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Qualitative Research Methods: An overview

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Quantitative versus Qualitative research methods

	Quantitative	Qualitative
Data	Numbers	Text
View of the world	Social reality - objective, measurable, external to individual ETIC	Social reality – subjectively interpreted and experienced EMIC
Logic of enquiry	Deductive – testing formal hypotheses	Inductive – understanding of social processes derived from data
Research design	Ensures repeatability	Interpretation of responses
Validity	Objective (reliability)	Subjective (credibility)
Cross-cultural generalizations	Application of the same observation method to different cultures	Require conversion in abstract inter-cultural categories

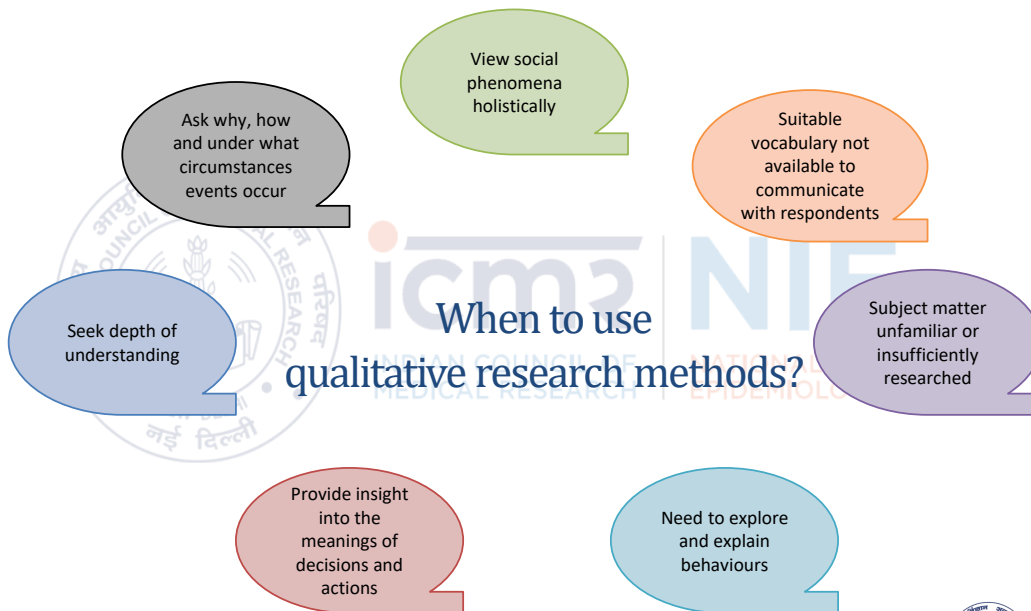
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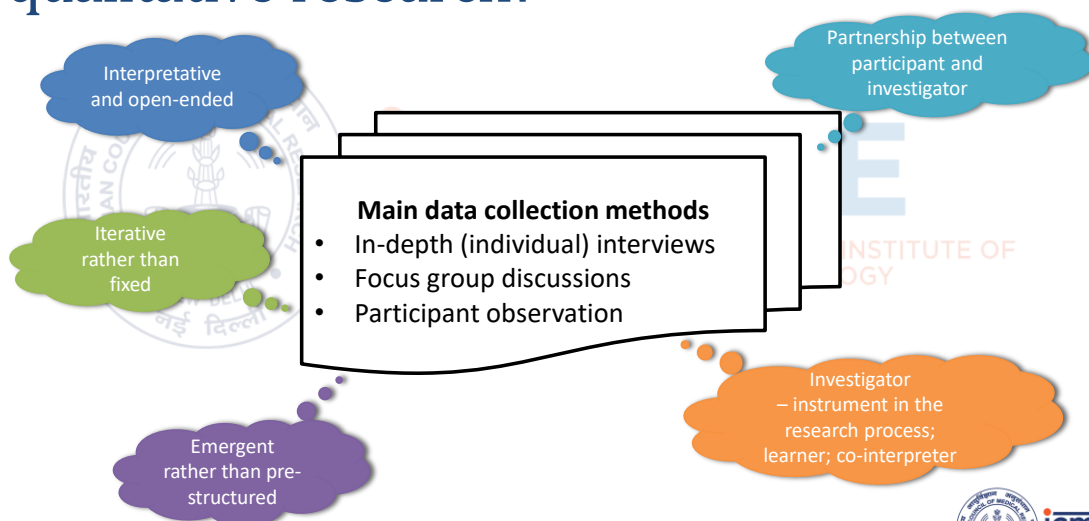
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What are the methods used in qualitative research?



