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Abstract

In *Qualitative Research Methods*, Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2011) offer readers an overview of every phase of qualitative research from formulating research questions, to participant recruitment, to writing and presenting results. In each of these phases, the authors push readers to continuously move between induction and deduction and embrace the cyclical nature of the qualitative research process.

Keywords

Qualitative Research, Research Cycle, Public Health

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Induction, Deduction and Cyclical Movement: A Review of *Qualitative Research Methods*

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In Qualitative Research Methods, Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2011) offer readers an overview of every phase of qualitative research from formulating research questions, to participant recruitment, to writing and presenting results. In each of these phases, the authors push readers to continuously move between induction and deduction and embrace the cyclical nature of the qualitative research process. Keywords: Qualitative Research, Research Cycle, Public Health

As an early career qualitative researcher, I regularly revisit previously read books and articles and explore new how-to texts as a way of reflecting on and evaluating the quality and appropriateness of my (and others') fieldwork and written work. Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter, and Ajay Bailey's (2011) *Qualitative Research Methods* functioned as a new how-to book for me to explore.

Hennink et al. (2011) write for novice and accomplished qualitative researchers (and everyone in-between) and note that the structure of the book allows researchers with different skill levels to pick-up and dive-in at any chapter; they recommend that novices begin with chapter two and others select chapters that address their interests, needs, and level of experience. For seasoned researchers with specific needs (i.e., a refresher on conducting focus groups), this "diving-in" approach will not leave them feeling isolated from the essence of the book or the research tasks discussed in other chapters. The authors reference the content from preceding and subsequent chapters throughout each section, directing readers who require more information to do things such as, "see chapter two for more details on these" and "see chapter four on the ethical guidelines."

In hopes of using the book to reflect on and guide all of the steps of my next research project, I began with the first chapter. Here the authors introduce the framework for the book, which corresponds with their approach to conducting qualitative research. (It should be noted that the book is structured around *the authors' approach* to qualitative research. There are other paradigms with different ideas of how inquiries should proceed). The book is structured around the cyclical nature of qualitative research, the *qualitative research cycle* and its subcycles, which include the *design cycle* (chapters three and four: the design cycle and ethical issues, respectively), the *ethnographic cycle* (chapters five through eight: participant recruitment, interviews, focus groups, and observations, respectively) and the *analytic cycle* (chapters nine through 11: data preparation and coding, analysis, and writing, respectively); each subcycle has its own set of tasks. In describing qualitative research in circular terms, the book emphasizes the interlinkages between all of the tasks of the qualitative researcher. In this introductory chapter Hennink et al., (2011) also bring readers' attention to their use of inductive *and* deductive reasoning; the authors note that there is a frequent interplay between these types of reasoning within each of the three subcycles.

The authors recognize that most readers will associate induction with qualitative research; however, they make a point to highlight the role of induction *and* deduction in each of the subcycles. For example, in the design cycle, the authors describe the initial stages of participant recruitment as being deductive in nature (defined a priori, informed by published literature and existing theories, etc.). However, additional participants may be identified through key informants and interview responses during initial data collection and “this inductive refinement of the study population allows researchers to...identify new ‘information-rich’ participants” (Hennink et al., p. 87).

Without exhaustively detailing what is contained in the book’s remaining 10 chapters, in the remainder of this section, I want to highlight the strengths of the book and elements of the chapters that make it an accessible text and go-to guide.

The authors describe a lot of steps and material in their 300 page book. To cover this material, they use straightforward language and uncomplicated descriptions while pointing interested readers to other, more in-depth perspectives and accounts. Each chapter’s end contains two sections on “further reading.” In these sections, the authors list books and articles that are relevant to the tasks and ideas covered in the respective chapter and highlight exactly what components receive strong coverage in these referenced texts. For example, at the end of chapter five on participant recruitment, the authors list an article (Hamilton & Bowers, 2006) that “...highlights the practical issues of recruiting participants via the internet” (Hennink et al., 2011, p. 107). Also, at the end of chapter nine, a book (Saldana, 2009) on “coding procedures for qualitative research” (Hennink et al., p. 231) is recommended.

Each chapter’s end also includes a list of five to six questions for researchers to ask themselves as they evaluate the quality of their own work. Here, for example, are some of the questions from chapter nine on data preparation and coding:

- Was a codebook used to maintain consistency in coding?
- How was inter-coder agreement checked?
- Was code development saturated?
- Have all identifiers been removed from data transcripts? (Hennink et al., 2011, pp. 229-230)

Another strength of the text is the use of case studies to illustrate different processes. Notable case studies include a new qualitative researcher’s paradigm struggle (chapter two) and a write-up of an observation of diners and staff in a hotel café in Africa (chapter eight). Finally, the authors’ presentation of examples from the field effectively illustrates different strategies and techniques for approaching and collecting data and highlight researchers’ successes and struggles with implementing these tasks.

The book, however, is not without its limitations. The authors’ values and backgrounds dominate the text. Hennink and colleagues (2011) are trained demographers, conduct research in areas of health and population sciences, and “broadly follow the principles of grounded theory” (p. 204). Their “position[s] and positioning in the world...[and their] place and biography...” (Macbeth, 2001, p. 38) are evident in their examples and selection of coding and data analysis techniques. For example, the authors state that the book is for researchers from “different scientific disciplines” (Hennink et al., p. 3); however, the majority of the examples are health-related, with many focusing

on the topics of reproduction, HIV/AIDS, and access to healthcare/healthcare facilities outside the home country of the researcher. The examples are useful and help ground the research tasks in reality, though it may be difficult for others to translate these examples to their own research in local settings and on topics such as education, technology, and management. Additionally, in their chapters on developing codes (chapter nine) and data analysis (chapter 10), the authors rely almost exclusively on the guidelines and processes of grounded theory. They do acknowledge that “there are different approaches to analyzing qualitative data...” (Hennink et al., p. 206); however these are not reviewed. Readers would benefit from a brief overview of these techniques.

Another noteworthy limitation is that while the authors discuss the need to use open-ended questions during interviews and focus groups, many of the examples they provide include close-ended questions (“...does this happen here?;” “Do you think...?” “Is there a difference...?” and “Could you describe...?”). For a book designed in part for novice researchers, who will likely turn to these sample protocols and discussion and interview guides as models, these questions might direct the construction of interview questions that elicit short, single-word answers.

Summary

Overall, *Qualitative Research Methods* (Hennink et al., 2011) is an accessible, readable how-to book. It can be recommended as a reference book for those approaching a new qualitative project. The in-chapter descriptions and the exercises and questions at the end of each chapter provide easy, yet necessary tasks for researchers to complete during each stage of their projects. However, as they reach the coding and analysis stages, those new to qualitative research will need to seek out other texts that address additional approaches (e.g., how to code and analyze observation write-ups, using discourse analysis and narrative analysis, etc.). For more information about this text, including a link to chapter one, see the book’s website on Sage’s webpage: <http://www.uk.sagepub.com/books/Book229185>.

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