



## Introductory Qualitative Research in Psychology by Carla Willig: A Book Review

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**Abstract** – In their evaluation of Carla Willig's book, *Introductory Qualitative Research in Psychology* (2nd ed.), the writers of this paper founded that the skills that readers will learn from this book will help them to write a good research project and confidently use qualitative research methods. It goes beyond only instructing students on how to carry out qualitative academic research. It can also be modified for a variety of assignments that students will run into in their academic lives. The second edition of Carla Willig's book *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology* from 2008 gives beginning researchers a firm grounding in the theories that underpin qualitative research, the epistemology that guides qualitative research, and the use of six qualitative methodologies in psychology research.

**Keywords:** Research Project, Qualitative Research, Psychology, Academic Research.

### BOOK WRITER BIOGRAPHY:

Psychology professor Carla Willig teaches at City University of London. She has written several articles about the philosophy and application of qualitative research methods. She co-edited the *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology* and is the author of *Qualitative Interpretation and Analysis in Psychology*.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

There are different types of qualitative research methods including diary accounts, in-depth interviews, documents, focus groups, case study research, and ethnography. The second edition of Carla Willig's book *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology* from 2008 gives beginning researchers a firm grounding in the theories that underpin qualitative research, the epistemology that guides qualitative research, and the use of six qualitative methodologies in psychology research. In the first chapter's introduction, Willig shares a personal narrative of how her own perspective on research has changed from one of mechanical "recipes" (i.e., "how to apply the proper approaches to the subject matter") to one of creative "adventure" (how-can-I-find-out?). Willig establishes the foundation by providing a concise yet detailed explanation of theoretical ideas like epistemology, positivism, empiricism, and hypothetical-deductivism, as well as how these viewpoints affect the way we think, before the book digs into the six various approaches. She discusses how methods vary in terms of their position on epistemology, reflexivity, and critical linguistic awareness. She also examines generalizability concerns, validity issues, and reliability issues in qualitative research.

Carla Willig then discusses the practical facets of formulating the qualitative research topic and choosing the best approach. One of the most important passages in the book is "Choosing the 'correct method'" on



page 22. In this part, Carla Willig gives the reader instructions on how to choose an analysis approach that is appropriate for the research issue after identifying the research topic. She emphasizes further that data should never be gathered by researchers without first considering how the data will be examined. These practical elements help the reader comprehend the ideas as they relate to the creation of their own study. Moreover, examples of how to discover and group themes in phenomenological research are provided, as well as an application of the six stages of Social constructionist Discourse Analysis to an interview excerpt.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The choice of research methodology is repeatedly referred to as "the way to the goal" in the book. Carla Willig addresses the following three questions for each methodology to highlight the significance of choosing a methodology based on the agreement between the research question and the methodology's epistemological roots:

- What kind of knowledge is intended to be produced by the methodology?
- What kinds of suppositions about the outside world does the technique make? (that is, from an ontological perspective)
- How is the researcher's position in the research process conceptualized by the methodology (respective task)?

Carla Willig does a great job of summarizing the strategy by responding to these three epistemological questions at the end of each chapter. This also gives the reader a chance to exercise their own analysis of these factors when choosing the best way.

The reader is carefully led through the fundamentals of qualitative research, design principles, particular procedures, and eventually real-world applications of qualitative research in Carla Willig's introductory and academic book. Each chapter also includes a useful "how-to" manual for formatting the research report according to the chosen approach. Carla Willig offers advice on the structure and essential elements of the qualitative study given the latitude given to qualitative researchers in the manner they write up their work.

The six methods were mentioned by Carla in her book: (a) Grounded Theory, (b) Phenomenology, (c) Case Study, (d) Discursive Psychology, (e) Foucauldian Discourse Analysis, and (f) Narrative Psychology/Memory Work, and they are described throughout the book.

In each chapter, Carla Willig introduces the approach, explains the steps taken for data collecting and analysis, and goes over its benefits and drawbacks, including any restrictions on its application. In using a case study approach, she also addresses certain epistemological challenges including the use of triangulation and generalizability. She also analyzes ethical issues, the advantages of each approach, how frequently they are used in psychological study, in addition to these constructs.

Carla Willig's structure within and between chapters makes it easier to understand the ideas because they build on one another. Her decision to arrange the chapters on discursive psychology and discourse analysis after ideas like phenomenology helps the reader first grasp the notion that perceptions create phenomena before moving on to more complex approaches that take into account the function of language in establishing subject positions and managing "stake" in social interactions.



Carla Willig examines how qualitative research is currently assessed in the field in the last chapter and presents a set of standards by which "excellent" qualitative research is judged. They include principles that recognize both the scientific rigor and distinctive qualities of qualitative research, as well as criteria developed by Henwood and Pidgeon (1992) and Elliott, Fischer, and Rennie (1999) (creativity and idiosyncrasy). The significance of fit, the integration of theory, reflexivity, offering credibility checks, coherence, documentation, theoretical sampling and negative case analysis, sensitivity to negotiated realities, and transferability are a few examples of these. By including these sets of standards, student researchers can use them as a checklist to evaluate the scientific worth of their qualitative study in the future.

