# *Qualitative Research in Action A Canadian Primer (Canadian) 3rd edition van den Hoonaard Test Bank*

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CHAPTER 2

# Asking Questions and Identifying Goals

## Multiple Choice Questions

1. Howard Becker told a story about a student who wanted to learn why mail carriers chose specific routes. His student thought mail carriers would choose their preferred routes based on safety concerns, but instead learned that mail carriers chose routes according to the how much uphill or downhill walking was required. This anecdote is a useful example of _____.
   a) determining a participant's social ties to a neighbourhood
   b) determining what research design is necessary
   c) why asking what seem like straightforward questions in research is important
   d) why quantitative research data are generalizable

2. According to the textbook, research participants _____.
   a) are usually involuntary subjects who are observed covertly in their social settings by researchers
   b) are people who voluntarily welcome researchers to interview them, or join them in their social setting
   c) include anyone who is involved in social research (such as researchers, research assistants, respondents, etc.)
   d) only include those people who take part in experiments in laboratories

3. The *best* combination of the three central elements of the positivist tradition is _____.
   a) realist perspective, trust in causal knowledge, reliance on deductive reasoning
   b) focus on theory testing, no trust in causal knowledge, reliance on intuition
   c) realist perspective, truth as an objective reality, reliance on intuition
   d) trust in causal knowledge, systematic observation, reliance on inductive reasoning

4. Qualitative research began to re-emerge as a popular and mainstream method in _____.
   a) the early 1960s
   b) the early 2000s
   c) the late 1920s
   d) the late 1880s

5. The sociological term *verstehen* _____.
   a) means that if we define a situation to be real, it will be real in its consequences
   b) means that the definition of an object constantly evolves and is mediated through shared understandings
   c) is another way of saying "the looking-glass self"
   d) means putting yourself in the "shoes" of your research subjects

6. Symbolic interactionism was first formulated by _____.


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a) Howard Becker
b) Thomas Kuhn
c) W.I. Thomas
d) Herbert Blumer

7. The textbook illustrates the concept of *definition of the situation* by referring to _____.
   a) Will C. van den Hoonaard's experience of "baby talk" in Iceland
   b) Thomas Kuhn's book *The Structure of the Scientific Revolution*
   c) how studying widows prepared the author for dealing with her own father's death
   d) the importance readers place on the interpretations made by researchers themselves

8. The self we define through seeing ourselves as "things" and defining ourselves through our interactions with others is associated with the sociological concept of _____.
   a) *verstehen*
   b) reflexivity
   c) looking-glass self
   d) methodological individualism

9. Harold Garfinkel developed the *ethnomethodological* approach, which _____.
   a) recommends the use of causal experiments to uncover the truth of everyday interactions
   b) understands social interaction as an outgrowth of the relationship between internal identities and external expectations
   c) recommends the use of positivist theories as a foundation for the approach
   d) understands how people go about their everyday lives in the absence of formal rules

10. Genevieve's qualitative methods instructor asked the class to perform a _____. The next day, whenever someone asked "how you are?" instead of responding with a simple "good, and you?" she responded with a further question such as "in regard to what—Life? School? Work?"
    a) rulemaking experiment
    b) breaching experiment
    c) ethnomethodological study
    d) norm deconstruction study

11. Qualitative researchers are *least* likely to use _____ to collect and analyze data.
    a) interviews
    b) document analysis
    c) surveys
    d) field methods

12. Qualitative researchers most often follow an inductive approach. This means that _____.
    a) they begin with a theory and then test the theory in the social world
    b) they begin with a theory and adjust it based on what they observe in the social world
    c) they test a theory and then write a critical analysis on how well it matches social reality
    d) they start with the social world and then develop a theory that is consistent with what they see

13. The textbook author describes her trip to China and, more specifically, a tour she took to the Great Wall. According to her own assessment and supporting statements, this tour could best be characterized as _____ in nature and approach.
    a) quantitative


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b) interactionist
c) realist
d) qualitative

14. The textbook suggests that qualitative research _____.
    a) is flexible and open to change
    b) seeks to unearth statistical significance
    c) tends to be atheoretical
    d) relies on objective experiments and subjectively doubts the validity of respondents' viewpoints

15. When a researcher no longer learns anything new in a research setting, she or he has reached a stage of _____.
    a) ethnographic overkill
    b) "going native"
    c) theoretical saturation
    d) *verstehen*

16. According to the textbook, a "mixed-methods" research entails _____.
    a) using positivist and quantitative methods and integrating them into two different studies
    b) simultaneously using qualitative and quantitative methods in two parallel studies
    c) using both qualitative and quantitative methods and integrating them into a single study
    d) combining inductive and deductive approaches to a given research topic

