

# Choosing a Qualitative Research Paradigm for Social Sciences: A Literature Review for Educational Researchers.

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.8120327>

Received: 13 December 2024; Accepted: 19 December 2024; Published: 22 January 2025

## ABSTRACT

Social science research is directed by qualitative research to gain insights into the context of participants' lived experiences through examining the complex social and cultural process and interactions, that capture the in-depth understanding rather than breadth. Human and social science researchers commonly use four qualitative designs which are phenomenological studies (that understand lived experiences), grounded theory (that develop theories based on data) ethnographies (that study cultures and communities), and case studies (that examine complex phenomena in their natural settings). The qualitative approach is immersed in the interpretative paradigm which views the world subjectively. The research design is a case study. The data is collected through the following instruments, interviews, document analysis, observations, and audio-visual materials. To avoid physical and psychological harm to participants' human dignity, ethical considerations such as confidentiality, anonymity, consent, and privacy are observed in the study. Qualitative data collected is content and thematically analyzed, and for trustworthiness and rigor of data credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are considered in the research. Triangulation is the use of multiple data sources or methods to validate findings, integrate member checking that involves participants in verifying findings, and prolonged engagement with participants to keep detailed records of research processes and decisions. The strengths of qualitative research are probing humanistic issues to provide a nuanced understanding of a social phenomenon that allows for the adaption of new findings as they emerge to amplify the voices and experiences of participants. It has challenges or criticisms based on subjectivity, as the researcher bias can influence the interpretation of findings, and data collection and analysis can be a lengthy process thus the findings may not be easily generalized to a larger population.

**Keywords:** Qualitative Research, Paradigm, Literature Review, Education, Educational Researchers.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a social science discipline facing significant challenges due to the influence of the revolving world. The transition to globalization was necessitated by the drive to meet the needs, demands, and expectations of the society it serves. Thus educationists as proponents of social sciences have chosen a qualitative research paradigm with a qualitative approach which enables researchers to advance an understanding and insights existing interpretations of the world. Qualitative research is exploratory, and it seeks to explain "how" and "why" a particular social phenomenon or program operates as it does in a particular context. It tries to help us to understand the social world in which we live, and why things are the way they are (Polkinghorne, 2005). Every research must involve an explicit, disciplined, systematic (planned, ordered, and public) approach to find credible results. Generally, researchers utilize the following approaches and paradigms, mixed research approaches based on pragmatism, quantitative-post positivist claims, and qualitative-constructivist/interpretivist. The social science researcher grapples to contribute new ideas to a broader existing body of knowledge from findings generated from qualitative data collected, analyzed it in trying to solve problems as well as created theories. The research process involves emerging questions and procedures, collection of data from the participants' natural setting, analyzing the data, inclusively, building from particulars to general themes, and making interpretations of the meaning of data. According to Philipsen and Vernoij- Dassen 2007 cited in Busetto et al (2020), qualitative research is defined as "the study of the nature of phenomena" including "their quality, different

manifestations, the context in which they appear or the perspective from which they can be perceived” but excluding “their range, frequency, and place in an objectively determined chain of cause and effect”. This entails that qualitative research includes data in the form of words rather than numbers. Qualitative research is embedded in phenomenological inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants (Bhar,2019). It seeks to understand the lived experiences that make phenomenology a philosophy as well as a method. The procedures involve studying small numbers of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning ,(Berger,2015, Olaghere,2022). Thus prolonged engagement involves having enough time with participants to gain a full picture of the full breadth of participants ‘voices. In this case, the researcher will be able to understand the deeper culture of a case and also check for anomalies in the context. In the process, the researcher brackets or sets aside their own experiences to understand the participants in the study (Dado et al, 2023). However, qualitative research is described as an effective model that occurs in a natural setting and enables the developmental level of detailed research with a high involvement in the actual experiences. Those who engage in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that credits an inductive style, focuses on individual meaning, and the importance of interpretation of the complexity of the situation, (Creswell,2014). It is a research method that collects and works with non-numerical data that seeks to interpret meaning from data to help us understand their social life through the study of targeted populations or places. Before data collection, the researchers upheld the protection of participants’ privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality (ethical considerations). According to Clough and Nutbrown (2024), ethical considerations in the study are maintained building values for privacy by giving protection and dignity of respecting the views of participants all the time. Purposive sampling is used to select participants for data collection. The data is collected or generated through the use of the following data collection methods that utilize, interviews, (and focus group discussions), document analysis, observations, and audio-visual materials. Rather than standardized surveys. These non-numerical tools collect data in the form of text, images, or videos, which are analyzed into themes and patterns, rather than numerical data.

