

Rita Faria
Mary Dodge *Editors*

Qualitative Research in Criminology

Cutting-Edge Methods



Springer

Chapter 3

Mixed Methods: A Justification, Explication, and Example



Diana Sun and Michael L. Benson

Why Use Mixed Methods?

As novelists, painters, poets, and song writers never tire of pointing out, reality is complex and multifaceted. This comes as no surprise to social scientists, who have long been both fascinated and perplexed by the complexity of social reality, which is the world of human beings, communities, and cultures (Johnson & Gray, 2015). Because of this irreducible complexity, it is difficult if not impossible to fully understand some aspects of the social world by relying solely on either quantitative or qualitative data. In these situations, some form of mixed methods research design can often be a useful way of illuminating at least one small piece of social reality. By mixed methods research design, we simply mean a design that incorporates at least two different forms of data or data collection, such as, for example, quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data. As other chapters in this handbook show, however, there are other forms of data collection besides surveys and interviews, which may be included in a mixed methods study. In this chapter we focus on what is known as a *concurrent nested research design* in which quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data are collected simultaneously (Creswell et al., 2003; Mathison, 1988).

Within the disciplines of criminology and criminal justice, there are numerous examples of mixed methods research designs. For instance, in their classic reanalysis and extension of the Glueck's data, Laub and Sampson (2003) skillfully combined quantitative arrest data on desistance from crime with qualitative interviews with

D. Sun (✉)
Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL, USA
e-mail: sund@fau.edu

M. L. Benson
University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, USA
e-mail: Michael.benson@uc.edu

former offenders as they aged through the life course. The quantitative analysis documented the decline in crime commission and eventual desistance from crime among some members of the sample, and the qualitative interviews shed light on how and why these changes had occurred. In addition, the qualitative interviews allowed the researchers to understand why other members of the sample had not desisted from crime.

In criminal justice, an outstanding example of a mixed methods design can be found in Klinger's and Brunson's (2009) study of police officer shootings. In this study, officers who had been involved in job-related shootings completed a survey in which they reported on the circumstances surrounding the shootings, especially in regards to perceptual distortions that they may have experienced. Perceptual distortions include, for example, such visceral experiences as tunnel vision, diminished sound, or a sense of time slowing down. After the survey the officers were then interviewed about the various experiences that they had reported in the survey to enhance and flesh out their levels of recall. These findings allowed the researchers to address such questions as how the perceptual distortions were experienced and the order in which they occurred. For example, what did it mean to say that time had slowed down or sounds were diminished? How were these effects manifested? Did the distortion occur before shooting started or after it had commenced?

These two examples illustrate one of the primary advantages of a mixed methods design. To wit, the mixed methods design helps researchers understand why two or more variables are associated with one another. Via their quantitative data, Laub and Sampson (2003) were able to document that marriage was associated with desistance, and their interview data enabled them to develop a theory of how marriage promotes desistance under certain circumstances. Likewise, Klinger and Brunson (2009) used the data from their qualitative surveys to show how perceptual distortions evolved over time in deadly force incidents. By suggesting reasons why variables are related to one another, these studies also open up avenues for future quantitative work, because the concepts and ideas uncovered qualitatively can now be converted into measurable variables themselves. Thus, mixed methods studies of this sort can help build theory and spur additional research.

A Concurrent Nested Design Example

In a concurrent nested design, the researcher gathers data via quantitative and qualitative methods simultaneously. Typically, the quantitative data is survey based, but it does not have to be. For example, the quantitative data could come from systematic social observation of urban neighborhoods (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999) or from an analysis of tweets posted on Twitter (Budhwani & Sun, 2020). The qualitative data in a concurrent design usually comes from interviews that are conducted more or less simultaneously with the quantitative data collection activities, so that the quantitative activities can inform and direct the qualitative interviews.

