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QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: A FUTURE ROAD MAP FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHERS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This article examines the issues of using qualitative methods in educational research among Nigerians. With the increase in the need to properly understand the issues, phenomena, and activities around educational settings, the need to encourage researchers to use qualitative methods is paramount. This paper explores the different designs, data collection techniques, sampling methods and how to ensure validity and

ethical consideration. The article also investigated the benefits and shortcomings of qualitative research. The paper provided a model to demonstrate the future directions of qualitative educational research in Nigeria. It was recommended that educational researchers should carry out the actions provided in the model. If done, it will provide a springboard for properly integrating qualitative approaches into educational research.

Keywords: Qualitative research (QR), educational research, data collection in QR, research design in QR, research techniques in QR

Introduction

Investigating complicated challenges in educational settings is a beneficial use of qualitative research. Unlike quantitative research based on numerical data, qualitative research examines people's experiences, viewpoints, and attitudes by gathering and analysing rich, in-depth data. Qualitative research may shed light on the experiences and viewpoints of students, instructors, and others in educational settings (Kambouri-Dones and Pieridou, 2020). Stakeholders can assist in the identification of the fundamental variables affecting educational results.

Constructivism is a powerful theoretical framework that stresses the significance of an individual's experiences and knowledge in forming their perspective of the outside world. According to constructivism, qualitative research techniques are crucial for figuring out how people interpret their educational experiences since they concentrate on understanding participants' views and experiences. Moreover, social constructivism, which highlights how social interactions and environments influence how people see the world, is pertinent to the discussion of qualitative research in educational settings (Ramalho et al., 2015; Lauridsen and Higginbottom, 2014). According to social constructivism, qualitative research techniques investigating the social environments in which people learn can offer vital information about the elements influencing educational experiences and results (Gammelgaard, 2017; Andrews, 2012). Investigating complicated topics in educational settings using qualitative research is a worthwhile strategy because it may offer a deep, nuanced understanding of the experiences and viewpoints of students, instructors, and other stakeholders (Papodopouliou et al., 2022; Hays and Singh, 2011). Yet, it can be difficult and requires a technique for data collecting, analysis, ethics, and validity to perform rigorous and valid qualitative research in educational contexts. Researchers may improve the rigour and effectiveness of their qualitative research and help create good educational policies and practices by using proper methodologies and ethical concerns. This article reviews qualitative research in educational contexts, including its benefits and drawbacks, and a model for a future

approach to qualitative research in educational contexts. The main concepts discussed in this paper are captured in the word cloud shown in Figure 1



Figure 1: Word Cloud of the concept discussed in this paper

Design and methodology for qualitative educational research

1. **Ethnography:** An ethnographic research design involves witnessing and participating in people's daily activities in a specific location. Spending much time in one community or group is typical in ethnographic research. It uses techniques like participant observation, interviews, and focus groups to gather data. Ethnography may be utilised in educational research to examine the cultural and social elements that affect educational achievements (Pennington, 2016).
2. **Case Study:** A case study is a qualitative research strategy that thoroughly examines a specific instance or circumstance. Case study research often entails gathering information from various sources, including observations, interviews, and documents, and then evaluating the information to create a comprehensive and in-depth knowledge of the situation. Case studies can be used in educational research to examine topics like educational policies and procedures or the experiences of particular students or teachers (Almalki, 2016).
3. **Narrative Inquiry:** Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research approach that gathers and examines unique narratives and first-person perspectives. Typically, narrative research entails

gathering information through oral histories, diaries, and interviews and then evaluating the information to find trends and themes. Narrative inquiry can be utilised in educational research to examine particular students' or teachers' experiences and viewpoints (Loh, 2015).