### **Qualitative Designs**

There are generally four common qualitative designs that guide a qualitative research study and these include, phenomenological studies (that understanding lived experiences), grounded theory (that develop theories based on data) ethnographies (that study cultures and communities), and case studies (that examine complex phenomena in their natural settings) Upadhyay and Vikash Kumar, (2014), Ethnography is a type of qualitative designs that are used to gathers observations, interviews, and documentary data to produce a comprehensive interpretation of different social phenomena. Mohajan, (2018), explained that the collection of observations, interviews, and documentary data, which is triangulated in comparing and contrasting with one another ethnography research reveals that the qualitative approach has the potential to yield a detailed and comprehensive account of different social phenomena ( actions, behavior, interactions, and beliefs), Thus ethnography is the study of social interaction and cultural groups, whether these groups are defined as societies, communities, organizations or teams. Ethnography aims to promote rich, holistic insights into peoples ‘worldviews and actions, as well as the nature of the location they inhabit, (Pawar,2013, Scott, 2013). The objective is to document the cultures, perspectives, and practices of the people in their natural settings, this is done to get inside the way each group of people sees the world. Phenomenology is a form of qualitative designs that focus on the study of an individual’s lived experiences within the world, Scott et al,2013). It is a qualitative approach that builds on the assumption that the universal essence of anything ultimately depends on how its audience experiences it. This phenomenology philosophy assumes that the experience of any reality is possible only through interpretation, and phenomenology has stimulated the growth of major interpretative traditions in qualitative research such as symbolic interactions and hermeneutics (Flick, 2009, Willies ,2007, Scott et al,2013). Symbolic interactions are more concerned with the study of human meaning that is seen to emerge out of symbolic realms and related meaningful actions. On the other hand, hermeneutics is an approach that aims to interpret the nature of verbal and non-verbal forms of communication as well as underlying aspects that affect these forms of communication for example assumptions and presuppositions, (Flick,2009) Data collection methods include, observing, interviewing recording and analyzing texts and observations from participants related to the phenomenon in their natural setting. Grounded theory (GT) is the generation of theory, it differs from other designs in that it stresses the need for theory development based on human social behavior that is grounded in data as it holds that the concept of theory develops materializes from systematically collected, analyzed, data through social research. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). The thrust of GT is to theorize and facilitate an

understanding of effective knowledge, which is happening in the lives of people in society (Mohajan and Mohajan (2023). GT is conceptual, inductive, and developmental as it represents the participant's views relative to a basic area of interest. It is a flexible method that emphasizes simultaneous data collection and analysis, refining and classifying the data and finally provides tools for creating theories. The case study is a research design that is used in social and life sciences. A case study can be defined as an intensive study about a person, a group of people, or a unit, which is aimed to generalize issues over several units (Gustafsson,2017). A case study is thus being described as an intensive, systematic examination of a single individual, group, community, or other related units in which the researcher scrutinizes in-depth data relating to several variables. The case study examines complex phenomena in their natural setting to increase an understanding of them in this case a holistic nature if inquiry is addressed.

