

Worksheet: Creating Qualitative Research Questions

Sometimes, qualitative researchers often find themselves asking research questions that are too broad. In doing this, it can generate too much data to examine in a single study and become overwhelming to sift through.

To help combat this common issue, work through the following questions when thinking about starting a study. The questions are designed to help you formulate a clear vision for your future research study. It might also be useful to talk through your answers to these questions with a colleague or a research partner.

1. First, write down your proposed research question(s).
2. What paradigm underpins your research (e.g., postpositivist, interpretivist, critical, etc.)?
 - a. How does this paradigm influence your research question?
 - b.
 - c. What are the implications of this paradigm on your research question?
3. What theoretical influences are you drawing from (these may be *sensitizing concepts*)?
4. How did extant research or theory factor into the creation of your research question?
5. How does the research question connect to your site or sample?
6. Does your qualitative approach allow for revision of your research question as you collect and analyze data? (e.g., the iterative approach to qualitative data analysis)
7. What contribution will your research make to your discipline? To theory? To society (outside of academia)?
8. After working through the questions above and talking them out with a colleague(s), how have you revised your research question(s)?
 - a. What might you need to be mindful of as you begin your research?
 - b. Remember to consider how your paradigm and theoretical influences may impact this process...