

Obstacles Facing the Use of Qualitative Research and Suggestions to Overcome Them "Bibliometric Study"

This study aimed to investigate the obstacles to the use of qualitative research in the light of the previous studies and the proposals to overcome them. (16) research studies were analyzed and evaluated critically, within a ten-year period between (2011-2021). The study revealed a number of obstacles to the use of qualitative research, which the study classified into six axes: obstacles related to the administrative aspect, obstacles related to the university professor, obstacles related to the graduate student, obstacles related to the academic course, obstacles related to the nature of qualitative research itself, and obstacles related to the environment and the prevailing educational research culture. The study also reached several proposals to overcome the obstacles to the use of qualitative research, the most prominent of which are the following: spreading the culture of the qualitative curriculum, adoption of qualitative research ideas by faculty members and assigning students to this type of research, in addition to including qualitative research courses within postgraduate programs.

Keywords: qualitative research, obstacles, suggestions

Introduction

The use of scientific research is an indicator of the renaissance of nations since it has become a significant part of decision-making and problem-solving in various fields of human knowledge. It contributes to the development of society, its human resources and its development plans. For instance, economic and social development are effective and fruitful if they are based on scientific results stemming from research that is grounded on a sound methodology and a deep understanding of scientific research methodology, steps, tools and procedures (Al-Qahtani, 2017). In recent years, scientific research has developed and its methodologies have diversified providing researchers with various fields to work in accordance with their goals and orientations. Scientific research methods include two basic directions: quantitative research and qualitative research; both directions seek to access scientific knowledge.

In the twenties of the last century, quantitative research dominated scientific research in the fields of humanities and social sciences depending on the field's quantitative data and statistical analysis of this data. Quantitative approach methods spread widely in a way suggesting that those who do not deploy these complex methods are not applying proper methods of scientific research. On the other hand, qualitative research has appeared in the last quarter of the twentieth century as a number of scholars started to criticize the use of statistical quantitative research and identified its limitations as it only focuses on the quantitative side of the data. Consequently, there were calls to turn to the qualitative side of the data while others called to mix quantitative research and qualitative research in order to benefit from the advantages of

1 both approaches resulting in what is known as the mixed research method (Al-
2 Moosa, 2018).

3 The trend towards qualitative research has grown, especially in the
4 educational field, as a result of diminishing satisfaction with the quantitative
5 approach when studying educational and social problems, particularly where
6 the use quantitative analysis is not suitable. Moreover, qualitative research
7 enables the researcher to obtain direct knowledge from the social and
8 educational reality that the study deals with and it provides a deep view of
9 teaching and learning issues as well as a better understanding of the nature of
10 educational problems in a number of natural contexts (Anderson, 2010). It also
11 offers more accurate results and interpretations due to its adoption of the
12 principle of comprehensiveness in relation to the theoretical construction of the
13 phenomenon under scrutiny contributing to reach results that may lead to
14 solutions of these issues and problems (Al-Qahtani, 2020).

15 16 17 **The Concept of Qualitative Research** 18

19 Qualitative research method represents a major methodology in social
20 research aiming to apply qualitative rather than quantitative research methods
21 in order to reach the maximum possible degree of understanding of the studied
22 social phenomenon through exploring it in details, identifying its potential
23 dimensions and the factors affecting its continuity and development. This is
24 supposed to be done in the context of the phenomenon and without the
25 researcher taking any action that would modify its course or working in a
26 manner contrary to the truth or adopting a biased and non-objective vision
27 (Muhammad, 2015, p. 142). Al-Jarrah (2014, p. 125) defines the qualitative
28 method as “a type of research that offers an in-depth understanding and
29 comprehensive description of the human phenomenon by which researchers
30 usually provide an in-depth understanding and comprehensive explanation of
31 the phenomenon under study. Qualitative research requires that the researcher
32 does not interpret the data and the results they reach by numerical and
33 statistical methods, but rather by using natural language vocabulary, narrative
34 style and explanatory sentences (Muhammad, 2020)

35 Furthermore, (Creswell, 2007, p15) states that qualitative method is an
36 investigation process based on distinct traditions of scientific research
37 methodology that is based on a social or human problem and the researcher
38 builds a complex and comprehensive picture of it, analyzes the words and
39 prepares a detailed report stating the views of counselors and then conducts a
40 study on the real situation.” Denzin & Lincoln (2011, p 3) defines it as “the
41 study of phenomena in their natural state where the researcher collects data
42 focusing on every detail in order to provide an adequate description and
43 explanation of the studied problem”.

44 Researchers who use qualitative method collect data, words or images,
45 then analyze them in an inductive manner focusing on the meanings stated by
46 the participants and describe the process in a convincing and expressive

1 language. Researchers in the qualitative field study things in their natural
2 situations and try to form a meaning or interpretation of phenomena in the light
3 of the meanings that people give to these phenomena. They use various tools
4 such as case studies, personal experience, examination of thoughts, feelings,
5 motives, life history, interview, observation, historical method, interaction and
6 documented texts (Al-Harbi, 2021).

