

# Qualitative Research in Counseling and Treatment Research

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**Abstract:** Research methods in counseling and therapy are diversified and scientific, and the ultimate goal is to solve the problems encountered in counseling and therapy to a certain extent, so the research methods are not open to life practice. However, there is a serious disconnect between qualitative research and life practice in counseling and treatment research, which has led to a more theoretical approach to counseling and treatment research and a failure to better solve problems. In this paper, we analyze the qualitative research in counseling and therapy research.

**Keywords:** Psychological counseling and therapy, Qualitative research.

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## 1. Introduction

As an important discipline in psychology, counseling and therapy cannot be separated from practice for a long time in the process of conducting qualitative research, and only through practice can we obtain the relevant basis and guidance for counseling and therapy in order to obtain further academic improvement. However, at present, many scholars only regard counseling and therapy as a multidisciplinary activity, and the process of research is detached from practice. This research method, which only emphasizes rationality, objectivity, and linearity, is not only difficult to adapt to the needs of counseling and therapy in the context of humanistic care, but also difficult to obtain research results [1,2]. This paper focuses on the application of qualitative research to counseling and treatment research, so as to improve the shortcomings of current counseling and treatment research.

## 2. Background of Qualitative Research in Counseling and Treatment

The use of qualitative research in counseling and therapy is not a new research method. As early as the 1980s, some scholars predicted that qualitative research methods would provide new ideas for counseling and therapy and improve professional help for those in need, such as psychoanalysis, feminism, humanism, and other research findings have had a profound impact. This has led to an increase in the use of qualitative research in the field of counseling and therapy. Since the 1990s, a number of qualitative research studies related to counseling and therapy have appeared in journals related to counseling and therapy, and of course, qualitative research is also on the rise in other journals. In recent years, a number of journals have hired experts and scholars in mental health counseling and treatment to serve as editors-in-chief of journals on qualitative research methods. Second, from a methodological point of view, the adoption of a qualitative research approach also highlights the gradual transition of research methods in counseling and therapy from a pure, traditional research approach to an integrated one [3,4]. The qualitative research approach places greater emphasis on humanism, naturalism, and individual differences. Research methods are also mainly combined through phenomenological, ethnographic, and solid theoretical

foundations, thus studying small samples and providing rich personality studies as a way to achieve a fit between these research methods and counseling and therapy. Furthermore, in terms of research topics, counseling and therapy is usually about understanding the counselor's language, behavior, and a host of other factors. Using qualitative research allows for the collection of information about the counselor's treatment process in this process, which then better allows the researcher to conduct relevant research based on real cases, and of course, qualitative research can be conducted on a number of other issues involved in the research process. For example, teenage pregnancy, child abuse, self-harm, domestic violence, and other such socially intractable problems can be studied through qualitative research methods such as holistic and contextual factors, and in-depth mapping so that they can be better addressed later [5]. Finally, in terms of research methods, qualitative research emphasizes the adoption of open and in-depth communication and naturalistic observation to collect data, which are also the most common methods of counseling and therapy. Of course, the steps that feel insignificant in terms of how to establish a good relationship with the interviewer, how to get valid information, how to organize and record such information, and so on, can provide practical solutions for counseling and treatment [6].

## 3. Application of Qualitative Research in Counseling and Treatment Research

From the qualitative research published in professional journals, it is clear that although qualitative research has received a high call, the growth trend is far less effective than quantitative research. Here, we mainly analyzed the fifteen years of psychology journals from 1989 to 2003 and found that most of the research subjects in psychology were adults, and fewer children were involved, and the content of qualitative research methods was diversified, including exploratory research, phenomenological research, case study research, content analysis research, historical investigation, and so on. However, overall, the proportion of case studies in qualitative research methods is relatively large, and the proportion of content analysis studies is smaller. According to John, the core of research in the field of counseling and therapy is divided into three important categories: process

research, case study research, and research to be conducted. In terms of process research, process research refers to the study of the interrelationship between these aspects from the beginning of counseling to the beginning of a series of actions, bodies, and words of the counselor, and thus explores ways of researching counseling and treatment methods. By using these approaches, it is possible to further study and identify problems in the counseling and treatment process, so that it is possible to know which aspects are beneficial or detrimental to the medical outcome and to make adjustments. Usually, there are five methods to achieve this goal through qualitative research [7]. One is the process research of humanistic counseling, that is, the study of the counseling and treatment process using the recording method, which is of course the common method of counseling nowadays. The second is the process of counseling analysis guided by psychodynamic theory, which is the identification of counseling behaviors by reading them. The third is the exemplary process study, which is to identify the events that change during the counseling process and to identify the behavioral activities of the people involved in the occurrence of these events. The fourth is a process study of the interviewer, in other words, the interviewer's counseling process is recorded, and then after the counseling is over, the counselor is asked to watch the video, recall the feelings at that time, and then the conversation records are organized and identified. Fifth, it is a study of counseling and therapists by reflecting on the records. The basis of this type of work is that the research scholar necessarily introduces his or her previous understanding and perspective into the theory [8]. In terms of the case study, his concentration, depth, and specificity as the ultimate component of qualitative research is important in revealing the nature of the problem and its interior and exterior. Case studies are usually enriched with relevant information through diverse ideas and diverse sources. For example, when conducting a case study, the researcher collects data through all use of documenting the counseling process, for each counselor in the form of memories, interviews, and questionnaires, and then analyzes the data through phenomenology, full interpretation, and theoretical foundations, and also involves the counselor and the visitor in the research of the treatment. However, in the case study process, the researcher also faces problems, which requires the researcher to collect detailed information, deepen the relationship between the researcher and the researched person, and make the information provided by them more powerfully true and complete. Finally, in terms of effectiveness research, the issue of effectiveness research does not carry much weight in qualitative research in counseling and treatment, as most qualitative research tends to be case studies and does not include effectiveness research, which can also make the results of the research will likely be further marginalized [9-11].

#### 4. Conclusion

Qualitative research in counseling and therapy research has great advantages for the development of psychology, not only bringing new impetus to the development of counseling and therapy work, but also promoting the close integration of theoretical knowledge and practice of counseling and therapy, thus enhancing the influence of counseling and therapy in the psychological profession. This requires scholars to pay

attention to the positive effect of qualitative research on counseling and therapy, which can add to the research work of counseling and therapy in the psychology profession.

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