4. **Grounded Theory:** Through an iterative data collection and analysis process, grounded theory is a qualitative research approach that aims to create a theory or explanation for a specific occurrence. Data are often gathered using methods like interviews and observations in grounded theory research, and the data are then analysed through continual comparison and theoretical sampling. Grounded theory may be utilised in educational research to examine the effects of educational policies and practices on student outcomes or the experiences of particular students or instructors (Compton-Lilly et al., 2015).
5. **Phenomenology:** Phenomenology is a qualitative research approach examining people's irrational experiences and viewpoints. Observations and interviews are frequently used in phenomenological research to gather data, which is then analysed to determine the underlying structures and meanings of the experiences under investigation. Phenomenology can be utilised in educational research to examine specific students' or instructors' experiences and viewpoints or to investigate more general problems like the significance of culture and identity in educational contexts (Lapan et al., 2012).
6. **Participatory Action Research:** A qualitative research approach that entails participant and researcher partnership to identify and address social and educational issues. Participatory action research often includes working with participants to design and implement solutions to the issues being investigated and gathering data through surveys, focus groups, and interviews. Participatory action research can be used in educational research to examine and remedy problems like educational gaps and unfairness (Piccioli, 2019).

Types of Techniques for data collection in qualitative educational research

1. **Observation:** Direct observation of individuals, events, or phenomena in their natural environment is one way to gather data. Observations can be used in educational research to acquire data on the activities, interactions, and experiences of students, instructors, and other stakeholders in a learning environment. There are two types of observations: structured (when the researcher records data using a predetermined set of categories) and unstructured (where the researcher observes without established categories).
2. **Interviews:** Information is gathered by conversing with participants during interviews. Interviews can be used in educational research to examine students' instructors' experiences, viewpoints, attitudes, and other educational stakeholders. Interviews can be unstructured, in which the researcher lets the conversation run naturally, or organised, in which the researcher employs a series of preset questions. (Adhabi and Anozie, 2017)
3. **Focus Groups:** In focus groups, information is gathered from people with similar perspectives or experiences. Focus groups can be used in educational research to examine common experiences and viewpoints on educational problems or policies. Focus groups can be unstructured, where the researcher is free to let the conversation run naturally, or organised, where the researcher employs a series of preset questions.
4. **Document Analysis:** Using textual or visual sources like textbooks, government papers, or student work, document analysis entails gathering data. Document analysis may be used in educational research to examine how policies and procedures are applied in the classroom or

to analyse student learning results. Document analysis can be unstructured, in which the researcher investigates the documents at random, or organised, in which the researcher employs a list of preset categories.

5. **Audiovisual Techniques:** Audiovisual approaches use audio or video records to acquire data. Audio and video recordings can be utilised in educational research to document classroom interactions, student behaviours, and teacher-student interactions. Combining audiovisual data analysis with other data-gathering methods, such as focus groups, interviews, and observations, is possible.
6. **Unstructured questionnaire:** Another method for gathering data in qualitative research is using unstructured questionnaires. Unstructured questionnaires enable participants to reply to questions in their own terms, unlike structured questionnaires, which include preset queries and response options. Unstructured questionnaires are helpful in educational research because they let researchers get rich, in-depth information on the viewpoints and experiences of students, instructors, and other stakeholders in a learning environment. On the other hand, unstructured surveys might be difficult to interpret since the replies are not standardised. The researcher can utilise coding to find themes or categories in the responses to an unstructured questionnaire. The data can then be examined using discourse analysis or theme analysis.
7. **Discourse analysis** focuses on examining how language is used in social interactions. Discourse analysis is helpful in educational research because it enables researchers to comprehend how language is used in educational contexts to create social identities and meanings. Speaking, writing, or visual media are just a few examples of the different types of communication that can be studied using discourse analysis. In discourse analysis, the researcher gathers data before analysing language use and how it is used to create meaning. The researcher recognises recurring themes, patterns, and underlying presuppositions in the language (Coleman. 2022; Zairal, 2021).

Procedures for analysing qualitative data

1. **Data preparation:** Preparing the data for analysis is the first stage in qualitative data analysis. For this, transcription of audio or video recordings is necessary, along with accuracy verification and data organisation for analysis.
2. **Coding:** The data must then be coded. The coding process is finding patterns, themes, and classifications in the data. Open coding can be used to do this, in which the researcher scans the data and picks out any patterns or codes that stand out. Other options include using preexisting codes or theoretical frameworks to direct the examination.
3. **Categorisation:** The third stage is to group the codes into more general categories or themes after the data has been coded. The researcher should consider the connections between the codes and determine any underlying assumptions or meanings in the data.
4. **Data Reduction:** When the data have been divided into themes, the researcher can trim the data to a manageable size by choosing the information that most clearly exemplifies the themes or categories. This method aids in concentrating the analysis and producing valuable insights.
5. **Interpretation:** Interpretation is the last stage of qualitative data analysis. To do this, you must comprehend the themes or categories and their ramifications on a deeper level. The researcher should note data trends, contradictions, or discrepancies and consider how the results connect

to the study questions or objectives. The researcher must participate in critical analysis to create insightful observations and conclusions.

