



# Improving research quality through technical guidance on qualitative research methods

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## ABSTRACT

The quality of qualitative research conducted by Master's students and lecturers at STIE Wirabakti Makassar has been lacking due to insufficient mastery of qualitative research methods. This Community Service Activity (PKM) aims to enhance the research quality by organizing a Qualitative Research Methods workshop. The PKM involves disseminating and training in Qualitative Research Methods, with material introduction conducted online and practical training held offline. The outcomes reveal a notable improvement in participants' understanding and skills in employing qualitative research methods. The primary objective of this initiative is to address challenges in crafting theses or scientific papers by offering various research methodology choices. The participants of this service were Master's students and lecturers from STIE Wirabakti Makassar. The workshop combined offline and online sessions conducted via Zoom. The workshop incorporated material presentations and interactive question-and-answer segments to gauge participants' comprehension. The results, deduced from pre-test and post-test evaluations, indicate participants' enhanced grasp of qualitative research methodologies, especially diverse paradigms introduced by facilitators. The clear and practical material presentation, supplemented with concrete examples, contributed to participants' comprehensive understanding. The successful implementation of this initiative is anticipated to elevate the calibre of research conducted by students and lecturers, enabling them to make informed choices regarding qualitative research methods.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Research conducted by lecturers and students in the field of accounting and management primarily relies on quantitative methods. However, observations at STIE Wirabakti Makassar indicate a significant lack of utilization of qualitative methods in the scientific endeavours of both lecturers and students. Typically, theses, dissertations, and articles authored by lecturers and students predominantly employ quantitative research methodologies. This trend can be attributed to a lack of comprehension and proficiency among lecturers and students at STIE Wirabakti Makassar when it comes to understanding qualitative research methods.

With the advancement of time, particularly in the field of management and accounting, an increasing number of researchers have embraced qualitative methods in their studies. The outcomes of their research have been published in esteemed accounting and management (Mulawarman, 2020; Paranoan et al., 2023; Salmah et al., 2021; Sharon & Paranoan, 2020; Twyford et al., 2022). This trend signifies that qualitative methods are gaining recognition among researchers due to the realization that qualitative findings address real-world problems more effectively than mere numerical data (Bungin, 2015; Kamayanti, 2016a, 2016b; Moleong, 2008). However, it is worth noting that lecturers and students at STIE Wirabakti Makassar predominantly employ quantitative research methods over qualitative ones.

There are two research methods used in the field of social sciences, namely quantitative and qualitative methods (Bungin, 2021; Bungin & Irwanti, 2022; Sugiono, 2017). However, quantitative methods are generally more widely utilized compared to qualitative methods. Quantitative research methods have a dominant tendency over qualitative research methods (Chua, 1986). Chua (1986) also noted that quantitative methods, which emphasize a hypothesis-deductive approach, have limitations in addressing research problems. To overcome these limitations, alternative methods are needed to answer questions or statements that cannot be addressed using quantitative research methods (Faza & Indriani, 2022; Ilham & Farid, 2019; Saadati & Sadli, 2019).

The Wirabakti Makassar College of Economics always encourages its lecturers and students to provide alternative solutions to social problems through careful selection of methodologies. These efforts are carried out through various academic activities such as training and workshops. Lecturers as an important component in academic activities in tertiary institutions have a responsibility to advance knowledge. The progress of science cannot be separated from the role of researchers in conducting studies. To effectively address existing problems or achieve research objectives, it is very important to use appropriate research methods.

The Wirabakti Makassar College of Economics consistently encourages its lecturers and students to propose alternative solutions to social problems through the thoughtful selection of methodologies. These endeavors are conducted through various academic activities, including training sessions and workshops. Lecturers, being vital participants in academic activities at tertiary institutions, bear the responsibility of advancing knowledge. The advancement of science is closely linked to the role of researchers in conducting studies. To effectively address prevailing issues or attain research objectives, it is of utmost importance to employ appropriate research methods.

Innovative and applicable research outcomes are expected to be developed by enhancing the research competence of lecturers and students. Both qualitative and quantitative methods can be utilized in designing research in the fields of economics, social sciences, and (Sugiono, 2014; 2017). The selection of appropriate theories, independent and moderating variables, along with suitable methodologies, can lead to well-disseminated outputs. These outputs may take the form of scientific publications in international or national journals, as well as enriching textbooks that benefit students and the community. Improving the quality of research is necessary to generate valuable scientific publications. The objective of this PKM (Community Service Program) activity is to enhance the knowledge and skills of lecturers and students at STIE Wirabakti Makassar in utilizing qualitative research methods. The implementation of qualitative research method workshops aims to inspire workshop participants to enhance the quality of their research.

