

The purpose of this study is to . . .



The research questions guiding this study are (Make sure that your research questions are aligned with your research purpose above):

What terms/jargons do you need to operationalize/conceptualize? (List all the terms that could be broken down into simpler terms, with specific indicators.)

What theoretical perspective best fits your study and why?

## Expand Your Thoughts about Your Research Project

In this section, we will dig deeper into your thoughts surrounding the research design that is appropriate for your research purpose and questions that you listed above. Remember, there is no right or wrong answer, but an honest engagement with your thoughts.

### Research Design and Theoretical Alignment

In this section, we will explore your design in an even deeper manner and connect your design to the tenets of your theoretical perspective(s). Complete the following table to the best of your ability. If you are unable to answer some of the prompts, do not be hard on yourself. Just revisit this section when you are able to respond to the prompts. The process of qualitative research is iterative, so linear progression is not always necessary.

The first column lists certain motivations for conducting qualitative studies. If they align with yours, then think of the tenets of your theoretical perspective that align with such a motivation. The third column lists some methodologies that might be appropriate. This is an invitation for you to explore those methodologies further. If the methodologies listed in the third column do not match your thoughts or reasoning, then list your own methodology. It is important that your research reflects your thinking more than anyone else's prescribed pathways. The pathway is offered to you as an organizing strategy.

**TABLE 8.1** Aligning Motivation, Theory, and Methodology

<i>Motivation</i>	<i>Tenets of theoretical perspective(s)</i>	<i>Suggested methodology (Insert your own if you find a better match)</i>
You're interested in understanding, describing, identifying an essence of a lived experience, a phenomenon.		Phenomenology
You're interested in exploring people's lived realities as they interact with other people in a group, setting, organization, etc.		In-depth interview study
Your interest lies in gaining a diverse set of perspectives from a small group of people with opportunities to probe and ask follow-up questions.		Focus-group study

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<i>Motivation</i>	<i>Tenets of theoretical perspective(s)</i>	<i>Suggested methodology (Insert your own if you find a better match)</i>
You're mostly interested in stories. You like hearing stories, you want to repeat your findings in some story structure and you want to hear stories about people's experiences surrounding an event, or their daily lives, or their interactions with people, event, organization, circumstances, etc.		Narrative inquiry
You're mostly interested in understanding the culture of a group of people, organization, setting, etc.		Ethnography (duration in field for at least 18 months) Critical ethnography (duration in field for at least 18 months) Visual ethnography (duration in field for at least 18 months)
You're interested in how communication occurs in various settings and how such communication leads to people's meaning making and experiences		Discourse analysis Ethnomethodology Conversation analysis
You want to talk to as many people as possible and snowball your sampling to as diverse a section of people who can contribute to your topic. You want to generate a theory out of your study.	NONE NEEDED HERE	Constructivist Grounded Theory
You want to draw a boundary around one central point of focus on your study, such as a person, organization, classroom, or project and gain as in-depth understanding as possible.		Case study
You love to analyze documents, archived materials, historical artifacts, from a particular time period that you wish were studied with further analysis and detail on a topic that interests you.		Historical research (mostly analysis of documents, material culture)

<i>Motivation</i>	<i>Tenets of theoretical perspective(s)</i>	<i>Suggested methodology (Insert your own if you find a better match)</i>
You value people's experiences about historical moments in the past and are concerned that certain kinds of experiences, if not documented will not provide the knowledge that is currently missing in our social documentary. You enjoy talking to people about their life histories, memories of critical past events, etc.		Oral history Life story Biography
You want to focus on your experiences within the context of a cultural narrative or a set of cultural narratives because you think that it is important to document your experiences in this way as it provides knowledge in a way that currently does not exist.		Autoethnography Life story
<b>Add your own here</b>		

Please note that the above list is not exhaustive and there are about as many combinations of intentions, theoretical tenets, and methodological alignments as you can imagine. Do not feel restricted by the choices above. You can feel free to align your intentions with your theoretical perspective and methodological choices as you see fit. Just make sure that you have some solid academic arguments for doing what you are doing.

### Methods of Data Collection

Next is a table with some possible data collection sources and a space to document your interest and what kind of information you intend to gather from those potential data sources.

**TABLE 8.2** Exploring Data Collection Methods

Potential Data Source	Mark X if you want to use this source	What information/stories do you wish to obtain from this data source?
Open-ended semistructured interviews (questions prepared and have room for probes based on participant's response).		
Open-ended initial question (Tell me about X the first time you experienced it in as much detail as you can), with follow-up questions based on participant's response.		
Conversational interviews, open-ended, informed by broad lines of inquiry, bidirectional, researcher shares information too about the topic.		
Focus group interviews (open-ended, semistructured, structured).		
Photo-elicited interviews (conversations generated from pictures taken/selected by the participant or the researcher).		
Object-elicited interviews (conversations generated from objects selected by the participant or the researcher).		
Other elicited interviews (maybe you would like your participant to complete a task, like draw a timeline of critical events and discuss experiences on the timeline).		
Participant observation (think about the role you will play while observing—active, passive, peripheral?).		
Documents (think about all the documents that would be relevant to understanding the context of your study better, such as policy manuals, lesson plans, daily planner, etc.).		
Websites (think about all the websites maybe the participant uses, or websites that are relevant to the context of the study with which the participant is familiar, etc.).		
Multimedia data (think of video clips, song lyrics, songs, etc., that might be relevant for your study).		

Potential Data Source

Mark X if you want to use this source

What information/stories do you wish to obtain from this data source?

Other data sources that might be relevant for your study that are not mentioned in the choices above.

