10 Questions to help you make sense of Qualitative Research

This assessment tool has been developed for those unfamiliar with qualitative research and their theoretical perspectives. This tool presents a number of questions that deal very broadly with some of the principles or assumptions that characterise qualitative research. It is not a definitive guide and extensive further reading is recommended.

General comments

- The first two questions are screening questions and can be answered quickly. If the answer to both is "yes", it is worth proceeding with the remaining questions.

- The subsequent questions ask you to read the main question in bold first and then use the sub-questions underneath to give more detailed feedback.

- Record your answers to each question in the spaces provided.

- The 10 questions have been developed by the national CASP collaboration for qualitative methodologies

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### Screening Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HINTS:</strong> What was the research trying to find out?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Why is it important?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is its relevance?</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HINT:</strong> Does the research seek to interpret or illuminate the actions and/or subjective experiences of research participants?</td>
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### Detailed Questions:

#### Appropriate research design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?</th>
<th>Write comments here</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Has the researcher justified the research design? (eg have they discussed how they decided which methods to use)</td>
<td></td>
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#### Sampling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?</th>
<th>Write comments here</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has the researcher explained how the participants were selected?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Have they explained why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study?</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Are there any discussions around recruitment? (eg why some people chose not to take part)</td>
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### Data collection

5. **Were the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?**

- a) Was the setting for data collection justified?
- b) Is it clear how data were collected?  
  *eg: focus group, semi-structured interview etc*
- c) Has the researcher justified the methods chosen?
- d) Has the researcher made the methods explicit (eg for interview method, is there an indication of how interviews were conducted, or if they used a topic guide?)
- e) If methods were modified during the study, has the researcher explained how and why?
- f) Is the form of data clear (eg tape recordings, video material, notes etc)
- g) Has the researcher discussed saturation of data?

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### Reflexivity (research partnership relations/recognition of researcher bias)

6. **Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?**

Is it clear:

- a) If the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during:
  - formulation of research questions
  - data collection including: sample recruitment, choice of location
- b) How the researcher responded to events during the study and whether they considered the implications of any changes in the research design?
### Ethical Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7 Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?</th>
<th>Write comments here</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Are there sufficient details of how the research was explained to participants for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Has the researcher discussed issues raised by the study (eg issues around informed consent or confidentiality or how they have handled the effects of the study on the participants during and after the study?)</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Has approval been sought from the ethics committee?</td>
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### Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8 Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?</th>
<th>Write comments here</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Is there an in-depth description of the analysis process?</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) If thematic analysis is used, is it clear how the categories/themes were derived from the data?</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Does the researcher explain how the data presented was selected from the original sample to demonstrate the analysis process?</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) Is there sufficient data presented to support the findings.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>e) To what extent is contradictory data taken into account?</td>
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<tr>
<td>f) Did the researcher critically examine their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation?</td>
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### Findings

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>9 Is there a clear statement of findings?</th>
<th>Write comments here</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Are they explicit?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Is there adequate discussion of the evidence both for and against the researchers’ arguments?</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Has the researcher discussed the credibility of their findings?</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) Are the findings discussed in relation to the original research questions</td>
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### Value of the research

**10 How valuable is the research?**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>a)</strong> Does the researcher discuss the contribution the study makes to existing knowledge or understanding?</td>
<td>Write comments here</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eg - do they consider the findings, in relation to current practice or policy, or relevant research based literature?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- do they identify new areas where research is necessary?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have the researchers discussed whether or how the findings can be transferred to other populations or considered other ways the research may be used</td>
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