Exercises

**Your Exercise Workbook** 

This workbook is made of a series of exercises designed to help you practice the techniques you have learned, apply your newfound knowledge to real-world research examples, and brainstorm for your own project. Whether you use them as revision tools, reflection guides, or note taking in the field, you can save each chapter’s exercises to your computer and add your thoughts directly into the document so they are readily available wherever you are in your project.

# Chapter 2: What you can (and can’t) do with qualitative research

## Exercise 1: Distinguish qualitative and quantitative research topics

Listed below are three examples of research topics and design:

1. Consumer motivations for content creation in online social networking exploring users’ unconscious motivations in semi-structured interviews including techniques like word association and sentence completion. Twenty-four participants will be chosen based on contribution frequency (high, medium and low) and gender. (Lucy Miller, Marketing, Macquarie University)

2. Are organizations’ decisions about adopting social media for external communication more influenced by institutional pressures rather than driven by economic factors? Content analysis of four online social media followed by telephone interviews with key personnel. (Kim MacKenzie, Accounting, Queensland University of Technology)

3. The role of trust and distrust in relationships between two business organizations based on the assumption that trust is influenced by the personalities of the employees involved. Interviews with 65 pairs of individuals in contact with each other while working for different firms. (Angelos Kostis, Umeå School of Business and Economics)

Now answer the following questions:

a. Which of these topics and designs are best suited to qualitative research?

b. Which are better suited to quantitative research?

c. Suggest ways to redefine the topic and/or research design in a manner suited to qualitative research.

## Exercise 2: Understand what methodology suits your research topic

1. How far are (a) qualitative and (b) quantitative methods suitable for your research topic?

2. What difference does it make to the methodology you use if you are looking for facts or ‘facts’?

## Exercise 3: Examine the pros and cons of mixed methods designs

Here are examples of research topics:

1. The business strategies of tuna fishermen in Vietnam (Lan Ho, Business, Australian National University)

2. Adolescents’ perspectives on care practices in child welfare institutions (Marianne Buen Sommerfeldt, Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences)

3. The healthcare needs and experiences of women leaving prison (Penny Abbott, Medicine, Western Sydney University)

What would you gain and lose by using a mixed methods research design for each of these topics?

## Exercise 4: Defend your methodology choices

In relation to your own possible research topics:

1. Explain why you think a qualitative approach is appropriate.

2. Would quantitative methods be more appropriate? If not, why not?

3. Would it make sense to combine qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed methods)? Explain your answer.