6. **Triangulation:** A further step may be performed to improve the validity and reliability of qualitative data analysis. Finding patterns or discrepancies in the data entails comparing the analysis's findings with information from other sources, such as interviews, observations, or written materials. Triangulation might be helpful to ensure that the results are reliable and not merely a reflection of a single source of data (Johnson et al., 2020; Santos et al., 2020).

Qualitative educational research- How to ensure ethical considerations

Each research project, especially qualitative education research, must consider ethical issues. Ethical concerns are the concepts and standards that direct research and ensure it is carried out ethically and responsibly. Qualitative educational research's ethical implications encompass participant rights protection, informed permission, confidentiality, and privacy (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012). Getting participants' informed permission is one of the first measures researchers may take to ensure ethical issues are considered. Participants must be informed about the research study's objectives, methods, potential drawbacks and advantages, and participant rights to provide their permission. The chance to ask questions will allow participants to decide whether to join the study (Iphofen and Tolich, 2018).

The protection of participant privacy and confidentiality is a further step. By employing pseudonyms or de-identifying data, participants' identities and personal information are protected in this way. Researchers should also take precautions to safeguard data storage, ensure it is safe, and guarantee that only authorised individuals can access it. The possible influence of the research on participants and the larger community, as well as power relations and social justice, are additional ethical considerations in qualitative educational research. Researchers should take precautions to reduce the possibility of coercion or undue influence by being mindful of the potential power dynamics between the researcher and participants. Also, they should consider how their study can affect underrepresented or vulnerable people and take precautions to ensure that it does not reinforce current power disparities or social injustices (Mertens, 2012).

Researchers should follow established ethical criteria and get ethical evaluation and permission from an institutional review board (IRB) or ethics committee to address ethical issues in qualitative educational research. By providing feedback on the study's findings and answering any queries or concerns that participants may have, researchers should be in constant contact with their participants. Lastly, researchers should be conscious of their own biases and presumptions and take action to reduce the likelihood that they may affect the study process and conclusions (Ngozwana, 2018).

Benefits of qualitative educational research

In-depth investigation of complex phenomena, such as human experiences and points of view or the dynamics of social connections, is made possible by qualitative research. This level of comprehension can offer essential insights into the intricacies of educational challenges that may be challenging to capture using other research techniques. Qualitative research is a method that is adaptable to the particular research issue and setting. To meet the demands of the study, researchers can employ several data-gathering and analysis techniques, allowing for a tailored approach that can effectively capture the distinctive characteristics of a given educational environment. A key

component of qualitative research is the voice of the participants, which enables a better comprehension of their experiences, viewpoints, and opinions. The experiences and perspectives of students, instructors, and other stakeholders are vital for comprehending the educational system, making this kind of study particularly helpful in education (BOOKER, 2014).

Qualitative research strongly emphasises context, which can offer a more in-depth knowledge of the educational phenomenon being researched. Researchers can use this method to investigate how historical, cultural, and social influences affect educational practices and outcomes. Qualitative research frequently enables emerging findings not first envisaged. This allows new views and insights to be drawn from the data, which might aid in creating new educational theories or ideas. Qualitative research may significantly influence educational policy and practice. Qualitative research may assist in developing more effective policies and practices that can result in good social change by offering a more nuanced knowledge of educational phenomena and stakeholders' perspectives (Kambouri-Danos and Pieridou, 2020; Papadopoulou et al., 2022).