In what follows, we use a study of prison adjustment and reentry experiences to illustrate how a concurrent nested design works in the field. The basic research

question that motivated the study was: How do gender, race/ethnicity, and social class influence adjustment to life in prison and reentry into a community? Specifically, the researcher was interested in what is known as the special resiliency hypothesis developed by Benson and Cullen (1988), which hypothesizes that white-collar offenders adjust better in prison and reentry than other types of offenders because of advantages that inhere in their social class background. The special resiliency hypothesis can be contrasted with the special sensitivity hypothesis, which posits that white-collar offenders do worse in adjustment precisely because of their social background and their limited experience with the criminal justice system. Although there have been several quantitative studies of these hypotheses that have found some differences between white-collar offenders and other offenders (Logan et al., 2019; Stadler et al., 2013), the results have been mixed with some favoring the special resiliency hypothesis and others the special sensitivity hypothesis. More importantly, the studies shed little light on why any observed differences in adjustment exist. The researcher hoped to make comparisons between women versus men, whites versus racial and ethnic minorities, and individuals of lower- versus middle- or upper-class standing. In this particular study, the researcher was especially interested in people who had committed white-collar type crimes, because prior research has documented that such people come from different social and class backgrounds compared to people who commit ordinary street offenses (Benson & Moore, 1992; Weisburd et al., 1991; Wheeler et al., 1988). As noted above, prior research has documented differences in prison adjustment and reentry between white-collar offenders and other types of offenders (Logan et al., 2019; Payne, 2003; Stadler et al., 2013). However, it remains unclear why these differences exist. Hence, the researcher recognized that this gap in the knowledge base might be addressed using a mixed methods study. Because gender and race/ethnicity are such powerful influences on all aspects of social life, these variables were also included in the design and analysis.

With cooperation from a local federal probation office, the researcher identified a sample of persons convicted of white-collar type crimes and a comparison sample of persons convicted of other non-violent federal offenses, such as drug violations. Unlike many quantitative studies which have the luxury of a known sampling frame from which to sample respondents at random, the sample for this study was built up purposely over time as the researcher worked with personnel in the probation office to identify potential respondents, that is, those convicted of white-collar type crimes, and those convicted of other types of federal offenses. As respondents became available, the researcher initiated data collection and analysis (described below) on an individual basis. The sample eventually included 9 females and 17 males convicted of white-collar offenses, compared to 1 female and 10 males convicted of other offenses.¹

¹ The definition of white-collar crime has been contested since Sutherland (1940) first introduced the term. In this study, the researcher used what is known as an “offense-based” definition (Benson & Simpson, 2018), because this definition is easier to apply with official record data. Using this definition also ensured that the sample would contain an adequate number of middle- and upper-class individuals, which was an important consideration because one of the prime objectives of the study was to investigate whether adjustment varies by social class.

The researcher used two data collection strategies simultaneously. First, respondents completed a fixed-choice questionnaire on prison adjustment. The questionnaire included a series of fixed-choice and open-ended response questions drawn from prior research on prison and post-prison adjustment (Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2004; Morris & Sclocum, 2010; Porcellato et al., 2016; United States Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2004; Warren, 2006). Second, after the questionnaire was completed, the researcher reviewed it and used the information gleaned from the survey as a basis for semi-structured interviewing of the respondents. The goal was to permit respondents to clarify their answers and explain the context behind them. For example, if a participant reported that they needed mental health services while incarcerated, the researcher could ask them to explain in their own words what the problem was and perhaps how it was handled.

There are several advantages to using a semi-structured interview format. First, it allowed the researcher to ask initial open-ended questions that served as prompts for the interviewee (Charmaz, 2014; Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012). For example, the researcher could ask a general question such as, "If you can recall, could you describe what was going on in your life then?" This question serves two purposes. The question is general enough to cover a wide range of experiences and the question leans on symbolic interactionism to identify what events are meaningful for the participant (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012). The open-ended nature allows the participant to provide subjective meaning to the question asked and to answer beyond a fixed response. In other words, the participant can describe in detail any outside events (e.g., a death in the family and what that death meant to the person) that may have been missing in the questionnaire.

