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## Applying a Total Quality Framework to Qualitative Research Design: A Review

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### Abstract

In Applied Qualitative Research Design: A Total Quality Framework Approach, Margaret R. Roller and Paul J. Lavrakas present their Total Quality Framework (TQF) designed to help researchers understand qualitative research is required to be creditable, analyzable, transparent, and useful. The authors show how qualitative researchers can utilize these four TQR fundamental elements to identify strengths and limitations of their qualitative methods and design process.

### Keywords

Qualitative Research, Research Design, Total Quality Framework

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## Applying a Total Quality Framework to Qualitative Research Design: A Review

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*In Applied Qualitative Research Design: A Total Quality Framework Approach, Margaret R. Roller and Paul J. Lavrakas present their Total Quality Framework (TQF) designed to help researchers understand qualitative research is required to be creditable, analyzable, transparent, and useful. The authors show how qualitative researchers can utilize these four TQR fundamental elements to identify strengths and limitations of their qualitative methods and design process. Keywords: Qualitative Research, Research Design, Total Quality Framework*

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*Applied Qualitative Research Design: A Total Quality Framework Approach* written by Margaret R. Roller and Paul J. Lavrakas (2015) was designed to help researchers with some basic knowledge, learn the important aspects of application of qualitative research standards to qualitative research. Before getting into the structure and content of the book, let me tell you a little about M. Roller and P. Lavrakas.

It all started from feelings of lacking a full understanding into research, either qualitative or quantitative, after graduate school for Roller and Lavrakas. They planted a seed of applying qualitative standards to qualitative research. Their search for clarity and understanding took nearly 40 years of the seed to grow and develop. Roller and Lavrakas combined their gained knowledge and compiled it for three years into a book. Because qualitative research is primarily the interpretation and/or analysis of the researcher, meaning the research is subjective in nature, there should be standards put into place to assist in validating the outcomes of that research.

Roller and Lavrakas, developed the Total Quality Framework (TQF), making it the center of their book. TQF was designed to help researchers understand that qualitative research is required to be creditable, analyzable, transparent, and useful. These four fundamental elements are what make up the TQF by guiding researchers into being able to identify strengths and limitations of their qualitative methods and design process.

According to Roller and Lavrakas, creditable is understood as outcome trustworthiness associated with data gathering; while analyzable represents accuracy of the interpretation and/or analysis data process. Transparent involves disclosure of all parts of the design, fieldwork, and analysis processes and transferability to other context. Lastly, useful refers to the capability to do something with the results. In other words, these four elements making up TQF help to create standards for qualitative researchers.

With these four elements in place, the research becomes more standardized instead of solely leaving it up to interpretation of the researcher. Roller and Lavrakas have confidence TQF can be applied to a variety of design models. In the book, Roller and Lavrakas demonstrate how it can be used in the following design models: In-Depth-Interviews (IDI), Focus Group Discussions, Ethnography, Qualitative Content Analysis, and Case-Centered Approaches specific to case study and narrative research. These design models and other terms are defined in the glossary section of the book.

In each of the design models, Roller and Larvakas did a fantastic job of identifying strengths and limitations of that design model. At the end of the chapter, they provide a case example for the model and include a chapter summary, exercises and discussion topics, and

suggested future readings to include web resources. They highlight a basic component of TQF, saying it is not enough to meet saturation, instead ensuring the researcher answers 10 questions to evaluate interview completions at the field stage to determine the number of interviews required for the research when using the IDI design model. To me, these questions guide the researcher to ensure more than the minimum requirement of saturation is met. It provides certainty and confidence in the results.

Now that I have outlined the main components of the book by Roller and Lavrakas, let me explain a little about myself and my view of the book. As a Ph.D. candidate in a Marriage and Family Therapy program, I have begun the dissertation phase of my program. I began researching a variety of qualitative design models and came across this book by Roller and Lavrakas. In my expansive research, I learned there are a variety of design models and the design model needs to match your research question.

Based on my topic, I wanted to be able to explain why I had chosen a particular design model when asked to defend my position during my proposal and final dissertation defense. Upon reading the book, I realized this book was trying to do something no other books were doing, which was creating standardization to qualitative research (TQF). It was this framework which drew me into the book. I wanted to learn more about how TQF could be applied to a variety of design models. The most relevant design model to my dissertation design model is the IDI. Upon reviewing the book and the different design models in using the TQF application, I now have a better understanding on how to ensure my qualitative research for my dissertation will exceed saturation while ensuring it is credible, analyzable, transparent, and useful.

### References

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### Author Note

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