Qualitative Inquiry and Inclusive Research 17

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Abstract

This chapter discusses the contribution of qualitative inquiry in social inclusion and its role in inclusive research. Qualitative research refers to "a broad approach" that qualitative researchers adopt as a means to examine the social contexts of people and their lives. The inquiry posits that people use "what they see, hear, and feel" to make sense of social experiences. Fundamentally, it is interpretive. The meanings and interpretation of the participants is the essence of qualitative inquiry. Qualitative research is valuable in many ways. It encourages researchers to hear silenced voices, to work with marginalized and vulnerable people, and to address these issues within asocial justice framework. The methods adopted in qualitative research tend to embrace the lived experiences of people

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who occupy a variety of social spaces, sitting neatly within the inclusive research approach. Qualitative researchers are seen as constructivists who attempt to find possible explanations for phenomena in the real world. Fundamentally, qualitative researchers look for the complexity of meanings that people have constructed in relation to experience. This chapter discusses the value of qualitative research, qualitative inquiry, and social inclusion. The chapter also covers inclusive qualitative research practices including arts-based methods, visual research, embodiment, and digital-based qualitative research methods that can enhance inclusivity in the research approach. The role of qualitative researchers as inclusive researchers is also discussed in the chapter.

1 Introduction

Qualitative inquiry refers to "a broad approach" that qualitative researchers adopt as a means to examine experience and social situations of people. The inquiry is based on the position which argues that people use "what they see, hear, and feel" to make sense of their social experiences (Rossman and Rallis 2017, p. 5). Fundamentally, qualitative research contributes to the social inquiry which aims to interpret "the meanings" of people's actions and behaviors (Bradbury-Jones et al. 2017). It is a type of research that embodies individuals as the "whole person" who are living in complex and dynamic social milieus.

Qualitative research has been adopted extensively in the social sciences, particularly in anthropology and sociology. More recently, it has been adopted in health and medical research. As described below, it has been adopted widely within research involving socially excluded individuals. Arguably, qualitative inquiry aligns with inclusive research that has become essential at present around the globe. Most qualitative methods promote the inclusion of research participants; often, as an active partner in the research process.

This chapter discusses the value of qualitative research in social inclusion, inclusive qualitative research methods which include arts-based, visual research, embodiment, and digital-based qualitative research as well as the role of qualitative researchers and social inclusion.

2 Qualitative Research and Social Inclusion

Qualitative inquiry focuses on the social world. A qualitative research approach, as Hesse-Biber (2017, p. 4) suggests, offers "a unique grounding position" for researchers to undertake research that encourages distinct ways of asking questions

and offers an insight into the social world, which in turn will help researchers to make sense of a social issue that "privileges subjective and multiple understandings." Qualitative research offers explanations for social actions (Rossman and Rallis 2017). In the social world, we deal with the subjective experiences of individuals. In different social situations and over time, people's "understanding of reality" can change (Dew 2007, p. 434). To capture and understand the perspectives of individuals, qualitative inquiry relies heavily on words or stories that these individuals tell researchers (Patton 2015; Creswell and Poth 2018; Liamputtong 2020). Thus, qualitative research has also been recognized as "the word science" (Liamputtong 2020).

Qualitative inquiry possesses distinctive characteristics (Rossman and Rallis 2017; Creswell and Poth 2018). These are presented in Table 1.

Qualitative research is utilized when "silenced voices" need to be heard. Qualitative inquiry permits researchers to ask questions and to find answers, that can be difficult or impossible with the quantitative approach (Hesse-Biber 2017; Liamputtong 2020). For example: What strategies do Asian people adopt to deal with discrimination resulting from COVID-19? How do young refugee people deal with social exclusion? How do women experiencing sexual violence deal with their situations in their everyday life? and What contributes to stigma and discrimination of HIV/AIDS despite extensive media and educational campaigns in the country? These are some examples of what qualitative research can find answers for health and social care policy-makers and professionals.

When this chapter was written in 2020, people around the world had been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is an example of where qualitative inquiry can play a vital role in understanding people's lived experiences of the virus, and the impact it has had on their lives. As Teti et al. (2020, p. 3) argues, qualitative research is situated to "explore the plurality of expertise and diversity of perspectives necessary to understand fully the COVID-19 pandemic as it unfolds." Qualitative research can provide in-depth understanding of the situation as it unravels, and what we can learn from it for future outbreaks, as well as strategies that can be used to effectively manage the situations.

