

Structuring a Research Method Document for a Qualitative Approach



**Structuring a Research Method Document:
Focus on Qualitative Research**

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Introduction to Qualitative Research

- **Key Points:**
 - **Focus on understanding human behavior, experiences, and social phenomena.**
 - **Relies on data that is not numerical: interviews, observations, and texts.**
 - **Aims for depth of understanding rather than breadth.**

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Typical Structure of a Research Method Section

Key Sections:

1. Research Design
2. Participants/Sampling
3. Data Collection Methods
4. Data Analysis
5. Ethical Considerations
6. Trustworthiness (Validity and Reliability)

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Research Design

Content:

- **Define Your Approach: (e.g., ethnography, case study, grounded theory, phenomenology)**
- **Justify why the chosen design is suitable for the research questions.**
- **Explain the scope of the study and any limitations.**

Participants/Sampling

Content:

- **Who:** Describe the participants or groups targeted (demographics, relevance to the study).
- **Sampling Method:** Purposive, snowball, convenience sampling. Explain why the chosen method fits your research.
- **Sample Size:** Justify your sample size based on the saturation point in qualitative research.

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Data Collection Methods

Content:

- **Primary Methods:**
 - Interviews (structured, semi-structured, unstructured)
 - Focus groups
 - Observations
 - Document/Content Analysis
- **Explain:** The rationale for each method, how data will be gathered, and what tools will be used (e.g., interview guides, observation protocols).

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Data Collection Methods

Content:

- **Coding: Manual or software-assisted coding.**
- **Thematic Analysis: Explain how themes and patterns will be identified.**
- **Iterative Process: Highlight the back-and-forth analysis typical of qualitative research.**
- **Quotes: How you will use direct quotes from participants to support themes.**

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Ethical Considerations

Content:

- **Informed Consent:** Explain the process for obtaining consent.
- **Confidentiality:** How will participants' identities and data be protected?
- **Bias and Reflexivity:** Reflect on how the researcher's position or bias might influence the research and how to mitigate it.

Trustworthiness

Content:

- **Credibility:** Triangulation, member checks, prolonged engagement.
- **Transferability:** Thick descriptions to help others assess applicability to other contexts.
- **Dependability:** Use of audit trails.
- **Confirmability:** Researcher reflexivity and the use of external audits to minimize bias.

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Conclusion

Content:

- **Summarize:** The importance of a well-structured method section in qualitative research.
- **Encourage Reflection:** On how each part contributes to the integrity and trustworthiness of the study.