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Qualitative Research Designations

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11 Since the rise of the qualitative method in the field of scientific research, it
12 has taken a number of names intending to express a new philosophy that uses
13 different methods and tools that were not used or accepted earlier. Qualitative
14 Research is the most circulated term and it is called qualitative because it is
15 concerned with describing the reality precisely as it is and that indications and
16 evidence are deduced from the events witnessed in their places. It is also called
17 interpretive research method as it goes beyond description to analysis and
18 interpretation; giving meaning to data by linking them together, exploring them
19 from different angles and discovering relationships between them through
20 explanatory research. Moreover, it is called ethnographic or field research,
21 especially in relation to anthropology and field work. Thematic Research is
22 another term referring to the qualitative research when dealing with a main
23 phenomenon that expresses a problem and then uses its tools to analyze it and
24 reveal the relationships between the different variables included in the
25 phenomenon under study, without neglecting other related phenomena.
26 Therefore, it is concerned with studying a phenomenon and how it is
27 influenced by other phenomena.

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29 In addition, contextual research is another term describing qualitative
30 method when studying a phenomenon or a problem in a specific context where
31 the environment, interactions, external indicators, cultural, scientific and
32 societal background are evident and which have their characteristics in the
33 system in which the problem is being studied as well as other systems of
34 society. When qualitative research studies a phenomenon or a problem as it is
35 in reality and as it occurs in nature without artificial interactions and without
36 distinguishing one variable from another, it is named naturalistic research.
37 Finally, it is called constructive research when analyzing and studying a
38 phenomenon that depends mostly on moving from one point to another. In this
39 case; with the compilation of the results of the different points, more general
40 results are reached and then they are compared to the overall study of the
41 phenomenon in its philosophical framework in order to obtain accurate results
(Al-Moosa, 2018).

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Common Designs for Qualitative Research Methodologies:

Creswell (2007) identifies five common designs for qualitative research in relation to fundamental differences of the goals of qualitative methodologies. They are the most common and widely used methods in the educational field. They are as follow:

1. *Case Study*: It aims to identify the characteristics of the person, group, organization or events on which the research is conducted to explore the studied problem.
2. *Ethnography*: It is concerned with defining the culture of a group of people and their views in their natural context in relation to the studied problem.
3. *Narrative Inquiry*: It presents the opinions of the participants about the studied problem and their understanding and experiences by studying stories from their lives in relation to the studied problem.
4. *Phenomenological Study*: It focuses on how the participants face the studied problem and deal with it.
5. *Grounded Theory*: It focuses on identifying the theory that can be reached inductively about the studied problem using the data collected from its context.

Characteristics of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is characterized by a number of characteristics ensuring its significance by itself and at the same time distinguishes it from quantitative research. These characteristics were referred to by a group of researchers including: Al-Moosa, (2018), Al-Qahtani, (2017) and Al-Jarrah, (2014) and they can be summarized as follows:

- Qualitative research explores social phenomena in their natural conditions and contexts and uses its information directly from this natural situation. Naturalness is an essential feature of qualitative research that many of its supporters emphasize.
- It is mainly concerned with the meanings related to how to make people's lives and experiences meaningful as it does not seek to form a partial meaning or extracted from its context such as the relationship between two variables or the effect of a variable on another, however it seeks to understand the meanings that individuals establish to participate in their social life and to form more comprehensive and deeper meanings on the topic of research.
- Researchers who use qualitative research as the main tool for collecting and analyzing data; they observe, participate, record and then analyze and interpret in order to access the meanings of the studied phenomenon.

- 1 • Subjectivity: as a researcher himself is engaged in the research:
2 gathering and analyzing information, so that it is difficult for him to
3 separate from the studied phenomenon in order to control his biases that
4 may interfere in his research procedures. Therefore, the concept of
5 reflexivity has appeared in relation to qualitative research to confirm
6 the researcher's awareness of himself, his political and cultural motives
7 and perspective from which he proceeds.
- 8 • The absence of prior beliefs and hypotheses for the questions that lead
9 the research. The aim of qualitative research is not to reach theoretical
10 generalizations or to issue judgments and come up with
11 recommendations, but rather to describe and interpret the topic under
12 scrutiny in its cultural, spatial, psychological and social framework.
- 13 • The researcher starts with designing a flexible plan that does not
14 literally restrict him, however he may develop and change the research
15 plan in light of the development of the work and the variables that he
16 obtains.
- 17 • Paying attention to the process and not just the product. The main goal
18 of qualitative research is to understand the behavior and feelings of the
19 respondents and not just to study the phenomenon by subtracting it
20 from its natural context, so how do students do something is as
21 important as the work itself.
- 22 • Totality and complexity as the research begins with the assumption that
23 a social situation to be studied is unique and complex and it investigates
24 the phenomenon on a regular basis as an integrated whole.
- 25 • Qualitative research is an interactive research that requires a long time
26 to observe, interview and record information as it occurs in its form and
27 in its natural situation. It also focuses on describing the context without
28 the researcher trying to impose his system or beliefs on the research
29 situation.
- 30 • Its methodology and objectives differ from other researches. In terms of
31 methodology, it requires the researcher to live the process of the
32 research as it requires certain mechanisms for data collection such as
33 recording daily observations, conducting interviews with members of
34 the research sample and analyzing relevant documents and diaries.
- 35 • It is characterized by spontaneity such as openness to the variables that
36 appear as a result of unstructured interviews or unregulated observation,
37 so the researcher receives different answers and observations from the
38 participants.
- 39 • It is also characterized by research flexibility when dealing with a
40 phenomenon as researchers rarely develop a detailed design for all
41 aspects of the research before starting the study and the design changes
42 whenever the study becomes apparent. Accordingly, researchers modify
43 their procedures and methods according to the data they collect.
- 44 • There are many tools that are used to collect data requiring the
45 researcher to carefully review the collected data, understand it and
46 realize its different contents and organize it into categories or topics in