### **Characteristics of Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research does not include statistical or empirical calculations. The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. It is usually involved with fieldwork. The researchers must go to the people, setting, site, and institutions to observe behavior in its natural setting. It builds abstractions, concepts, or theories rather than tests existing theories, (Creswell, 2009, Mohajan,2018), explains that qualitative research has some common characteristics which are as follows:

1. In qualitative research data collected is in the field, at the site where participants experience the problem issue under study. There is no need to bring individuals into a lab (a contrived situation), nor send out instruments for individuals to complete. This type of information gathering involves talking directly to people and seeing them behave, and act within their context is a major characteristic of qualitative research. In this natural setting context, the research is conducted in a face-to-face interaction over time.
2. Qualitative researchers collect data themselves by delving into documents, observing behavior, or conducting interviews with participants. The researcher may employ use protocol (instruments) for collecting data, however, the researcher is the one who gathers information. Researchers do not tend to use or rely on instruments developed but the researcher is the instrument.
3. The researcher can gather multiple forms of data, from various data generation instruments/sources such as interviews, observations, documents, and audio and visual materials, rather than based on one data source. The researcher then reviews all the data, makes sense of it, and organizes it into categories or themes that cut across all of the data sources.
4. The researcher builds their patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up, by organizing the data gradually into more abstract units of information. This inductive data analysis process illustrates working back and forth between the themes and the database until the researcher has established a complete set of themes. It may also involve collaborating with the participants interactively so that participants have a chance to shape the themes or concepts that emerge from the process.
5. The theoretical lens is used by researchers to view their studies, such as the concepts of cultures, central to ethnography, or gendered, racial, or class differences from the theoretical orientations. Sometimes the study may be organized around identifying the social, political, or historical context of the problem under study.
6. Qualitative research is a form of interpretive inquiry in which researchers interpret what they see, hear, and understand. Their interpretations cannot be separated from their backgrounds, history, contexts, and prior understandings. The readers, participants, and the researcher make interpretations of the study on how multiple views of the problem emerge.
7. The researcher develops a complex picture of the problem or issue under study. This involves reporting multiple standpoints, identifying the many factors involved in a situation, and sketching the larger picture that emerges. A visual model of many facets of a process or a central phenomenon aids in establishing this holistic picture.

8. The research process is an emergent design. The initial research plan cannot be firmly prescribed, and all phases of the process may change or shift after the researcher enters the field, and begins to collect data. For instance, the questions may change, and the sites visited may be modified. The main idea behind qualitative research is to learn about the problem or issue from participants and to address the research to obtain that information.

Several scholars have commented that the best method to learn human science is by using qualitative data. In selecting a research methodology, Crosswell, (2014) suggests that it is proper to select a paradigm whose assumptions are best met by the phenomenon being investigated. It is also generally recognized that qualitative research is more into processes rather than simply the outcomes or products. When the understanding of an event is a function of personal interaction and perception of those in that event and the description of the processes that characterize the event. Qualitative research provides an insight necessary to understand the participants' role in an event, and perceptions of their experiences. Qualitative research methods are becoming more pronounced analytical data methods that improve people's search for better ways of gathering data about a problem, (Berg, 2012).

