

# BENCHMARK TEXTBOOK CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS PAPER

Benchmark Textbook Critical Analysis and Synthesis Paper Assignment

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**Chapter 1 of the Ravitch & Carl (2020), Qualitative Research: An Opening Orientation**

The authors begin by sharing their desire to help their reader to develop a better understanding of qualitative research (QR) (pg. 1). The basics of QR is to develop an interest in an area or research, read the available materials, develop questions, and seek fulfillment of these by research that may include “interviews, focus groups, observational fieldnotes, etc.”, along with answering the when, where, and who that will be the focus of the research (pg. 2). When you begin to interpret the observations, the author suggests a valid method of testing your findings is to ask the participants if they agree the findings are reasonable (pg. 2). The data collection is not a linear pursuit. It is recursive which indicates future work may inform past efforts and lead the research down sideroads that were not anticipated (pg. 3). QR was formalized as a means of research in the 1960’s (pg.6). QR considers how each party in the research circle sees reality (ontology), how persons understand knowledge (epistemology), what is valued (axiology), and how one goes about organizing their research practices (methodology) (pg. 6). QR encourages the questioning of held beliefs to seek a more resolute truth unbound by biases (pg. 7). The author speak to the ongoing battle between the two primary types of researcher styles (qualitative and quantitative) and states this is not necessary because each type has its place in the vast realm of the research world (pg. 8). QR embraces the subjective nature of life rather than trying to make everything in life fit neatly into concise interpretations of how the world works (pg. 11). The idea that QR is to be “binary” has positive qualities but aspects that are suspect. There are indeed things that are black and white and must be seen as such while most things do indeed have aspects that can be understood differently when seen through the lens

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of various dichotomies (pg. 13). The process of dialogic engagement is one that helps to bring about diverse outcomes by being challenged by varying perspectives (15). Though there are specified methods of QR, many fall under the general umbrella term QR.

**Chapter 2 of the Ravitch & Carl (2020), Conceptual Frameworks in Research Assignment**

A conceptual framework (CF) is a key tool in qualitative research. The authors indicate that in essence it is a track to run on in my research endeavors to help me to be both guided by and to help balance the journey (pg. 32). A good CF should lead me to develop valuable progress by promoting “thinking, planning, conscious action, and reflection throughout the research process” (pg. 33). The CF should also help me to acknowledge my relationship and desires associated with my research to help me avoid some potential gaps due to potential biases (pg. 33). My CF should make clear how I anticipate the process utilized in my research to produce information that will help obtain valuable content that will add to the knowledge base of the subject I am studying (pg. 35). The CF should become more refined as I progress through the task, styles, platforms, etc. being utilized to move the research process forward (pg. 36). The CF guides the research but also takes a fluid characteristic by being allowed to be shaped by various perspectives and data that may lead to variations of directional pursuits of information that will inform the outcome of the study (pg. 37). I as the researcher am the primary tool and therefore must be intentional to critically critique my preconceived notions of reality to allow my interpretations of the data to be more diversified than my personal opinions would typically allow for in everyday life encounters (pg. 40). The CF should also help me to clearly identify the group or context where my research will be focused (pg. 43). Using formal theories are valuable

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to guide my research practices but I will need to keep the mindset that though valuable, theories are susceptible to needing to be updated or potentially done away with (pg. 47).

### **Chapter 3 of the Ravitch & Carl (2020), Qualitative Research Design Assignment**

Research design is the basic path that I as the researcher will take to help me to integrate “the theories, concepts, goals, contexts, beliefs, and sets of relationships that shape a specific topic” (pg. 62). I will need to begin with establishing my research topic that may be spawned by a specific group or topic that I have interest in increasing the knowledge base of in the existing literature (pg. 63). Throughout the process, I will need to be actively learning and allowing this knowledge to continually shape and mold the process including future data collection in a non-linear approach (pgs. 63 & 65). Leading up to and throughout the research process it is wise for me to discuss my work with colleagues and participants to continue the process of refining my research journey (pg. 67). Additionally, it will be a wise practice for me to utilize a positionality statement to both inform others of the lens through which I operate and see the world and research, but to also remind me of the potentiality that is present within me to be skewed in a particular direction due to preconceived notion or life experiences. These may vary based on all the dynamics that have made me who I am today but likely differ (on varying levels) in more ways than they align with others who may participate or view the research findings (pgs. 67-71). I will need to do a literature review and use this to refine this wide scope research approach to a more narrow and more concise theoretical framework approach of my research pursuits (pg. 78). I will need to put great thought into the specific site or sites and the participants who are providing the data that is feeding my research efforts (pgs. 81-88). I will continue to utilize

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various tools, colleagues' input and participants' input throughout the process to help establish rigor in the work being produced.

