

# QUALITATIVE METHODS

**Lecturer:** Dr. Florian Kauffeldt: [mail@florian-kauffeldt.com](mailto:mail@florian-kauffeldt.com)

## 1. Course Overview

This course highlights the most important and common approaches in qualitative research. It covers application fields and methods of qualitative research in economics and other practical fields. The course provides the opportunity to become acquainted with the process of qualitative research, and the analysis and presentation of qualitative data. The students work in groups to carry out a qualitative research project.

## 2. Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The course objectives are the following:

CO 1: Get an overview over qualitative research methods in social sciences, their advantages and disadvantages

CO 2: Explore different approaches in qualitative research and identify challenges in answering research questions

CO 3: Learn to plan a research project, to conduct qualitative research, to analyze qualitative data and to present research results

These course objectives relate to the following expected learning outcomes:

LO 1: Students will be able to choose appropriate approaches depending on the research question and deal with the corresponding advantages and disadvantages.

LO 2: Students will be able to develop qualitative research designs and apply qualitative research methods to answer research questions.

LO 3: Students will be able to critically reflect on qualitative research results presented in academic literature.

## 3. Contents

### 00 Introduction to the Course

Get to know preknowledge  
Syllabus  
Recommended readings

### 01 Issue 1 – Qualitative Research

Qualitative and quantitative research

Research questions  
Using theories and literature  
Research design

## **02 Issue 2 – Overview Qualitative Methods**

Qualitative interviews  
Focus groups  
Observation  
Ethnography  
Ethics in (qualitative) research

## **03 Issue 3 – Research Question**

*Find a research question*  
*Current state of research in the field*  
*Discuss relevant aspects*

## **04 Issue 4 – Focus Groups**

Design, procedure, analysis  
*Conduct a focus group by yourselves*  
*Transcription*  
*Interpretation and discussion*

## **05 Issue 5 – Qualitative Interviews**

Design, procedure, interview guide, types of questions  
*Construct an interview guide*  
*Conduct interviews by yourselves*  
*Monitor the interview process of team members and improve interviewer competence*  
*Transcription (upload transcripts in ILIAS)*

## **06 Issue 6 –Qualitative Content Analysis**

Categorization, coding and analysis  
*Analysis, interpretation and discussion of data collected*

## **07 Research Paper**

**Note:** *Blue – practical exercises*

## **4. Teaching Methods**

Learning occurs through a combination of

- Face-to-face lectures, open discussion and exercises
- Research project (own field research) accompanied by mentoring and supervision of the research process and data analysis
- Assigned academic readings
- Extended self-study

## **5. Examination and Assessment Requirements**

The grade in this course is determined by an academic research paper. The paper is team work (three to four students). The research paper describes the theoretical background, the research question, the methods, and analyzes and interprets the qualitative data collected (see below).

- Submission date: 04.02.2019

- Via e-mail (PDF) and a printed version (N building, post box Kauffeldt)
- Submitting the paper up to 4 hours late results in one point grade deduction (e. g. 3.3 instead of 2.3)
- Submitting the paper more than 4 hours late results in failing the course.
- Recommendation: Start writing during the semester!
- It is expected that all work will be appropriately referenced and will make use of the APA 6 citation method.

To be able to consider different contributions to the research project, each team member assesses the other team members' contribution.

Each team member can distribute 15 points to the other team members (for teams of 4). E.g. student A distributes 5 points to student B, C and D in the case of same contribution to the project.

Or: Student A distributes 7 points to student B, 5 points to C, and 3 points to D in the case of different contribution to the project.

(Assessments by e-mail, will be handled completely anonymously; deadline: **04.02.2019**)

## 6. Required Reading

Alvesson, M. & Sköldeberg, K. (2017). *Reflexive Methodology – New Vistas for Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE.

Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Research Design. Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. London: SAGE.

Flick, U. (2014). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE.

Scott, G. & Garner, R. (2013). *Doing Qualitative Research – Design, Methods, and Techniques*. New Jersey: Pearson.

Silvermann, D. (2009). *Doing Qualitative Research - A Practical Handbook*. London: SAGE.

Silvermann, D. (2004). *Qualitative Research. Theory, Methods and Practice*. London: SAGE.

Thomas, G. (2009). *How to do your Research Project*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Yin, R. K. (2011). *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*. New York: Guilford Press.

Some readings are provided in PDF format via the ILIAS online learning platform.

## 7. Recommended Reading

You are also expected to read broadly on the issues covered in your research project (academic paper/ journal articles).

## 8. Links to other courses

Research methods, as foundational academic knowledge, directly relate to all other courses when it comes to correctly interpret academic work, research results, etc. and reflect academic and non-academic articles.