- 1 order to obtain reliable results that help to understand the studied
2 problem.
- 3 • Inductive thinking: starting with the data collected from observation,
4 participation and coexistence with reality as it is and then identifying
5 patterns to be interpreted and analyzed to find relationships aiming to
6 infer initial hypotheses and finally reaching theories that can explain the
7 studied phenomenon.
 - 8 • Researchers using qualitative method need a degree of sensitivity that
9 enables them to feel the general atmosphere and the interactions within
10 the field of study. This requires the ability to collect data from various
11 sources and link it to the cultural and social context and then convert it
12 into meanings and connotations related to the overall subject of the
13 study.
 - 14 • Researchers also need to establish a distinguished social relationship
15 with the respondents and to have the ability to gain their trust and
16 cooperation by using less formal tools such as observation,
17 participation, coexistence and integration into the life of the groups they
18 study.

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20 In light of the above, the researcher believes that the characteristics of
21 qualitative research do not always indicate that it the best, but it may be the
22 best in certain situations depending on the nature and objectives of the study.

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25 **Justifications for Applying Qualitative Research:**

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27 There are many justifications behind the call for the use of qualitative
28 research in education. Some are related to the nature of the educational and
29 human phenomenon and some of them are related to the nature of the research
30 and the efficiency of its tools to provide a more accurate and detailed vision of
31 that phenomenon. These justifications are as follows (Al-Moosa, 2018):

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- 33 • The nature of the studied phenomenon: the type of variables and the
34 nature of the questions posed by the researcher as well as the
35 knowledge of the researcher related to the investigated phenomenon or
36 problem assist to determine the appropriate approach of research. If the
37 aim of the study is to reveal precise and deep meanings of the subject or
38 if the topic is social or educational and characterized by its sensitivity
39 and emotional depth, then it is preferable to use the qualitative
40 approach.
- 41 • The degree of concept maturity: referring to the amount of knowledge
42 available about this concept or the degree to which it has been studied.
43 If studying previous literature has proven that there are few available
44 studies on the subject, this shows that it has not been studied
45 sufficiently in away allowing the use of the quantitative method in the
46 study. In other cases, there may be a reasonable amount of previous

1 studies on a particular topic, but when analyzing the content of these
 2 studies it becomes clear to the researcher that most of them were built
 3 on unverified assumptions or they are biased assumptions and here the
 4 qualitative approach is adopted in the study.

- 5 • Difficulties related to the study's topic or its population: for example,
 6 if the study population is limited, elderly or children, it is better to use
 7 qualitative research in the study (Al-Khayyat, 2010, p. 70).

10 **Obstacles Facing the Use of Qualitative Approach**

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 12 There are a number of obstacles that limit the use of the qualitative
 13 approach and they are diverse and multifaceted. Some of these obstacles are
 14 related to the misunderstanding of this kind of research and the systematic bias
 15 towards the quantitative approach at the expense of qualitative research. Others
 16 are related to the nature of the qualitative approach and its distinctive
 17 characteristics and the time that it consumes compared to the quantitative
 18 approach. Other obstacles are related to intellectual schools of methodology
 19 and philosophy of science and their implications which create a philosophical
 20 and methodological conflict causing researchers to hesitate to conduct
 21 qualitative studies. On the other hand, the factors associated with preparing and
 22 training researchers have a major role hindering the conduct of qualitative
 23 research.

24 A number of studies have focused on exploring the challenges and
 25 obstacles when using the qualitative research methods. For instance, a study by
 26 Afshar & Hafez, (2021) investigates the challenges facing postgraduate
 27 students of English as a foreign language when conducting qualitative research
 28 and the suggested solutions. The study used the interview. It concludes that the
 29 most important challenges facing postgraduate students when conducting
 30 qualitative research are: difficulty of analyzing data, the focus of educational
 31 systems and courses on quantitative research methods and lack of training
 32 offered in regard to qualitative research.

33 Another study was carried out by Al-Harbi (2021) aiming to explore the
 34 obstacles hindering the use of qualitative research related to sociology. The
 35 study used two tools: the interview and the questionnaire and the questionnaire
 36 included two areas: the skills and personal obstacles and the obstacles related
 37 to the characteristics of the qualitative approach. The study reveals a number of
 38 results; most notably: that there is a significant impact of the philosophy of the
 39 positivist school on sociology in general and on many specialists in sociology
 40 and that this influence is still continuing at a large scale. This was reflected by
 41 the faculty's members and researchers as they were trained to use the
 42 quantitative approach creating an academic culture that promotes the use of the
 43 quantitative approach and ignores the qualitative approach, not only in the field
 44 of research and scientific studies, but also excludes this approach from the
 45 study plans of academic programs.

