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## Qualitative Research Ladder for Fledging Researchers A Review of Essentials of Qualitative Inquiry

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### Abstract

In order to qualify our research, I think quantitative studies are not enough. As a matter of fact, we need more qualitative studies especially if we are dealing with human traits and the social sciences' studies as the numbers would not suffice. In doing so, there is a need for researchers to acquire a full understanding of qualitative research methodology, data collection procedures and the risks and issues related to them. For the beginners to enter in to the ocean of qualitative research areas, it seems necessary to have good sourcebooks to get a general view of this type of research and then deeply dive in the ocean of qualitative studies which needs lots of endeavor. In *Essentials of Qualitative Inquiry*, Maria J. Mayan (2009) provides a handy ladder for these beginning qualitative researchers to gain an introductory perspective .

### Keywords

Qualitative Research, Qualitative Methodology, Qualitative Inquiry

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## **A Qualitative Research Ladder for Fledging Researchers A Review of *Essentials of Qualitative Inquiry***

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*In order to qualify our research, I think quantitative studies are not enough. As a matter of fact, we need more qualitative studies especially if we are dealing with human traits and the social sciences' studies as the numbers would not suffice. In doing so, there is a need for researchers to acquire a full understanding of qualitative research methodology, data collection procedures and the risks and issues related to them. For the beginners to enter into the ocean of qualitative research areas, it seems necessary to have good sourcebooks to get a general view of this type of research and then deeply dive in the ocean of qualitative studies which needs lots of endeavor. In *Essentials of Qualitative Inquiry*, Maria J. Mayan (2009) provides a handy ladder for these beginning qualitative researchers to gain an introductory perspective. Keywords: Qualitative Research, Qualitative Methodology, Qualitative Inquiry*

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Qualitative research has become widely integrated in all research fields especially the social sciences. Many new researchers in qualitative inquiry may think it is easy to do a qualitative study as they have some qualitative background, but they may also have some misunderstandings on how to implement qualitative research. In *Essentials of Qualitative Inquiry*, Maria J. Mayan (2009), a director of training programs with more than 20 years of experience in qualitative research, has aimed the book for these "newcomers." As she writes, "this book is an introduction" (p. 7) for further reading in qualitative research that "can point you in particular direction" (p. 7) so, the students can start reading this book to get a general idea of qualitative research and then they can seek for more resources of each topic of this book.

In her book, Mayan (2009) has ten chapters which starts with an introduction to qualitative inquiry, theories and methods, and then goes to different instruments and data collection procedures. Then, she follows by introducing data analysis and the rigor of qualitative research. In the last chapters she explains about writing up a proposal and discusses some of the issues related to qualitative inquiry researchers should take into consideration.

The strength of the book lies in many aspects. First, it is well organized and starts logically from theory to practice as real-world qualitative researchers may encounter in their development. Furthermore, each chapter starts with some overview paragraphs so the reader can get the idea of each chapter by reading the overview at the beginning of each chapter. Another positive point of this book is that for each part of the chapters she has provided examples for better understanding. However, I would have preferred if she had provided some more general examples instead of presenting examples related to only to health issues which are the areas of Mayan's expertise. I think if she can do that in her book's next editions then qualitative research students in different majors will also benefit because the examples then will be more tangible for them. Moreover, at the end of each

chapter there is a summary section which summarizes as well as concludes some of the issues discussed in each chapter. The most interesting and practical part of each chapter is the exercise section. If the instructors want to use this book as a supplementary book in their classes, they can assign these exercises so that their students can practice the real qualitative research in their own field of interest.

In the last part of the book which contains the appendices, Mayan (2009) provides some samples of qualitative instruments such as transcription system, a field notes example, and a document analysis template for the readers. This section is also a very good aspect of the *Essentials of Qualitative Inquiry* since it represents the practical, usable and functional aspect of the book.

Overall, I found the book to be well-organized, well-written, easy to read with understandable text. As Mayan (2009) aims, the book is an excellent and great book for beginner students. Consequently, after reading the book, the juveniles or newcomers will move forward to the other steps of the ladder of qualitative research development. I recommend this book for beginning PhD students as a supplementary material, especially the exercises, for classroom or self-study. Nevertheless, this is not comprehensive on its own so as Mayan herself recommends beginning researchers will need to read more related books to gain a more in-depth treatment in qualitative research methodology.

### References

Mayan, J. M. (2009). *Essentials of qualitative inquiry*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

### Author Note

Sepideh Mirzaei Fard is a PhD candidate in English Language studies at National University of Malaysia (UKM). She is one of the editorial board members of *English Language Teaching Journal* (Canada); Reviewer of some of the international journals such as *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning* (Australia). Her research interests include computer assisted language learning, Technology in language classroom, reading strategies and learning styles. Correspondence regarding this review can be addressed to Sepideh Mirzaei at her E-mail: [sepideh.mirzaeifard@yahoo.com](mailto:sepideh.mirzaeifard@yahoo.com)

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