**Data Analysis Methods**

As with the previous sections, the options for data analysis presented below are abbreviated. However, your choice is strengthened when you can demonstrate an alignment between your epistemology, theoretical perspective(s), research purpose and questions, research design, data analysis, and data representation. I invite you to engage with the next activity to assess to what you might be naturally drawn. Then, revisit this section repeatedly as you immerse yourself deeper in your study to see if you need to recalibrate your preferences.

The first column will have room for you to enter your thoughts as you explore the activity presented next.

**TABLE 8.3** Aligning Personal Preferences with Data Analysis

What I am naturally drawn to is . . .	You most probably will benefit from	Is there another approach that appeals to you? List below.
A systematic analysis, a path laid out in front of you, examples from other people, some linear progression of ideas, even though at times it might not be linear or clear.	Inductive analysis—systematically coding, sorting, categorizing, building some organizational structure, visualizing your data, constructing themes.	
<b>Your thoughts?</b>	Methodological approaches you could include but are not limited to:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnography</li> <li>• Grounded theory</li> <li>• Case study</li> <li>• Interview study</li> <li>• Narrative inquiry</li> <li>• Critical ethnography</li> </ul>	

(Continued)

**TABLE 8.3** (Continued)

<i>What I am naturally drawn to is . . .</i>	<i>You most probably will benefit from</i>	<i>Is there another approach that appeals to you? List below.</i>
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A systematic organization of all sorts of archived materials, documents, pictures, websites, etc., and looking for patterns within those materials.	Content analysis—systematic organization of information, ideas presented in some form of commonly occurring pattern. You can use inductive approaches for analyzing data in this context too.	
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**Your thoughts?**

- Methodological approaches you could include but are not limited to:
- Life history
  - Oral history
  - Historical study
  - Biographical study

Telling stories, hearing stories, writing stories, looking for elements that make up a story.

**Your thoughts?**

- Narrative analysis—exploring your data with the intent to identify structures of a story. What structure you lean on depends on what theory of storytelling you are using in your study, as there are many ways to tell a story.
- Methodological approaches you could include but are not limited to:
- Case study
  - Interview study
  - Oral history
  - Life history

<i>What I am naturally drawn to is . . .</i>	<i>You most probably will benefit from</i>	<i>Is there another approach that appeals to you? List below.</i>
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Thinking strongly with theory. Using theoretical tenets to read through the data and understand and make connections between different parts of the data that are tangibly collected and perhaps intangibly processed.	Theory-driven analysis without any predetermined format but following a process of chunking material, writing around the material with theoretical reflections, and connecting between various chunks to obtain deeper understanding.	
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**Your thoughts?**

- Note that all analysis should ideally be incorporated with theoretical tenets, but the scholars who lean on this approach often reject the more traditional inductive approaches of codes, categories, and theme identification in preference of theory being the one and only guide for analysis.

Methodological approaches you could include but are not limited to:

- Case study
- Interview study
- Oral history
- Life history
- Narrative inquiry

Finding a core essence. Analyzing all shared experience to find an invariant theme, a core essence of a particular phenomenological experience.

**Your thoughts?**

- Methodological approaches you could include but are not limited to:
- Case study
  - Interview study
  - Oral history
  - Life history
  - Narrative inquiry

**TABLE 8.3** (Continued)

<i>What I am naturally drawn to is . . .</i>	<i>You most probably will benefit from</i>	<i>Is there another approach that appeals to you? List below.</i>
<p>Closely understanding interactions in a conversation, turn taking, use of pauses, nonverbal responses, and the influence these have on communication.</p>	<p>Conversation analysis, where you can select small portions of interactional data that reflect detailed transcriptional notations, and analyze the small portions of data closely.</p>	
<p><b>Your thoughts?</b></p>	<p>Methodological approaches you could include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discourse analysis</li> <li>• Ethnomethodology</li> <li>• Actions implicative discourse analysis</li> </ul>	
<p>Artistic ways of thinking about your data inspired by poetry, dramas, theaters, documentaries, songs, fictions, nonfictions, satire, art, etc.</p>	<p>Arts-based analysis where you would combine tenets of the genre of art you might be drawn to with the scholarly requirements of a study. You can conduct poetic analysis, dramatic analysis, visual analysis, etc. Often these approaches are not prescribed and it falls on the researcher to discover a process and document the process.</p>	
<p><b>Your thoughts?</b></p>	<p>Methodological approaches you could include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual ethnography</li> <li>• Critical ethnography</li> <li>• Autoethnography</li> <li>• CRT and feminism methodologies</li> <li>• Case study</li> <li>• Narrative inquiry</li> <li>• Postmodern, poststructural, postcolonial methodologies</li> </ul>	

<i>What I am naturally drawn to is . . .</i>	<i>You most probably will benefit from</i>	<i>Is there another approach that appeals to you? List below.</i>

**Write what you might be drawn to that is not mentioned above.**

### Representation of Your Work

Below are some possibilities of data representations. As you must have guessed by now, this list is not exhaustive and there are as many possibilities as there are qualitative researchers. Some of the references are dissertation works which will allow the readers to gain an in-depth understanding of the process that informed the decisions for the re-presentational format. If these dissertations are not available to you in electronic format, most libraries will be able to obtain them for you through interlibrary loan.

**Thematic narratives**—Often this is the format that most students are introduced to initially. This format follows an inductive analysis of data with the main themes being headings of the findings elaborated with various examples from the data. The narratives read like an explanation of theme in elaborate details. (See Bhatnacharya, 2010; Jones, 2004.)

**Phenomenological study**—This kind of study usually has both theoretical and methodological influences of phenomenology. The structure of the representation is informed by the tenets of phenomenology. While there is wide variation in how people choose to understand and implement the tenets of phenomenology, there are some key aspects that tend to be common in these representations. These aspects focus on the structural analysis of the phenomenological experience in addition to the identification of essence. (See Bogard, 2011.)