Table 1   Common characteristics of the qualitative inquiry

Qualitative inquiry: Common characteristics
• It is fundamentally interpretive
• It focuses on the meanings and interpretation of the participants
• It asks why, how, and under what circumstance things arise
• It explicitly attends to the contextual situations of the participants
• It takes place in the natural settings of human life
• It emphasizes holistic accounts and multiple realities
• It is emergent rather than rigidly predetermined
• Participants are treated as an active respondents rather than as subject
• It makes use of multiple methods
• The researcher is the means through which the research is undertaken

Qualitative research is crucial for research involving socially excluded people including marginalized, vulnerable, or hard-to-reach individuals and communities around the globe (Liamputtong 2007, 2010, 2020; Flick 2018). This is particularly so when they are "too small to become visible" in quantitative research (Flick 2018, p. 452). Often, they are excluded from the research and policy-making process. More importantly, due to their marginalized, vulnerable status, and distrust in research, most of these individuals tend to decline to participate in research. The nature of qualitative inquiry will permit qualitative researchers to be able to engage with these individuals. Having opportunities in participating in research, their voices can be better heard. This may assist these individuals to be more socially inclusive in society.

3 Qualitative Inquiry and the Inclusive Research Approach

The inclusive research approach has become increasingly popular in the last few decades. This chapter encourages more inclusive means that researchers can adopt to include the experiential knowledge of research participants (as well as of their own).

Within the often-exclusive world in which we are now living, there are many situations where conventional methods may not work and can even be alienating for some people. It is crucial that researchers adopt unconventional alternative approaches to meet the needs of people who may not fit the white privileged norm. Indeed, many researchers have increasingly realized the value of more inclusive inquiries in working with socially excluded groups. Research that involves children, for example, traditional research methods such as in-depth interviews or focus groups may be problematic. Inclusive research methods that treat children as active research participants instead of research objects will allow children to contribute valuable knowledge in the research. These inclusive methods also allow researchers to gain a deeper insight into the understanding and experiences of children (Angell and Angell 2013).

Increasingly too, there have been many researchers who believe in the value of social justice and attempt to change the social conditions of people and communities who are socially excluded (Bryant 2016; Denzin 2017). This is precisely what Denzin (2010) has encouraged researchers who are situated within the "moral and methodological community" to do. This has resulted in the development of more inclusive approaches in many parts of the globe. These approaches are also in expansion.

Theoretically, to reduce social exclusion in research, the inclusive research approach needs to be embraced (Williams et al. 2015). Inclusive research is an approach that embodies participatory and emancipatory wisdom where research participants are at the center of the research; they are actively engaged in the planning and conduct of the research with which they are involved (Walmsley and Johnson 2003; Nind 2014b, 2017; Edwards and Brannelly 2017; Fullana et al. 2017; Veck and Hall 2020). Johnson et al. (2014, p. 77) suggest that inclusive research epitomizes "a movement from a research model in which people were 'subject' to research to one in which they are accorded respect, are seen as experts in their own

lives and can be agents for change." To them, inclusive research bridges emancipatory research to the method. Inclusive research emphasizes the sharing of power between the researchers and research participants who are often referred to as "co-researchers" (Walmsley and Johnson 2003; see also Salmon et al. 2018; Walmsley et al. 2018). Inclusive research seeks to reduce the inequality of power that shapes traditional research processes and to widen the role of research participants (Novek and Wilkinson 2019).

Importantly, inclusive research reflects a change concerning "the democratization of the research process" (Nind 2014a, b, p. 1, 2017, p. 279), which has become prominent in the qualitative inquiry. The democratization of research attempts to do justice for individuals and groups who experience ongoing exclusion and marginalization. They are communities that need extra research strategies so that their often-silenced voices can be heard (Edwards and Brannelly 2017; Alminde and Warming 2020). This research practice intends to ensure that socially excluded individuals/groups are involved in research, and how they can gain benefit from their involvement (Edwards and Brannelly 2017; Alminde and Warming 2020).