## **2. METHODS**

This service activity is conducted in the form of a workshop, which is outlined in the activity stages, including activity design, program implementation methods, and activity schedules.

### Activity Plan

This service activity is conducted in partnership with STIE-Wirabakti Makassar, focusing on the theme “Navigating Research Methodology Workshop” specifically designed for postgraduate students and lecturers at STIE Wirabakti Makassar. The workshop takes place at the STIE Wirabakti Hall, located at Andi Pangerang Pettarani No.72, Komp. Ruko An-Nadzar kav. 3,4,5, Tamamaung, Kec. Panakkukang, Makassar City, South Sulawesi 90232. The activity is conducted in an offline format, with the Service Team utilizing an LCD to present the workshop materials.

**Table 1.** Structure of Activities

Date/Time	Activity	Objective	Person Responsible
<b>Preparation</b>			
<b>10 Feb 2023</b> 10.00-12.00	Meeting with Service Team	Communication with Partners Equipment requirements and internal consumption Committee Formation	Partner Service Team
<b>Implementation</b>			
<b>25 Feb 2023</b> 09.00-10.00	Participant Registration	Ensure attendance of participants	
10.30-10.20	Opening of the Head of STIE Wira Bhakti Makassar	As a sign of starting the Workshopp	Partner Service Team
10.20-12.00	Navigating Quantitative Research	Improvement of research quality	Partner Service Team
12.00-12.30	Discussion	Participant Questions and Answers	Partner Service Team
12.30-13.30	Ishoma		
13.30-13.40	Introduction to the Discussion	Improvement of research quality	Partner Service Team Moderator
13.40.14.30	Navigating Qualitative Research		Partner Service Team
<b>Evaluation Stage</b>			
14.30-15.40	Participant Questions and Answers (Evaluation)	Improvement of research quality	Partner Service Team
15.40.16.00	Closing		Partner Service Team

### Program Implementation Method

The program is implemented through socialization and training. The training consists of three stages: (1) Preparation; (2) Implementation; and (3) Reporting (evaluation). During the preparation stage, partners’ readiness regarding the workshop schedule is assessed. The implementation stage involves lectures and discussions, where the Service Team presents qualitative research methodology through presentations. Evaluation is conducted to assess the achievement of the activity’s objectives.

### Schedule and Stages of Implementation

The workshop activities follow a structured schedule, which includes conceptual explanation steps, discussions, and simulations. Conceptual explanations in the form of lectures are considered effective in generating interest in learning (Andiani et al., 2023; Rikawati & Sijinjak, 2020; Mansir, 2020; Fatmawati & Rozin, 2018). The activity is organized in Table 1.

The workshop preparation stage involves participant registration. The activity implementation begins at 13:30 with a lecture on navigating qualitative research, followed by a question-and-answer session. This approach aims to engage the workshop participants effectively. In order to assess the participants' comprehension, a questionnaire is distributed to gather feedback and evaluate the participants' knowledge enhancement following the workshop.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of workshop activities to navigate research methodology is a form of increasing the capacity of students and lecturers in compiling scientific work. The purpose of holding this activity is to increase the understanding of lecturers and students on research methodology with two approaches, namely quantitative and qualitative, so that lecturers and students have adequate provision of understanding to produce quality research, especially in the preparation of final assignments or theses and writing scientific papers (articles) for lecturers.

#### Preparation

The workshop took place on Saturday, February 25, 2023, and was attended by Postgraduate Students of the Wirabakti College of Economics in Makassar, as well as lecturers and other academics. The workshop was conducted both offline and online, with posters being distributed through WhatsApp groups and information boards within the STIE Wirabakti Makassar premises. Figure 1 are samples of the activity posters that were shared on social media platforms, such as WhatsApp groups for lecturers and students.



