

Qualitative Research

Course instructor

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Application procedure

Goal and target audience

The seminar is mainly targeted at doctoral students from the TUM School of Management, who are in the beginning of their studies, and who intend to employ qualitative designs and methods in their line of research.

Application process

Since the doctoral seminar is interactive in nature, it is limited to 15 participants. If you are interested in it, send a short letter of motivation and CV to Prof. Dr. Frank-Martin Belz until October 31, 2022 (email: frank.belz@tum.de).

Course aims

What this course is

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. Academy of Management Journal). In this seminar you will learn about: the notion of methodological fit; ontological and epistemological assumptions; qualitative research designs; research methods for qualitative data collection; and research methods for qualitative data analysis.

What this course is not

This course is not about quantitative research.

Course objectives

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

- Make an informed decision, why, when and how to employ qualitative research;
- Understand the ontological and epistemological assumptions of qualitative research;
- Carefully develop a qualitative research design;
- Skilfully employ research methods for qualitative data collection and analysis;
- Craft a qualitative research paper proposal.

Schedule

Date	Place	Contents
5.12.2022 (14:15-18:00)	Munich (room tbd)	Introduction to Qualitative Research: Theory, Ontology and Epistemology
12.12.2022 (9:15-18:00)	Munich (room tbd)	Qualitative Research Designs: Case Study, Ethnography, Interview Study, Document Study
13.12.2022 (9:15-18:00)	Munich (room tbd)	Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis: Templates, Tools and Techniques
31.01.2023 (9:15-18:00)	Weihenstephan (room tbd)	Qualitative Research Project Proposals: Discussion and Feedback

The doctoral seminar will be held in person. The first session on December 5, 2022 will take place at the TUM School of Management in Munich. It is an introduction to qualitative research. It is also an opportunity to get to know to each other and your research interests. The second and third sessions during December 12-13, 2022 focus on qualitative research designs and methods. Note that is required to read all assigned papers prior to class to allow group work and in-depth discussions. After the two-day bloc seminar you have some time to digest the material and develop your own qualitative research paper, which is to be submitted on January 24, 2022 as an upload via Moodle. The last session will take place at the TUM School of Life Sciences in Weihenstephan on January 31, 2023 with in-depth feedback to the qualitative research paper proposals. It is an opportunity to visit the oldest brewery of the world, go to the "Bräustüberl" and celebrate the successful finish of the seminar together cultivating "Gemütlichkeit" as the Bavarian way of life.

Core readings

The following articles are **basic readings** in the doctoral seminar on qualitative research. They combine method articles (marked *) with selected articles from management (in a broad sense) published in top journals, which employ qualitative research in an exemplary fashion. The articles are listed in logical order (not alphabetical order). 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 all articles **prior to class!** In addition, read through the assignments, make your own thoughts and take some notes, which we will discuss in class.

Introduction to Qualitative Research: Theory, Ontology, and Epistemology

In the introduction we will talk about theory, theoretical aims and methodological fit as an attribute of high-quality field research. In this context we will also differentiate between variance and process theories. Furthermore, we will discuss different kinds of ontological and epistemological assumptions, that is the nature of reality and how that reality is known. They are fundamental and underlie any kind of empirical research.

*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.

*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.

*Edmondson, A.C. & McManus, S.E. 2007. Methodological Fit in Management Field Research. *Academy of Management Review*, 32 (4): 1155-1179.

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

Assignment #1: What is theory (not)? What is the difference between theory and theorizing?

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

Assignment #3: How would you characterize the state of theory in your line of research? Does this suggest a qualitative or a quantitative approach to your field research?

Qualitative Research Designs: Case Study, Ethnography, Interview Study, and Document Study

Case study is one of the main qualitative research designs in management. In the second session we will learn about the defining features of the “Eisenhardt Method”. Besides, we will discuss ethnography, interview and document studies as alternative qualitative research designs by the examples of six carefully selected articles published in top journals.

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

*Eisenhardt, K. 2021. What is the Eisenhardt Method, Really? *Strategic Organization*, 19(1) 147-160.