**Chapter 4 of the Ravitch & Carl (2020), Reflexivity in Data Collection Assignment**

This chapter speaks to the need of being reflexive in the data collection process. I will need to consider all the variables involved with those who participate in my studies and to consider the larger context in which they live (pg. 105). It is crucial that I understand the data that I am considering and processing through and to use the information to inform my research actively and in real time. What I as the “primary instrument”, learn today should affect how I read and understand the next bit of information. In the qualitative research world, it is a process that continually builds as I interact with the data and various individuals (pg. 106). Research memos are a method I can utilize to keep up with thoughts as I move along through the process, but it can also be a source of data in and of itself to spur the current and additional research (pg. 107). An additional thought shared by the authors is the idea of reflecting on the “identity of positionality memo” throughout the process and sharing it with friends and fellow researchers to stir insights and receive pushback if needed due to an inward ideal that may be distracting or even blinding me from presenting unencumbered research (pg. 108). A personal research journal is another tool to help me reflect on and grow from the process over time by identifying various helpful aspects along the way (e.g., “questions, struggles, ideas, excitements, experiences”, etc.) (pg. 116). Dialogic engagement is a method I will also consider to further improve upon my desire to present the information with as little biases as possible. Through discussions with others

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potential biases I have can be eliminated or at least clearly identified (pg. 118-119). Researcher interviews may help me stay on track and help bring to light any changes or refinements that may be needed to achieve the goals of the research by being questioned about the process and other various aspects of the research journey (pg. 120).

**Chapter 5 of the Ravitch & Carl (2020), Methods of Data Collection Assignment**

Thinking about data collection, I find I am eager to find participants to be able to sit with, interview and hopefully gain some valuable insights to direct me on my research journey (pg. 126) to discover, "What are the experiences of Christian married couples who would describe their sexual intimacy as mutually satisfying?" This is exciting to me because I desire to help those who may struggle in this area to see the opportunity that God has provided them to have great sex and to see that experiencing great sexual intimacy is within reach of most couples with a few adjustments to their daily lives. I really like the idea that the questions I will be asking can be fluid and not a rote questionnaire that is to be generically answered by the masses. Further, I am thrilled that follow-up questions can be customized to the person in front of me and is considered a good practice (pg. 126).

As I interview participants, thinking about; being relational, the context, the non-evaluative stance, being person centered, the temporal snapshot in time of the interview and how this may be a partial perspective in the moment, the overall subjective nature of people's understanding of their reality and that the interview process is non-neutral will guide my research interviews (pgs. 127-130). These concepts will help me gain the value that is present in the interviews, while also knowing a different day or time may sound very different. Asking good

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questions, while considering these various aspects, will assist me in doing well-grounded research that is valid (pg. 134). I am leaning towards utilizing a non-structured approach so that it will be a more natural feel for the interviewee (pg. 135). Creating a transcript does not seem enjoyable but should be a valuable and key process in doing great qualitative research (pg. 139).

**Chapter 6 of the Ravitch & Carl (2020), Validity in Qualitative Research Assignment**

The chapter begins the conversation about validity acknowledging there are variations in how validity should be understood in qualitative research (QR). Some say it is a foreign concept and has no place with QR. The authors are wanting me to take the stance of developing research that is credible and uses rigor to maintain the integrity of my QR (pg. 166). The idea of transactional validity is the angle I can align with where the transformational approach appears to be an antagonist to perceived norms and is described by the authors as an “emancipatory process leading towards social change” and a concept I would not align well with (pg. 167). From the qualitative perspective I will be most concerned with being respectful of and true to the experiences of the participants in my research work (pg. 167). I will have to be intentional in the design of my research project to help those who are using the data to be able to have confidence in the trustworthiness of the work (pg. 168). My research will need to include elements such as utilization of “thick description” in a manner that honors the integrity of the participants so my work could be used alongside other efforts (pg. 168). I will strive to provide research that has dependability by using well-reasoned methods and questions (pg. 171) that aim at the heart of my primary question seeking to learn experiences of Christian married couples who have

