



Editorial

Advancing Qualitative Research: Insights from the 7th World Conference on Qualitative Research

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The 7th World Conference on Qualitative Research convened scholars, researchers, and practitioners across various domains to exchange insights into the wide-ranging utilisation of qualitative research. Within this distinctive *Social Sciences* Special Issue, readers will encounter invaluable suggestions on employing qualitative research methodologies within diverse cultural and environmental contexts. These directives not only aid researchers in adeptly tailoring their investigative approaches to varying settings, but also underscore the importance of employing digital tools and embracing stringent practices to uphold methodological credibility.

In the contemporary globalised landscape—the global village (McLuhan 1962)—societies must be able to effectively respond and adjust to perpetually evolving environments (Liu et al. 2023). Qualitative research presents a valuable avenue for acquiring insight into diverse cultural norms, equipping researchers with adequate methodologies and tools to navigate this dynamic world. Through thorough immersion in the research context (Creswell and Poth 2018), researchers can more efficiently collect, expand on, and utilise information, thus easily adapting to challenging environments. In today's international setting, researchers must establish connections with their global counterparts, aiming to augment knowledge, enrich understanding, and advocate for adopting optimal research practices, ultimately contributing to advancing both individuals and society.

Therefore, advancements in the domain of research methodology must be grounded in peer-to-peer interaction and collaboration, which encompasses diverse components such as formulating methodologies (Tracy 2013), identifying appropriate research settings and participants (Neale 2021), and selecting efficient data collection methods (Creswell and Creswell 2018; Creswell and Poth 2018). These initiatives aim to address research challenges effectively and foster advancements worldwide while acknowledging the importance of situating discoveries and methods within the framework of qualitative research.

Nind and Katramadou (2023) emphasise the positive impact of qualitative research in empowering individuals amidst adversities and stress how important it is for researchers to be well versed in these outcomes. One key advantage of qualitative research lies in its ability to offer a profound comprehension of the subject by clarifying diverse research designs (König et al. 2022). As Anderson et al. (2021) highlighted, qualitative investigation can empower women by providing them with local and global platforms to voice their experiences and viewpoints. Furthermore, a noteworthy aspect is the increasing integration of digital tools and platforms into qualitative research for data collection and analysis, which enables researchers to cultivate crucial skills relevant to the digital era (Dumitrica and Jarmula 2022). Additionally, qualitative researchers play a pivotal role in enhancing educational settings by examining participant input (Debnam et

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al. 2021), promoting a more profound understanding of ethical principles in research practices (Taquette and Borges da Matta Souza 2022), and fostering innovation within research endeavours (Opara et al. 2023).

This Special Issue presents papers delivered at the 7th World Conference on Qualitative Research (WCQR2023), held on 25–27 January 2023 in Algarve, Portugal (hybrid conference). The WCQR2023 was organised by the ESEC of the University of Algarve and Ludomedia of Portugal, with collaboration/sponsorship from multiple universities, research institutes, and companies, such as the CIDTFF, University of Aveiro; University of Alberta; NCRM; AQRA; Adventus University; and the Nursing Research, Innovation and Development Centre, Lisbon (ESEL). Other partners included VESIM, Society of Qualitative Studies and Research, CIAIQ, Action Research Network, Global CAR, Atlas.ti, Timberlake, and DiscoverText.

The conference's main topic was qualitative research, focusing on methodological considerations and how they relate to research questions, concepts, and findings. Encompassing four main application fields—Education, Health, Social Sciences, and Engineering and Technology—the WCQR2023 covered seven core areas: Rationale and Paradigms of Qualitative Research (theoretical studies, critical reflections on epistemological, ontological, and axiological dimensions); Systematisation of Approaches to Qualitative Studies (literature reviews, integrating results, aggregation studies, meta-analyses, meta-syntheses, meta-ethnographies); Qualitative and Mixed-Methods Research (with an emphasis on research processes that build on mixed methodologies, prioritising qualitative approaches); Data Analysis Types (content analysis, discourse analysis, thematic analysis, narrative analysis, etc.); Innovative Processes of Qualitative Data Analysis (design analysis, articulation, and triangulation of different sources of data, such as images, audio, and video); Qualitative Research in Web Contexts (e-research, virtual ethnography, interaction analysis, Internet corpora, etc.); and Qualitative Analysis with the Support of Specific Software (usability studies, user experience, the impact of software on the quality of research and analysis). With each article carefully reviewed by at least three independent reviewers, thirteen high-quality works (of nineteen invited articles) from the WCQR were selected for this publication. They bring together thirty-eight (38) authors from nine (9) countries, namely Chile, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Spain and the United Kingdom.

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