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

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

Fauchart, E. & Gruber, M. 2011. Darwinians, Communitarians, and Missionaries: The Role of Identity in Entrepreneurship. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54(5): 935-957.

Gioia, D.A., Thomas, J.B., Clark, S.M. & Chittipeddi, K. 1994. Symbolism and Strategic Change in Academia: The Dynamics of Sensemaking and Influence. *Organization Science*, 5(3): 363-383.

Hengst, I.-A., Jarzabkowski, P., Hoegl, M. & Muethel, M. 2020. Toward a Process Theory of Making Sustainability Strategies Legitimate in Action. *Academy of Management Journal*, 63(1): 246-271.

Hertel, C., Binder, J. & Fauchart, E. 2021. Getting more from many – A framework of community resourcefulness in new venture creation. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 36(3): 106094.

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

Assignment #4: Read the selected articles, which employ qualitative research in an exemplary fashion, i.e. Eisenhardt 1989, Fauchart & Gruber 2011, Gioia et al. 1994, Hengst et al. 2021, Hertel et al 2021, and Munir & Philips 2005. Analyze them in terms of: theoretical aim (theory building, elaboration, testing); type of theory (variance, process); ontological and epistemological assumptions; research design (case study, ethnography, interview, document); main unit of analysis; empirical units of observation; and sampling.

Assignment #5: Develop a research design relating your own line of research, including a specific research question, theoretical aim, type of theory, main unit of analysis, and empirical units of observation.

Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis: Templates, Tools and Techniques

In the third session we will learn about different methods of collecting qualitative data (verbal, written, and visual), and analyzing qualitative data, including coding, developing a data structure (“Gioia Method”) and using tables to ensure the trustworthiness in qualitative research.

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

*Campbell, Coding In-depth Semistructured Interviews: Problems of Unitization and Intercoder Reliability and Agreement. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 42(3): 294-320.

*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.

*Cloutier, C. & Ravasi, D. 2021. Using tables to enhance the trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Strategic Organization*, 19(1): 113-133.

*Langley, A. 1999. Strategies for Theorizing from Process Data. *Academy of Management Review*, 24(4): 691-710.

Assignment #7: Read the articles by Eisenhardt 1989, Fauchart & Gruber 2011, Gioia et al. 1994, Hengst et al. 2021, Hertel et al 2021, and Munir & Philips 2005 (if you have not done it yet!). Analyze them in terms of the methods of qualitative data collection and analysis. What kind of methods are employed and combined to collect and analyse the empirical data? What kind of tables and displays are used to enhance the trustworthiness in qualitative research?

Qualitative Research Project Proposals: Discussion and Feedback

In the final 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.

Assignment #8: Submit a qualitative project proposal, including main research questions, research context, research design, and research methods for qualitative data collection and analysis (3-5 pages, single-spaced, Times Roman 12). Upload as a pdf file via Moodle until January 24, 2023 (23:59).

Course procedures

The seminar is designed as an interactive seminar, including group exercises, group presentations, open plenum discussions, direct talks with and feedback by the instructor.

Assessment

The seminar objectives and the letter of participation will be achieved by:

- reading assigned papers (prior to class!);
- attending all classes;
- preparing the assignment at home;
- 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.

The assessment of the individual performance is based on pass or fail.

Instructor

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 a doctoral student at the University of St. Gallen (Switzerland). He wrote his doctoral thesis on *“Ecology and Competitiveness in the Food Industry”*, employing multiple 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. Between 2014 and 2016 he coordinated EU-InnovatE, a large-scale European research project on sustainable innovation and entrepreneurship, funded under the EU 7th Framework Programme. Since 2020, he has been Director of TUM SEED, a Center of Excellence in Exchange and Development, funded by DAAD. The TUM SEED Center focusses on Sustainable Energies, Entrepreneurship and Development, collaborating with eight leading Technical Universities from the Global South (www.seed.tum.de).

Frank-Martin Belz likes conducting, publishing, teaching, and supervising qualitative research.

Status: August 24, 2022