

## **Qualitative analysis of life course issues**

**Doctoral Programme LIVES – June 4-6, 2024**

**University of Geneva**

**Unimail, M4220**

Objective: In this module, students will acquire the theoretical foundations for qualitative and mixed-methods analysis with a life course approach. The module is structured in three days. The first day will focus on qualitative methods, the second day will be dedicated to mixed methods and the third day will deal with qualitative methods in life course research. The days are organized in (1) presentations by researchers of more theoretical and methodological concepts, approaches, and tools, and of research results, (2) discussions of articles, to be read before, and (3) exercises that allow PhD students to mobilise their own experiences and work and engage with the input in this module.

## **June 4, 2024**

9h15 – 10h45: Introduction to qualitative methodology: research designs, data collection – Claudine Burton-Jeangros (UNIGE)

*10h45 – 11h15: Coffee break*

11h15 – 12h45: Introduction to qualitative methodology: analyzing qualitative data – Claudine Burton-Jeangros (UNIGE)

*12h45 – 14h00: Lunch*

14h00 – 15h15: Article discussion about quality and validity of qualitative research

Santiago-Delefosse, M., Gavin, A., Bruchez, C., Roux, P., & Stephen, S. L. (2016). Quality of qualitative research in the health sciences : Analysis of the common criteria present in 58 assessment guidelines by expert users. *Social Science & Medicine*, 148, 142-151.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2015.11.007>

The number of qualitative research methods has grown substantially over the last thirty years, both in social sciences and, more recently, in health sciences. This growth came with questions on the quality criteria needed to evaluate this work, and numerous guidelines were published. These guidelines, however, include many discrepancies, both in terms of vocabulary and structure. Many expert evaluators also decry the absence of consensual and reliable evaluation tools. To address this gap, we present the results of an evaluation of 58 existing guidelines in four major health science fields (medicine and epidemiology; nursing and health education; social sciences and public health; psychology/psychiatry, research methods and organization) by expert (n = 16) and peer (n = 40) users (e.g., article reviewers, experts allocating funds, editors). This research was conducted between 2011 and 2014 at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland. Experts met during three workshops spread over this period. A series of 12 consensual essential criteria, along with definitions, stemmed from a question in a semi-qualitative evaluation questionnaire that we developed. Although there is consensus on the name of the criteria, we highlight limitations on the ability to compare specific definitions of criteria across health science fields. We conclude that each criterion must be explained to come to broader consensus and identify definitions that are easily operational and consensual to all fields examined.

Keywords: Qualitative research assessment, Quality criteria, Qualitative research guidelines, Health sciences, Switzerland

*15h15 – 15h45: Coffee break*

15h45 – 17h00: Exercise about synthesizing qualitative findings.

**June 5, 2024**

9h15 – 10h45: Mixed-methods – Oana Ciobanu (HETSL, HES-SO)

*10h45 – 11h15: Coffee break*

11h15 – 12h30: Article discussion

Le Roux, G., Studer, M., Bringé, A., & Bonvalet, C. (2023). Selecting qualitative cases using sequence analysis: A mixed-method for in-depth understanding of life course trajectories. *Advances in Life Course Research*, 56: 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alcr.2023.100530>.

In this paper, we propose a sequence analysis-based method for selecting qualitative cases depending on quantitative results. Inspired by tools developed for cross-sectional analyses, we propose indicators suitable for longitudinal study of the life course in a holistic perspective and a set of corresponding analysis guidelines. Two complementary indicators are introduced, marginality and gain, that allows labeling observations according to both their typicality within their group and their illustrativeness of a given quantitative relationship. These indicators allow selecting a diversity of cases depending on their contributions to a quantitative relationship between trajectories and a covariate or a typology. The computation of the indicators is made available in the TraMineRextras R package. The method and its advantages are illustrated through an original study of the relationships between residential trajectories in the Paris region and residential socialization during childhood. Using the Biographies et Entourage [Event history and entourage] survey and qualitative interviews conducted with a subsample of respondents, the analysis shows the contributions of the method not only to improve the understanding of statistical associations, but also to identify their limitations. Extension and generalization of the method are finally proposed to cover a wider scope of situations.

Keywords: Mixed methods; Sequential explanatory design; Sequence analysis; Case selection; Residential trajectories

*12h30 – 14h00: Lunch*

14h00 – 15h30: Exercises: working with and applying the mixed-methods approach.

*15h30 – 16h00: Coffee break*

16h00 – 17h00: xxx

**June 6, 2024**

9h15 – 10h45: Qualitative methodology in life course research: the importance of time - Claudine Burton-Jeangros (UNIGE)

*10h45 – 11h15: Coffee break*

11h15 – 12h15: Qualitative Longitudinal Research in Life Course Studies: A Processual Understanding of Unfolding Lives, Transitions, and Adaptation to Institutional Change - Liala Consoli (UNIGE)

*12h15 – 13h30: Lunch*

13h30 – 15h00: Article discussion

Lewis, J. (2007). Analysing Qualitative Longitudinal Research in Evaluations. *Social Policy and Society*, 6(4), 545-556. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746407003880>

This article describes the processes and objectives of qualitative longitudinal analysis in evaluation research, using a recent evaluation study – the evaluation of the Job Retention and Rehabilitation Pilot – as an example. It describes evaluation research as involving an interplay between four domains of change: individual, service, policy and structural, which makes longitudinal qualitative research a particularly rich data source. It outlines different types of change that may be evident: narrative change, reinterpretation by either participant or researcher, and the absence of change. The article describes how the Framework analysis method was used to analyse longitudinal qualitative research. It examines how the data can be read in different ways to combine cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis, and theme, case and group analysis, and discusses the kind of questions that can be asked of change in longitudinal qualitative evaluation studies.

*15h00 – 15h30: Coffee break*

15h30 – 17h00: *Exercise about designing qualitative research integrating analyses of time.*