Nind (2017, p. 280) sees inclusive research as tactical and "morally-committed" strategies that would ensure that research participants taking part in the research "are not passive providers or consumers of research knowledge but critically engaged in generating it." Inclusive research, according to Edwards and Brannelly (2017, p. 272), attempts to ensure that the "research is of concern and benefit to the research participants, reaches and represents their grounded knowledge, and treats them with respect." Importantly, inclusive research "can be used… to promote and support change" in society (Johnson et al. 2014, p. 83).

Put simply, inclusive research situates socially excluded people at the center of research processes (Walmsley 2001; Walmsley and Johnson 2003; Nind 2017). It provokes power relationships between researchers and researched and renegotiate them so that the hierarchy between the two can be reduced or eradicated (Nind 2014b; Nind et al. 2017; Veck and Hall 2020).

Methodologically, the inclusive research approach shares a typical terrain with the qualitative inquiry, particularly the concern relating to the lived experience and voices of research participants (Nind and Vinha 2014; Nind 2017; Clendon and Munns 2018; Novek and Wilkinson 2019). According to Novek and Wilkinson (2019: 1056), participating in qualitative research can "contribute to the well-being and social inclusion" of the research participants.

The fundamental aspect of inclusive research is the responsibility of researchers to "listen" carefully to other people (Veck and Hall 2020). Inclusive research, similar to the aim of the qualitative inquiry, aims to meaningfully hear the voices of individuals who are socially excluded in society. This is seen in the argument of Fullana, Pallisera, and Vilà (2017, p. 724), who suggest that inclusive research can be achieved when researchers endeavor to listen and understand, as well as recognize that "people are free to express their point of view with their own voice." This is what qualitative researchers do. Often, qualitative researchers work closely with individuals and they listen tentatively to what they say and try to make sense of what the participants tell them.

There are several inclusive research approaches that we have witnessed recently. These are discussed in the following sections.

3.1   Participatory Research

Participatory research (PR) refers to a distinctive tenet of social research that is often linked with social transformation among socially excluded individuals and marginalized societies (Kemms et al. 2014; Higginbottom and Liamputtong 2015; Abma et al. 2019; Eckhoff 2019). The roots of PR are "in liberation theology and neo-Marxist approaches to community development and liberal origins in human rights activism" (Kemmis and McTaggart 2000, p. 568).

In principle, PR aims to examine the political structures that disempower marginalized, deprived, and oppressed groups of people and to find ways in which these structures can be changed (Brydon-Miller et al. 2011; Lykes and Crosby 2014; Higginbottom and Liamputtong 2015; Bradbury-Jones et al. 2018; Abma et al. 2019). Thus, PR aims to create new forms of knowledge through a creative synthesis of the different understandings and experiences of people who take part. Since this knowledge is created from the point of view of marginalized, deprived, and oppressed groups, it aims to transform "social realities" (de Koning and Martin 1996, p. 14). Martin (1996, p. 82) argues that PR is based on a "strong commitment to social justice and a vision of a better world." The distinctive nature of PR lies in "its focus on collaboration, political engagement, and an explicit commitment to social justice" (Brydon-Miller et al. 2011).

In the PR tradition, the knowledge and lived experience of "oppressed" people are valued. PR researchers must have a genuine commitment toward "oppressed" people. The researchers must authentically work in collaboration with the community of interest in order to improve their lives (Bradbury-Jones et al. 2018; Abma et al. 2019).

In practice, the key concepts and activities of PR are interrelated and include participation, education, and collective action (Reason and Bradbury 2008; Brydon-Miller et al. 2011; Kemms et al. 2014; Bradbury 2015; Abma et al. 2019). PR aims to be a learning experience for the participants. Its focus is their interests (Bradbury-Jones et al. 2018; Eckhoff 2019). Establishing the directions of the research requires active and informed participation by the community. Thus, community groups are seen as "active subjects" of the research as opposed to "passive objects having research done on them," as they are often considered in orthodox research methods. They take an active role from the beginning of the project and, through this active participation, they gain new knowledge and skills, and hence increased self-confidence (Higginbottom and Liamputtong 2015; Bradbury-Jones et al. 2018).

This process is believed to empower the local community and assist them to change their lived situation (Reason and Bradbury 2008; Brydon-Miller et al. 2011; Lykes and Crosby 2014; Higginbottom and Liamputtong 2015; Bradbury-Jones et al. 2018; Abma et al. 2019). Cornwall (1996, p. 94) takes a similar standpoint, arguing that PR has its focus on the process of research, not the product. Cornwall

argues that actively engaging in a process of learning helps the local people to realize what they know, and that their knowledge is valuable. This in turn empowers them to be able to take control of their situations more effectively.