The shortcoming of qualitative research in education

The possibility of subjectivity in data collection and processing is one of the significant difficulties in qualitative research. Because qualitative research depends on the researcher's interpretation of the data, those interpretations may be coloured by the researcher's prejudices and worldview. This raises concerns regarding the validity and dependability of the results of qualitative research. Because qualitative research frequently focuses on a particular environment or population, the applicability of its results to other contexts or groups may be constrained. Because of this, it may be challenging to create more comprehensive theories about educational phenomena or to transfer qualitative research findings to other educational contexts. Collecting and analysing the necessary data for qualitative research might take time. The extensive nature of qualitative research necessitates a major time and resource commitment, making it challenging to carry out large-scale investigations or produce results quickly (Taylor et al., 2015; Schonfeild and Mazzolo, 2013).

Working with vulnerable populations, such as children or disadvantaged groups, is common in qualitative research. This may give rise to moral questions about matters like informed consent, participant safety, and confidentiality. Analysing qualitative data may be complicated, particularly when finding patterns and themes. The fact that qualitative research frequently produces vast volumes of data might make things even more difficult. Some academics who favour quantitative approaches have typically viewed qualitative research with mistrust. Due to this, it may be challenging to acquire financing for qualitative research projects or to gain acceptability for qualitative research findings in some academic settings (Munthe-Kaas et al., 2019; Queiro et al., 2017)

Why educational researchers in Nigeria rarely use qualitative research

1. **Absence of knowledge and experience:** Many educational researchers in Nigeria may lack the experience or training in qualitative research techniques to carry out in-depth qualitative investigations. This can result from limited access to resources and training and fewer opportunities to practice and hone qualitative research techniques.

2. **Financial limitations:** Qualitative research may require more time and money for data gathering and processing than quantitative research. This might be a hindrance for Nigerian researchers who might not have sufficient funds for their research initiatives.
3. **The emphasis on quantitative research:** Many educational research environments have historically valued quantitative research, focusing on statistical analysis and numerical data. As a result, qualitative research may be underestimated or perceived as less rigorously conducted.
4. **Low possibilities for distribution and impact:** Even when qualitative research is carried out in Nigeria, there may be little chance for these outcomes. This could be brought on by a dearth of forums for disseminating research findings and a lack of interaction with groups involved in policy and practice (Flick, 2014; Starke, 2013; Tekola et al., 2009).

How to overcome the challenges of carrying out qualitative research in Nigeria

1. **Access to resources and training:** Increasing access to pertinent training and resources is one option to address the shortage of knowledge and training in qualitative research methodologies. This might entail giving seminars or training sessions on qualitative research techniques, granting access to pertinent resources and equipment, or establishing communities of practice where researchers can exchange ideas and advice (Gough & Lyons, 2015).
2. **Funding:** Money is a crucial component in carrying out high-quality qualitative research. Hence, financing should be prioritised. One strategy to overcome financial restrictions is to prioritise financing for qualitative research through separate funding streams or by urging funders to devote more funds to qualitative studies.
3. **Promote the value of qualitative research:** It is critical to inform stakeholders about the advantages of qualitative approaches to counteract the bias toward quantitative research and promote the importance of qualitative research. Encourage the use of qualitative research in decision-making; this may entail identifying effective qualitative studies, showcasing the distinctive insights that qualitative research can offer, and interacting with policymakers and practitioners (Toye et al., 2016; Gough & Lyons, 2015).
4. **Improve dissemination and impact:** To address low dissemination and effect, expanding chances for disseminating research findings and interacting with populations involved in policy and practice is critical. This might entail setting up specific online forums, blogs, or journals for publishing qualitative research and interacting with stakeholders to ensure the findings are pertinent and valuable for their job.
5. **Address language hurdles:** Researchers in Nigeria who desire to undertake qualitative research in regional languages may face substantial difficulties due to language constraints. Researchers may consider working with local language specialists, employing translation tools or services, or recruiting bilingual local research assistants to help with the translation process.
6. **Establish trust and respect:** The key to overcoming qualitative research difficulties in Nigeria is establishing trust and respect between researchers and study subjects. Researchers may gain participants' confidence by being open and honest about their goals, integrating them into the study process, and respectfully sharing the results.
7. **Adapt research methods to the local context:** Qualitative research methodologies may need to be modified to be effective in Nigeria. For instance, when designing their research, researchers may need to consider cultural norms and beliefs and modify their methodology

appropriately. They might also need to consider using technology or other tools to overcome obstacles caused by infrastructure, access, or distance.