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In-depth (Individual) Interviews

- Open-ended interviews
 - Discover the interviewee's own framework of meanings
 - Obtains rich, contextualized, in-depth information
 - Avoid imposing the researcher's structures and assumptions
- Technique
 - Follows interview guide
 - Probes
 - Reflecting on remarks made by the informant
 - Collects respondent's perspective and words
 - Level of structure varies
- When to use?
 - Complex subject matter and knowledgeable respondents
 - Highly sensitive subject matter
 - Geographically dispersed respondents
 - Peer pressure an issue - social desirability a threat



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In-depth (Individual) Interviews

- | | |
|--|---|
| <div style="background-color: #d4edda; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> • Advantages </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most in-depth - Why behaviors are practiced? • Data on how people think and talk; conceptualizations of behavior • Exact words & language people use amongst themselves • "Emic" perspective = insider's perspective | <div style="background-color: #d1c4e9; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> • Disadvantages </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on a few people, usually not systematic sample, but purposeful or convenience sample • Not generalizable • Interviews very long, lots of data! Time consuming to analyze • Researchers opinions of what the data means |
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Focus Group Discussions

- Open-ended group interviews that promote discussions between participants on specific topics
- Usually 6-8 'similar' participants
 - Similar age, gender, socio-economic status, education, others...
 - Similar cognitive structures
 - Similar perceptions of their social environment
 - Similar normative beliefs
- Moderator and note-taker
- Flexible interview guide
- When to use?
 - Group interaction important
 - Cost and timing issues
 - Idea generation
 - Problem identification and definition goal
 - Identify local/group specific vocabulary/terminology
 - Evaluating messages for an intervention



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Focus Group Discussions

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advantages • Some people more comfortable and talk more openly in group settings • Natural way for some people to talk about problems and personal issues in some cultures • Collects information on social norms • Can provide lots of data in a limited amount of time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disadvantages • Difficult to access practice of very personal or sensitive behaviors in groups • Not GENERALIZABLE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to dominant personalities • Sensitive to biased analysis • Transcribing time consuming - often 30-40 pages each <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to identify speakers • Analytic challenge! |
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Participant Observation

- The researcher becomes participant in social event or group under study and records observations
- Advantages
 - Data is very deep and detailed
- Disadvantages
 - Difficult to systematically collect; especially in middle of important moment - hard to take notes so details may be forgotten
 - Analytic methods for observation notes not well described



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Qualitative data (text) analysis

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grounded theory • Transcripts of interviews • Potential analytic categories— themes • Coding text into categories • Relations among categories • Build theoretical models • Exemplars - quotes from interviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content analysis • Theoretical framework • Set of codes for variables in the theory • Applying codes systematically to a set of texts • Unit-of-analysis-by-variable matrix from the texts and codes • Statistical analysis of matrix |
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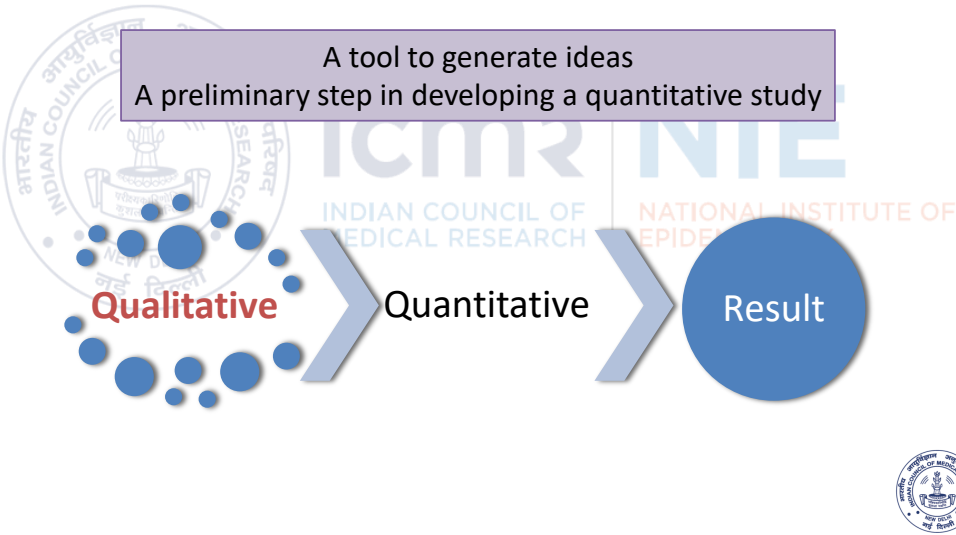
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Bernard HR. Research methods in anthropology : qualitative and quantitative approaches. 2006

