

**Answers to Study Questions
for
Chapter 12**

(Don't forget that the companion website also has multiple choice questions that you can take for practice. You will find them here:

http://www.southalabama.edu/coe/bset/johnson/dr_johnson/2mcq.htm)

12.1. What are the key characteristics of qualitative research?

One good summary list of the key characteristics is Patton's list of the 12 major characteristics of qualitative research given on page 362:

1. Naturalistic inquiry,
2. Emergent design flexibility,
3. Purposeful sampling,
4. Qualitative data,
5. Personal experience and engagement,
6. Empathic neutrality and mindfulness,
7. Dynamic systems,
8. Unique case orientation,
9. Inductive and creative synthesis,
10. Holistic perspective,
11. Context sensitivity,
12. Voice, perspective, and reflexivity.
 - Characteristics 1-3 are *design strategies*.
 - Characteristics 4-7 are *data-collection and fieldwork strategies*.
 - Characteristics 8-12 are *analysis strategies*.
 - You can see the explanations for each of the 12 characteristics in Table 12.1 on page 362.

You should also review at this time our list contrasting the key characteristics of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research shown in Table 2.1 on page 31. This list was also shown in lecture two. Basically, qualitative research in its "pure" form tends to use the inductive form of the scientific method, views human behavior as fluid and dynamic, views reality as socially constructed, the objective is typically exploratory, it takes a "wide-angle lens" focus of phenomena, it studies behavior naturalistically and studies the context of that behavior, the researcher collects qualitative data and it is the researcher that is the principal data collection "instrument," the data come in the form of words and categories, the researcher searches for themes, patterns, and holistic description during data analysis, and the final report takes a narrative form.

Finally, as you "construct" or reconstruct your view of qualitative research, also review Table 8.2 which depicts the researcher as a "detective" trying to obtain valid (i.e., trustworthy and defensible) results using such strategies as triangulation, extended fieldwork, reflexivity, peer review, participant feedback, and negative-case sampling. You may also want to review the various sampling strategies used in qualitative research and discussed on pages 220-222.

12.2. Explain the role of induction in qualitative research.

Qualitative research tends to use the inductive form of the scientific method which follows these three steps: make observations, study the observations and search for a pattern (making a statement of what is occurring), and make a tentative conclusion or generalization about how some aspect of the world operates. The inductive method is a “bottom up” approach and is contrasted with the deductive or “top down” method (discussed on p.18; see the research wheel in Figure 1.1 on page 18). Basically, qualitative researchers tend to explore the world and its complexities, and noticing and describing patterns (often context bound) based on their observations and analysis of their data.

12.3. Why is it said that qualitative research does not follow a series of steps in a “linear fashion”?

This is because qualitative researchers try to always remain open to new insights during a single research study. This is essential for exploration. Look again at the “emergent design flexibility” characteristic shown in Table 12.1. Also, qualitative researchers tend to collect some data, analyze those data, and then continue this cycle until some closure is obtained. This is part of what is called extended fieldwork (see page 250) and interim analysis (p. 500). When a researcher stays in the field for an extended period of time he or she tends to begin with the inductive mode of the scientific method but then goes into the deductive or testing mode and then engaging in the inductive--deductive cycle over time (that is the research wheel shown on page 18 in chapter 1). Qualitative research is rigorous and systematic, but it is also a fluid and changing process as the researcher continually constructs an understanding of the phenomenon being studied. We tried to depict the qualitative research process as a non-linear system in Figure 12.1 on page 360.

12.4. Why is qualitative research important for educational research?

If you look again at the two major scientific methods (inductive and deductive) and the objectives of science (in chapter one) you will notice the importance of theory generation and exploration. Qualitative research is especially strong in describing and exploring phenomena and generating tentative explanations. Furthermore, qualitative research is very helpful in adding new dimensions of understanding (e.g., understanding groups from the insider’s perspective, understanding the importance of local context, studying complicated processes that occur over time, etc.). We take a “mixed research” view, and believe that both qualitative and quantitative research help each other in understanding the world. They are complementary approaches to research (but we will explain this in depth in Chapter 14 which is on mixed research).