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1 In addition, Al-Sayed's study (2021) explores the reasons for the absence
2 of Arabic studies using qualitative approach when investigating teaching and
3 learning mathematics. The study identifies various reasons for this absence and
4 classifies these reasons into three categories. First, reasons related to the nature
5 of qualitative research such as that the qualitative research consumes long time
6 and high cost to collect data and the difficulty of conducting qualitative
7 research since it requires high skills and the difficulty of generalizing the
8 results due to the small size of the sample. Second, reasons related to the
9 prevailing educational research environment and culture including: the bias
10 towards quantitative research at the expense of qualitative research, scarcity of
11 sources and references related to qualitative research techniques and
12 methodologies and lack of educational research and studies that deployed
13 qualitative research methods and designs. Third, reasons related to the
14 researcher such as the researcher's belief that it is difficult to conduct
15 qualitative research and the lack of required skills to carry out qualitative
16 research.

17 Al-Qahtani's study (2020) discloses the most important obstacles facing
18 researchers and faculty members at the College of Education, King Saud
19 University, when applying qualitative research in the educational field. The
20 study used a questionnaire that included (30) items representing obstacles
21 hindering the application of qualitative research. The results show that the
22 sample agreed that most important obstacles are: psychological, training, skills
23 and the fieldwork.

24 Moreover, Muhammad's study (2020) used the interview to elicit the
25 opinions of a group of faculty members in the Egyptian universities in order to
26 identify the difficulties they face when conducting qualitative research in the
27 field of pedagogy as well as the ways they see suitable to overcome them. The
28 study concludes that there are many obstacles that prevent the conduct of
29 qualitative research in the field of education in general and the field of
30 pedagogy in particular. These obstacles include poor preparation and lack of
31 training and workshops offered to postgraduate students on how to conduct
32 qualitative research, their preference for repeating the methodologies they are
33 accustomed to, fear of how to document the data of qualitative research, the
34 fact that qualitative research needs long time to prepare and analyze its data
35 and lack of interest in the Department of Fundamentals of Education in holding
36 scientific conferences and seminars on qualitative research.

37 A study by Al-Zaidi (2019) also identifies the obstacles facing the use of
38 the qualitative approach in educational management and leadership research
39 from the point of view of faculty members in Saudi universities. The study
40 employed a questionnaire that included 20 items representing obstacles to the
41 use of the qualitative approach. It determines that the most prominent obstacles
42 are: lack of training courses on the qualitative approach, lack of focus of
43 postgraduate programs on qualitative approach compared to the quantitative
44 approach, the resistance of change among some faculty members to modern
45 approaches of educational research, lack of references translated into Arabic on

1 the methods of qualitative research and lack of conviction of the importance of
2 the qualitative approach in educational research.

3 Al-Arini's study (2019) recognizes the difficulties of using qualitative
4 research in education from the point of view of postgraduate students in the
5 Department of Education at the Islamic University of Al-Madinah. The study
6 used a questionnaire that covered four areas: obstacles related to students,
7 obstacles related to faculty members, obstacles related to academic courses and
8 obstacles related to administrative aspect. The study highlights a number of
9 obstacles to qualitative research, most notably: lack of access to research that
10 used the qualitative approach, lack of encouragement of faculty members in
11 educational departments to use qualitative research, the academic courses do
12 not encompass sufficient training on how to conduct qualitative research and
13 lack of knowledge of members of the scientific councils concerned with
14 approving this type of research.

15 A study by Cypress, (2019) sheds light on the challenges and dilemmas
16 facing Ph.D. students during the application of qualitative research. As
17 revealed by the results, one of the most significant challenges was the difficulty
18 of selecting the topic, the difficulty of choosing the methodology and design of
19 the research and the difficulty of collecting, managing and analyzing large
20 amounts of qualitative data.

21 Al-Moosa Study (2018) presents a proposal for activating qualitative
22 research in the field of fundamentals of education in Saudi universities in light
23 of the contemporary international experiences and based on the results of
24 diagnosing the reality of qualitative research and the obstacles which prevent
25 its activation there. The study applied a questionnaire that divided the obstacles
26 to activating qualitative research into three areas: obstacles related to the
27 university's administration, obstacles related to university professors and
28 obstacles related to postgraduate students. The most prominent findings of the
29 study are: the predominance of quantitative method over scientific theses
30 (Master's, Ph.D.) in relation to the major of fundamentals of education in Saudi
31 universities by 95% of the scientific theses, and lack of qualitative research in
32 scientific theses, poor preparation of postgraduate students on how to apply
33 qualitative research, poor dissemination of the culture of qualitative research as
34 well as scarcity of experts specialized in qualitative research in Saudi
35 universities, preference of university professors to use quantitative research
36 patterns because it is common.

37 The study of Queiros, Faria, & Almeida, (2017) highlights the strengths
38 and challenges of both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study
39 reached a number of results and the most important challenges facing
40 qualitative research that it requires more time and effort to collect and analyze
41 data as well as the difficulty of generalizing the results, the need to take into
42 account ethical issues very carefully and the difficulty of obtaining a sample
43 and its representation of the study's community.

44 Al-Hanu's study (2016a) reveals the obstacles to employing qualitative
45 research methodologies from the perspectives of faculty members of special
46 education departments of Saudi universities. The study used a questionnaire

1 consisting of (27) items that represent obstacles to the use of the qualitative
2 research methodology. The study states a number of obstacles to the use of
3 qualitative research methodologies including that researchers in the field of
4 special education are used to conducting quantitative research, the preference
5 of the editorial boards of Arab scientific journals for quantitative research
6 methodologies and the weak focus on qualitative research methodologies in
7 postgraduate courses.

