

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

A Brief Introduction on Qualitative Research Method

by

Adlina Hj Ariffin

30 March 2011

Presentation Outline

- Overview of qualitative research
- Reasons for qualitative research
- Traditions of inquiry in qualitative research design
- Data collection methods
- Sampling
- Analysing Data

Definition of Qualitative Research

“ Qualitative research is an **inquiry** process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that **explore** a **social or human problem**. The researcher builds a **complex, holistic picture**, analyses **words**, reports **detailed views** of informants and conducts the study in a **natural setting**” (Cresswell, 1998, p.15).

Characteristics of qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992)

- Naturalistic
 - Conducts study in natural setting - fieldwork; no form of exploitation as in experimental research
 - Researcher is the key instrument
 - *Context* is important (e.g. AIKOL)
- Descriptive data
 - Detailed and rich descriptions
 - Written words, pictures etc
 - Direct encounters with individuals = Time consuming

Characteristics of qualitative research - Cont

- Concerned with process
 - Not product or outcomes
 - “How do people think?”
 - “How does the traumatic experience affect ones behaviour?”
- Inductive
 - To establish a proposition about a class of phenomena based on observations on a number of particular facts
 - Analogy – developing a picture
 - Developing a theory vs testing a theory

Characteristics of qualitative research - Cont

- Meaning
 - Interested in participants' or informants' perspectives
 - feelings, opinions, beliefs, experiences
 - capture holistic perspectives (not identification of a set of variables)
 - researchers do not have pre-conceived ideas

Qualitative \neq Quantitative

Qualitative

- Subjective
- Holistic
- Phenomenological
- Naturalistic
- Soft data
- Descriptive
- Inductive

Quantitative

- Objective
- Reductionist
- Scientific
- Contrived / artificial
- Empirical
- Experimental
- Deductive

(Hancock, 1998)

Why Qualitative Research?

- Seek to find answers to questions of 'how' and 'why' to the answer of 'what'
 - How and why cultures developed in the way they have
 - Why people behave the way they do
 - How opinions and attitudes are formed
- e.g. How does the tsunami affect the lives of the Japanese?

Traditions of Inquiry in Qualitative Research Design

- Biography
 - “Study of an individual and his or her experiences as told to the researcher or found in documents and archival material” (Creswell, 1998, p.47)
 - study on “collection of life documents that describe turning-point moments in an individual’s life” (Denzin (1989a) in Creswell, 1998,p.47)