PR represents an approach to the learning process in which research, reflection, and action are continuing. Both the local people and the researcher play equal parts and the local people are involved in the process from the start (Reason and Bradbury 2008; Brydon-Miller et al. 2011; Kemms et al. 2014; Lykes and Crosby 2014; Bradbury 2015; Abma et al. 2019). PR is an approach in which the "oppressed" and ordinary people join hands to take collective action for social change (Maguire 2006). As such, PR aims to "transform power structures and relationships and empower oppressed people" (George 1996, p. 119).

PR helps to legitimize "the right to research" among socially excluded people (Abma et al. 2019; Eckhoff 2019). It allows these individuals to acquire new knowledge and skills through their participation in research, thereby empowering them and enabling them to have more control of their life. It prevents "oppressed" people from becoming passive objects who have research "done on them," as in conventional research methods, because they are able to have equal power in controlling the research. Through this empowerment and emancipation, injustices in health and social care can be reduced or, at best, eradicated.

Participatory research, according to Bradbury-Jones et al. (2018), has become a prominent approach for researchers conducting research with marginalized children who are particularly vulnerable. These include children who have experienced neglect or abuse, children with disabilities, and children who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer (LGBTQ) (see also Eckhoff 2019). As the project is co-developed with children, participatory research is creative and flexible; thus, it facilitates "the meaningful inclusion of children with complex or additional social and communication needs" (p. 81). Bradbury-Jones et al. (2018, p. 81) contend that:

> For children whose needs are complex or uncommon – and who may have had difficult or damaging relationships with adults – participatory approaches go some way to valuing and making visible their unique experiences and insights.

3.2   Visual Methods

In the last few decades, researchers have embraced the use of visual research so that their understanding of the human condition can be enhanced. Visual research methods refer to "a series of research approaches in which visualizations are developed, analyzed, and/or disseminated to examine a specific phenomenon" (Shannon-Baker and Edwards 2018, p. 937). Visual methods are classified into four groups: pre-existing visuals that are selected for inclusion into a research project, visuals that are generated as data, visuals that are constructed as an approach for data analysis, and visuals produced as a way for the dissemination of research findings.

There are a wide variety of visual forms that are available to researchers. Each of these visual forms can result in different ways of knowing. Thus far, we have witnessed visual forms such as photographs, cartoons, graffiti, maps, diagrams,

films, video, signs, and symbols have been adopted in the research. Most often, however, researchers use visual methods together with some form of interviewing (Shannon-Baker and Edwards 2018; Liamputtong 2020).

Images speak louder than words (Harper 2002, 2012) and there is a saying that "a picture is worth a thousand words." A picture can be captured instantly at a glance, but those thousand words would need time to read or to listen to. The use of visual images as data collection tools in research can assist researchers in many ways. Images can assist us to capture knowledge that is hidden, elusive, or hard-to-put-into-words which would be ignored or remain hidden without the use of visual forms. Photographs, for example, can greatly invoke affect, reflection, and information (Rose 2016) that written texts may not be able to do. Similarly, drawing and painting can grasp emotions that are not easily produced in words alone. Images can assist researchers to pay attention to things in different ways. Ordinary things can become extraordinary with the use of images. This can make us embrace new ways of doing things. Often, images can invoke new research questions and inspire the research design (Rose 2016; Lyon 2020; Mazzetti 2020; Milne and Muir 2020).

Teti and colleagues (2020) suggest that in health research and practice, visual methods are common tools. Health researchers have appreciated the values of photography as a means "to understand health issues from the perspectives of those living with health challenges, inform health interventions, and engage community members in identifying and solving health problems" (p. 1148). Teti and colleagues discuss the application of the photovoice method to HIV/AIDS and Autism Spectrum Disorder research and practice. Within community-based participatory action research, the method of photovoice has emerged as an innovative means of working with marginalized people, particularly in cross-cultural research (Liamputtong 2007, 2010, 2020). The photovoice method allows individuals to record and reflect the concerns and needs of their community via taking photographs. It also promotes critical discussion about important issues through the dialogue about photographs they have taken. Their concerns may reach policymakers through public forums and the display of their photographs. By using a camera to record their concerns and needs, it permits individuals who rarely have contact with those who make decisions over their lives, to make their voices heard.