12.5. What are the key characteristics of phenomenology?

Here is the foundational question in phenomenology: *What is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon by an individual or by many individuals?*

Some key characteristics include:

- Attempting to describe participants’ experiences of a phenomenon.
- Attempting to gain insight into participants’ lifeworlds (or lebenswelt), typically through in-depth interviewing.
- Getting participants to bracket or suspend their preconceptions.
- Searching for the invariant structures or essences of participants’ experiences.

12.6. How does the researcher analyze the data collected in a phenomenology?

1. First, you search for “significant statements” (i.e., words, phrases, sentences, etc.) that have particular meaning to the participants or have direct relevance to the phenomenon being studied.
2. Second, some researchers like to make a list of their interpretations of the significant statements (these are called the “meanings”).
3. Third, the researcher searches for themes in the data (i.e., in the significant statements and meanings).
4. Fourth, the researcher attempts to construct a statement of the fundamental structure of the experience (e.g., of what it is like to experience the death of a loved one) that will create a vicarious experience in the reader of the description.

12.7. What are the key characteristics of ethnography?

Here is the foundational question in ethnography: *What are the cultural characteristics of this group of people or this cultural scene?*

The key idea of ethnography is to discover and describe the culture or cultural scenes of a group of people.

- Everything revolves around the conceptual framework of culture (i.e., a system of shared beliefs, values, practices, perspectives, folk knowledge, language, norms, rituals, and material objects and artifacts that members of a group use in understanding their world and in relating to others).
- This involves understanding the etic and emic perspectives, not being ethnocentric when collecting and interpreting data, searching for the wholes, staying in the field for an extended period, etc.

12.8. What is the difference between a “macro” and a “micro” culture?

Macro means “big” and micro means “small.” Ethnographers may study small cultures as well as big cultures. A small culture would be a local high school band; a big culture would be “an American” which is used in the United States to refer to its members.

12.9. How do people become members of cultures?

Through socialization, internalization, and the use of social sanctions. Learning is the key psychological process by which we identify with and become members of macro and micro cultures.

12.10. What is the difference between the emic and the etic perspective?

The emic perspective is the native or insider’s perspective; the etic perspective is an external, social scientific perspective.

12.11. What are the key characteristics of case study research?

Here is the foundational question in case study research: *What are the characteristics of this single case or of these comparison cases.*

- Case study research is eclectic.
- It uses the conceptual organizer of “case” and “cases” in delineating the world.

12.12. What is a case?

A case is a “bounded system” of interrelated parts forming a whole.

- A case may be an object or entity, an event, an activity, or a process.

12.13. Define intrinsic case study, instrumental case study, and collective case study.

1. In an intrinsic case study the researcher is interested in understanding the particulars of a specific case.
2. In an instrumental case study the researcher is interested in understanding something more general than the particular case.
3. In a collective case study the researcher is interested in comparing multiple cases in a single research study.

12.14. What are the key characteristics of grounded theory?

Here is the foundational question in grounded theory: *What theory or explanation emerges from an analysis of the data collected about this phenomenon?*

- In Glaser and Strauss’ words, “Grounded theory is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed.”
- Glaser and Strauss wrote the first book on grounded theory.
- In short, grounded theory uses an inductive or bottom-up approach to generate or develop a theory or explanation.

12.15. What are the four important characteristics of grounded theory according to Glaser and Strauss?

The four characteristics of a grounded theory are

1. Fit (Does the theory or explanation fit the data?)
2. Understanding (Is it clear and readily understandable even to non-research types who may need to use the theory?)
3. Generality (Does the scope of the theory and its conceptual level move somewhat beyond the immediate people in the original research study?)
4. Control (Would use of the theory result in some control over the phenomenon that is explained by the theory? Does the theory include some “controllable” variables?).

12.16. When does the researcher stop collecting data in grounded theory research?

Supposedly the researcher stops collecting data when theoretical saturation occurs (i.e., when no new information or concepts are emerging from the data and the grounded theory has been validated).