Traditions of Inquiry in Qualitative Research Design

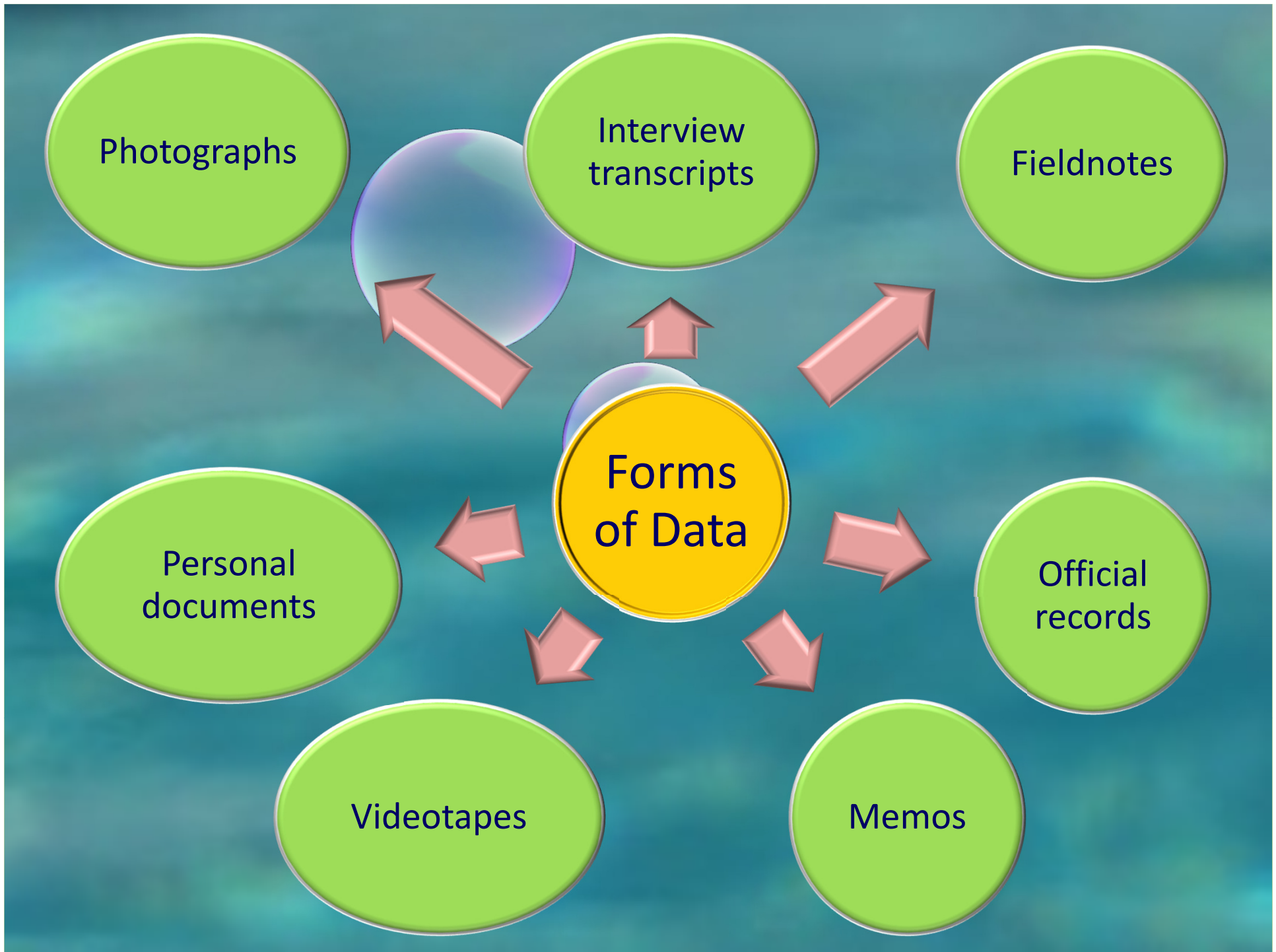
- Phenomenology
 - Study the *meaning* of events, situations, experiences for a number of individuals
 - Phenomenon of loneliness by Moustakas (1994)
- Grounded Theory
 - Develop a new theory about a phenomenon through collection and analysis of rich data
 - Theory is 'grounded' in data from the field
 - Goes beyond phenomenology because the explanations that emerge are genuinely new knowledge and are used to develop new theories about a phenomenon

Traditions of Inquiry in Qualitative Research Design

- Ethnography
 - Portraits of a people – study of cultures and peoples
 - Entails extensive field work – longitudinal study
 - Margaret Mead (1925) – Samoan tribe
- Case study
 - A program, an event, an activity or individuals
 - Relates to the in-depth analysis of a single or a small number of units

Data Collection Method

- Interviews
 - Structured and unstructured
- Focus group
 - 6 to 10 individuals
 - Potential for greater insights during interaction
- Participant observation
 - Enters the world of the people under study, gets to know them, earns trust, keeps a systematic detailed written record of their activities/ conversations etc



Sampling

- Seek information from specific groups or subgroups in the population because they are 'special' or different and "that 'specialness' is the focus of the research" (Hancock, 1998).
- Quantitative – seek to show representativeness of findings through random selection of subjects

Typology of sampling strategies (Kuzel, 1992)

Type of sampling

- Typical case
- Extreme case
- Snowball or chain

Purpose

- Highlights what is normal or average
- Learning from highly unusual manifestations of the phenomenon of interest
- identifies cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information-rich

Analysing Data

- “The process of data analysis is like a **funnel**: Things are open at the beginning (or top) and more directed and specific at the bottom” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) .

- Own experience

Exploring the Common Practices of Law Students in the Reading of Legal Cases: a case study of an EAP course at the Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyyah of Laws (AIKOL)

Analysing Data

Interview Transcription

Coding Template

Inter-rater Reliability

Developing Themes

Summary of Themes

Findings

No I don't think so I don't think English is that important...
...English proficiency is a bonus but it's not a condition for understanding law...SM

...in my opinion they would really need a good command of the English...XY

Themes

Coding

RQ
&
IQ

- Strong knowledge of LAW
- Proficient in English
- English is not important

...you need to know your vocabulary...
...you need to know your legal principles...
...you need to have a solid background of the topic SM

RQ2: How do the students cope with the linguistic complexity
skills that a Law student needs to possess in order to be able to read the legal cases