Figure 1. Poster of research methods workshop activities

The dissemination of activity posters through social media serves as an effective means to inform students, lecturers, and academics about the ongoing activities. The use of posters as a medium can stimulate interest in knowledge and skills development (Intaha et al., 2020). Moreover, utilizing posters as a promotional tool helps attract student participation in these activities. The distribution of posters significantly influences the level of participation (Salsabila & Pratiwi, 2021).

#### Implementation of Activities

The target audience of the community service activities are the lecturers and Master's students at STIE Wirabakti Makassar. The activity was implemented smoothly, as evidenced by the participation of students from the accounting and management study programs. The workshop participants comprised 54 individuals, with 74% being Master's students and 33% being lecturers. The distribution of participants is depicted in Figure 2.

The composition of workshop participants consisted of 40 Master's degree students (74%) and 14 lecturers (33%), making a total of 54 participants who attended the workshop either in-person or via Zoom. The majority of the participants were Master's students who were in the process of completing their theses. The lecturer participants comprised a combination of lecturers from the accounting and management study programs.

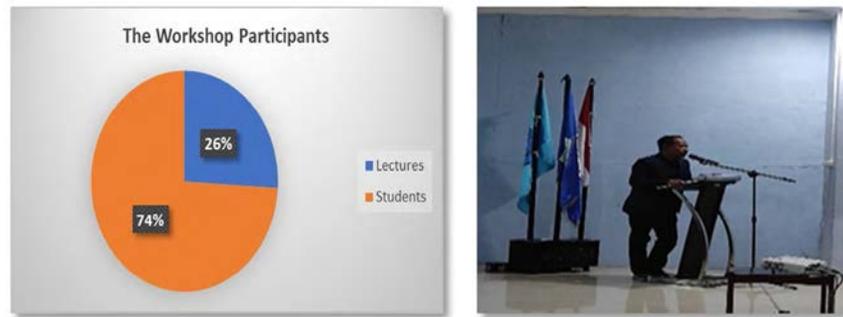


Figure 2. Graph of percentage of workshop participants

Figure 3. Opening of the workshop on navigating qualitative research

The workshop was inaugurated by the Head of STIE Wirabakti, representing the partners involved in the activity. The Head of STIE Wirabakti emphasized the importance of taking the workshop seriously, as it featured expert keynote speakers in the field of qualitative research. The main objective of the workshop was to enable students and lecturers to select the appropriate methodology for their research and scientific paper writing. In the academic environment of STIE Wirabakti, quantitative research still dominates scientific studies. Therefore, this workshop is highly relevant for advancing scientific development within the institution. The training and workshop activities are expected to provide motivation and enhance the quality of research conducted by both lecturers and students (Firmansyah et al., 2020; Oktoviana et al., 2020).



Figure 4. Introduction of the discussion by the moderator and workshop participants

The presentation of the material started with an introduction by the moderator, who invited the participants to attentively listen to the presentation delivered by the keynotes speaker. The content of the presentation was considered new and significant within the STIE Wirabakti environment. The service team distributed the material by providing links accessible to all workshop participants, whether they were attending the workshop through Zoom or in-person.



**Figure 5.** Presentation session

This devotion aims to navigate qualitative research methods. The material presentation session was delivered through an explanation of the concept of qualitative research, along with a variety of qualitative research paradigms. In order to optimize the delivery of the material, an interesting PowerPoint presentation was used, created by the design team using Canva (Salsabila & Pratiwi, 2021). The material description covers various paradigms and highlights the differences between quantitative and qualitative methods, as well as the reasons for using qualitative methods. To provide a concrete understanding, the presentation includes examples of qualitative research issues published in reputable journals. Each session also includes a discussion segment where participants can ask questions or seek clarification on any topics, they find difficult to understand.



**Figure 6.** Workshop participants asking questions

The training method is in the form of providing face-to-face/offline material, so that participants can ask questions directly to the speaker. One of the participants who asked said that he had just heard about the choice of paradigm through qualitative research. So that they are not able to distinguish the other participants. They are unable to differentiate related to the variety of research, especially the positivist and non-positivist paradigms, so they often ask students which theory is used. Even though it could be that the student study is still in the realm of describing research findings. The simple presentation of the material made the participants more able to differentiate between research using quantitative and qualitative methods. Various questions were raised by workshop participants who asked whether research using the interview method could be considered a non-post paradigm.