A second advantage to using a semi-structured interview format is that it permits probe questions. Probe questions are frequently used to follow up on emerging themes or answers (based on the interview or questionnaire) that need more context or clarification. For example, a respondent might say something such as "When I got out of prison and back home, I really didn't want to leave my house ever." In this case, a follow-up probe might be "Can you explain a little bit about the reasons you felt that way?" Probe questions are guided by interviewee statements and memos taken in vivo (Charmaz, 2014; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Moreover, probe questions give participants the opportunity to tell their story (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012). Charmaz and Belgrave (2012) contend that fixed interview questions may decrease the comfort level of the interviewee and have abrupt endings. To develop a positive rapport, interviewers should err on keeping the interview conversational to gain more trust and detail (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012).

A final advantage to using a semi-structured interview is to allow for real-time modifications in the interview questions that fit the interviewee (Charmaz, 2014; Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012). Each individual responds differently to questions, and the interviewer must be aware of the language they use, the potential meanings behind questions, and each participant's personal reaction. For instance, in one interview, a participant stated that she did not like the term "offender" or "guilty." To address her concerns, the researcher avoided using both terms throughout the interview portion. Other techniques can also be used to gain more detailed answers,

such as slow pacing, repeating key points, and gently turning interviewee's words into open-ended questions (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012).

In sum, the interviews were directed in the sense that the questions in the survey served as prompts for the interviews, but the interviews were also open-ended in that respondents were able to explain in detail what their answers really meant. The interviews then served as a reliability check on the questionnaire responses, and yielded details that were not available from the questionnaire alone by giving respondents a chance to describe their experiences in their own words. Thus, the mixed methods study design created a more comprehensive picture of prison and post-release adjustment that went beyond a prison survey or lone interview.

In this study, the quantitative data were nested within the qualitative data. This enabled the researcher to corroborate findings across the different methods, but also to address different research questions based on the data. For instance, the researcher could test whether the white-collar sample and control sample are the same quantitatively on some dimension through the questionnaire, but also explore any adaptations in detail with the qualitative data. Thus, the researcher could assess differences between the samples while gaining a broader understanding of how adults navigate the prison system and reentry to civilian life. This concurrent nested design also permits the two methods to be mixed during the analysis phase. This is a key advantage because the researcher was able to follow leads in the data and apply a grounded theory approach to the qualitative data analysis.

The mixed methods concurrent nested design allowed the researcher to answer different questions than those that could be addressed with the quantitative data. The researcher was interested in the participants' narratives in the qualitative data and, to that purpose and following Charmaz's (2014) qualitative techniques, they used a grounded theory approach for the qualitative data analysis to move between data collection, data analysis, and theorizing. This process was aided using elaborate memos that permit reflexivity of the data. Typically, reflexivity refers to the researcher, rather than the data. It calls upon the researcher to be reflective about their role in the study and be aware of how their biases might influence their findings (Alvesson, 2003; Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011). According to Alvesson (2003), this angle toward data assumes "working with alternative lines of interpretation and vocabularies and reinterpreting the favored line(s) of understanding through the systematic involvement of alternative points of departure" (p. 14). This approach permits the opportunity to apply different theoretical lenses and interpretations of the interview data. Overall, reflexivity provides two advantages in data analyses. First, it prevents naive assumptions based on simple reality. Second, it allows the researcher to challenge interpretations of the data by suggesting more than one interpretation of the data can exist. In short, ambiguity is acknowledged.

After the interviews were completed, they were transcribed and then coded in a three-step process using the qualitative software, NVivo (Locke, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The first step in the coding process involved first-order codes (Charmaz, 2014). In this study, first-order codes identified quotes related to the crime of which the informants were convicted, their role in the offense, and what they experienced during the adjudication process and in prison. All first-order codes

were assigned using a line-by-line coding technique and then documented and defined in a “data dictionary” (Gibson, 2017; Locke, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data dictionary was constantly revised following each interview to reflect emergent codes from the data. The second step in the coding process involved aggregating the first-order codes into second-order codes. Second-order codes allowed the researcher to reevaluate and reorganize the data and to categorize findings into larger themes or groups (Charmaz, 2014; Locke, 2002).

