
10-1-2023

Introduction for TQR Special Issue: “International Scholarship for Qualitative Theory, Methods, and Analysis”

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Recommended APA Citation

Pope, E. M., & Costa, A. P. (2023). Introduction for TQR Special Issue: “International Scholarship for Qualitative Theory, Methods, and Analysis”. *The Qualitative Report*, 28(10), 2834-2837. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2023.6745>

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Introduction for TQR Special Issue: “International Scholarship for Qualitative Theory, Methods, and Analysis”

Abstract

The field of qualitative research is robust and nuanced. While there are foundational standards to which all researchers hold, many intricacies regarding theory, methods, and analysis are influenced by differing training and expectations. These latter components are themselves often influenced by the norms of culture and geographic location. Researchers can learn much from international inquiry. In this introduction to the special issue of *The Qualitative Report*, “International Scholarship for Qualitative Theory, Methods, and Analysis,” we briefly consider the benefits and challenges that come from international scholarship. We then introduce the articles in the issue and their connection with the 2023 World Conference on Qualitative Research.

Keywords

international, qualitative research, interdisciplinary, culture

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Acknowledgements

We have no conflicts of interest to disclose. The research represented in this manuscript was not funded by any supporting agency.

Introduction for TQR Special Issue: “International Scholarship for Qualitative Theory, Methods, and Analysis”

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The field of qualitative research is robust and nuanced. While there are foundational standards to which all researchers hold, many intricacies regarding theory, methods, and analysis are influenced by differing training and expectations. These latter components are themselves often influenced by the norms of culture and geographic location. Researchers can learn much from international inquiry. In this introduction to the special issue of *The Qualitative Report*, “International Scholarship for Qualitative Theory, Methods, and Analysis,” we briefly consider the benefits and challenges that come from international scholarship. We then introduce the articles in the issue and their connection with the 2023 World Conference on Qualitative Research.

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Introduction

Rigorous, ethical, and high-quality qualitative research is conducted across the world. Many qualitative research journals welcome international submissions. In this special issue of *The Qualitative Report*, we highlight the international complexities of qualitative research. Qualitative researchers are trained to conduct quality research under principles often dependent upon the expectations of culture, community, and policy. Yet, qualitative research as an international discipline holds foundational criteria for quality and rigor such as the establishment of trustworthiness, ethical practice (often following guidelines from institutional/ethical review boards) and agreed upon methodological standards.

Review

Researchers can benefit greatly from reading and familiarizing themselves with international research. International approaches offer unique research perspectives, a diversity of methodological and theoretical tactics, and varied participant experiences that may not be accessible within one’s home culture or county. Studies completed in international contexts may result in robust and culturally unique findings (Guler et al., 2023). Access to international participant pools has opened dramatically with the increase of digital tools and spaces used for qualitative research (Hicks et al., 2021; Keen et al., 2022). Researchers may choose to conduct studies with international populations in their home countries or those who travel abroad to gain culturally unique insights into and experiences with a variety of research problems (Joseph & Hartwig, 2020; Liu et al., 2022; Wathen & Kleist, 2015). Researchers may also learn beyond research findings, including reflections on their own experiences working with international populations, international researchers, or in international settings (Brown et al., 2022; Kang, 2020).

Researchers who conduct their studies internationally or with international populations in their home countries have unique challenges as well. They must consider how to form relationships with participants who have cultural norms which may be different from their own (Woodend & Arthur, 2023). For instance, researchers must be aware of practices that may be taboo in one culture but normal for another, greeting rituals, and cultural sensitives. If working with participants who speak different languages, they must consider the best practices for translation and representation (Abfalter et al., 2021). Finally, differing cultures have dissimilar infrastructure, and researchers must not assume that technologies or amenities widely available in one country will be accessible to all populations in another.

Discussion

This special issue contains manuscripts written from works accepted for presentation and discussion at the seventh World Conference on Qualitative Research (WCQR). The conference, held on January 25-27, 2023, in the Algarve, Portugal and virtually, is an international conference encouraging and accepting submissions from researchers across the world. WCQR 2023 was organized by the Escola Superior de Educação e Comunicação (ESEC) from the University of Algarve and Ludomedia of Portugal. The conference organizers also collaborated with several universities, research institutes, and companies which supported or sponsored the event.

The conference's main topic was qualitative research, focusing on methodological considerations and how they relate to research questions, concepts, and findings. WCQR 2023 covered seven core areas and four main application fields (Education, Health, Social Sciences, and Engineering/Technology) including rationales and paradigms of qualitative research, systematization of approaches to qualitative studies, qualitative and mixed methods research, data analysis types, innovative processes of qualitative data analysis, qualitative research in web contexts, and qualitative analysis with the support of specific software.

Twenty-nine authors from ten different countries, including Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Iceland, India, Italy, the Philippines, Portugal, South Africa, and the United States, wrote the articles published in this issue. López-Estrada and colleagues examine the perceptions of women about entrepreneurship in Costa Rica. Bryngeirsdottir and Halldorsdottir develop a theory of post-traumatic growth after intimate partner violence committed against men and women in Iceland. Finally, Avilés and colleagues researched healthy eating and physical activity campaigns for minors in Ecuador. In addition to multiple research locations, the articles' topics show interdisciplinarity in areas such as tourism, child abuse, intimate partner violence, higher education, policy, psychology, computer assisted qualitative data analysis software, music education, nutrition, and digital tools and spaces for qualitative research. Akram and colleagues examine graduate and undergraduate student perspectives in Portugal. Moreno and colleagues scrutinize music education in Portugal. Finally, Pendharker and colleagues discuss the challenges to fieldwork that novice policy researchers face from their social identity and the socio-political context in India. The interdisciplinarity found in this issue represents the diversity of thought and practice of qualitative researchers on the international stage.

Conclusion

We acknowledge and appreciate the whole staff of *The Qualitative Report* for their assistance creating this special issue. With regards to WCQR 2023, Conceição Ferreira, Jaime Ribeiro, Fábio Freitas, Hugo Mártires, Mfanelo Ntsohi, Marisa Mártires, Grzegorz Bryda, King Costa, Elizabeth Pope, and Sónia Mendes deserve special recognition for their intricate and

delicate work on the scientific management, local logistics, promoting, publication, and financial issues. We would like to thank the additional reviewers and all the WCQR Program Committee members who were instrumental in guaranteeing the event's high standard of scholarship. Finally, we thank the authors and participants whose research and attendance helped make WCQR 2023 success, both in person and virtually.

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Acknowledgements: We have no conflicts of interest to disclose. The research represented in this manuscript was not funded by any supporting agency.

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Article Citation

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