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mutually satisfied sexual intimacy. Further, I will seek to have confirmability which the authors say is not a claim of objectivity but then describe it as relative objectivity with me needing to specify my potential biases vis a vis my worldview (pg. 171). The concepts of descriptive, interpretive, and theoretical validity will be valuable concepts for me to consider as I design, perform, and follow-up with my research (pgs. 172-173). The variations of triangulation are methods I will likely use to strengthen the trustworthiness of my research work (pg. 174-176).

**Chapter 7 of the Ravitch & Carl (2020), Ethics and Relational Research Assignment**

As I work through my writing process for my research proposal and on into the research process, I will need to keep in mind the factors found throughout this chapter. Though many facets of life can be generalized, and inferences made among many, if not most people, it is crucial that I take to heart and apply the idea of being relational and seeing each participant as the individuals they are and seek to understand the dynamics that are present in their specific lived experiences (pg. 193). This is both a relational issue as well as an ethical concern that goes beyond the IRB standards I must also have at the fore of my research proposal (pg. 196-199). I will be intentional to be vulnerable and open to the possibilities that my understanding of what drives mutually satisfying sexual experiences among Christian married couple to grow beyond preconceived ideas I may have (pg. 195). I, absolutely, lean towards the idea of being friendly verses being stoic to help build repour and comfort as I carry out my dialogic interviews (pg. 201). I do not see boundaries as being a struggle in my current research work due to my general thought process of mutual benefit being derived from helping our world through research and research participation, though I will need to remain aware of the possibilities of it occurring (pg. 205). As

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a key part of my research work, I will need to have clear informed consent in writing (if culturally acceptable), so participants understand the data being collected is to be disseminated into a work that is intended to be made public and have a clear understanding of their desires to remain anonymous or if they would mind their name being attached in the final work (pg. 210-212). I will use a responsive approach, using the knowledge gained from early research to develop the latter, hoping to build towards a fuller level of knowledge and understanding to promote mutually satisfied sexual experiences among more Christian married couples (pg. 228).

**Chapter 8 of the Ravitch & Carl (2020), An Integrative Approach to Data Analysis**

This chapter has some tools that will assist me in my endeavor to produce research work that is trustworthy and demonstrates a well-reasoned process that would allow others to arrive at similar findings (pg. 233). I will take on the stance that I am an observer of the experience of my participants and intentionally resist the temptation to have the sole interpretive authority (pg. 235). My desire is to honor those who agree to be participants. One tool I will utilize is intentional systematic data analysis (pg. 236). Part of my QLR process will involve a reduction of the vast data gathered down to that which is pertinent to my specific research topic (pg. 237). The authors use the phrase 'iterative and recursive' eleven times in this chapter. In essence meaning repetition and repetition. I will need to be repetitious in many of the steps in my QLR to get down to the essential data that will improve trustworthiness of my research presentation (pg. 241). I will be using the formative approach to digest early data to then refine any questions or possibly even the research focus based on my early information gathering efforts (pg. 243). It relieves so apprehension where the authors encourage having a theoretical triangulation model

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but say not to get caught up in having a specific formal model, if I am intentional to utilize theoretical components that will help me develop “analytically complex and robust findings” (pg. 246). It would be very easy to assert my interpretive authority, however, I will be intentional to utilize strategies to help avoid abusing this principle (e.g., checking in with participant to review my final version of their information). Finally, dialogic engagement with people who will challenge my perspectives is a critical process to help balance the final product (pg. 247-248). It sounds delightful to be sitting around with others to discuss and refine the presentation of the collaborative work between the participants, discussion group and myself (pg. 249).