17. The textbook suggests that one of the biggest challenges for mixed-methods research is _____.
    a) ensuring that the research is qualitative and quantitative in precisely equal ways
    b) finding ways to truly to integrate the findings so that the qualitative components do not disappear in the analysis
    c) reporting on generalizability and experiences "in the field"
    d) finding a research topic amenable to mixed-methods approaches

18. Dmitri is researching a northern community that does not conceive of what it means to be a person in this individualistic way. Rather, they see the self as connected to other human beings, to the land, ancestors and animals. The type of approach most in line with the community under study here is _____.
    a) realist methodologies
    b) ethnomethodologies
    c) indigenous methodologies
    d) positive methodologies

19. In his research on how medical students they felt about patients, Howard S. Becker found that _____.
    a) medical students and physicians held a shared definition of a particular concept
    b) medical students could not wait to become physicians
    c) medical students held a shared definition of a particular concept and that this definition reflected their own interest
    d) the interests of medical students had nothing to do with how they defined a particular concept


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20. Maria is conducting research on a group of team of sledge hockey players. In her research report, Maria writes about her research participants' "different abilities," rather than referring to the participants as "handicapped." Maria refers to her participants this way because _____.
    a) she recognizes that athletes should be described differently than other groups
    b) she recognizes that language is an essential mechanism for meaningful knowing and acting
    c) recent legislation demands that she use this language
    d) university research protocols demand that she use this language

21. According to the textbook, "generic social processes" include all of the following *except* _____.
    a) acquiring perspectives
    b) obtaining *verstehen*
    c) achieving linguistic fluency
    d) developing relationships

22. Social researchers were encouraged to mix and interact with the people they were studying in _____.
    a) the Frankfurt School (of Marx and Engels)
    b) the Chicago School of Sociology
    c) the Harvard School of Sociology and Anthropology
    d) Garfinkel's Ethnomethodological School

## True or False Questions

1. The author outlined a study conducted by her university where students were asked whether they preferred short (50 minutes) or long (80 minutes) classes. Through the use of supplemental qualitative interviews, she discovered that students disliked longer classes because they were harder to fit into their schedules.

2. The author tells a story of how, during her research on retirement communities in Florida, she began by considering members of the board of the Homeowner's Association, but soon realized that the most productive group to interview would be the entertainment committee. This is an example of how the design of qualitative research is emergent.

3. Through the disassociation of theoretical preferences, most qualitative researchers agree that the error of bias affecting the research can be avoided.

4. Identifying a generic social process can help a researcher to expand the scope of her or his project to uncover hidden aspects of participants' collective experiences.

5. The only important question asked in qualitative research is *why* people participate in certain social processes.

6. The inductive approach is central to qualitative research.

7. According to the symbolic interactionist approach, nothing has intrinsic meaning. The meaning of something is the result of the meaning we give to it in a particular situation.


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8. Trust in causal knowledge involves a belief that the world is made up of causes that can be influenced by individuals.

9. Most researchers who choose a mixed-methods approach to research do so because of the lower ethical standards associated with that approach.

10. Mixed-methods researchers often find it challenging to truly integrate the findings so that the qualitative research components do not disappear in the analysis.

11. One of the foundations of qualitative research is to question the notion of truth as an objective reality.

12. Surveys, experiments, and the perspectives of researchers have become an integral part of indigenous research.

## Short Answer Questions

1. Briefly define the three main components of positivism.

2. Outline the benefits of using a mixed-methods approach using the studies presented in the chapter.

3. Explain how the author's example of planning and taking a vacation demonstrates how qualitative and quantitative research differ with respect to flexibility.

4. Briefly outline the study completed by Jack Haas and William Shaffir as it relates to examining a generic social process.

5. Ashley Austin's 2016 research on young people negotiating a transgender or gender nonconforming (TGNC) identity identified the process of "navigating a TGNC identity in the dark." What does Austin mean by this and what does this process of identity negotiation involve?

6. Summarize the difference in asking a *why* versus a *how* question in qualitative research.

7. Pick either the example of "waitressing and women tippers" or "Icelandic baby talk" and briefly outline what critical concept the example demonstrates.

## Essay Questions

1. Distinguish between the objectives of quantitative and qualitative approaches to research.

2. What evidence does the author offer to support her claim that "in adopting a research perspective, a researcher will necessarily be influenced by the assumptions associated with that perspective"?