In their research regarding sexual violence among trans women of color in Australia, Ussher et al. (2020) used the photovoice method as a means for the women to reflect on their everyday experiences of sexual violence. Through their photos, trans women of color in this study portrayed their frequent experiences of sexual harassment in their daily lives; often these were manifested by verbal abuse and hostile public staring. They experienced racism in combination with sexism, homophobia, and transphobia, taking pictures of places where these occurred. This revealed the intersection of gender, sexuality, and cultural identity in trans women's experiences of verbal harassment. Verbal abuse and staring worked as the precursor to physical sexual assault, such as groping and forced sexual acts, perpetrated by strangers, sex work clients, and their intimate partners. Sexual assault was seen by trans women as a reflection of the fetishization of their gender identity and gender expression, that served to legitimate objectification and sexual assault. These

messages were conveyed with provocative and metaphorical images of dolls and eggplants, with rich descriptions of what these images meant in relation to their experiences. Many trans women reported poor health outcomes. They saw these outcomes closely linked with their exposure to sexual violence and the transphobia they are subjected to and social inequities. The rich findings of this study reaffirm the strength of the photovoice method as inclusive research that gives voice to a group of socially excluded and vulnerable women as well as cultivates empowerment among the trans women of color in the study.

3.3 Arts-Based and Arts-Informed Research Methods

Visual research approaches are parallel to arts-based and arts-informed research. A core feature of arts-based research is the use of artistic methods. For arts-informed research, it makes uses for artistic methods for elaborating on other qualitative methods; most often it is the individual interviewing method (Shannon-Baker and Edwards 2018; Liamputtong 2020).

Arts-based research is an emergent, appealing, and expanding terrain (Barone and Eisner 2012; Leavy 2015; Capous-Desyllas and Morgaine 2018; Segalo 2018; Edwards 2019; Lenette 2019; Ward and Shortt 2020). According to Lenette (2019, p. 27), arts-based research "encompasses a range of different methods of inquiry for interpretation, meaning-making, and representation of lived experiences." Arts-based research approach embraces "the use of any art form, at any point in the research process, to generate, interpret, or communicate new knowledge." In her recent writing, Edwards (2019, p. 1132) coins arts-based research as "a way of using the arts to facilitate and enhance processes within research, to advance knowledge." Arts-based research embraces creative works such as poetry, embroideries, plays, drawing, painting, song writing, dance, and narrative fiction (also Liamputtong and Rumbold 2008; Leavy 2015; Capous-Desyllas and Morgaine 2018; Segalo 2018; Edwards 2019; Lenette 2019; Ward and Shortt 2020).

Arts-based research became to be known between the 1970s and the 1990s, and has now been extensively embraced in inclusive research (Edwards 2019). Arts-based research is based on the assumptions of "the creative arts" in research. According to Chilton and Leavy (2014, p. 403), "the partnership between artistic forms of expression and the scientific process integrates science and art to create new synergies and launch fresh perspectives."

Arts-based research possesses "the power to provoke, to inspire, to spark the emotions, to awaken visions and imagining, and to transport others to new worlds" (Thomas 2001, p. 274). The arts can assist researchers as they attempt to "portray lives" and light up "untold stories" (Cole and Knowles 2008, p. 211; Chilton and Leavy 2014, p. 403). Through the arts, we can reach people's "inner life" through their "stories, metaphors, and symbols, which are recognised as both real and valuable" (Chilton and Leavy 2014, p. 403). Segalo (2018, p. 298) too writes that by "creating multiple forms of engaging with data" (such as poetry, picture, drama, and mapping) give researchers "space to be in conversation" with individuals from

different "vantage points." This of course allows the voices and stories of people who are, otherwise, silent in research to be included more (Segalo 2016).