### **Qualitative Research Paradigm**

The qualitative research paradigm has its roots in cultural anthropology and sociology (Liamputtong, 2009). It has been adopted of late by educational researchers, (Ponce, et al, (2022)). The object of qualitative research is to understand a particular social situation, event, role, group, or interaction. Qualitative research is a paradigm that focuses on understanding human experiences, behaviors, and social phenomena through a subjective lens. It is principally a delve process where the researcher progressively makes sense of a social phenomenon by contrasting, comparing, replicating, categorizing, and classifying the object of the study. Contrary to quantitative research, which seeks to quantify data and generalize results, qualitative research emphasizes depth of understanding, context, and the meanings individuals attach to their experiences. Researchers aim to understand participants' perspectives and experiences within their specific contexts. Creswell, (2014), alluded that this necessitates immersion in the everyday life of the setting chosen for the study, the researcher enters the participants' world and through an ongoing interaction, seeks the informants' perspectives and meaning. Qualitative research often seeks to explore complex issues, rather than test specific hypotheses, (Creswell, 2009). It is particularly useful for understanding new or poorly understood phenomena. The subjectivity approach concedes that reality is socially constructed. The goal is to make sense of the meanings and interpretations that participants assign to their experiences. Research designs are often flexible and adaptive, allowing researchers to respond to emerging findings and insights, (Creswell, 2008). Qualitative research is widely used in various fields, including social sciences to explore cultural phenomena, social relationships, and community issues, and in health research to understand patient experiences, healthcare practices, and health behaviors as well as in education to investigate teaching methods, learning experiences, and educational policies. The qualitative research paradigm is essential for gaining a deep understanding of human behavior and social contexts that prioritize depth over breadth, to provide valuable insights that can inform practice, policy, and further research.

### **Considering choosing a qualitative paradigm**

Choosing a qualitative paradigm for research can offer several advantages, but it also comes with certain challenges. There are many considerations that researchers take into account when deciding to use a qualitative research methodology. The qualitative methodology can be used to better understand any phenomenon about which little is known, (Maxwell, 2016). Qualitative research allows for in-depth exploration of complex phenomena. It can reveal insights into participants' thoughts, feelings, and motivations that quantitative methods may overlook. The paradigm can be used to gain new perspectives on things about how much is already known to gain in-depth information that the quantitative methods may fail to reflect or convey, Mohajan (2018). The methodology finds favor where the researcher feels that quantitative measures cannot effectively describe or interpret a situation in question. This paradigm emphasizes the context in which data is collected and social, cultural, and environmental factors can lead to more nuanced conclusions. The use of open-ended questions, member checking, and prolonged engagement with participants supports the discovery of new information which might be difficult to establish using quantitative measures. Creswell (2014) noted that qualitative researchers embrace their full involvement and immersion into the research on the understanding that the real world is subject



to change and therefore a qualitative researcher should be present during the changes to record an event after and before the change occurs. It is therefore worth noting that the ability of qualitative research to fully describe a phenomenon is an important consideration not only from the researcher's perspective but from the reader's perspective as well, Punch,2013). Most scholars prefer qualitative research mainly because qualitative methods provide reports that are rich with details and insights into participants' experiences of the world. Data collected through interviews, focus groups, audio-visual materials, and observations can provide rich, narrative insights that enhance understanding of complex issues. Data analysis often involves coding qualitative data to identify themes, patterns, and insights. This can be iterative, with researchers refining their understanding as they engage with the data. The qualitative approach often prioritizes the perspectives and experiences of participants, giving them a platform to share their stories and viewpoints. Emerging designs can be adapted as the study progresses, allowing researchers to explore emerging themes and questions that arise during data collection, (Dusetto et al,2020). This flexibility gives harmony to participants, researchers, and readers. Contrary, no methodology can go without pros and cons, qualitative research can be influenced by the researcher's biases and perspectives, which can affect data interpretation and analysis. However, findings from qualitative studies are often context-specific and may not be easily generalized to larger populations, (Creswell,2014). Analyzing qualitative data analysis can be complex and requires skills in coding and thematic analysis, which may not be as straightforward as statistical analysis. Data collection and analysis in qualitative research can be time-intensive, requiring significant investment in both phases. Engaging deeply with participants' experiences can raise ethical issues, such as ensuring confidentiality and managing emotional responses during research, (Creswell,2014, Punch,2013). Choosing the qualitative paradigm for social sciences can enrich research outcomes, health, and education among others. Generally, researchers must be mindful of its limitations and challenges and try to balance the depth of qualitative insights with methodological rigor to come up with credible and meaningful research. Choosing the right qualitative research paradigm is essential for effectively addressing your research questions and ensuring that your work is relevant and impactful. Reflect on your goals, the context, and the voices of your participants to make an informed choice.

