



PEOPLE PERFORMANCE



Using Qualitative Research Methodology in doing Assessment centre research

Danie Oosthuizen
SHL South Africa

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- > The qualitative research process :
 - Designing Qualitative Research
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> Defining Qualitative research

Qualitative research is a loosely defined collection of approaches to *inquiry (or question)* of what is happening here as experienced by humans in order to understand and describe their experiences. It is done through insight developed during interviews, observations, case analysis, diaries, notes, story telling, autobiographies, etc, all of which rely on verbal, visual, tangible, emotional, auditory, olfactory and gustatory data. The emphasis is on inquiring how a person experience(d) a construct. No provision is made for control of error, except for following scientifically and ethical practices

> The emphasis of Quantitative research

The emphasis of the Quantitative paradigm is on the quantification of constructs. The quantitative researcher believes the best, or perhaps only way of measuring the properties of a phenomena is through assigning numbers to the perceived qualities of things. It makes provision for variables (control/uncontrolled) and the control of sources of errors are done through experimental control.

> Brief history of qualitative research

Traditional period (1900 to the 1940s). Human phenomena could only be studied through observation and description of the actions of subjects and the meanings they attach to their behaviours.

The modernist phase (the 1940s to the 1970s). Reality should be interpreted through formalised qualitative methods and by undertaking rigorous data analysis (e.g. analytical induction and grounded theory).

The interpretive phase (1970 to 1986). Qualitative Research studies are only the researcher's interpretations of the subject's experiences and not a reflection of the real situation.

The post modernist phase:

- ❑ **Crisis of representation (the mid-1980s).** The research process have to be more reflective and researchers and subjects thus need to become partners in the process.
- ❑ **The fifth moment (1990s)** The researcher should gather and present data in such a way that the subjects speak for themselves. Theories should therefore be written in narrative terms as *tales of the field*. It is no longer the hunter that needs to tell the tales of the lions but the lions that need to be empowered to tell their own tales.
- ❑ **The six moment.** Here Qualitative Research's boundaries are expanded to accommodate creative non-fiction and autobiographical, ethnographical, poetic representations.

> Current status of qualitative research

- Today Qualitative Research is used as an umbrella term that refers to **several research strategies** and **types of research** (e.g. case studies, cultural studies, narrative analysis and grounded theory) and terms.
- The assumptions raised from within these moments have crystallized into three paradigms of inquiry, the ***modernist***, the ***interpretive***, and the ***postmodernist***.
- Emphasis will be placed on the **modernist** paradigm, since this is also the approach mainly followed by myself in my own research endeavors.

> Core characteristics of qualitative research

- Is **idiographic**: thus aims to understand the meaning that people attach to everyday life.
- Regards reality as **subjective**.
- Captures and discovers **meaning** as the researcher becomes immersed in the data.
- Uses an **emic** perspective of inquiry: derives meaning from the subject's perspective.
- Typically uses an **inductive** form of reasoning, i.e.. develops concepts, insights and understanding from patterns in the data.
- Concepts are in the form of **themes, motifs and categories**.

> Core characteristics of qualitative research (Continue)

- Qualitative Research aims to **understand** phenomena.
- Observations are determined by **information richness** of settings.
- Data are presented in the form of **words, quotes from documents and transcripts**
- The research design is **flexible and evolves throughout the research process**. There are no fixed steps that should be followed and research can not be exactly replicated.
- Data are analyzed by **extracting themes**.
- The unit of analysis is **holistic** concentrating on the relationships between elements, contexts etc

> Qualitative research demands a new way of viewing the world



- From the core characteristics of Qualitative Research it is clear that doing Qualitative Research requires us to reframe our view of the world

- Quantitative research requires us to stay within boundaries and thus play a finite game, whereas with Qualitative Research you can play with boundaries by transforming your view of reality and thus play an infinite game.