**Chapter 9 of the Ravitch & Carl (2020), Methods and Processes of Data Analysis**

This chapter begins by helping me see that I will need to gather the data, interact repeatedly with the data, and then write in a manner that accurately depicts the data where readers can have confidence in the competent methodology utilized (pg. 254). I will need to be intentional to have a good method of data organization in place before collection of data begins to help me to store the information gathered in a manner that makes it readily accessible and logically situated as I interact with the data to develop a relationship of understanding, questioning my understanding, and seeking further clarification of the data if needed from fellow data analyzers or returning to the participants directly (pgs. 254-256). Any transcribing I do or have done will be a literal verbatim and will not employ “cleaning up” practices. To presume to “clean up” someone’s words in a transcript seems a bit presumptuous. Maybe the motivation to do so will become clearer as I move through the process. No transcript can compete with an audio and certainly not with a video recording of a session. My current thought is to include time

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stamps in the verbatim to easily reference the recording if during a reviewing of the data nuances of body language and tone are needed to add clarification (pgs. 257-258). I am excited about the process of reviewing the data repeatedly and striving to see the data through various lenses. However, I cannot help but wonder will the data begin to take on a life of it's own that has the potential to go beyond the intent of the participant (pgs. 261-262). Coding will be a process that I will use to help me digest the data and to hopefully see patterns that can lead to a better understanding of the data (pgs. 265-274). When in the data analysis aspect of my research, I will likely find a person or persons to interact with in dialogic engagement and/or using a listening guide to help test/challenge any assumptions I may have made (pgs. 275-277).

**Chapter 10 of the Ravitch & Carl (2020), The Research Report Assignment**

When I begin the process of writing my research findings, I should consider an outline to help me in the organization and in processing the information I have gathered, where it should be placed, and if the amount of data collected is sufficient or needs some pruning (pgs.295-297). Another tool I may employ is the utilization of a timeline to make sure I have a reasonable grasp of the time needed and can take on each segment to meet any deadlines (pg. 296). While reading the chapter, it is well received that the research information is just information until the findings are reduced to writing for others to be benefitted (pg. 298). Throughout my process of developing the final product, I will need to consider my audience and the overarching goal[s] I am desiring to communicate to them through my work (pgs. 299-300). I like the idea of using key themes as a method of organizing my final reporting of the information (pg. 303). I also see the practice of using quotes from participants as a great method of bringing the “voice” of the

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participants into the final report (pg. 309). It will be a thought-provoking task to ensure that my analysis is an accurate representation of the data and be able to not only aspire to this end, but to repeatedly support the effort throughout my process (pg. 312). The advice to always consider how you are portraying your participants by thinking through what they would think if reading the report is solid advice I will put into practice (pg. 313). Further, making clear who said a certain statement and not speaking in broad sweeping generalities is another aspect I intend to follow (pg. 315). As I work through my research and reporting, I will need to be cognizant of the forces that may influence my work (e.g., being published, graduating, etc.) (pg. 316). An additional area that I will need to focus on is how to go about performing my research and reporting in a manner that will be both ethical and honoring of my participants (pgs. 321-322).

**Chapter 11 of the Ravitch & Carl (2020) text—November 3, 2024****Jeremy Gillentine— Qualitative Research Proposals**

Writing the proposal will indeed be a challenging undertaking but one that will be enjoyable. I look forward to the process and thinking more about where I think the project will lead, what questions I hope to answer, and then seeing what the evidence brings to light. I also am very interested in thinking about writing while being intentional about the perceived audience I will be seeking to touch with my work (pg. 325). As I begin the research proposal process, it is very helpful to understand it is a declaration of intentions for my work but not a contract spelling out what I guarantee to take place (pg. 326). I will plan to use questions like the ones presented on page 326 to help me to develop my proposal. Further, I hope to be able to bounce my ideas off

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others to help accomplish the goal of a well-presented proposal. I will be intentional to help my reader to begin to see the value of the research being proposed in my introduction (pg. 327).

In the conceptual framework section, I will help show how my topic fits in current research and why it is needed (pg. 329). I will discuss my methodological and research design ideals and include the data collection and data analysis processes and reasoning so my readers can have a clear understanding of the intentionality of my processes. I will make clear how my early data collection will influence my later questions and processing of data (pg. 330). I really like the three-pronged approach (data organization and management, immersive engagement, and writing and representation) and find it to be a good, generalized, road map (pg. 331). I am a little excited about thinking through the additional study questions and the refining of the overall study goals (pg. 332). The idea of having an open discussion after I complete my proposal to help move towards the next phase seems to be a well-reasoned idea (pg. 334).

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140

70

90

300