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3. On 17 October 2018, recreational marijuana use will officially become legal in Canada. Describe how research questions, researcher assumptions, and research design might differ for researchers studying recreational marijuana users in late 2018 versus 10–15 years ago. How might they be similar?


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# Answer Key

## Multiple Choice Questions

1. **c** (p. 13–14)
2. **b** (pp. 14, 230)
3. **a** (p. 15)
4. **a** (p. 16)
5. **d** (p. 16)
6. **d** (p. 17)
7. **a** (p. 17)
8. **c** (p. 18)
9. **d** (p. 18)
10. **b** (pp. 18–19)
11. **c** (pp. 20–22)
12. **d** (p. 20)
13. **a** (pp. 20–21)
14. **a** (p. 21)
15. **c** (p. 21)
16. **c** (pp. 22–24)
17. **b** (p. 22)
18. **c** (p. 24)
19. **c** (p. 26)
20. **b** (p. 26)
21. **b** (p. 27)
22. **b** (p. 31)

## True or False Questions

1. **F** (p. 13)
2. **T** (p. 21)
3. **F** (p. 25)
4. **T** (p. 28)
5. **F** (pp. 28–31)
6. **T** (pp. 14, 20, Table 2.1)
7. **T** (p. 17)
8. **F** (p. 15)
9. **F** (p. 22)
10. **T** (p. 24)
11. **T** (p. 14, Table 2.1)
12. **F** (pp. 24–25)

## Short Answer Questions

1. (1) Adherence to a realist perspective: reality is discoverable, positivists think that natural laws (what Durkheim calls social facts) exist and can be found, and that truth is a criterion scientists need to identify. (2) Trust in causal knowledge: the world is made up of causes and effects external to individuals that are observable and measurable. Objectivity is achievable. Scientific emphasis should be placed on techniques that are quantifiable and precise. (3) Reliance on deductive reasoning: This approach uses inference to derive conclusions from general laws. It emphasizes theory-testing using quantitatively collected data. (p. 15)

2. The answer should argue that a mixed-methods approach (also known as the "third approach") offers the most complete understanding of social phenomena. For example, in their study of why young people abstain from voting in national (US) elections, Parmelee, Perkins, and Sayre used a deductive approach where a theory was chosen "up-front." They combined content analysis (of political ads) with focus groups to elicit a broad understanding of the subject matter. Specifically, while a quantitative content analysis only played a secondary role in addressing their research question, it did help them understand how and why students "framed" elections in a certain way. The Christ example is useful in demonstrating that a piece of research might finish in a way it does not start, and might


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indeed begin in a more unspecified and flexible (i.e., less predetermined) manner. For instance, an initial survey of 1500 disability support co-ordinators needed to be repeated to track changes over time. Analysis of the results made it clear that qualitative interviews were needed to provide a clearer understanding of the factors involved. Barbara Vrikljan's multi-step study of older drivers, co-pilots (passengers), and technology involved initial (quantitative) demographic surveys, followed up, once again, by qualitative interviews to explore the driver–co-pilot relationship. Underscoring the advantages of a flexible mixed method approach, this study continued using a blend of approaches including quantitative usability analysis (of navigation systems) and more interviews (allowing participants to discuss their impression of using navigation technology). In sum, and using examples, this answer should show how research is able to blend quantitative and qualitative approaches into a single study to offer the most incisive analysis. (pp. 22–24)

3. From a qualitative approach, a person might select two books, but not be sure which parts of each book would be helpful or interesting. They would have an idea of what they wanted to see, but they would not be "locked in" to particular places or things to do. Rather, they would be free to change their plans as they saw fit. From a more quantitative point of view, the traveller might commit to a "package tour." They might conduct some background research first, selecting the most interesting tour, and commit to it with little or no flexibility to change even if something more exciting arose. (pp. 20–21)

4. Haas and Shaffir's work looks at identity formation in medical students and, specifically, how they transform from a lay to a professional identity and status. They describe how students looked at the "neutral" behaviour of doctors and copied it. Haas and Shaffir use the concept of impression management to understand how students participate in a process whereby a "cloak of confidence" is sought out, which helped them communicate to others the message that they were confident, competent, and professional. (p. 28)

5. Ashley Austin identified a generic social process common to young people negotiating a transgender or gender nonconforming (TGNC) identity. When Austin refers to "navigating a TGNC identity in the dark," she recognizes that the process is "often silent and invisible," and, because the individuals' gender identity is outside accepted gender norms, they must navigate their experiences "in the dark." Austin found that the process of acquiring and negotiating this identity involved six components: "moving from uncertainty to knowing, finding me, recognizing self in others, explaining work, struggling for authenticity, and evolving self-acceptance" (221). (p. 28)