How to use qualitative research methods?

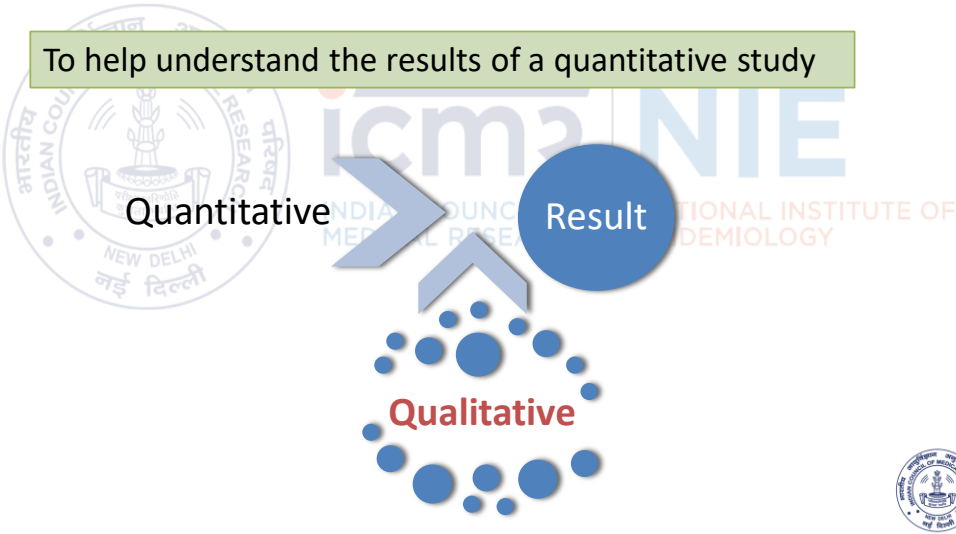


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How to use qualitative research methods?



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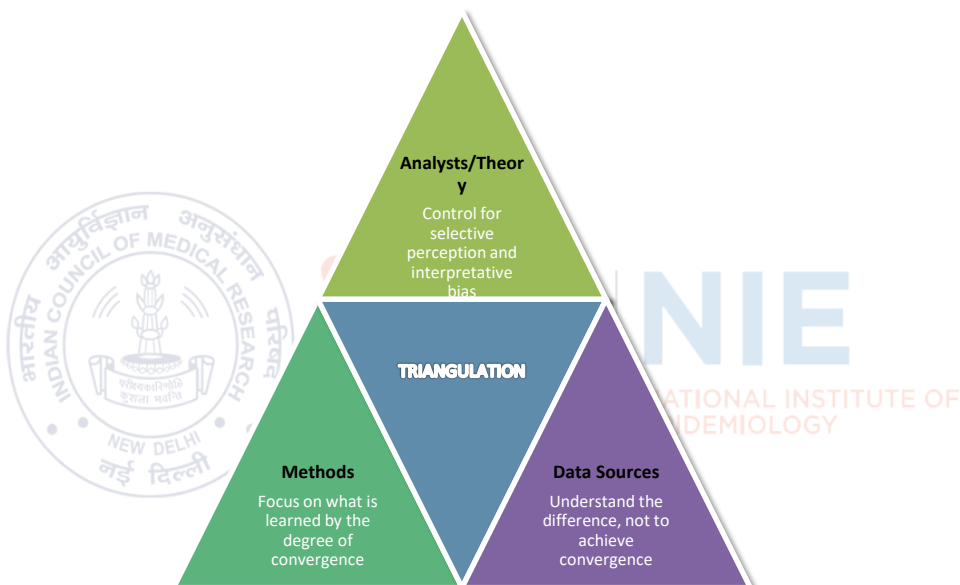
How to use qualitative research methods?