Carla Willig does a fantastic job in this chapter of reminding the reader of the fundamental design principles discussed in Chapter 2 and hammers home the point that a high quality research study is one in which the goals and the kind of knowledge it set out to produce were clear. Also, the chosen methods of data collection and analysis are clearly in line with the suggested goals, and the epistemological foundation of the research methodology must be obvious in order to assess the study's contribution. This chapter also has a table (Figure 2, p. 155) that plots each of the six approaches on a continuum between the two opposing viewpoints of radical relativism and naive realism. This gives the reader a fantastic visual representation of the techniques. This gives the reader a clear visual representation of the approaches and how they relate to the fundamental ideas of realism and relativism that are emphasized throughout the text.

Although Carla Willig's dedication to qualitative research is clear, she is able to communicate current criticisms of the field, both inside and outside of it, to the reader in a manner that appears objective. She successfully addresses issues that are frequently faced during the data collection and analysis processes. Each chapter effectively addresses ethical issues in relation to approach and method (e.g., "the sensitive and ethical rapport between the interviewer and interviewee (p. 25)" in the semi-structured interview) (i.e., confidentiality issues surrounding case study research).

Willig presents real-world examples in every chapter to help readers understand the concepts and put them into context. Negotiating commitment and involvement in the nurse-patient relationship: An example from the chapter on grounded theory (p. 42) provided a clear and pertinent application of ideas previously covered in the chapter. It also successfully illustrated how the focus of a grounded theory study can change significantly over the course of a study. Where Carla Willig does not provide examples (e.g., Repertory Polyclinics in research on case studies, p. 76), she offers directions on how to find the information.

Carla Willig's writing approach allows the reader to readily understand what may otherwise be tough or complex subjects, and it also acts as a "how-to" manual for less experienced researchers. Her capacity to understand the needs of the student is astounding, despite her years of experience in the field of qualitative research. Her chapters on discursive psychology discourse analysis made this particularly clear. Despite the inherent complexity of these two techniques, and despite her significant knowledge in this field, she was able to clearly describe the differences between them on a basic level.

As a relative "starter" in the subject of descriptive study myself, I never once felt that the book's content was beyond my capacity to comprehend. Moreover, Willig maintains the material's arrangement across each chapter, making it a reference that is simple to find.

### 3. TEXTUAL ADDITIONS AND FEATURES



At the end of each chapter, Carla Willig's book includes a series of "interactive tasks" to help readers better understand the concepts and methodological techniques. These exercises range from tasks that enable the reader to apply qualitative ideas (e.g., adopt a phenomenological mindset while engaging in daily activities) to practicing analysis techniques (i.e., coding a newspaper article line-by-line). She also gives three research reports from third-year psychology undergraduate students, which show how the earlier-described techniques are used. These samples include a number of annotations that the author has added to emphasize particular ideas. I discovered these examples to be understandable and to successfully reinforce the application of the concepts learnt from the viewpoint of a learner.

#### 4. WEAKNESSES OF THE BOOK

Step VIII of Carla Willig's analysis only mentioned one chapter (chapter 17). He did, however, also speak to chapter 18, which deals with study technique and evaluation. I believe that a lack of editing and chapter structure under each step may be the cause of missing the crucial chapter under the step he included. It would be best to review this formatting before the author and publisher publish the final version.

Chapters one and two were left out, and Carla Willig categorized them under stages, just as he did for the other chapters in his book. He didn't explain why he didn't include those chapters in any organizational steps. Based on comments from his students, Carla Willig revised the second version of his book. While receiving student feedback is crucial, leveraging students' view.

Carla Willig prohibited students from engaging in any physical activity or practical activity. He emphasized that this book was mainly geared at those just starting out in research activities. No chapter of his book mentions a single workout. I don't believe that his pupils or readers will be helped by the brief summaries provided in each chapter of his book to understand the chapter's main points. We noted Carla Willig cited a few sources in his writing. However supporting key elements from other study books might raise the caliber of this publication.

She pointed out that only qualitative research methods were highlighted in this work. Nonetheless, he concentrated less on qualitative research and more on the theoretical facets of the research approach.

There are no activities that could encourage students to forecast what they would learn from reading the topics covered and help them assess their prior knowledge and ideas about the issues covered in each chapter. Many tables and other graphics were utilized in this book, however they were difficult to read and comprehend.