8 Musharraf's study (2016) highlights the features of the innovative vision
9 that adopts the use of qualitative research when addressing some aspects of the
10 educational research crisis and the most important challenges facing the
11 application of qualitative research in the field of educational research. The
12 study concludes that qualitative research is of significant effectiveness when
13 addressing some aspects of the educational research crisis in the Arab world
14 and that one obstacle facing the use of qualitative research is that researchers
15 are influenced by the quantitative approach and positivist philosophy. It also
16 states the need of training on how to apply the qualitative research methods and
17 tools and that collecting data, analyzing it and interpreting the results consume
18 more time and effort. Other obstacles include the difficulty of providing
19 validity standards, the difficulty of generalizing the results and lack of
20 confidence in qualitative research expressed by some supporters of the
21 quantitative approach.

22 A study by Mohammadi & Zare, (2014) discusses the reasons for the lack
23 of use of qualitative research in the field of humanities in Iran. The study
24 deployed the interview tool. The results of the study show that the most
25 prominent reasons for the lack of use of qualitative research are the following:
26 lack of knowledge of qualitative research, the complexity of qualitative
27 research design, the difficulty of data collection and analysis and the ambiguity
28 of methods for validating the results.

29 Wang's study (2013) explores the challenges and patterns of difficulties
30 facing junior researchers when applying qualitative research for the first time.
31 The study used the interview tool. The most prominent findings of the study
32 are: the low level of gradual practice in the process of analyzing qualitative
33 data, poor skills of analyzing data in a systematic and comprehensive manner
34 due to the difficulty of the process of analyzing qualitative data and the long
35 time this process consumes. Other obstacles include subjectivity in relation the
36 interpretation of qualitative data, poor interpreting skill of the results in an
37 argumentative and persuasive manner based on the presence of clear argument
38 and evidence.

39 A study by Alexandros & Others (2012) provides an insight into the
40 difficulties facing researchers when applying qualitative research in the field of
41 marketing from the point of view of the researchers and their field experiences.
42 The study used the interview tool. One of the most important challenges is the
43 ambiguity of qualitative data analysis standards and the huge amount of
44 qualitative data.

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1 A study by Walls (2011) identifies personal, methodological and cultural
 2 challenges that researchers face when collecting qualitative data. The study
 3 points out that the methodological challenges include: failure to achieve
 4 systematic rigor, lack of self-awareness of cultural differences and cultural
 5 sensitivity, alienation and sickness. Language barrier was one of the most
 6 prominent cultural and personal challenges that the researchers face during the
 7 implementation of the study.

8 The review of previous studies shows that there are many obstacles facing
 9 the application of qualitative research and these obstacles are varied. Some of
 10 previous studies classified these obstacles differently such as the study of Al-
 11 Harbi, (2021), Al-Sayed, (2021) and Al-Arini, (2019). Therefore, the
 12 researcher decided to conduct a survey of previous studies that dealt with the
 13 obstacles to the use of qualitative research and to analyze their results in order
 14 to offer a comprehensive conception of these obstacles and accordingly the
 15 idea of this bibliometric study emerged.

17 **The Study's Problem and Questions**

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 20 There is a global trend towards the use of qualitative research. However, it
 21 is noticed that the movement of scientific educational research in the Arab
 22 world lacks studies that use qualitative research as many researchers tend to
 23 employ quantitative research in their studies. For example, a number of studies
 24 have reached this assumption including the studies of Al-Hanu, (2016b), Al-
 25 Dahshan, (2015) and Al-Khatib, (2010). These studies extrapolated and
 26 analyzed the fields and methodology of researches published in a number of
 27 peer-reviewed scientific journals and master's and doctoral theses in a number
 28 of universities and their results confirm that most of the studies published in
 29 peer-reviewed scientific journals and most of the studies prepared by
 30 postgraduate students focused on the use of quantitative educational research.

31 Due to the importance of qualitative research taking part in producing of
 32 educational knowledge and studying human phenomena, which are more
 33 profound and complex than quantitative research, the current study seeks to
 34 explore the factors that hinder researchers wishing to conduct qualitative
 35 research and call for further research and analysis in order to identify these
 36 obstacles and then to propose suggestions that would contribute to overcome
 37 them. As a result, the use of qualitative research will increase because of its
 38 benefit to the research movement in various fields in general and in the
 39 educational field in particular. Consequently, this study aims to highlight the
 40 obstacles facing the use of qualitative research and to propose suggestions to
 41 overcome them.

42 The researcher also noticed the scarcity of bibliometric studies concerned
 43 with analyzing research outcomes in relation to the obstacles hindering the use
 44 of qualitative research. After extensive search using the following databases:
 45 the university theses information base "Dar Al-Mandumah", the educational
 46 information database "Edu Search", Al-Manhal, Shamah or the candle,

1 EBSCO, Google Scholar and the websites of peer-reviewed scientific journals
2 available on the internet. This search showed that there are no bibliometric
3 studies in the field of obstacles to the use of qualitative research. So this study
4 aims to bridge this gap. Therefore, the problem of the study is represented in
5 the following main question: What are the obstacles facing the use of
6 qualitative research and suggestions to overcome them in light of the
7 extrapolation of previous studies? And accordingly, the following two
8 questions stem from this question:

- 9
- 10 1. What are the obstacles facing the use of qualitative research in light of
 - 11 extrapolation of previous studies?
 - 12 2. What are the suggestions to overcome the obstacles facing the use of
 - 13 qualitative research in light of extrapolation of previous studies?
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16 **The Objectives of the Study**

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18 The current study intends to reveal the obstacles hindering the use of
19 qualitative research that were identified by previous studies and presented in
20 educational literature between the years (2011-2021) in order to provide a
21 comprehensive view of these obstacles and to present the suggestions reached
22 by previous studies and educational literature to overcome these obstacles.