The primary data collection method
– sometimes but not necessarily along with a quantitative study like a survey



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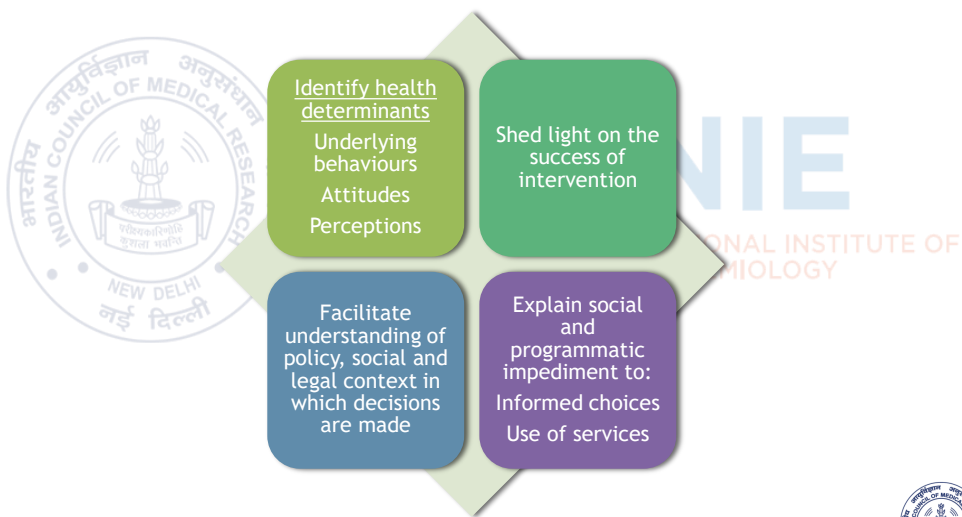
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No single method adequately solves the problem of rival explanations

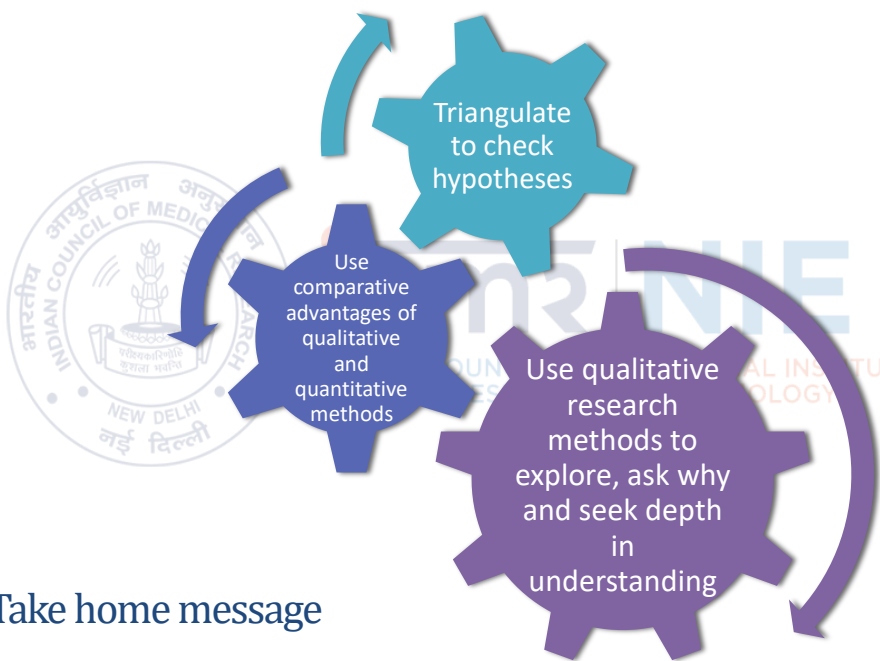
- Guard against systematic biases

How are qualitative research methods useful?



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Take home message



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Thank you