The arts-based and arts-informed inquiry is situated within a tradition of participatory research (PR) (Higginbottom and Liamputtong 2015; Capous-Desyllas and Morgaine 2018; Finley 2018; Lenette 2019; Matarasso 2019; Ward and Shortt 2020). Researchers adopting this line of inquiry call for a "reinterpretation of the methods" as well as its ethics concerning human social research (Finley 2005, p. 682, 2018). They attempt to develop inquiry involving action-oriented processes that provide benefits to the local community where the research is undertaken. Arts-based and arts-informed research, Finley (2005, p. 686) maintains, is carried out to "advance human understanding." Primarily, arts-based and arts-informed researchers attempt to "make the best use of their hybrid, boundary-crossing approaches to the inquiry to bring about culturally situated, political aesthetics that are responsive to social dilemmas."

3.4   Embodiment Research

Corporeal realities, or embodiment, has become a site of attention among feminist and postmodern researchers (Perry and Medina 2011, 2015; Lennon 2014; Ellingson 2017). This has resulted in the advancement of research methods that can be used to elicit the knowledge of the corporeality (the body) within the social sciences (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006; Gray and Kontos 2015; Ellingson 2017). The body, according to Perry and Medina (2011, p. 63), is "our method, our subject, our means of making meaning, representing, and performing." The embodiment is embraced by Grosz (1994) as the "lived" or "inscribed" body. The lived body symbolizes experiential knowledge that is connected with the physicality of an individual (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006; Tarr and Thomas 2011; Ellingson 2017). It is through the lived body that meanings are brought about (Grosz 1994; Liamputtong and Rumbold 2008; Tarr and Thomas 2011; Lennon 2014; Perry and Medina 2015; Ellingson 2017; Vacchelli 2018). As a researcher, we can attain crucial knowledge by the lived body of the research participants. At the same time, we can also access this important knowledge through our own body (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006; Lennon 2014; Ellingson 2017; Naidu 2018; Vacchelli 2018). Thus, the embodiment is "an integral part of all research processes" (Ellingson 2017, p. 1).

In their conversation about how to obtain knowledge about the identities of individuals, Gaunlett and Holzwarth (2006, p.8) contend that "we need research which is able to get a full sense of how people think about their own lives and identities, and what influences them and what tools they use in that thinking, because those things are the building blocks of social change." This has prompted many embodiment researchers to invent methods that can allow them to do so.

The body mapping method, as Coetzee et al. (2019) suggest, is a "research tool that prioritizes the body as a way of exploring knowledge and understanding experience." Body mapping is a creative method that really grabs the imagination of research participants (Orchard et al. 2014; de Jager et al. 2016; Ebersöhn et al. 2016; Naidu 2018). In the body mapping method, life-size body drawings are drawn

(or painted) to visually portray "aspects of people's lives, their bodies and the world they inhabit." The method has also been coined by researchers as "body map storytelling" because the meaning of a body map can only be fully understood by the story and experience as told by the individual who creates the body map.

Inclusive research methods that incorporate a bodily experience also include walking and talking together with the research participants, referring to as the walking interviewing method (Block et al. 2019; King and Wroodroffe 2019; Boydell et al. 2020). According to King and Wroodroffe (2019, p. 1277), "as a shared corporeal or bodily experience, the physical act of walking alongside someone shapes the research encounter, aiding the development of an intersubjective understanding of the physiological particularities of a respondent's lifeworld." Walking interviews are "a valuable means of deepening understandings of lived experiences in particular places" (p. 1270). Walking interviews generate "rich, detailed and multi-sensory data" (p. 1270). Walking interviews provide researchers with "unique opportunities" to examine the contexts of research, and to provide "insight into environmental and locational influences that can impact significantly on how individuals perceive, experience, and exercise agency over their wellbeing, health, and care" (p. 1274).

Voice, according to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006, p. xxv), is also a part of the corporeal realities because voice occurs "in a cultural context, in relation to self, and in relation to others." Voice is hinged on a mutual form of expectation. Voice, when it is expressed in certain ways, such as the digital storytelling method, allows individual's stories to be heard. In their research with young people in Canada, Gladstone and Stasiulis (2019) discuss the digital storytelling method that they employed. Digital stories refer to "short (2–3 min) videos using first-person voice-over narration synthesized with visual images created in situ or sourced from the storyteller's personal archive" (p. 1303). The method permits the first-person narrative; the participants have an opportunity to write and use their own voice to tell their own story. This is indeed where the power of the method lies. The method is situated within the emergence of the arts-based research approach and is adopted widely in community-based participatory research, public health, and health promotion research and practice (see Otañez and Guerrero 2015; Ellingson 2017; Lenette 2019; Flicker and MacEntee 2020).