### **Objective of the study**

The study on choosing a qualitative research paradigm for social sciences is directed to the following specific objectives (SPBs).

SPB1.To provide the basics and understanding of the qualitative research paradigm.

SPB2.To equip social science researchers on qualitative data generation instruments and how data is analyzed.

SPB3.To highlight key characteristics of a qualitative research study.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology refers to the practical "how" of a research study. It explains how the researcher intends to carry out the research. It is a logical, systematic plan process to resolve a research phenomenon by gathering information and data with the intent to conclude a particular research study (Yin,2009). A methodology refers to a researcher's techniques and approaches that are used within research to ensure reliable, valid results that address their research aims, objectives, and research questions. It encompasses what data they are going to collect and from where as well as how data is collected and analyzed. The research methodology in this qualitative research hinges on the research approach and design that characterizes social science research. No matter the type of research, the data gathered will either be as numbers or descriptions and it's up to the researcher to choose to focus on collecting words, numbers, or both. The main aim of the research methodology is to describe, analyze, and ascribe approaches that can be used to collect data considering strengths and limitations (Clough and Nutbrown,2012).

### **Qualitative Research Approach**

Qualitative research is situated in an interpretivist/constructivist paradigm that views the world subjectively. The paradigm argues that the researcher and participants construct knowledge as it is a derivative of interpretivist

and the social world is not understood from one standpoint since reality is socially constructed, (Leavy, 2017, Pretorius, 2024). In the constructivist paradigmatic view, knowledge is constructed through different patterns, interactions, and meaning-making experiences. Thus knowledge is constructed by humans as they try to make meaning of their lived experiences but also by researchers as they interpret data, (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017) Qualitative research is a method of inquiry that seeks to understand human behavior, experiences, and social phenomena by exploring the meanings individuals assign to them. It involves collecting and analyzing, written or spoken words and textual data. It may also focus on body language or audio-visual elements and help to create a detailed description of a researcher's observations. Researchers usually gather qualitative data through observations, documents, interviews, and focus groups using small carefully chosen participants. The objective is to gain insights into the context of participants' lives, through examining the complex social process and interactions, that capture the depth of understanding rather than breadth.

### **Qualitative Research Design**

In qualitative research, a case study is used as a research design because it is an empirical inquiry that emphasizes contemporary issues within the confines of lived experiences, (Leary, 2017). According to Gustafsson (2017), a case study is an in-depth study of a particular research problem that is carried out by analyzing variables such as people, events, decisions, institutions, or other social systems. It is also defined as a research method that has a realistic inquiry, and that investigates the existing real-life perspective. A case study is an exploratory study that leads to the ideal plan of restraining the study to a small sample that is investigated in-depth allowing the researcher a direct interaction with participants, (Heale and Twycross, 2017). In qualitative research, a case study research design is flexible with a variety of evidence which leads to the triangulation of data.

### **Qualitative Sampling Methodology**

Sampling is imperative in qualitative research, it helps in the selection of the correct representative of the study population. A sample is a subset of a population, (Seale, 2017), and it streamlines the population according to another specific prominence. Sampling is the process of choosing a sample of a population from an individual or a large group for a particular reason. In qualitative research, the non-probability sampling method is used which comprises purposive, snowball, convenience, and quota sampling techniques. Purposive sampling is also referred to as deliberate sampling or judgemental sampling (Makwana et al 2023, Lune and Berg, 2017). It applies to a case study where a small sample is characterized informative in-depth study for rich key informants. In quota sampling, the participant is chosen based on some particular predetermined traits the researcher has established. These characteristics include gender, age, socio-economic, status, and social class. Quota sampling is either controlled where the researcher's options are constrained or uncontrolled where there are no restrictions and the researcher interviews participants within the confines of set criteria. The convenience sampling technique involves selecting participants based on their ease of accessibility. It involves choosing members who are available leading to a lot of bias thus making a concrete conclusion difficult for the researcher. Snowball sampling is applicable where the identification of sample members is a challenge to come up with the required characteristics of the population. Snowball also referred to as chain or sequential sampling is employed when a participant recruits another participant from their networks as friends and relatives. (Makwana, et al, 2023).