8. **Include practitioners and policymakers in the research process:** By including practitioners and policymakers in the research process, it is possible to ensure that the findings are pertinent and valuable for their work. This can entail including people in data collection and processing or delivering study findings in a way that is clear and applicable to their lives.
9. **Promote the application of qualitative research:** By supporting its application and highlighting its benefits to decision-makers, practitioners, and the general public, educational researchers in Nigeria may aid in overcoming the difficulties that qualitative research faces. To increase public knowledge of the advantages of qualitative research, this may entail publishing opinion pieces or blog entries, giving presentations at meetings or seminars, or interacting with the media (Howarth et al., 2016; Starke, 2013; Sharma, 2010).

Sampling in qualitative research

Sampling in qualitative educational research refers to the method of choosing study participants. The purpose of sampling is to select subjects who can offer rich and varied data to address the research issue. In qualitative educational research, there are numerous sampling techniques, including:

1. **Purposive sampling:** This non-random sampling technique selects individuals based on predetermined standards. When a researcher wants to find a particular set of participants who can offer insightful responses to the study topic, they frequently utilise purposive sampling. For instance, a researcher investigating teachers' experiences at a given school could purposefully sample instructors employed there for a specific amount of years.
2. **Snowball sampling:** This technique starts with one participant and asks them to propose additional persons appropriate for the study. This strategy is frequently employed when a demographic is difficult to reach, such as those who have personally experienced a particular event or members of a tiny or disadvantaged group.
3. **Convenience sampling** involves choosing participants based on their accessibility and availability. When a researcher has little time, money, or access to the investigated population, convenience sampling is frequently employed. A researcher could decide, for instance, to interview students who are accessible during a specific class hour.
4. **Theoretical sampling:** This technique involves choosing participants based on newly developing themes and ideas discovered while data is being gathered. In grounded theory investigations, theoretical sampling is frequently utilised when the researcher attempts to construct a theory or model based on the data collected.
5. **Stratified purposeful sampling:** This technique entails categorising the population under investigation into groups based on crucial traits (such as age, gender, ethnicity, or level of education). Afterwards, participants are purposefully chosen from each stratum to guarantee that the sample is representative of the total population.
6. **Maximum variation sampling:** With this technique, participants are purposefully chosen to reflect a variety of backgrounds and viewpoints relevant to the study subject. To acquire a complete picture of the subject, it is intended to capture as much variety in the data as feasible.
7. **Quota sampling:** This technique chooses participants according to a predefined quota (such as a specific number of participants from each age group or gender). When a researcher wishes

to make sure that the sample is representative of the community being researched but lacks the resources to utilise a more complicated sampling procedure, quota sampling is frequently used.

8. **Sequential sampling:** In this technique, participants are chosen in waves or stages, and the information gathered in each step is used to guide the choice of participants in the subsequent stage. When a researcher is modifying their study topic or is unclear of the features of the population being investigated, they frequently utilise sequential sampling.
9. **Expert sampling:** In this technique, individuals considered authorities in the subject under investigation are chosen. Expert sampling is frequently utilised when a researcher wishes to learn more in-depth information and insights from people with specialised expertise or experience.
10. **Network sampling:** This technique chooses participants based on their ties to or relationships with other population members under investigation. Network sampling is frequently utilised when a researcher wishes to focus on a particular social network or group to examine or when it is challenging to reach the population being studied.
11. **Cluster sampling:** Using preexisting groupings or clusters, such as companies, communities, or schools, participants are chosen using this technique. When a researcher wishes to focus on a specific group or community to analyse or when the population being researched is spread out geographically, cluster sampling is frequently utilized (Draper and Swift, 2011).
12. **Homogeneous sampling:** With this technique, people are chosen who have similar gender, age, or cultural background. When a researcher wishes to concentrate on a subset of the investigated population, homogeneous sampling is frequently utilised (Bornstein et al., 2013).
13. **Heterogeneous sampling:** This technique chooses people with various backgrounds and traits. Heterogeneous sampling is frequently utilised when a researcher wishes to gather various viewpoints and experiences relevant to the study subject (Whitehead and Whitehead, 2016).
14. **Time-location sampling:** This technique chooses participants based on their whereabouts at a specific time and place. When a researcher wishes to examine a particular behaviour or activity, such as drug usage or sexual conduct, time-location sampling is frequently utilised (Shaghghi et al., 2011).
15. **Critical case sampling:** This technique includes choosing participants who are viewed as critical or extreme instances because they represent rare or uncommon phenomena or have had a very intense or significant encounter with a certain event or scenario. Critical case sampling is frequently utilised when a researcher wants to comprehend a certain occurrence or process more deeply (Shaghghi et al., 2011).
16. **Deviant case sampling:** This approach chooses individuals who do not fit the norm or normal pattern of behaviour or experience within the community being investigated. Researchers frequently utilise deviant case selection to test or improve preexisting hypotheses or presumptions about the study issue (Kartal et al., 2012).
17. **Random Purposive Sampling:** With this technique, participants are randomly chosen from a bigger group of people who have been purposively sampled. For instance, the researcher could purposefully choose a group of volunteers thought to be authorities on a specific subject and then randomly choose a subset of these persons to participate in the study. Using random purposive sampling, the researcher may concentrate on a particular subset of people most pertinent to the study issue while ensuring that the sample is representative of the population being researched (Barrett and Twycross, 2018; Lopez and Whitehead, 2013; Omona, 2013)