3.5   Digital Methods

Digital methods refer to the application of online and digital communications that researchers utilize to gather and analyze research data (Brondani and Marino 2019; Hookway and Snee 2019; Pearce et al. 2019; Wright 2019). Globally, the digital has become a significant part of our daily life and researchers have embraced it as part of their research methods (Iacono et al. 2016; Brondani and Marino 2019; Hookway and Snee 2019; Pearce et al. 2019; Wright 2019). We have witnessed many research projects that make use of digital methods in recent times.

Digital methods have many advantages over more conventional research methods. Digital communication can reach a large number of people across different geographical and socio-cultural boundaries (Iacono et al. 2016; Brondani and Marino 2019; Hookway and Snee 2019; Pearce et al. 2019; Wright 2019). Mann

and Stewart (2000, p. 80) suggest that "the global range of the Internet opens up the possibilities of studying projects which might have seemed impracticable before." Researchers are able to conduct their research with individuals from different local and global locations.

Importantly, digital methods provide possibilities to reach a terrain of socially excluded individuals, such as people with disabilities, mothers at home with small children, older people, and people from socially marginalized groups such as gays and lesbians, who may not be easily accessed in face-to-face research methods (Mann and Stewart 2000; Brondani and Marino 2019; Hookway and Snee 2019; Pearce et al. 2019; Wright 2019). These socially excluded individuals can make contact with others from their familiar and physically safe locations. People with disabilities who have access to email and necessary online information can take part in research without having to leave home or be mobile. Digital methods also permit researchers a possible vehicle for connecting with people situated within restricted access like schools, hospitals, cult, and religious groups, bikers, gangs, and so on.

In social science areas, digital methods provide the possibility of researching within politically sensitive or dangerous areas (Mann and Stewart 2000). Due to the anonymity and physical distance, both the researchers and the participants are protected. Some highly sensitive and vulnerable participants, such as political and religious dissidents or human rights activists, will be more likely to participate in online research without excessive risk. Researchers can access censored and politically sensitive information without being physically in the field. People living or working in war zones, or sites of criminal activity, or places where diseases abound can be accessed without needing to combat the danger involved in actually visiting the area. Digital methods also permit researchers to distance themselves physically from research sites. This helps to eliminate the likelihood of suspicion that might alienate some participants.

As the boundary between the virtual (or online) and face-to-face communication interactions blur, identity formation is more influenced by and takes place in online spaces. This online space is more prominent for socially excluded individuals who may not be able to express and develop their identities in public or at home. Trans people use online support groups to form friendships and connections with other transgender individuals (Evans et al. 2017; Noack-Lundberg et al. 2020). Because transgender people are a minority and only make up a small percentage of the population, many people may have had limited contact with transgender communities, due to stigma, isolation, or anxiety, and because transgender people are a minority and only make up a small percentage of the population (Noack-Lundberg et al. 2020). In their recent paper, Liamputtong (2020) discuss the way that trans women embody their transgender identity, focusing on identity questioning, gender dysphoria, and clinical gatekeeping and medicalization narratives. Their data was derived from online forums where trans women posted content about their gender perspectives and experiences of gender and gender transitioning. Trans women participating in online forums in this study faced many challenges in being a transgender person. In embodying their transgender identity, many interacted with significant others in society as well as health care providers. Liamputtong (2020) argue that it is essential that we understand the ways trans women express their gender identity. Data from online forums revealed that trans women have

heterogeneous experiences that often do not match those of expected discourses (and diagnoses) which have implications for access to treatments to achieve their desired gender identity. Trans individuals have the right to carry out self-determination practice as a way to achieve their gender autonomy. Health care providers must understand the way trans women embody their identity as one of the myriad diverse human expressions of one's own gender.

4   Qualitative Researcher as an Inclusive Researcher

> Researchers, in other words, are not simply dispassionate observers of social phenomena; they can play an active role in the construction and maintenance of categories and conceptions of the included and the excluded. (Veck and Hall 2020, p. 1091)

Qualitative researchers look for meanings that people have constructed (Hesse-Biber 2017). They are interested in learning about "how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (Merriam and Tisdell 2016, p. 15). Qualitative researchers can be perceived as "constructivists" who "seek answers to their questions in the real world" (Rossman and Rallis 2017, p. 4) and then "interpret what they see, hear, and read in the worlds around them" (p. 5). They attempt to bring out the silent voices of those who are socially excluded in society. They are indeed an inclusive researcher.