### **Qualitative Data Collection instruments**

There are generally four major data collection instruments that are used in qualitative research. These are interviews (focus groups), document analysis, observations, and Audio-visual materials.

#### **Interviews**

There about three types of interviews, structured and semi-structured interviews and non-directive interviews. The structured interview allows the interviewer to ask participants the same questions in the same way, and the investigator has control over the tone and pace of the interview process, (Creswell, 2014). Structured and semi-

structured interviews are the types of interviews used, with semi-structured commonly used as it offers more room for flexibility when approaching different participants. However, covering the same study area in data collection. Interviews must be recorded to secure data validity and reliability as not everything can be captured through writing as the interview progresses, (Bsetto et al,2020). It is wise to code the recording on each category to avoid mistakes when transcribing data.

### **Focus groups**

Focus groups are group interviews that seek to explore participants 'life experiences and expertise. This method explores how and why people behave in certain manners/ ways (Busetto et al,2020). Focus groups usually consist of a meeting of small groups of 6-8 participants led by an experienced investigator to discuss a particular topic. Notes on non-verbal could be taken on aspects or situations using an observation guide. The discussion could be recorded audio-recorded, or tape-recorded for future transcribing in analysis. Generally, the focus group brings together participants with relevant expertise and experiences on a given topic(s) in which they can share detailed information, (Lune and Berg,2017). It is a faster and easier way to gain access to informative information through sharing ideas within the group sharing similar characteristics.

### **Observation**

This is where the researcher observed the phenomena of interest in the environment studied to draw information that was not obtainable from other methods. What has been observed by the researcher related to the natural setting, Busetto, et al,2020). The observations are those in which the researcher listens takes photos, and just watches takes down field notes of information on the behavior and activities of individuals as they occur on site. Observations generate insights and a better understanding of the phenomenon under study. The advantage of observation is that firsthand information is captured instantly. Observation is very useful in getting information on topics participants might not be willing to discuss. These field notes, maybe recorded, in an unstructured or semi-structured way (using some prior questions that the inquirer wants to know), and activities at the site, (Creswell,2009, Creswell,2014). Qualitative observers may also engage in roles varying from a non-participant to a complete participant.

### **Documents study/analysis**

Documents study also known as document analysis imply a review of written documents (Busetto et al, 2020). Documents analysis is generally used as a supplementary source to compensate for the limitations reflected by other methods (Interviews, observations, and audio-visual materials). Documentary evidence then acts as a method to cross-validate information gathered from interviews and observation in cases where participants might have been different from what people do, Busetto, et al (2020) On the same note, documents provide guidelines in assisting the researcher with the inquiry during interviews. Records and official and unofficial documents about the process/activities in any setup will be analyzed. Examples of documents include individual files, newsletters, and printed materials (newsletters, journals, conference reports, and articles among other documents), Russel and Gregory, (2003). Thus corroboration of multiple qualitative techniques for the case studies research enhance s the credibility of findings.

### **Audio-visual materials**

Audio-visual materials are an unconstructive method of collecting qualitative data through photographs, videotapes, art objects, films, and computer software. It provides an opportunity for participants to direct their essence into reality. Pawar (2013), human feelings and emotions are difficult to express in words. Thus words on paper cannot be a substitute for human emotions. But a video recording of the same could communicate the actual situation of the subject. Pawar (2013), reminds us that it is common to say that "human lies and images don't". Audio-visual materials communicate, create, and capture, attention in data collection despite poor visual quality.

