

UNIVERSITY OF ESWATINI
FACULTY OF EDUCATION



**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS AND
MANAGEMENT**

FINAL EXAMINATION PAPER

JUNE 2019

TITLE OF PAPER: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

COURSE NUMBER: EFM 602

TIME ALLOWED: THREE (3) HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS:

- (a) YOU SHOULD WRITE ALL YOUR ANSWERS ON THE ANSWER BOOKLET PROVIDED.
- (b) THERE ARE SIX QUESTIONS IN THIS PAPER. ANSWER ANY **FOUR (4)** QUESTIONS.

TOTAL MARK ALLOCATION: 100 MARKS

THIS PAPER CONSISTS OF THREE PAGES INCLUDING THE COVER PAGE

**DO NOT OPEN THIS PAPER UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO BY THE
INVIGILATOR**

Question 1

What are the underlying assumptions about the nature of knowledge (epistemology) in the qualitative research approach to education? [25 marks]

Question 2

“Good research questions do not necessarily produce good research, but poorly conceived or constructed questions will likely create problems that affect all subsequent stages of a study” (Agee, 2009, p. 431).

- (a) Explain how the process of generating and refining questions is critical to the shaping of all phases of a qualitative research study. (15 marks)
- (b) Describe the characteristics of good research questions using practical examples from the topic of your choice. (10 Marks)

[Total 25 marks]

Question 3

Analyse the differences, both logistically and conceptually, between probability sampling, which involves some form of random selection, and purposeful sampling. [25marks]

Question 4

An ethnographic research study is being designed for which the statement of the problem is, “A study of the principal’s role in school-based management at the elementary school level”.

- (a) Develop the working design for this problem by considering the specific decisions that can be made at this initial step of the research design. (6 marks)
- (b) Develop three or more working hypotheses. These may include foreshadowed problems and research questions. (6 marks)
- (c) Identify possible documents (within the school) that might be collected. What specific situations would merit observation, at least as a starting point. (6 marks)
- (d) Develop a strategy on how data would be analysed and interpreted? (7 marks)

[Total 25 marks]

Question 5

The Toilet ethnographer

Some years ago an established researcher investigated the classroom ethos of three middle schools. Entry into those schools required gaining the confidence of the relevant teachers and the headteachers. He described the steps he took to maintain secrecy and unobtrusiveness- for example always writing up his observations behind the locked door of a toilet. But the publication of the book, though steps had been taken to anonymise the schools and the teachers, greatly upset one of the teachers who recognised herself in reading the book and took offence at the implicit criticism of her teaching. The headteacher told me that, in consequence, he would allow no more researchers into his school.

Analyse whether the researcher could have approached the research in a different way, recognising the vulnerability of the persons researched into – and possibly respecting their interpretation of events (their conclusions from the data) which may not have been the same as the researcher's?

[Total 25 marks]

Question 6

- (a) Explain the advantages of working with tapes and transcripts to collect and analyse qualitative data as opposed to reliance on field notes. (20 marks)
- (b) Briefly analyse the relationship between theory and methodological rigour in the analysis of qualitative research. (5 marks)

[Total 25 mark]