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25 **The Significance of the Study**

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27 The significance of the study is interrelated with the importance of the
28 topic it deals with and this study sheds light on the qualitative research which
29 has received a wide global attention from researchers in the field of education
30 during the past few years. So, this study intends to contribute in activating the
31 use of qualitative research by exploring the obstacles facing its use and
32 proposing suggestions to overcome them as well as providing researchers and
33 those who are interested in educational research with suggestions that may
34 open the way for them to benefit from in their future studies. It also provides
35 decision makers in universities and educational research centers with
36 recommendations that may help spread the culture of qualitative research and
37 overcome obstacles hindering its use.

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40 **The Study's Limitations**

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- 42 • *Subject limitations:* The study covered the educational research output
43 published on the subject of obstacles to the use of qualitative research
44 via the following databases: the university database of theses “Dar Al-
45 Mandumah”, educational information base “Edu Search”, Al-Manhal,
46 Shamah, EBSCO, and Google Scholar. It also used the websites of

1 scientific journals available on the internet as well as master's and
2 doctoral dissertations and studies published in scientific journals and
3 conferences, issued in both Arabic and English, which were (16)
4 studies.

- 5 • *Time limitations:* The study covered educational research output
6 published in the period (2011-2021) which the researcher was able to
7 access.
- 8 • *Objectivity limitations:* The study covered studies that dealt with the
9 issue of obstacles to the use of qualitative research in different fields
10 and disciplines.

11 12 13 **The Study's Methodology**

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15 The study deployed the descriptive "bibliometric approach" which seeks to
16 measure intellectual output in a specific cognitive field and analyze it exploring
17 some indicators in order to highlight the characteristics of information
18 circulation and trace the path of development of various scientific fields (Atari,
19 2004). Applying this approach, the study analyzed the studies that discussed
20 obstacles hindering the use of qualitative research listing those obstacles and
21 offering suggestions of previous studies to overcome them.

22 23 24 **The Study's Population and Sample**

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26 The study's population consisted of all the published studies in Arabic and
27 English that dealt with the obstacles facing the use of qualitative research
28 including available master's and doctoral dissertations, papers in scientific
29 journals and conferences until the year (2021). The study's sample comprised
30 of (16) studies which were published between the years (2011-2021).

31 32 33 **The Study's Terminology**

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35 **Qualitative research:** this type of research usually provides an in-depth
36 understanding and a comprehensive explanation of the field of objective
37 research. It also does not require the researcher to interpret the data and the
38 results by numerical and statistical methods, but it can be done using natural
39 language vocabulary, narrative style and explanatory sentences (Al-Jarrah,
40 2014, 125).

41 This study defines it procedurally as a research aiming to explore the
42 phenomenon or the field of objective research and understand it in its natural,
43 unpretentious context and it usually provides an in-depth understanding and
44 comprehensive explanation without relying on statistical or numerical
45 procedures.

1 **Obstacles:** they are defined procedurally as a set of difficulties and
2 hindrances that prevent the use of qualitative research and which were referred
3 to by the studies analyzed by the current study.

6 **The Study's Tool**

8 This study used an analysis card in order to analyze the content of the
9 educational research output that dealt with the obstacles to the use of
10 qualitative research and which was carried out as follows:

- 12 • Determining the purpose of the analysis card which is the analysis of
13 the educational research output that dealt with the obstacles facing the
14 use of qualitative research in studies published during the period (2011-
15 2021).
- 16 • Listing the targeted aspects of the analysis; categories of analysis
17 including: the author's name, year, obstacles to using qualitative
18 research, suggestions made by studies to overcome these obstacles.
- 19 • Analyzing, classifying and presenting these obstacles and suggestions
20 to overcome them.

23 **Study's Findings and Discussion**

25 In order to answer the first question: " What are the obstacles facing the
26 use of qualitative research in light of extrapolation of previous studies?, the
27 results of previous educational studies that dealt with the obstacles to the use of
28 qualitative research were gathered. (16) peer-reviewed scientific studies
29 dealing with this topic were found until October, 2021 and then analyzed,
30 evaluated and classified using the analysis card. The study identified the
31 following list of obstacles hindering the use of qualitative research:

33 **First: Obstacles related to administrative aspects**

- 35 1. Lack of interest in spreading the culture of qualitative research.
- 36 2. Scarcity of conferences, seminars, workshops and training courses
37 related to qualitative research offered to postgraduate students.
- 38 3. Scarcity of experts specialized in qualitative research at the university.
- 39 4. Weak orientation of the university administration's to publishing
40 qualitative research in its scientific journal.
- 41 5. The prevalence of the culture of quantitative orientation in educational
42 research at the university.
- 43 6. Scarcity of Arab journals specialized in publishing such researches.
- 44 7. Lack of Arabic and foreign references and periodicals provided by the
45 university about qualitative research.
- 46 8. Lack of incentives to encourage researchers to use qualitative research.

