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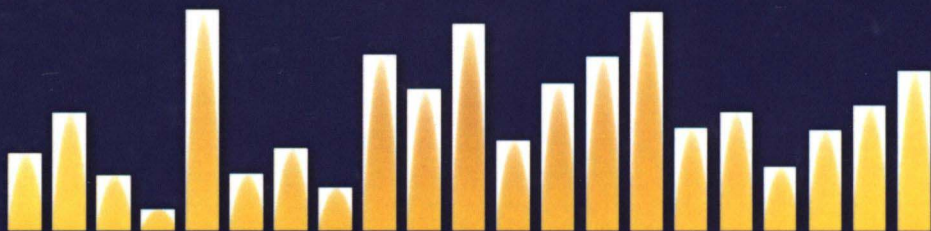
GOVERNMENT PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONS

Data Collection

Methods, Ethical Issues
and Future Directions

NOVA

Data Collection: Methods, Ethical Issues and Future Directions, edited by Dr. Susan E. Elswick, presents a broad and dynamic perspective on data collection practices across multiple disciplines. The chapter contributions identify potential ethical concerns, and describe future directions for addressing these issues. This book provides the reader with details about recent and possible future advances in the use of data collection practices within the fields of healthcare, social and behavioral sciences, digital survivor work, crisis work, computer technology/needs assessment development, and the field of hospitality management. Each chapter provides the reader with direct insight into these multiple fields of practice. The chapter and contributing authors are experts in their disciplines, and provide rich perspectives to the audience. Chapters provide descriptions regarding the data collection methods utilized, and the implications for best practices in data collection and future work within these fields.



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**DATA COLLECTION
METHODS, ETHICAL ISSUES
AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

**SUSAN ELSWICK
EDITOR**

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PREFACE

NOVA Science Publishers Inc. publishes a wide array of books and journals from authors around the globe. This book entitled, “Data Collection: Methods, Ethical Issues and Future Directions,” adds to the existing literature and works by providing an interdisciplinary review of data collection methods and best practices among specific fields.

The book “Data Collection: Methods, Ethical Issues and Future Directions,” edited by Dr. Susan E. Elswick, presents a broad and dynamic perspective on data collection practices across multiple disciplines. The chapter contributions identify specific methods of data collection, potential ethical concerns, and describe future directions for addressing these issues.

This book provides both profound data collection and methods knowledge for researchers, and provides a comprehensive insight into practices across different fields of expertise. The fields represented in this book include the following: healthcare, behavioral and social sciences, digital survivor work, crisis work, computer technology and needs assessment development, and the field of hospitality management. Each chapter provides the reader with direct insight into these multiple fields of practice. The chapter and contributing authors are experts in their disciplines, and provide rich perspectives to the audience. Authors provide descriptions within each chapter regarding the data collection methods utilized in each field, and best-implications for data practices and future work within these fields.

This book will assist readers interested in research with understanding the varying methods of data collection and processes across multiple fields of practice. This book starts with a chapter on the differences between qualitative and quantitative research models, and continues to build on novel approaches to research throughout the text. Each chapter describes in depth processes for

multiple data collection practices, methods utilized in the analysis of the data, and information about future directions for work across the fields. The example-driven approach of this book is sure to increase reader's knowledge of data collection practices among different professions in an attempt to encourage potential future interest in interdisciplinary research methods in practice.

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DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Chapter 1

**QUANTITATIVE OR QUALITATIVE
RESEARCH: METHODS, ETHICAL ISSUES
AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Jenny Salmon, PhD*

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ABSTRACT

Inherent within the field of research are two methodological data collection techniques known as quantitative and qualitative scientific inquiry - both having roles to play in theorizing and can be used in supplementary or complementary forms. This chapter focuses on data collection relative to qualitative research inquiry which is the methodology used in the social sciences, anthropology and most latterly within the field of health. The researcher collects data in rich and detailed textual form rather than in figures for analysis (quantitative research), seeking to understand the meaning of human action and experiences about phenomena as they occur in context rather than setting out to test predetermined hypotheses. Methodology provides justification for the methods of a research project. Methods are defined as 'techniques for gathering evidence' (data and analysis) or 'procedures, tools and techniques' of research and can be categorized as research action. Data

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produces knowledge which is modified by epistemological methodology (theory of knowledge), justifying the knowledge produced. The most common and frequently used methods in qualitative inquiry are grounded theory, ethnography, participatory action traditions, narrative, phenomenology and case study approaches. Regardless of the chosen approach to a qualitative mode of inquiry, many ethical issues arise during data collection, analysis and dissemination of the findings. These are discussed at some length, being based on the historical influence of the Declaration of Helsinki (1964) and the Nuremberg Code (1947). History and progress in the qualitative research field has caused paradigm shifts, which in turn, have created different ways of thinking about the world together with improved resources for data management and analysis. Most notably, researchers in the areas of social science analyse the implications of computers for society as well as changing technologies available. Researchers in the human and social sciences can be categorized as operational pragmatists. So the more flexibly scientists work (or are allowed to work) the more creative their research will be. The future of data collection is borne out of these acknowledged issues.