## Additional Information: f4 – Program for Transcription and Analysis

Semester licence for 10 days, starting date freely selectable (one per student!):

Serial number: f4/f5transkript: **LUZSUXQPB3RF**

f4analyse: **GARKO3G347OG**

or in the computer labs N building (f4/f5transkript always available)

<http://www.audiotranskription.de/transkription-praxisbuch>

## Research Paper

First the topic, current state of research and the **research question** shall be presented.

**Analysis/interpretation of data** presents the method you collected your data with, presents the setting you collected your data in, the data itself and the analysis of the data. In order to avoid repetition you can analyze the data while describing them.

Tell the reader about the methods and the setting you have collected your data with/in and present it in a logical way so the reader can follow your argumentation.

Since you are doing empirical research, the analysis part includes a detailed **interpretation** of your data. You must show that you can think logically, that you can draw conclusions from your empirical data logically and that you confirm your **conclusions**. The conclusions give answer to the research question. You must tell the reader why and how you came to your conclusions. This is done by citing the interviewees and by describing the situation pointedly.

### Structure Research Paper:

- Title page
- Table of contents
- List of tables (optional)
- List of figures (optional)
- List of abbreviations (optional)
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Literature Review/Theory (incl. current state of research, research question)
- Method (sample, data collection, approach, interview guide – main subjects)
- Results
- Discussion/Conclusions
- References
- Appendix (optional, but at least: interview transcripts, interview guide)

### Style:

- Extent of the work: approximately 15-20 pages.
- Title page, lists, abstract, appendix etc. are counted separately.
- Times New Roman 12 Pt, justification, top and bottom margin 2,5 cm, 3 cm at the sides, line spacing 1,5.
- APA 6 citation style
- The content that is not absolutely relevant for an understanding of the text, needs to be included in the appendix (e. g. additional tables and figures).
- Adopt a clear structure and correct grammar, syntax, punctuation and orthography.
- Use direct and indirect citations correctly. Please use brackets while citing (Harvard).  
<http://www1.chapman.edu/library/reference/guides/APA-Style.pdf>
- Plagiarism results in failing the course!
- Follow the general rules on academic writing and scientific working as well as the formal criteria above outlined. Guidelines for academic writing
  - Either [www.hs-heilbronn.de/nste/studierende](http://www.hs-heilbronn.de/nste/studierende) or
  - <http://aom.org/uploadedFiles/Publications/AMR/AMRstyleguide.pdf>
  - You may also use Silverman, Chapters 18-22.
  - There are many different style guides. You are free to choose. But please be consistent throughout the paper!

**Assessment Criteria (Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Review Guidelines, Source: <http://aom.org/annualmeeting/reviewerguidelines/>)**

- Introduction
  - Is there a clear research question, with a solid motivation behind it?
  - Is the research question interesting?
  - After reading the introduction, did you find yourself motivated to read further?
- Theory
  - Does the submission contain a well-developed and articulated theoretical framework?
  - Are the core concepts of the submission clearly defined?
  - Is the logic behind the hypotheses persuasive?
  - Is extant literature appropriately reflected in the submission, or are critical references missing?
  - Do the hypotheses or propositions logically flow from the theory?
- Method (for empirical papers)
  - Are the research approach and design appropriate for the research goal and were they appropriately applied?
  - Are the sample, focus group or case study appropriate for the research goal?
  - Is the data collection method well explained and consistent with the research approach and design?
  - Is the interpretation of the data logical and clearly presented?
  - Are the interviewees well cited (verbatim statements) and the interview settings clearly described?
  - Are other sources of data properly selected and well accounted for?
- Results (for empirical papers)
  - Are the results reported in an understandable way? (logical, plausible argumentation, conclusions and consistency, in-depth reflection of data, analysis instead of description)
  - Are there alternative explanations for the results, and if so, are these adequately controlled for in the analyses?
- Contribution
  - Does the submission make a value-added contribution to existing research?
  - Does the submission stimulate thought or debate?
  - Do the authors discuss the implications of the work for the scientific and practice community?
- References
  - Academic paper, peer reviewed
  - APA 6 citation style
- Formal aspects
  - Is the paper spell checked?
  - Are direct and indirect citations correctly used?
  - Are scientific journals, books, and textbooks cited? (Quantity, quality and timeliness of applied literature)
  - Are websites restricted to relevant institutions (e.g. statistical offices)?
  - Is the length criterion satisfied?
  - Is the paper well written (logical structure, paragraphs, lack of gaps, colloquial/journalist style avoided, etc.)?