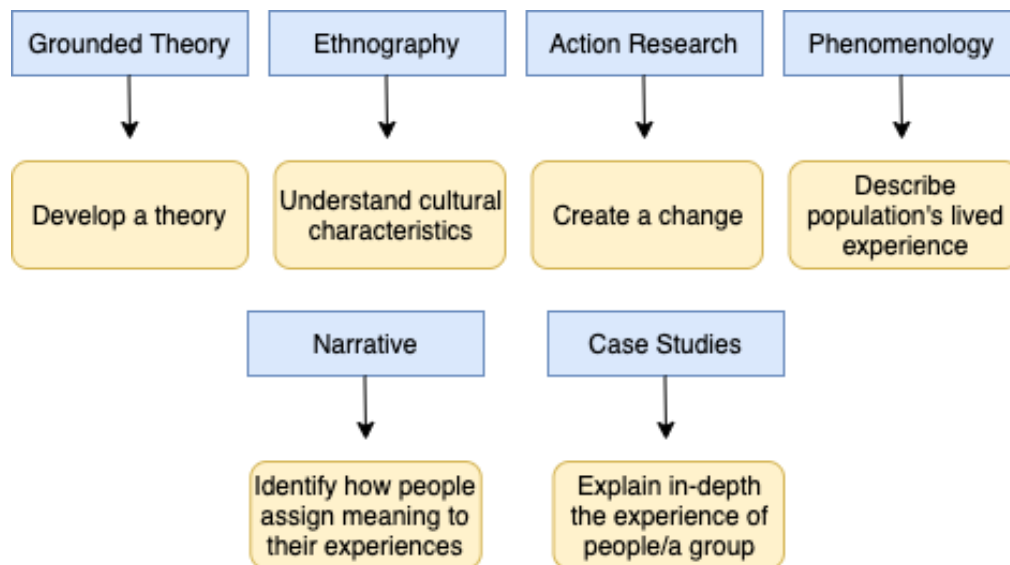


Qualitative Research Design

Your research design will set the specifications of your study. When determining your research design for qualitative research, please consider the following options.

What is the difference in the **aims** of the approaches?



Grounded-Theory

What is it? This approach's main purpose is to **create and develop a theory**. The researcher does **not** start with a theory, but instead develops their theoretical framework only after they collect and analyze data.

Developing a question. The researcher will identify a problem and investigate how people deal with those problems. The question will relate to the problem identified.

Method. Interviews, observation, archival data (many times a mix)

Results. Based on the analysis of the data, the research will propose a new theory.

Example. How do mothers who never went to college experience their own children going to college? How do children with special needs experience successful completion of tasks in a classroom setting?

Resource. Planning a Grounded Theory Study (2015). [Click here](#)

Qualitative Research Design

Ethnography

What is it? A **structured study** of cultures and/or communities where researchers **participate** in the everyday lives of the particular population they are studying. The researcher spends a long period of time living within this population as they do their observations and speak to the beliefs, experiences, and habits of the population.

Developing a question. Researchers will develop a question focused on gaining insight into the culture of a group/institution.

Method. Observations, interviews, surveys.

Results. Researchers will describe the culture and its characteristics.

Example. How are student attitudes affected by online learning? How do consumers use a new product/service? How does an organization's incentive plan influence productivity?

Narrative Research

What is it? A method of research that **depends on written or spoken words or some sort of visual representation** of study participants. Narrative research usually focuses on participants' lives and is told through participants' own stories.

Developing a question. The research will determine what they want to know about people's lived experiences. Most commonly, these questions start with *how* or *what*.

Method. Interviews, autobiographies, historical documents, journals.

Results. This type of research focuses on **who tells the story** and **how the story is told** to create a significant answer that will answer a research question.

Example. How did being raised in a large family affect a student's desire to succeed in school? What are the common challenges for women in positions of authority?

Phenomenology

What is it? A study that intends to **gain knowledge of experiences and perspectives of those who participate** in the study. It's focus is on the commonality of participants' experiences.

Developing a question. The researcher uses **more than one way to interpret the same experience** and these interpretations and their meanings make up the reality of the participants of this study.

Method. The researcher will conduct **lengthy and detailed interviews** with **multiple participants** to get information regarding their one of a kind experiences.

Results. These experiences offer a very detailed description of the human experience.

Example. What drives employees to contact HR when dealing with issues at the workplace? How do students of color perceive microaggressions in the classroom?

Resource. Groenewald, T. (2014). [Click here](#)

Qualitative Research Design

Case Studies

What is it? This type of study is **very detailed**. It is an investigation of how just **one** person or phenomenon develops over time. Thus, you would need to choose an organization or event (for example) to gather information about. Case studies often explore complex questions. More than one case study can be done and used as a way to compare the information gathered.

Developing a question. First, the researcher must **identify the problem** they will research. Then the researcher will **select cases and the method(s)** they will use to collect and analyze data. Then the researcher will **collect data and analyze it**.

Method. Interviews, observations, or archival data.

Results. Case studies focus on **one** individual occurrence, event, or person, the results **cannot** typically be generalized, or applied to other phenomena.

Example. What is the marketing strategy of Program X in the education curriculum market? How does online learning impact students' engagement levels in undergraduate studies?

Resource. Rashid et al. (2019). [Click here](#)

Action Research

What is it? This type of research **attempts to solve a current problem**. It uses a combination of methods to discover and solve problems. The researcher acts as a participant in this research.

Developing a question. The researcher will **identify the problem**, make sure they use the proper theory and make any kind of clarifications regarding that theory, then they will **identify the question(s)** to be researched and answered. The researcher then **collects the data** necessary to answer the question(s) and **sort the data** out in an organized manner. Then the researcher will **analyze and interpret the data** and create a plan to deal with the question or problem.

Method. Observations, interviews, archival data.

Results. The researcher will **implement the plan** created from data collection and analysis and **evaluate** the plan's results.

Example. How does the wise intervention feedback strategy influence student success on assignments at the university level? How do servant leadership strategies influence retention rates in medium-sized organizations?

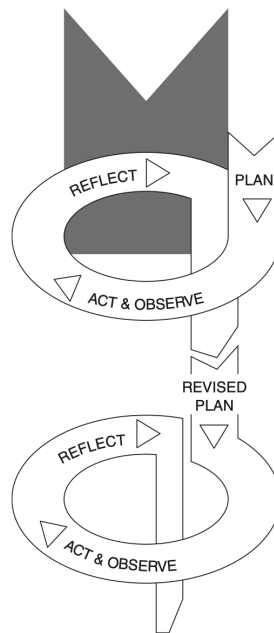
Resource. Kemmis et al. (2014). [Click here](#)

(See below for a visual depiction of action research)

Qualitative Research Design

Figure 1

What is Action Research?



Note: Taken from Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (2000). Participatory action research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 567-607). Sage.

Resource. [Designing a Qualitative Study \(n.d.\)](#).