Keywords: qualitative research, methods, data collection, phenomenology, ethics

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on data collection relative to qualitative research inquiry which is the methodology used in the social sciences and most latterly within the field of health. The researcher collects data in rich and detailed textual form rather than in figures for analysis (quantitative research), seeking to understand the meaning of human action and experiences about phenomena as they occur in context rather than setting out to test predetermined hypotheses. Methodology provides justification for the methods of a research project.

Researchers in the human and social sciences can be categorized as operational pragmatists. So the more flexibly scientists work (or are allowed to work) the more creative their research will be. The future of data collection is borne out of these acknowledged issues. Qualitative researchers and by extension phenomenological researchers, have a different world-view, paradigm and research tradition from their natural science quantitative colleagues [1]. Thus, a phenomenological approach, which seeks to unveil the description, meaning and essence of the experience is in opposition to a

quantitative, scientific (positivist) research perspective which utilizes statistical analysis. Qualitative researcher proponents would consider the qualitative perspective to be inferior.

However, since most researchers within the field of health wish to gain an understanding of the human 'lived experience' of particular individuals through first-person narrative, they elect to work with a phenomenological research methodology in order to collect data. Its emphasis is on the world as lived by a person, not the world or reality as something separate from the person [2]. This inquiry asks "What is this experience like?" as it attempts to unfold meanings as they are lived in everyday existence. Polkinghorne (1983) identified this focus as trying to understand or comprehend meanings of human experience as it is lived [3].

The "life world" is understood as what we experience pre-reflectively, without resorting to categorization or conceptualization and quite often includes what is taken for granted or those things that are common sense [4]. The study of these phenomena intends to return and re-examine these taken for granted experiences and perhaps uncover new and/or forgotten meanings.

THEORIES AND FEATURES OF QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Other data collection methods that guide human science research of the various qualitative inquiries are as above described - all possessing commonalities of theories and features. These common bonds include:

1. Recognizing the value of qualitative designs and methodologies, studies of human experience that are not approachable through quantitative approaches
2. Focusing on the wholeness of the experience rather than solely on its objects or parts
3. Searching for meanings and essences of experience rather than measurements and explanations
4. Obtaining descriptions of experience through first-person accounts in informal and formal conversations and interviews
5. Regarding the data of experience as imperative in understanding human behaviour and as evidence for scientific investigations

6. Formulating questions and problems that reflect the interest, involvement and personal commitment of the researcher
7. Viewing experience and behaviour as an integrated and inseparable relationship of subject and object and of parts and whole.

Phenomenological research methodology is also guided by the same ‘common bonds’ and is now described in greater detail; other qualitative methodologies are outside the realm of this chapter [5].

PHENOMENOLOGY

Phenomenological designs and methodologies are qualitative models that guide human science research [5]. They attempt to establish *what* a certain phenomenon means and *how* it is experienced. Phenomenology is often considered central to the interpretive paradigm [6]. It is considered a philosophical discipline as well as a research method [7].

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), a German philosopher and mathematician, is considered the founder of phenomenology as a philosophy and the descriptive (eidetic) approach to inquiry [8]. His main focus was the study of phenomena as they appeared through consciousness. He purported that minds and objects both occur within experience, thus eliminating mind-body dualism. Valle et al. (1989) reported that Husserl viewed consciousness as a co-constituted dialogue between a person and the world [2]. Moreover, he saw access to the structures of consciousness not as a matter of induction or generalization, but as a result of direct grasping of a phenomenon. This grasping was seen as an intentional process, actively guided by human intention, not mechanistic causation [3].

However, the choosing of an appropriate phenomenological approach can be viewed as daunting and perhaps conflicting to some individuals. This is because of the associated methodological strengths, limitations, underlying philosophical assumptions and the dedicated work required by the researcher in order to seek insight into the application of inherent methods and processes which ensure study validity. Validity of a study is judged by rigorous and accurate findings [9, 10].

Phenomenology with its strengths and associated limitations does not as a methodology aim to solve the posed research question - rather phenomenology seeks to unveil the *lived experience* of the individual under study, i.e., the one who has experienced the phenomenon of interest [5]. Furthermore, using