

Qualitative Research

Prof. Dr. Frank-Martin Belz
Technische Universität München
TUM School of Management

Doctoral Seminar
TUM Graduate School of Management
Winter term 2020/21

I. Seminar Description

Qualitative research has become an established method of inquiry in human and social sciences, including management and related fields. Qualitative papers are published in leading management journals (e.g. Administrative Science Quarterly, Academy of Management Journal, Organisation Studies, Journal of Business Venturing, and Journal of Consumer Research). In this seminar you will learn about the nature of qualitative research, different approaches, and research designs. Furthermore, you will become familiar with the facets and nuances of qualitative data collection and analysis.

II. Seminar Requirements

The seminar is targeted at doctoral students, who are in the beginning of their studies, and who intend to employ qualitative research. Since the seminar is very interactive in nature, it is limited to 15 participants. If you are interested in the seminar, send a short letter of motivation and CV until February 4, 2021 to Prof. Dr. Frank-Martin Belz (email: Frank.Belz@tum.de).

II. Seminar Objectives

At the end of the seminar you will be able to:

- Understand the ontological and epistemological assumptions of qualitative research;
- Define and appreciate qualitative research designs and methods;
- Acknowledge the difference between variance and process models;
- Understand case studies and ethnographies as main approaches for qualitative research;
- Apply qualitative research methods for data collection and analysis;
- Craft a qualitative research paper proposal.

The seminar is designed as an interactive seminar, including group exercises, role plays, open plenum discussions, direct talks with and feedback by the instructor. The seminar objectives and the letter of participation will be achieved by:

- reading assigned papers (prior to class!);
- attending all classes;
- participating actively in group exercises and class room discussions;
- developing a qualitative project proposal relating your own line of research;
- providing feedback to the project proposals submitted by your fellow students.

III. Seminar Schedule

Day	Time	Contents
11.02.2021	09:15-13:00	Welcome and Round of Introduction Qualitative Research: Theory, Ontology and Epistemology
18.02.2021	09:15-13:00	Qualitative Research Design: Case Study
25.02.2021	09:15-13:00	Qualitative Research Design: Ethnography
04.03.2021	09:15-13:00	Qualitative Data Collection: Interviews, Documents and Visuals

11.03.2021	09:15-13:00	Qualitative Data Analysis: Approaches, Tools and Techniques
18.03.2021	09:15-13:00	Qualitative Research Project Proposals: Discussion and Feedback

Due to COVID-19 the doctoral seminar will take place online enabled by Zoom. The link will be shared with the accepted participants prior to the seminar.

IV. Seminar Readings

The following articles are **basic readings** in the doctoral seminar on qualitative research. They combine method articles with some seminal articles from management, leadership, organization science, entrepreneurship, and consumer research published in top journals, which employ qualitative research in an exemplary fashion. The articles are listed in logical order (not alphabetical order of the authors). Altogether they form a basis for our discussion. For the convenience of the participants, all required readings are provided as pdf files in the TUM Moodle learning platform. To get the most out of it and allow a fruitful discussion, make certain to read the articles **prior to class!**

Session 1: Qualitative Research: Theory, Ontology, and Epistemology

In the first session we will talk about the theoretical, ontological and epistemological assumptions of qualitative research (in contrast to quantitative research). Furthermore, we will distinguish between variance and process models.

Sutton, R.I. & Staw, B.M. (1995): What Theory is *Not*. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40(3): 371-384.

Weick, K.E. (1995): What Theory is *Not*, *Theorizing Is*. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40(3): 385-390.

DiMaggio, Paul J. (1995). Comments on "What Theory is *Not*". *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40(3): 391-397.

Morgan, G., & Smircich, L. (1980): The Case for Qualitative Research. *Academy of Management Review*, 5(4): 491-500.

van de Ven, A. H. (2007). Variance and Process Models. In: van de Ven, A. H. (eds.): *Engaged Scholarship: A Guide for Organizational and Social Research*, Oxford University Press: Oxford: 143-160.

Memo 1: Why might it be useful to reflect upon ontological and epistemological assumptions in the beginning of your doctoral studies?

Memo 2: Think of your own line of research. Formulate a research question, which is suitable for 1) a variance model, and 2) a process model.

Session 2: Qualitative Research Design: Case Study

In the second session we will focus on case study research as one of the main qualitative approaches in management and related fields.

Eisenhardt, K. 1989. Building Theories from Case Study Research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4): 532-550.