### **Credibility in Qualitative Research Methods.**

Credibility in qualitative research has continued to increase in research debates and has remained a topical issue

in research methodology. Credibility entails the believability of findings in qualitative research and the development of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness and quality checks are achieved through confirmability, credibility, confirmability, and transferability of accurately collected data from the participants. These are evaluated against set parameters to check the validity and truthiness of findings. Credibility is the trustworthiness of the research's findings as well as abstract evaluation of the originally collected data that enhance the readers to believe the authors' interpretations of collected information about the study, Ghafouri, and Ofoghi, (2023), describe prolonged engagement, triangulation, and persistent observation activities in addressing credibility issues. Prolonged engagement entails having enough time with participants to gain full voices of participants. Prolonged engagement, interviews, and participant observation provide a good prospect to collect valid qualitative data. Confirmability refers to how well the research findings are supported, or confirmed by the original data. The investigator examines if the findings are shaped by participants' or the researcher's interests or biases are reflected in the results as trustworthiness and generalizability in a qualitative study face critics. Dependability concerns reliability, and quality checks on data stability under varying conditions and time. (Dado et al,2023). According to Earnest, (2020), dependability is how consistent is the data over similar contexts. If the findings of one study are simulated in a similar population, conditions, and contexts, the study findings are dependable and transferable/applicable. Transferability observes if the research results findings are true and applicable, or transferred to other contexts, settings, and groups, of participants (Mohajan, 2018). In a qualitative study transfer of results requires that the researcher provide a thick description of external validity of findings to readers. Thick description as an approach for qualitative data collection provides rich contextual information that can allow for comparison and transferability of information based on context, natural setting, space, and time. This will give the researcher ground to have good judgment on the transferability of data.

### **Data analysis**

To analyze data collected from interviews, documents, observation, and audio-visual materials data need to be transcribed into protocols and transcripts, cleaned, refined, and categorized to establish meaning out of it. Data analysis means breaking down into manageable patterns, themes, trends, and relationships, ((Lune and Berg,2017). To Mohajan (2018), qualitative data analysis meant searching for a pattern in data that portrays frequent behavior. Qualitative data analysis encompasses data coding of persistent themes from data generated, categorized, and analyzed.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations are concerned with how individual participants are protected and their dignity is respected against sensitive discussions in the study. The participants in the study will be voluntary and without any form of coercion. Participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any given time or point without repercussions, and their call to participate or withdraw is respected without any questions or queries. Every participant will receive a research informant consent form that spells out protection against harm, privacy, and confidentiality of collected data, (Lune and Berg,2017). In the data analysis process, names will be excluded to maintain anonymity and confidentiality. The researcher has to adhere to ethical measures participants take into consideration to ensure that the integrity, identity, and dignity of participants are protected and guaranteed, (Clough and Nutbrown,2024). Upon completion of data collection, refinement, and classification research instruments will be disposed of to prevent chances of a breach of privacy. The researcher assured the participants that the data collected was meant for research purposes and not for any other intent.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Social science research is directed by qualitative research to gain insights into the context of participants' lived experiences by examining the complex social and cultural processes and interactions, that capture the in-depth understanding rather than breath. Qualitative research is perceived by the following theoretical frameworks: phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography. The qualitative approach is immersed in the interpretative paradigm which views the world subjectively. The research design is a case study. The data is collected through the following instruments, interviews, document analysis, observations, and audio-visual materials. To avoid physical and psychological harm to participants' human dignity, ethical considerations such as confidentiality, anonymity, consent, and privacy. Qualitative data collected is content and thematically analyzed, and for



trustworthiness and rigor of data credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are considered in the research. Triangulation, the use of multiple data sources or methods to validate findings integrates member checking that involves participants in verifying findings, and prolonged engagement with participants to keep detailed records of research processes and decisions. The strengths of qualitative research probing humanistic issues to provide a nuanced understanding of a social phenomenon that allows for the adaption of new findings as they emerge to amplify the voices and experiences of participants. Its challenges on subjectivity as the researcher bias can influence interpretation of findings as data collection and analysis can be a lengthy process thus the findings may not be easily generalized to a larger population.

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