To bring out the silent voices of research participants, qualitative researchers are committed to several issues, as presented in Fig. 1.

Importantly, qualitative research is sensitive to personal biography as the researcher acts as "the instrument of inquiry" (Patton 2015, p. 3; Rossman and Rallis
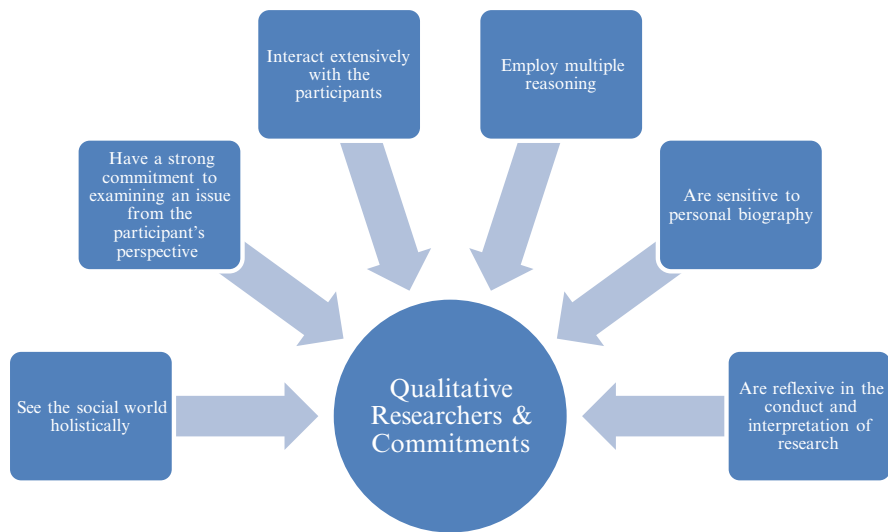

Fig. 1 Commitments of qualitative researchers

2017, p. 9). For most qualitative researchers, what makes them conduct their research is an important component of their research journeys. Qualitative researchers tend to acknowledge who they are and how their personal biography frame their research across the research process, from establishing research questions, selecting research methods, analyzing the data, and writing up. They value their "unique perspective as a source of understanding rather than something to be cleansed from the study" (Rossman and Rallis 2017, p. 9). Thus, reflexivity forms the importance of being a qualitative researcher (Liamputtong 2020).

5   Conclusion and Future Directions

Qualitative research has become a well-established and important mode of inquiry in many fields. This chapter has suggested that the inquiry can contribute significantly to research that promotes social inclusion in people. Most importantly, we are now living in a vulnerable world, where we have, and continue to be, confronted with social inequalities and injustices in all corners of the globe (Liamputtong 2007, 2019). Qualitative research that can help us to find better answers that better suit people, particularly those who are marginalized and vulnerable is needed (Flick 2018). Qualitative inquiry can lead to a positive change in the life of many people. This is what Denzin (2017) has advocated. Denzin (2017, p. 8) puts this clearly when he calls for qualitative research that "matters in the lives of those who daily experience social injustice." Qualitative research will continue to play a crucial role in the years to come.

The year 2020, when this chapter was written, is referred to as the year of COVID-19 that has impacted the life of millions of people around the globe. This is the time that the qualitative inquiry is so valuable. Indeed, Teti et al. (2020, p. 1) say this clearly:

> COVID-19 is not just a medical pandemic; it is a social event that is disrupting our social order... Qualitative inquiries are our best method for capturing social responses to this pandemic. As has been shown with other epidemics and health, these methods allow us to capture and understand how people make meaning and sense of health and illness.

This chapter has presented readers with a number of inclusive research methods that researchers have used in their research. As an inclusive qualitative researcher, our choice of inclusive methods primarily depends on the questions we pose; the people who are involved; our moral, ethical, and methodological competence as researchers; and the socio-cultural environment of the research. As we are living in the world that continues to change, it is likely that researchers will continue to experiment with their inclusive and creative methods in order to ensure the success of their research. It is anticipated that in the future, we will see even more inclusive qualitative methods that researchers will bring forth. It, indeed, will be an exciting time for inclusive researchers.

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