



**ENRICHING
THE ISLAMIC TRADITION
IN RESEARCH INQUIRY:
Some practical guidelines in using qualitative
data collection techniques.**

Edited by Adlina Ariffin (PhD)

Inthought

International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)

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PREFACE



In the Name of Allah the Most Glorious the Most Merciful

Everything begins with a dream and so is this book. The dream started when I was pursuing my doctoral studies at the International Islamic University Malaysia. One of the data collection methods I planned to employ in my research was ‘think aloud protocol’ (TAP). I searched the literature for this qualitative research method but failed to find suitable materials which could provide me a clear picture and guidance in terms of the procedures that TAP entails. Hence, upon completing my PhD studies, I dreamt of producing a book which would give a clear idea to the readers on the implementation of different data collection methods for qualitative research. Besides that, I also dreamt of highlighting the Islamic perspective embedded in each method. Hence, today my dream has come true with the birth of this book *Enriching the Islamic Tradition in Research Inquiry: Some Practical Guidelines in Using Qualitative Data Collection Techniques*.

Due to the huge interest for qualitative data, a thorough understanding on the implementation of the qualitative data collection techniques is indeed paramount. Hence, the fundamental intention of this book is to assist social researchers especially postgraduate students and novice researchers who are interested to conduct their research qualitatively. More often than not, they may have heard of certain techniques but they may not have an inkling on how to go about implementing them. It is hoped that this book will be able to shed some light on this issue.

Specifically, this book aims to capture and illustrate **how** certain qualitative **data collection techniques** are **utilised** in the social science research. It also emphasises the **practical considerations** that need to be made based on the experiences of the chapter contributors who had used the technique(s) before. Ultimately, by reading this book, readers will be able to:

- gain a clear picture as to how the techniques are applied in the different contexts
- gather useful and important tips on how to utilise them
- understand the shortfalls or constraints that they might face and how to overcome them.

The qualitative techniques delineated in this book are by no means exhaustive, however, they refer to creative and unique contemporary methodologies shared by each chapter contributor.

The book began by providing a general landscape of the social science research and its relation to the Islamic philosophy. In Chapter 1, Dr Alizi gives a clear illustration on the relationship between contemporary quantitative and qualitative research methods and the Islamic perspective. He also highlights some of the issues pertaining to both research paradigms as perceived from the Islamic lens. He eventually proposes an integrated Islamic-scientific social science research model.

In Chapter 2, Dr Adelina presents an uncommon approach in qualitative research where data can be gathered through something as abstract as graphics. She provides clear descriptions on how graphics are used as a supplementary form of method in a study on research instruction. It explores the way this study was carried out on undergraduates, and how they co-authored chapters of a book on research using graphics. The chapter therefore aims to offer an alternative lens through which the area of study is enriched. Some practical applications as well as related concerns are discussed as points of reference when using such a technique for research.

In the next chapter, Dr Rosnani shares her experiences in using ‘Diary Studies as a Research Tool’. This chapter provides an overview of diary studies and some background information on diary study research as well as its limitations. She also presents a detailed account of a research on second language learning where diary writing was employed as a research tool. Insights from the application of the technique are also discussed followed by the implications and suggestions for the benefit of young researchers.

Chapter 4 is a good start for an enlightening journey of verbal discourse where Dr Puteri Rohani shares her employment of a case study method in reading classroom which allows her to capture the essence of reading engagement among the students. In this chapter the researcher focuses on a qualitative technique which enables her to reflect on the students’ voices and their experiences as they tackle their reading tasks. By employing a pedagogical approach in a reading classroom that promotes interaction among students, it will develop the students’ hearts and minds as they progress to the status of engaged readers. Consequently, students will approach their reading in a more versatile and strategic manner.

Another fascinating research on interaction in the context of applied linguistics is shared by Dr Haliza and Dr Hazleena in Chapter 5. This chapter helps researchers in the qualitative field to understand the basics of interaction analysis and its differences to that of conversational analysis and discourse analysis. The important steps in utilising interaction analysis are also presented plus the nature of data that will be gathered.

Researchers who wish to embark on focus group discussion and interview will find Dr Nor Zainiyah’s work an enlightening read. In this chapter, she discusses some of the important issues pertaining to these research methods such as the role of the moderator-researcher, language setting, number of participants etc. She also highlights the advantages of using both focus group discussions and interview.

Human minds are indeed very complex and mysterious. Doing a research that taps into the minds of individuals requires some fundamental comprehension on the method used. In Chapter 7, Dr Adlina through her work on ‘Demystifying the Minds via Think Aloud Protocol’ aims to highlight the use of think aloud protocol (TAP) as a research procedure. It begins by providing some background information on TAP as a suitable procedure in delving into the

mysteries of the minds. This is followed by a deliberation on the criticisms related to TAP as found in the literature. The use of the procedure in an actual research context is also shared in the hope that readers can learn on the steps and approaches taken by the researcher in handling the criticisms pertaining to TAP. This knowledge is indeed crucial in ascertaining the credibility and validity of the data collected.

The current rapid advancement of technology has touched every facet of human life including communication where social media networks have gained prominence in our lives. Not only that, social media has become important tools in the research paradigm too. Chapter 8 presents an overview of how storytelling is exploited in social network platforms via WhatsApp and Facebook to improve students' communication ability. Dr Roziana presents a thorough description of the research and how students' communication ability has improved via this method. Setbacks found from the research are also discussed as a guide for future researchers.

Document analysis, interview transcription and observation field notes are the most popular and rapidly expanding techniques for collecting data in a qualitative research, especially in Qur'anic studies. These techniques have been applied to many areas of inquiry and has been used to study the methodology of Qur'anic exegesis, the exegetes' thought and the thematic interpretation of the Qur'an. However, occasionally the process of collecting and analysing data is not properly done, and this could affect credibility and accuracy of a description, explanation or finding of a research. Thus, in Chapter 9, Dr Nadzrah delineates the use of Cohen's Kappa Index to provide a scientific, valid and reliable research in the Qur'anic studies. The chapter also presents a few examples of Qur'anic research that applied the Cohen's Kappa index for better understanding.

It is indeed the hope of the editor and all chapter contributors that this book will be of great use and benefit to all researchers involved in qualitative research.

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