Methods for assuring the validity and rigour of qualitative educational research

Rigour and validity are crucial in qualitative educational research because they guarantee that the conclusions are reliable, correct, and pertinent. Following are some typical methods for ensuring validity and rigour in qualitative educational research:

1. **Triangulation** entails validating the results using several data sources, techniques, and researchers. For instance, the researcher could cross-check the findings using other data sources, including interviews, observations, and document analysis. Alternatively, They might ask several researchers to evaluate the same data to ensure consistent results independently Daniel, 2019; Cypress, 2017.
2. **Member checking** entails discussing the results with the participants and soliciting their comments or clarifications. The results are reliable and accurately represent the viewpoints and experiences of the participants, thanks to member verification (Santos et al., 2020).
3. **Peer debriefing:** To get feedback and ensure the study is reliable and reputable, colleagues or other professionals assess the research methodology and results.
4. **Reflexivity** entails considering the researcher's viewpoint and prejudices and how they could have affected the study procedure and conclusions. Reflexivity ensures the researcher is conscious of their positionality and has taken precautions to reduce the likelihood of bias.
5. **Saturation:** This is gathering data until no fresh themes or conclusions show that the material has been thoroughly examined. Saturation ensures the results are complete and accurately reflect the depth and complexity of the data.
6. **Thorough description:** This entails thoroughly explaining the research's setting, procedures, and outcomes. A thorough description makes the study more transparent and allows readers to judge the results' reliability. (Singh et al., 2021; Johnson et al., 2020).

The applications of qualitative Methods in educational research in Nigeria

1. **Educating policymakers and practitioners:** The opinions, experiences, and needs of teachers, students, and other stakeholders in the Nigerian educational system can be better understood via qualitative research. This knowledge may guide policy choices and instructional approaches at numerous levels, from the classroom to the national level (Dambo et al., 2022).
2. **Handling educational challenges:** Qualitative research may assist in identifying and resolving issues in the Nigerian education sector, such as insufficient financing, a lack of qualified teachers, and inadequate facilities. Policymakers and educators may collaborate to provide practical answers if they know the viewpoints and experiences of individuals impacted by these issues (Alordiah et al., 2022; Ugoma et al., 2021).
3. **Enhancing teaching and learning:** By offering insights into successful teaching methods, variables affecting student engagement and accomplishment, and strategies to enhance student learning, qualitative research can assist in improving teaching and learning in Nigeria (Garbo et al., 2020).
4. **Improving teacher preparation and professional growth:** Qualitative research may help create efficient programs for teacher preparation and development that cater to the requirements of teachers in Nigeria. These programs may be designed to better assist teachers'

continuing learning and progress by considering their experiences and requirements (Ifinedo and Kankaanranta, 2021).