- 1 9. Weakness of the role of research centers within the university in
- 2 supporting the use of qualitative research.
- 3 10. The difficulty of getting approval to conduct studies using qualitative
- 4 research from university scientific councils.
- 5 11. Lack of support for qualitative research from the deanships of scientific
- 6 research and research centers.

7
8 **Second: Obstacles related to university professors**

- 9
- 10 1. Lack of encouragement from university professors to use qualitative
- 11 research and they underestimate its value.
- 12 2. Teachers of research methods courses do not address this type of
- 13 research.
- 14 3. Lack of specialists in qualitative research among the teaching staff in
- 15 educational departments.
- 16 4. Weakness of the university professor's ability to conduct qualitative
- 17 research and use its procedural skills.
- 18 5. Weakness of the university professors' confidence in postgraduate
- 19 students' ability to properly apply qualitative research.
- 20 6. The university professors prefer to use quantitative research patterns.
- 21 7. The desire of the university professors not to violate the general trend
- 22 toward the use of quantitative research.
- 23 8. The scarcity of specialized professors in educational qualitative
- 24 research.

25
26 **Third: Obstacles related to postgraduate students**

- 27
- 28 1. Poor preparation of postgraduate students in relation to theoretical
- 29 aspects of qualitative research.
- 30 2. Neglecting to develop the practical side of qualitative research among
- 31 postgraduate students.
- 32 3. Poor competence of postgraduate students in qualitative research
- 33 patterns and technical methods needed to conduct it.
- 34 4. The difficulty of preparing a competent researcher who can employ
- 35 qualitative research tools such as interviews and standardized
- 36 observation.
- 37 5. Poor ability to analyze and criticize and relying only on statistical and
- 38 quantitative methods without in-depth qualitative analysis.
- 39 6. Lack of self-motivation of postgraduate students to use qualitative
- 40 research patterns.
- 41 7. Lack of access to researches that used the qualitative approach.
- 42 8. Getting used to conducting quantitative research.
- 43 9. Wrong perceptions about qualitative research.
- 44 10. Lack of conviction of the effectiveness of qualitative research.
- 45 11. The presence of failed attempts that implemented qualitative research.

- 1 12. Poor academic freedom of postgraduate students to choose the
- 2 appropriate approach to answer the questions of their studies.
- 3 13. Postgraduate students fear the difficulty of employing qualitative
- 4 research and the long time it takes to be implemented.
- 5 14. Fear of lack of academic rigor and objectivity when using qualitative
- 6 research.

7

8 **Fourth: Obstacles related to academic courses**

9

- 10 1. Academic courses do not include sufficient training regarding how to
- 11 conduct qualitative research.
- 12 2. Postgraduate courses focus on quantitative research methodologies.
- 13 3. Lack of adequate Arabic dissertations and studies that used qualitative
- 14 research.
- 15 4. Scarcity of Arabic scientific theses that used the qualitative approach.
- 16 5. Scarcity of Arabic course books specialized in qualitative research.

17

18 **Fifth: Obstacles related to the nature of the qualitative research itself**

19

- 20 1. Qualitative research requires long time and high cost in the process of
- 21 data collection.
- 22 2. The difficulty of carrying out qualitative research properly, especially
- 23 by junior researchers due to its need for high skills.
- 24 3. The difficulty of generalizing the results of qualitative research due to
- 25 the small size of its sample.
- 26 4. Qualitative research requires special skills to analyze data, interpret
- 27 events and phenomena and it needs special permits to conduct.
- 28 5. Qualitative research consumes long time analyzing data and drawing
- 29 conclusions and this stage is challenging for some researchers to
- 30 complete it to the fullest.
- 31 6. Low standards of credibility, rigor and objectivity in many qualitative
- 32 researches compared to quantitative researches.

33

34 **Sixth: Obstacles related to the environment and the prevailing educational**

35 **research culture**

36

- 37 1. Bias towards quantitative research at the expense of qualitative
- 38 research.
- 39 2. Scarcity of sources and references related to qualitative research
- 40 techniques and methodologies.
- 41 3. Lack of research and educational studies that applied qualitative
- 42 research methods and designs.
- 43 4. Lack of seminars, educational programs and training workshops that
- 44 are held on the techniques and procedures of implementing qualitative
- 45 research.

- 1 5. Belief that qualitative research is not scientific and that it is less
2 accurate, rigorous and reliable than quantitative research.
- 3 6. The novelty of the culture of qualitative research within Arab
4 educational circles in general.
- 5 7. Most educators are not convinced of the usefulness and importance of
6 qualitative research and their resistance to change towards adopting a
7 qualitative culture.
- 8 8. Scarcity of experts and specialists in the techniques and methodologies
9 of qualitative research and how to employ them, especially regarding
10 the techniques and skills of qualitative statistical analysis.