#### 5. STRENGTHS OF THE BOOK

The book was released by McGraw–Hill Education, a prominent publisher on a global scale. This affects how readers or students perceive quality psychologically. The diagram on the cover page illustrates certain steps and levels, which go along with the book's title and perfectly match the design of the cover page: An outline for novices. In this book, Carla Willig included chapter objectives under each. Since this book is written for beginners, it is crucial to understand the goals of each chapter in order to think clearly about its message within the context of the chapter. Under each chapter of each phase, he provided a kind of summary and invited readers to consider it. The topics progress from straightforward to intricate ideas, which stimulate readers with no prior expertise.



The book's reflection questions might aid pupils in solidifying their understanding. For improved visual learning and analysis, the chapters include graphics and tables. For a balanced and thorough foundation in research technique, it focuses on the development of research abilities by offering applicable examples from both qualitative and quantitative research. It is especially helpful for beginning researchers like the ones who will read this book to compare and contrast topics from quantitative and qualitative research in order to assist readers grasp the distinctions and similarities between the two types of research.

From developing a research problem to planning, sampling, creating a research proposal, gathering and processing data, and putting up a report, Carla Willig offers a great introduction to research methodology as well as a strong foundation for teaching strategies. The way he divided the book into sections and chapters demonstrates how meticulously he planned it for his students. He put related chapters or ideas together in one move. The learners at any level can readily understand the language coherence and overall flow of the topic from paragraph to paragraph while reading this book.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

In this book review, we reach the conclusion that any author of a book is encouraged to think carefully about the arguments and actions required to be included in his or her new versions. The third edition of the author's book differs significantly from the other two versions in one significant way. Nonetheless, the new version of the book typically includes updated issues on the agenda about the book's contents in light of the evolving situation. The book attempted to group related ideas under one stage and was designated as a chapter. Even though categorizing the book as a series of phases looks intriguing, giving 18 chapters to this research book for beginners caused some reader and learner confusion. Although the author made an effort, the statistical analysis found in other study publications was favored for its practicality.

Although the author made an effort to provide some statistical analysis, the statistical analysis found in other research works was favored for its applicability.

Overall, this book offers thorough instruction to beginning researchers on the nature and methods of performing quantitative and qualitative research. Due to its format and content, which contains carefully considered learning objectives, reflection tasks, and exercises; it may be used as an excellent introductory textbook on research technique in a variety of subjects. Readers would benefit from more details on several traditional sources for quantitative and qualitative research methodology.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following a thorough review, we identified the following problems that need to be fixed or altered: If the book and the text in the textbook have identical names or titles, it is urged that the content be improved. Every step needs to be updated and rearranged. Problems like those in step VIII of this book, for instance, should be resolved. I believed that missing the crucial chapter under the step he included might be due to editing and organization mistakes, but these should be reviewed again before the author and publisher make the final publishing. Even book publishers should take these difficulties into account when producing and publishing a book.

For chapters one and two, a title or explanations as to why a title was omitted should be provided; why were these chapters not divided under steps as he did for other chapters in his book? He didn't explain why he didn't include their chapters in any organization under any steps. It is important to include the suggestions



and critiques of prominent teachers as well as student feedback. While receiving student comments is crucial, treating all students equally as editors has a negative impact on the book's quality. Since this book focuses more on research activities for beginners, students should be given practical exercises or activities to encourage their ability to work. Every crucial action in his book should take into account the specifics of the executive summaries and major themes in each chapter.

It would be wise to cite related papers and evaluate them against other research publications. Important information from many study books would be obtained as a result, potentially raising the book's quality. Special consideration should be given to qualitative research methodologies, and significant analysis should be offered for the qualitative portion of typical data analysis tools. This would improve public opinion of the book. Each chapter should begin with an introduction that can aid students in assessing their existing knowledge and concepts on the themes included in that chapter and inspire them to forecast what they will learn from reading the topics covered.

## 8. FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to set the way for future qualitative research, contributors to the qualitative analysis provide a brief analysis of *Introductory Qualitative Research in Psychology* by Carla Willig: A Book Review. Each in-depth qualitative study on *Introductory Qualitative Research in Psychology* by Carla Willig: A Book Review identifies the weakness and strengths, draws out the main intellectual boundaries of the subject, and outlines the present and future research objectives and how they will be approached. For new researchers, the current study offers a clear and comprehensive evaluation of the qualitative *Introductory Qualitative Research in Psychology* by Carla Willig: A Book Review investigations. A review of the *Introductory Qualitative Research in Psychology* by Carla Willig: A Book Review also reveals gaps in the knowledge of the study implications for practices in Qualitative Research.

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## 10. AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors equally contributed to the drafting of the manuscript. Book review was carried out by Gemechu Tufa. Weakness and strengths analysis of book was done Dr. Shashi Kant. Draft Preparation was written Gemechu Nemera Dinber. . All authors have read and approved the final draft of the manuscript.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest. The authors have no competing interests to declare relevant to this article's content. This is the origin book review done by research scholar Gemechu Tufa under the guidance of advisor Dr. Shashi Kant from his PhD study on book review qualitative evaluations.

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