5. **Improving educational equality and inclusion:** Issues with educational equity and inclusion in Nigeria, such as gender discrepancies, discrimination, and the marginalisation of particular groups, may be found and addressed using qualitative research. Policymakers and educators may strive to create policies and practices that promote equality and inclusion by being aware of various groups' experiences and viewpoints.
6. **Aiding in curriculum development:** Qualitative research can shed light on the requirements and viewpoints of educators, students, and other participants in creating curricula and teaching aids. The experiences and requirements of these groups may be understood by curriculum designers, who can create successful, relevant, and appealing materials for Nigerian students.
7. **Developing research capacity:** In Nigeria's education sector, qualitative research can aid in developing research ability. Researchers may improve the quality and quantity of field research by receiving training in qualitative research techniques from educators and policymakers, resulting in more informed practice and policy (Alordiah et al., 2021).
8. **Doing cross-cultural research:** By examining the experiences and viewpoints of people from various cultural backgrounds, qualitative research may promote cross-cultural discussion and understanding. Researchers may aid in bridging cultural gaps and fostering understanding by doing research that respects all cultures.
9. **Increasing student engagement and participation:** In the Nigerian educational system, qualitative research can aid in increasing student involvement and engagement. Teachers and politicians may build learning environments that are more relevant and engaging for Nigerian students by listening to their opinions and involving them in decision-making (Okolie et al., 2021).
10. **Establishing a foundation for future study:** Qualitative research can serve as a foundation for future investigations into the Nigerian education system. Qualitative research can direct future research efforts and drive the formulation of research agendas by identifying gaps and opportunities for additional investigation.

A model for the future path of qualitative educational research in Nigeria

Figure 1: Model for the future path of qualitative educational research in Nigeria

S/N	Future direction	Actions to take
1	Greater emphasis on technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine how digital tools affect student engagement, academic performance, and access to education. • Examine how social media and online learning platforms affect teaching and learning. • Use qualitative methods to understand better the opportunities and challenges that technology in the education sector presents.
2	Emphasis on interdisciplinarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage collaboration and exchange between researchers from various disciplines. • Use interdisciplinary approaches to understand complex educational issues and challenges better. • Draw on insights and perspectives from other fields, such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology.

3	Emphasis on equity and social justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay attention to gender, disability, socioeconomic status, and other issues affecting access to high-quality education. • Employ qualitative research techniques to examine the experiences and viewpoints of marginalised and underrepresented groups in the education sector. • Work to advance more inclusive and equitable education systems in Nigeria.
4	Engagement with policy and practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with policymakers and practitioners to create more responsive and effective educational policies and practices. • Use qualitative research to guide policy choices and program creation in the education sector. • Encourage communication and exchange between researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to advance evidence-based policy and practice.
5	Use of mixed methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage communication and exchange between researchers using various methodologies to foster cross-methodological collaboration. • Combine qualitative and quantitative research to provide a more thorough understanding of educational issues. • Investigate the potential of mixed methods approaches to better understand complex educational issues and challenges.
6	Incorporation of Indigenous knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives in educational research. • Use qualitative methods to understand better how Indigenous knowledge can inform educational practice and policy. • Foster collaboration and exchange between Indigenous communities and researchers to promote culturally responsive educational systems in Nigeria.

Source: The Authors

Several variables, such as new developments in education, technological modifications, and shifting social and political situations, are expected to impact the future course of qualitative educational research in Nigeria. We have presented some potential future avenues for qualitative educational research in Nigeria in Table 1. Various elements, including technology, multidisciplinary approaches, equity and social justice, engagement with policy and practice, mixed techniques, and inclusion of Indigenous knowledge, will likely determine the future path of qualitative educational research in Nigeria. Qualitative researchers in Nigeria may contribute to creating more adaptive and successful educational systems for all students by continuing to develop and investigate novel techniques. We also provided the actions the education researchers would take to work in line with the various future directions provided. It was recommended that educational researchers should carry out the actions provided in this model. These actions are keys to the future directions of qualitative educational research.

Conclusion

This paper presented qualitative methods as a valuable tool for educational researchers. This paper provides the qualitative research process, its relevance to the field of education, and the

way to have more credible outcomes from qualitative research. A model for the future road map for qualitative education research was also provided to foster educational researchers' use of qualitative research.

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