Qualitative Research -- research methods that emphasize depth of understanding and deeper meaning of human experience; generally generates theoretically richer, yet more tentative conclusions than quantitative methods; results not easily reduced to numbers.

Many topics are appropriate for qualitative research, including practices, relationships, and social worlds.

Qualitative research paradigms

**Naturalism/ethnography** -- naturalistic research (observing the details of everyday life as they naturally unfold in the real world); the study of a culture from the point of view of the people who inhabit the culture.

**Grounded theory** -- inductive process of discovering theory from data; theories grounded in data through constant comparisons of evolving concepts and empirical data.

**Participatory action research (PAR)** — researcher’s function is to serve as a resource to those being studied (typically disadvantaged groups) as an opportunity for them to act effectively in their own interest; participants are involved in defining various aspects of the research.

**Case studies** — idiographic examination of a single individual, group, family, organization, community, or society; can use client logs as sources of data.

**Sampling in qualitative research** is more often purposive, including snowball sampling, quota sampling, deviant case sampling, intensity sampling, critical incidents sampling, maximum variation sampling, homogeneous sampling, theoretical sampling.

**Strengths** of qualitative research include depth of understanding, 2) flexibility, and 3) possible lower cost. Lack of **generalizability** is usually a limitation. **Subjectivity** can be both a strength in terms of gaining a more thorough understanding of a topic or and/or a limitation in terms of bias that may interfere with making accurate observations.

A prime standard for evaluating qualitative research is **trustworthiness**, which can be examined from different perspectives.

**Contemporary positivistic standards** include minimizing threats to trustworthiness such as reactivity, researcher bias, and respondent bias. Standards that can enhance trustworthiness from a positivistic view include 1) prolonged engagement, 2) triangulation, 3) peer debriefing and support, 4) negative case analysis, 5) member checking, and 6) auditing.

**Social constructivist standards** of trustworthiness involve 1) inclusion of multiple realities and 2) inclusion of sufficient details so the reader can judge whether the conclusions “fit” the situation.

**Empowerment standards** involve conducting studies that lead to participants recognizing a need for change or a possibility for change.