also possible to randomly sample from the sample. Makes it logistically easier to reach people

Sources: The list draws on Miles and Huberman 1994, 28 and a very similar list in Palinkas et al. 2013, table 1. It also reflects Thomas 2011; Forsyth et al 2012.

4: Selected Analytical Approaches in Applied Qualitative Research

Approach to Findings	Type of Analysis	Description
Data reduction/initial conclusions	Coding/constant comparison (LO)	After reading the dataset, chunk data into smaller parts, and assigns a code; codes can be preexisting or emerge from data (LO). Related to classical content analysis, below (LO).
	Marginal comments and reflective notes (MH)	Noting interesting elements and then writing brief reflective notes. Can identify new directions and interpret data. Simple to do digitally.
	Memoing, interim cases (MH)	Writing more structured descriptions and reflections; can include developing propositions or conclusions that come from the data, refining variables, etc.
Identify patterns and themes	Content analyses (GG)	Identifies patterns in content by identifying words and concepts (including parts of images); includes numbers of mentions (word count); word contexts (keywords-in-context); or coded themes (classical content analysis) (LO). Looks at intensity, trends, meanings, and patterns/connections (Gaber and Gaber 2007).
	Meta-analysis (GG)	Brings together material from multiple reports/results/texts to identify themes, gaps.
	Literature review (B)	Comes in many forms (B) e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Systematic search and review—best evidence synthesis – Mapping review—maps out literature to identify gaps – Critical review—assesses quality of sources – Integrative review—full understanding, theoretical and empirical – Scoping review—preliminary assessment Has narrative, tabular, and possibly graphical outputs
Compare and contrast	Analytical matrix or scatterplot (MH)	Compare/critique cases/examples in terms of two or more variables. Creates a text table or text scatterplot. Can be ordered by theme, time period, role, scale, etc.
	Classification	Can be a classification/taxonomy used in the situation being studied or developed by the researcher
Understand possible causality/trends/relationships	Time series, timeline	What really follows? What happens at the same time? When were there turning points?
	Decision trees, stakeholder diagrams etc.	Helps identify and understand processes, relationships
	Conceptual model, flow chart	What is connected and how? Identifies connections; can propose causal pathways

Sources: Draws on Gaber and Gaber 2007(GG); Booth et al. 2012 (B); Miles and Huberman 1994 (MH); Leech and Onwuegbuzie 2007 (LO)

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