Qualitative Research

Background

Purposes:
- Understand and describe human nature
- Understand and describe human interactions with systems
- Promote social change among historically oppressed

Research Paradigms:
- constructivists
- pragmatic
- transformative

Methodologies

ethnography	study of cultural patterns and perspective in a natural setting
case study	intensive, holistic description of a single unit of analysis
phenomenography	variation of experience with a phenomenon
phenomenology	essence of lived experience with phenomenon
grounded theory	develop an explanatory theory, grounded in research data of social processes

Sampling

Rule of Thumb: 1-30 participants, depending on your methodology, is a good guideline to follow.

Purposive Sampling Plans

typical	select informants to reflect the average person, situation, or phenomenon
unique	select informants to reflect atypical person, situation, or phenomenon
max variation	select informants to reflect the widest possible range of characteristic of interest
snowball/chain/network	participants identify other participants of interest
theoretical	select participants sequentially based on emerging theory

Data Collection Techniques

- interview
- focus groups
- observations
- documents
- images

Data Analysis

- **code[1]:** a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data.
- coding is time consuming and cross comparison with others should be utilized

first cycle coding → first transition → second cycle coding → second transition → results

Quality Considerations

- **validity[2]:** *(accuracy)* the agreement of the results of a measurement with the true value of the measured quantity
- **reliability[2]:** *(precision)* the repeatability of a measuring process

theoretical validation	fit between social reality and theory generated
procedural validation	feature that improve the fit between reality studied and theory generated
communicative validation	integrity of interlocking processes of social construction
pragmatic validation	compatibility of theoretical constructs with empirical reality
process reliability	mitigation of random influences on research process
ethical validation	integrity in collection, handling, and reporting data to ensure that no harm befalls the participants as a result of the research

[1] Saldaña, J. (2013). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. London: Sage Publications, 2nd edition.
[2] Sirohi, R. S., & Radha Krishna, H. C. (1983). *Mechanical measurements*. New York, NY: Wiley.