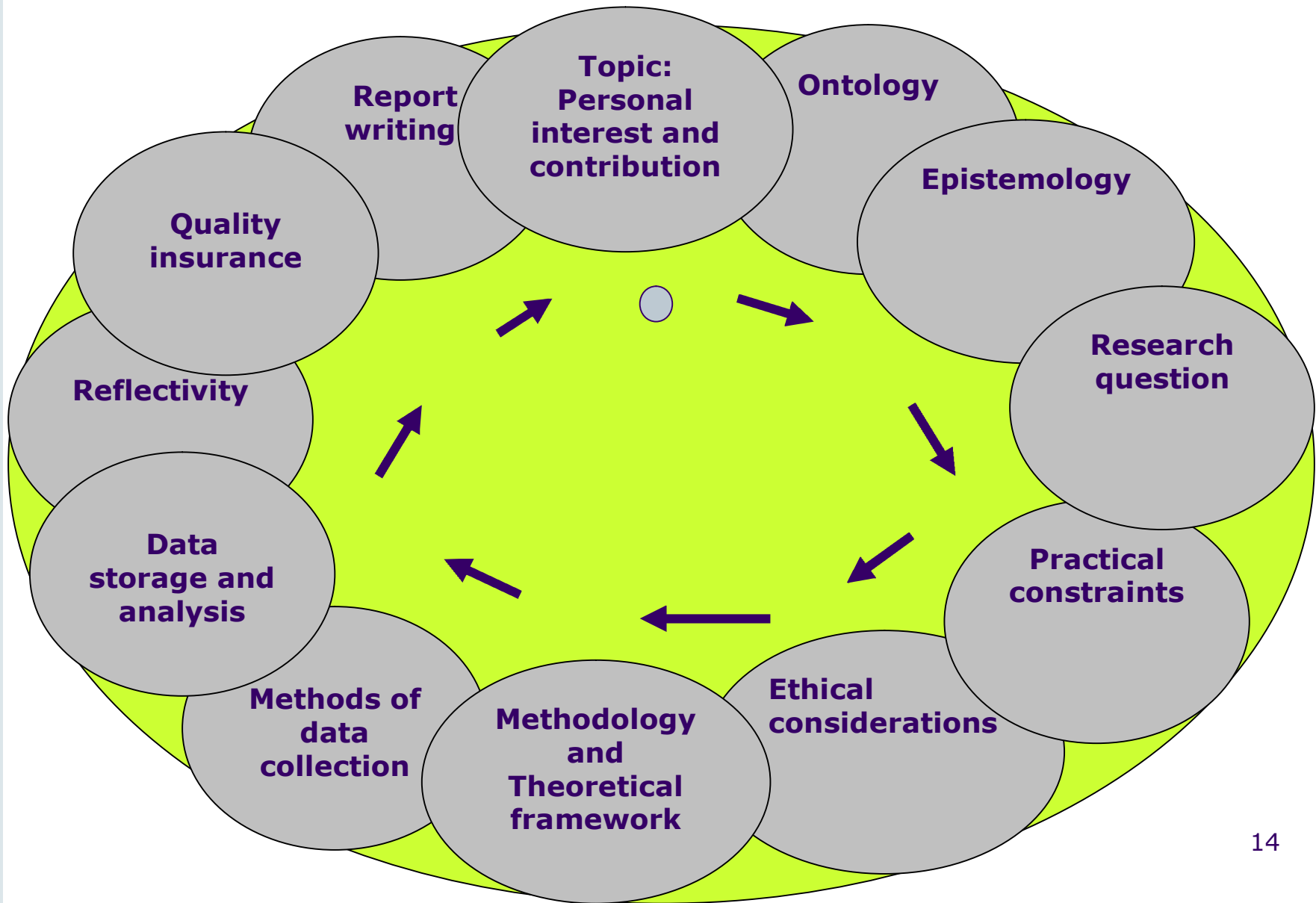
> Skills necessary to do qualitative research

- ❑ Building a relationship of trust based on honesty, sincerity and confidentiality
- ❑ Showing empathy and understanding
- ❑ Observing
- ❑ Listening attentively
- ❑ Communicating verbally and non-verbally
- ❑ Reflection/probing
- ❑ Analyzing and interpreting
- ❑ Writing

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> Designing qualitative research: most important questions to be asked



> The importance of a research proposal

- ❑ The qualitative research proposal is a plan for a systematic investigation into the phenomenon under study.
- ❑ A qualitative researcher typically begins with some interesting, curious, or anomalous social reality/phenomenon, which s/he observes, discovers, or stumbles across much in the same fashion of detective work

> Executing the research: Data collection methods

- ❑ Participant observation
- ❑ In-depth interviewing
- ❑ Focus groups
- ❑ Documentary-analysis: unsolicited documents and solicited documents.
- ❑ Photographs
- ❑ Printed documents and records
- ❑ Personal notes

> Executing the research: Data capturing and retrieving

- ❑ Field-notes
- ❑ Audio and visual taping
- ❑ Transcriptions
- ❑ Project diary
- ❑ Scanning of documents

> Data analysis: Data Management and Organization

- ❑ Developing a Categorization Scheme
- ❑ Coding Qualitative Data
- ❑ Manual Methods of Organizing Qualitative Data
- ❑ Computer Programs for Managing Qualitative Data

> Data analysis: Ensuring insight

It is a labour intensive activity requiring:

- ❑ Insight
- ❑ Ingenuity
- ❑ Creativity
- ❑ Conceptual sensitivity and hard work
- ❑ Not always clear cut like quantitative data analysis
- ❑ Continuous analysis to determine order from a large body of information so data can be synthesized, interpreted, and communicated

> Data analysis: Ensuring insight

- Usually collect and analyze data at same time:
 - searching for themes and concepts begins at the beginning of data collection;
 - enormous amount of work from organizing and making sense of interviews that are transcribed;
 - reducing this data in order to report it without reducing it so much that meaning is lost

- Requires reading narratives over and over to develop the true meaning of the statements and data, requires linking of attributes, based on:
 - comprehending (making sense of what is going on);
 - synthesizing (sifting of data and putting pieces together);
 - theorizing (sorting of data for alternative explanations);
 - recontextualizing (development of theory that is applicable to other settings)

> Data analysis: Building new understanding

- Analytic induction:
 - Data are collected and analyzed to develop and modify a theory
 - The theory is modified to include new cases that do not fit it
 - New cases expected not to fit the theory are deliberately included and the theory is redefined until a relationship is established

- Grounded theory - Uses the constant comparative method:
 - Identify and code key issues and recurrent events as categories of focus.
 - Compare new events with the properties of the various categories of previous data.
 - Continue until no additional data are being found and the theory is saturated

- Phenomenological analyses
- Narrative analyses

> Data analysis: Reporting

- ❑ Quotes/selective narratives taken from interviews and documents
- ❑ Schematic presentations
- ❑ Photos

> Data analysis: Methods to enhance the quality of the research

- Reflectivity
- Triangulation
- Member validation
- Credibility
- Audit trail
- Peer debriefing

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> Critique on Qualitative research

- ❑ Generalization
- ❑ Ethical considerations
- ❑ Subjectivity of the researcher
- ❑ Scientific correctness:
 - Focus is on internal validity
 - Reliability
 - Repeatability

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> Applying Qualitative methodology research in Assessment Centre research

- How candidates experienced the assessments and feedbacks
- Assessors experiences on giving feedback
- Candidate's perceptions of Assessment
- Experiences of the impact of assessment on careers



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