Fletcher, M. & Plakoyiannaki. 2011: Case Selection in International Business: Key Issues and Common Misconceptions, in: Marschan-Pierkkari, R. & Welch, C. (eds.) *Rethinking the Case Study in International Business and Management Research*. Edward Elgar: Cheltenham, UK, pp. 171-192.

Eisenhardt, K.M. 1989. Making Fast Strategic Decisions in High-Velocity Environments. *Academy of Management Journal*, 32(3): 543-576 (focus: method section).

Harrison, S.H. & Rouse, E.D. (2014): Let's Dance! Elastic Coordination in Creative Group Work: A Qualitative of Modern Dancers. *Academy of Management Journal*, 57 (5): 1256-1283 (focus: method section).

Memo 3: Read the two AMJ articles (focus: method section) and analyze the case study designs in terms of the main units of analysis, the empirical units of observation, and the sampling. Furthermore, ask yourself, what are the underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions of the articles.

Memo 4: Develop a case study design relating your own line of research.

Session 3: Qualitative Research Design: Ethnography

Reeves, S., Peller, J. & Kitto, S. (2013): Ethnography in qualitative educational research. *Medical Teacher*, 35: 1365-1379.

Atkinson, Michael (2008): Triathlon, suffering and exciting significance. *Leisure Studies*, 27(2): 165-180 (focus: method section).

Kozinets, R.V. (2001): Utopian Enterprise: Articulating the Meanings of Star Trek's Culture of Consumption. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 28 (1): 67-88 (focus: method section).

Memo 5: Develop an ethnography relating your own line of research.

Session 4: Qualitative Data Collection: Interviews, Documents and Visuals

In the fourth session we will learn about different methods of collecting qualitative data (verbal, written, and visual).

Arsel, Z. (2017). Asking Questions with Reflexive Focus: A Tutorial on Designing and Conducting Interviews. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44 (4): 939-948.

Harper, D. (2002). Talking about pictures. A case for photo elicitation. *Visual Studies*, 17(1): 13-26.

Flick, U. (2009): *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 4th ed., Sage: Los Angeles, 253-262.

Munir, K.A. & Philips, N. 2005. The Birth of the 'Kodak Moment': Institutional Entrepreneurship and the Adoption of New Technologies. *Organization Studies*, 26(11): 1665-1687 (focus: method section).

O'Neil, I., Ucbasaran, D. 2016. Balancing "what matters to me" with "what matters to them": Exploring the legitimation process of environmental entrepreneurs. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 31(2): 133-152 (focus: method section).

Session 5: Qualitative Data Analysis: Approaches, Tools and Techniques

In the fifth session the instructor will provide a brief overview of tools and techniques for qualitative data analysis. Furthermore, we will take first steps to use Maxqda, one of the leading software programmes for qualitative data analysis.

Miles, M. & Huberman, A. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis. A Methods Sourcebook*. 3rd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications: 70-75, 81-93.

Flick, U. (2009): *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 4th ed., Sage: Los Angeles: 306-312.

Gioia, D.A., Corley, K.G., & Hamilton, A.L. (2013). Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1), 15-31.

Memo 6: Download the free trial version from Maxqda on your notebook for your own use and take first steps to become familiar with the software program for qualitative data analysis.

Session 6: Qualitative Research Project Proposals: Discussion and Feedback

In the sixth session we will discuss your qualitative research project proposals. You will get in-depth feedback from your fellow students and the instructor with a special emphasis on qualitative research design and methods.

Memo 7: Submit a qualitative project proposal, including main research questions, research context, research design, and research methods for qualitative data collection and analysis (2-3 pages, single-spaced, Times Roman 12).

VI. Instructor's profile

Frank-Martin Belz holds the Chair of Corporate Sustainability at the Technical University Munich (TUM School of Management). He studied Business Administration at the University of Giessen and the University of Mannheim (Germany). From 1991 to 1995 he was doctoral student at the University of St. Gallen (Switzerland). He wrote his dissertation on *"Ecology and Competitiveness in the Food Industry"*, employing case studies for theory building. After his doctorate he was assistant and associate professor at the University of St. Gallen. In 2003 he became full professor at the TUM School of Management. Frank-Martin Belz focusses his research and teaching on sustainable entrepreneurship. He likes conducting, teaching, and supervising qualitative research. In his leisure time he enjoys doing sports, especially long-distance triathlon. More recently, he has written a semi-autoethnographic study on *"Challenge Ironman: In the Search of Meaning"* (forthcoming).