6. According to the author, asking a *why* question can sometimes produce only a shallow understanding of the processes involved. For example, if you ask why someone takes a class, she might respond by saying that the course is required, or identify as an influence the time of the day or the fact that a friend is taking the class, etc. In contrast, a *how* question can often provide a fuller and more complete answer, and thus a more complete understanding. That is, it can provide insight into *how* someone becomes involved in a social process, practice, or event. In the asking of *how* society occurs, the *why* is also revealed. *How* questions carry the potential to learn more about experiences and relationships—in this case, for example, by asking how a person came to take a class might reveal *why* they became interested in a certain discipline (like sociology) in the first place. (pp. 30–31)

7. In either case, the answer should highlight the notion of the *definition of the situation*. In the case of Icelandic "baby talk," the answer should describe how the researcher was conducting research in Iceland when the proprietor of a store was found to clearly believe that, as a


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foreigner, he could not understand Icelandic because of a certain definition of the situation the proprietor held. Consequently, the woman communicated with the researcher using "baby talk" (or, a rather condescending way of communication). When the man, in turn, could not understand this "baby talk," the proprietor's "definition of the situation" became consolidated as "reality." In the case of the waitress and tipping, the waitresses who were training were told that females were not good tippers and thus to "worry about them" less. In doing so, female customers in turn helped to substantiate this view by tipping less for poorer service, thus indicating how the notion of definition of the situation is linked with "self-fulfilling" behaviours. (pp. 16–17)

## Essay Questions

1. A complete answer should acknowledge that qualitative and quantitative work tend to begin from different points of view. Because qualitative research emphasizes the subjective "lived realities" of persons in a given social setting, an inductive approach is usually preferred, allowing participants to speak in their own terms about things like meaning and relevance. Qualitative research sets out to identify the "definition of the situation" using insider perspectives, and constructing theory on the basis of emergent data. By comparison, quantitative research tends to focus on a more deductive approach centred around developing and testing theory. Quantitative (or positivistic) work, which assumes that "truth" and "reality" are "out there" waiting to be discovered, emphasizes causal relationships which can be uncovered "objectively" using deductive reasoning. Among the many distinctions between qualitative and quantitative approaches, it is important that the answer acknowledges that these approaches (a) begin from different points of view, (b) operationalize theory differently, and (c) vary in the faith they place in subjective and objective "reality." (whole chapter, especially pp. 14–22)

2. This essay should draw on what the author has to say about identifying researcher perspectives and general assumptions. Since this is the main example provided, it should also draw on the potential (and effects) of symbolic interactionism (SI). The essential position of SI is that only as *members* of a given community can we come to understand local knowledge about "what is" and "what is not." Humans are social, and it is imperative that sociologists examine the actions of individuals in a particular social context where language is usually the essential mechanism for meaningful communication and action. Among the examples provided is the case of medical patients who are perceived as "crocks." These people are looked at and treated differently on the basis of how they are perceived. For example, students defined them as a waste of time, while doctors (who aim to make money from them) are less "put off" by them, seeing them as an easy way to make a living. A good answer might introduce the SI argument that social meaning is *negotiable*. Concretely, it is possible to use Howard Becker's notion of *Outsiders* and his discussion of *moral entrepreneurship*, which suggests that we only know ourselves through the relationships we share with other people regarding such matters as morals. The author's example of how university students experience school as "learners" versus "consumers" may also be used in this connection. Whichever examples are used, a solid answer should focus on how our assumptions about social life influence how we do research. Fundamentally, this is a question about *bias* and *preconception*, and how both guide and shape the qualitative work we do. (pp. 25–31)

4. This essay will allow students to apply material from the entire chapter to a contemporary newsworthy issue. Their answers will vary but they should draw on response material from


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the previous two essay questions and adjust it to suit the topic at hand. Solid responses will speak to the imminent social change that will occur with the legalization of marijuana or connect to the legalization as an indicator of social change before noting how researchers may conceptualize research on the topic differently and/or similarly pre- and post-legalization. The construction of research questions, consideration of researcher assumptions, and consideration of research design should all address the change in legality of this practice, which in turn means a change in deviant status for recreational marijuana users. Strong students will point out that society may be slow to adapt to the legislative change and in some groups eyes', marijuana users will still remain "deviant." Students may recognize any bias they may have about the group under study and discuss how this may affect their research. Other students may consider more practical matters such as easier access to research participants with decreased legal stigma. (pp. 12–32).


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