The research methodology can be chosen as a case study is a series of scientific activities that are carried out intensively, in detail and in depth about a program, event and activity, either at the level of an individual, group of people, institution or organization to gain in-depth knowledge about the event. The selected reality or phenomenon, hereinafter referred to as a case, is an actual thing (real-life

events), which is ongoing, not something that has passed (Rahardjo, 2017). The result of this service is an increase in a deeper understanding of what and how to use qualitative methods, so that participants can solve problems according to the right method. As a form of appreciation and appreciation for the resource persons, the committee gave certificates of appreciation to the resource persons which were submitted by the Head of the STIE Wirabakti Postgraduate Study Program.



Figure 7. Submission of certificates and group photo of service team and partners

### Activity Evaluation

Evaluation of activities is carried out by providing opportunities for workshop participants to ask questions to the presenters. The results of the activity show that there is an increase in the knowledge and abilities of partners based on the results of the pre-test and post-test recaps that were distributed during the activity. The description of the pre-test and post-test results is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Workshop participants' understanding of the qualitative research paradigm

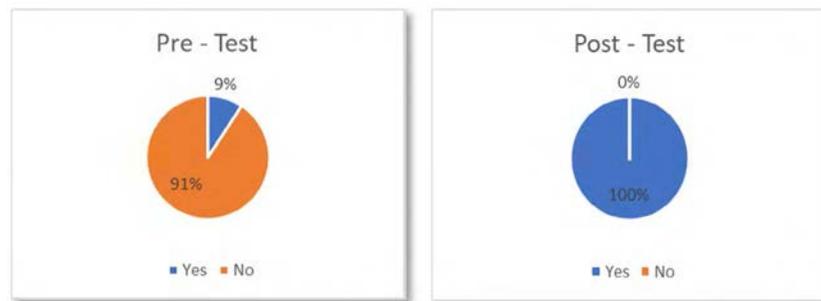
Questions	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Have you ever attended a qualitative research workshop?	5	49	54	-
Do you understand the qualitative research paradigm	0	54	50	4
Are you interested in the theme of this workshop	45	9	54	0
Do you still want to deepen the study of the qualitative research paradigm with a more specific methodology/issue	0	0	52	2
Do you understand quantitative and qualitative research methods	0	54	46	8
Is the material presented clearly and easy to understand?	0	0	54	0
Are you interested in writing scientific papers using qualitative research methodologies?	0	0	51	3

Evaluation of the activity was also seen from the level of enthusiasm of the participants who took part in the workshop activities until closing. The number of participants who stayed and filled out the post-test where the majority of participants were very interested in the workshop theme. One of the participants said that he often attended qualitative research workshops, but only understood and could differentiate between quantitative and qualitative research. Participants also considered that the material presented was very clear and easy to understand. Participants' interest in qualitative research methods was proven by the fact that 51 participants were interested in writing scientific papers using qualitative research methods.



**Figure 8.** Participants' Enthusiasm throughout the workshop until the closing session

The one-day series of events concluded with a sense of incompleteness. The participants, mainly postgraduate students in the midst of writing their theses, along with enlightened lecturers who could now differentiate between quantitative and qualitative methodologies, exhibited high levels of enthusiasm. Figure 8 representation of the results from the pre-test and post-test.



**Figure 9.** Graph of participants' level of understanding regarding quantitative and qualitative research methodologies

Based on the graph above, it proves that partners' capacity building can be seen from the number of participants (54 people) before the implementation of the activity, they cannot distinguish between qualitative and quantitative research methods. After the implementation of the workshop activities, the number of participants who were able to distinguish 46 people and 8 people who could not differentiate. The implementation of the workshop aimed at navigating research methodology was able to increase students' and lecturers' understanding of the research methodology approach to be used when compiling theses and writing scientific papers for lecturers, especially in the STIE Wirabakti Makassar environment and researchers in general.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to enhance the research quality of our partners, the service team conducted workshops on navigating qualitative and quantitative research methods. The workshop on research methodology was divided into two sessions, with the first session focusing on an in-depth exploration of quantitative research, followed by the second session which covered material related to qualitative research methodology. The theme of the workshop was "Navigating Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods". The aim of this workshop was to expand the knowledge and deepen the understanding of qualitative and quantitative research methods.

In conclusion, this activity has resulted in an improved understanding among lecturers and students in producing scientific work using qualitative research methods. There is now a deeper comprehension of the various methodological choices available in the fields of management science and accounting research.

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