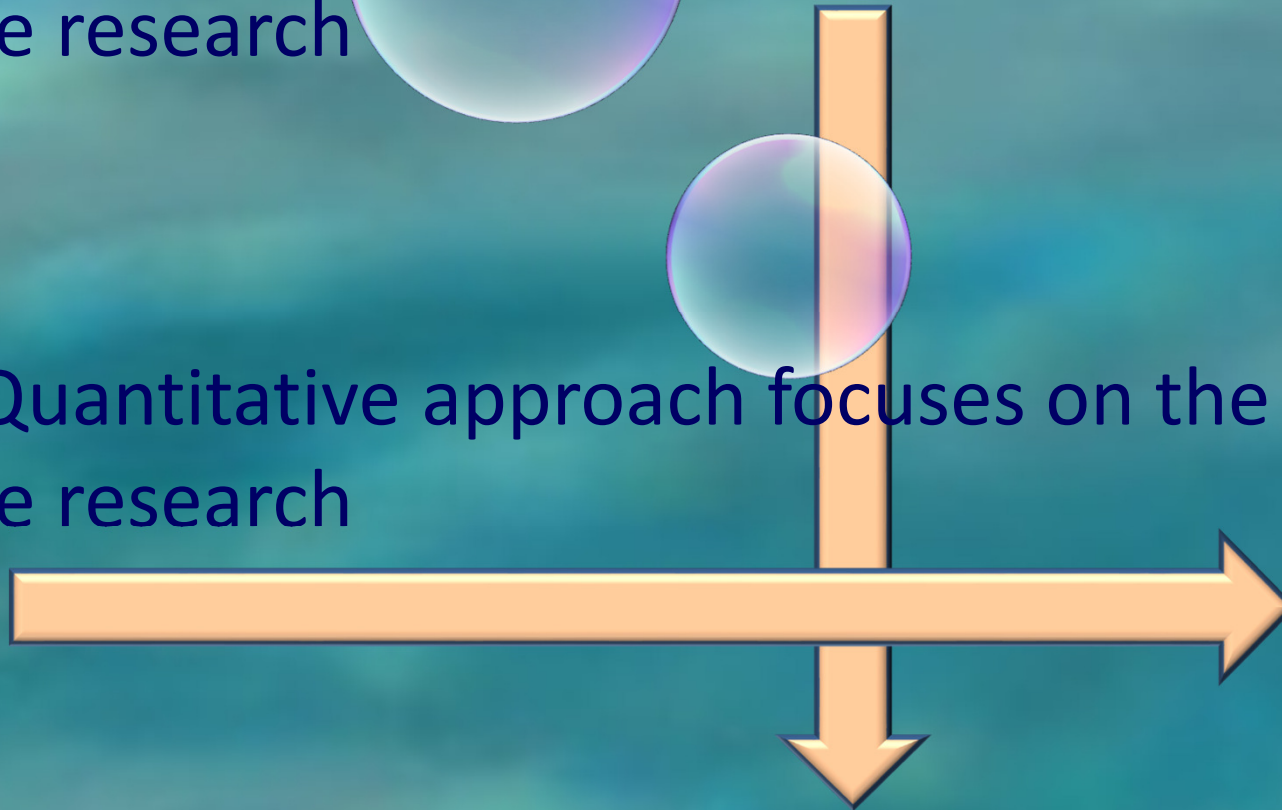
Software packages (Miles & Huberman, 1994)

- HyperQual, The Ethnograph – faster, better and more precise coding
- Sonar Professional, Orbis, askSam, the Text Collector - quicker and easier storing and retrieving relevant chunks of text
- Inspiration, Meta Design, MECA and SemNet - conceptual and graphic mapping
- ATLAS/ ti, NUD*IST – formulate and test theories
- Nvivo – latest software – transcribing, coding, graphic mapping

Conclusions

- Qualitative approach focuses on the **depth** of the research

- Quantitative approach focuses on the **breadth** of the research



References

- Bogdan, R.C. and Biklen, S.K. (1992). *Qualitative research for education: An introductory to theory and methods*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon
- Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods (2nd Ed)*. London: Sage Pubs
- Creswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative enquiry and research design: choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications
- Merriam S.B. (2009). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. Jossey-bass Higher & Adult Education Series
- Hancock, B.(1998). *Trent Focus for research and Development in Primary Health Care: an Introduction to Qualitative Research*. Trent Focus
- Miles , M.B.& Huberman, A.M (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Sage Publications



Good luck

&

Thank you



adlina@iiu.edu.my