11

12 In order to answer the second question: "What are the suggestions to
13 overcome the obstacles facing the use of qualitative research in light of
14 extrapolation of previous studies?", the study analyzed, evaluated and
15 classified (16) studies using an analysis card. As a result, the study reached a
16 number of suggestions to overcome the obstacles which are as follow:

17

- 18 - Spreading the culture of the qualitative approach and its importance in
19 relation to educational research through holding seminars, conferences
20 and workshops on qualitative research, its philosophy and importance,
21 how to analyze its data and encouraging researchers to attend them.
- 22 - Breaking the barrier of fear, apprehension and evasion towards
23 practicing and applying qualitative research by spreading culture of
24 familiarity needed to practice this type of research and encouraging
25 researchers from faculty members and postgraduate students to employ
26 qualitative approach by supporting and encouraging the trend towards
27 educational qualitative research at the college level and scientific
28 departments. Moreover, by improving professional development of
29 faculty members in relation to qualitative educational research and
30 showing the effectiveness of qualitative research at the level of
31 departments, colleges and universities, so that it becomes a scientific
32 approach to be adopted in future scientific research.
- 33 - Professors adopt qualitative research ideas and assign students to this
34 type of research.
- 35 - Developing positive attitudes of researchers towards qualitative
36 research and developing their skills to handle its tools and data.
- 37 - Postgraduate programs for the master's and doctoral levels should
38 include some theoretical and practical courses on qualitative research in
39 education and to train postgraduate students to acquire research skills
40 such as interviewing skills, observation, case studies, data collection,
41 analysis and interpretation in order to achieve balance between the use
42 of both quantitative and qualitative research methods.
- 43 - Encouraging postgraduate students to employ qualitative research
44 methods by using its tools such as interview, observation and document
45 analysis.

- 1 - Holding training courses for faculty members and researchers on
2 qualitative research, so that the training courses include both theoretical
3 and practical parts focusing on collecting qualitative data, analyzing it,
4 presenting its results and interpreting it which will help to develop their
5 conceptions, skills and attitudes towards qualitative research as one of
6 the important approaches in the field of educational research.
- 7 - Providing solid scientific references that deal with qualitative research
8 in the main library and making them available to researchers both in
9 paper and electronic forms to benefit from and refer to when needed.
- 10 - Studying research methodology books and investigating topics that
11 require analysis of educational issues with societal dimensions as well
12 as analyzing data qualitatively and with solid evidence with the ability
13 to use critical and deductive thinking skills.
- 14 - Providing statistical programs for qualitative research and training
15 faculty members, postgraduate students and researchers to use them in
16 analyzing qualitative data.
- 17 - Expanding the dialogue on the philosophical models that provide access
18 to knowledge by allocating courses for postgraduate studies concerned
19 only with the philosophy of science as it is noted that discussing
20 philosophical foundations of research in humanities is not common in
21 the Arabic literature which caused a kind of intellectual stagnation in
22 the field of developing research methodologies which lead to
23 decreasing options for researchers.
- 24 - Inviting educational research centers and colleges of education to
25 encourage researchers from faculty members and postgraduate students
26 towards expanding the application of qualitative approach.
- 27 - Inviting and hosting researchers and experts of using qualitative
28 approach to introduce their experiences and vision of the reality of this
29 approach introducing students to its objectives and training them on its
30 updates which can effectively contribute to supporting efforts to spread
31 the culture of the qualitative approach throughout the academic
32 community.
- 33 - Activating research partnerships between those with experience and
34 competence in qualitative research techniques and methodologies and
35 those with modest experience and skills regarding this field in order to
36 produce distinguished qualitative researches and at the same time to
37 practically train those with modest experience and skills.
- 38 - Allocating a relative weight to qualitative research, whether in
39 evaluation, incentives or promotions with the same amount and
40 importance as quantitative research within Arab universities and the
41 promotions committees of faculty members.
- 42 - Encouraging researchers financially and morally to conduct qualitative
43 research.
- 44 - Establishing partnership contracts between the university and
45 international universities to supervise qualitative educational research.

- 1 - Establishing an institute or association for educational qualitative
2 research to provide support and training, formulating study plans and
3 programs and supervising the publication of qualitative educational
4 researches as well as establishing scientific journals specialized in
5 qualitative educational research.
- 6 - Unifying efforts and coordination between universities to translate
7 books and articles on qualitative research.
- 8 - Benefitting from international websites that offer lessons about
9 qualitative research.
- 10 - Providing the necessary facilities for holding conferences, seminars,
11 courses and workshops that focus on qualitative research.
- 12 - Universities allocate an annual award for the best qualitative research.

13 14 15 **Study's Recommendations**

16
17 In light of the findings of the study regarding the obstacles to the use of
18 qualitative research and suggestions to overcome them, it recommends the
19 following:

- 20
21 - There is a need to ensure a balance between quantitative and qualitative
22 research.
- 23 - Paying attention to the professional development of faculty members in
24 the field of qualitative research and providing modern programs for
25 analyzing qualitative data.
- 26 - Including courses for qualitative research within the study program for
27 postgraduate students (Master's and Ph.D.).
- 28 - Encouraging faculty members and postgraduate students to carry out
29 qualitative research.
- 30 - Holding scientific conferences and seminars that serve the activation of
31 qualitative research.
- 32 - Issuing an educational Arabic journal specialized in qualitative
33 research.
- 34 - Work on writing and translating books specialized in qualitative
35 research.

36 37 38 **Suggestions for further research**

39
40 Further research on the topic suggested by the current study can be as
41 follows:

- 42
43 - A comparative study discussing the perceptions and attitudes of
44 researchers from faculty members and postgraduate students towards
45 the application of qualitative research and the most important obstacles
46 to the application of qualitative research.

- 1 - A comparative study of the obstacles facing the use of qualitative
2 research in the educational field among a group of Arab and foreign
3 universities

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