This second cycle of coding can be accomplished in several ways. For example, in focused coding, themes are grouped together based on initial first-order codes and general comparisons made across codes. Focused coding may reveal processes or shared definitions among participants that were not otherwise formally conceptualized. In this chapter’s study example, the researcher used a focused coding structure when identifying and defining prison slang terms (Charmaz, 2014; Locke, 2002). For instance, when participants discussed solitary confinement, they would often refer to the special housing unit as the “SHU,” “shoe,” or “solitary.” Every time a participant discussed their experience in the “SHU” or “shoe,” this signaled to the researcher that the participant was referring to an isolation experience within a special housing unit but is using a slang term for the housing unit. Here, all mentions of these first-order codes were then grouped to a larger theme of “the isolation experience in solitary confinement” so that the researcher can better understand adaptation techniques while in solitary confinement compared to other housing arrangements. Some techniques included dividing the day between mealtimes and shower to gain a sense of time. Thus, in focused coding, the researcher works with a defined code list and categorizes terms and experiences to fit that established defined list.

Another type of second-order coding researchers can use is axial coding, in which larger categories are synthesized into subcategories (Charmaz, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In axial coding, the researcher searches for connections and relationships across first-order codes to better understand a phenomenon (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The causes of the phenomenon, the reactions of the phenomenon, and the surrounding context for the phenomenon to occur are revealed based on this type of close analysis. Axial coding also can identify any outside or intervening conditions that might impact the phenomenon identified (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In the example study, the researcher relied on the techniques of axial coding to uncover how participants adjusted to social stigma upon reentry. For instance, when participants discussed meeting strangers for the first time post-incarceration, participants discussed feelings related to “anxiety,” “nerves,” and “feeling scared” in a new environment (e.g., at a work party or at a job interview) with strangers. Statements that shared a similar sentiment to these first-order codes were then grouped together to reveal a more general feeling of public stigma that participants experienced based on their fears of being seen as an “ex-convict” or “criminal” to people they did not know. Moreover, some participants expressed having panic attacks prior to social engagements or would leave the room to avoid meeting new people altogether. In this example, the axial coding allowed the researcher to better understand how formerly incarcerated individuals felt meeting new people, how they reacted, and the settings that elicited

such a response. In summary, these are only some examples of second-order coding techniques that researchers can employ in their research. For a more comprehensive list of second-order coding strategies, see Charmaz (2014) and Strauss and Corbin (1990).

The final step in the coding process was the aggregation of second-order themes into broader dimensions or themes. Emerging themes were then examined to see whether they brought new perspectives to the special resiliency hypothesis. For example, the researcher found that female offenders who commit white-collar offenses were more likely to seek mental health services following their incarceration experience as they reentered society. Female participants viewed mental health services, such as talk therapy and medication, as key support systems in managing their anxiety. By comparison, male participants did not seek mental health services even though they also experienced heightened levels of anxiety post-incarceration.

Though small by modern social research standards, the sample of 37 participants still offered a few advantages. First, the researcher was able to establish a baseline as to how generalizable the study sample is to the adult prison population. Second, the researcher was able to conduct chi-square and ANOVA comparisons across select demographic groups, including men versus women, white-collar offenders versus other types of offenders, and across race and ethnic identities to determine statistical relationships between the groups. Third, the sample size was large enough to permit logistic regression analysis of the impact of white-collar status on prison maladaptation (see Jenkins & Quintana-Ascencio, 2020, for a discussion on minimum sample size for regressions). Because of the purposive sampling strategy that was used in this study, the generalizability of the findings was limited; however, by conducting the analyses described above, the findings could be compared to past tests of the special resiliency hypothesis (e.g., Logan et al., 2019; Stadler et al., 2013).

An Unexpected Disruption: The Global COVID-19 Pandemic

As a researcher, one must be cognizant that unexpected things sometimes happen. For quantitative data, data might be miscoded, or the survey items may not accurately capture the phenomenon in question. For qualitative data, attrition is normal and there may be audio distortions in transcription tapes. Although these mistakes and oversights can present challenges, these issues are fairly common. In the example study used here, however, the researcher faced an unprecedented challenge that not only impacted the research, but also the participants as well as the lives of millions of other individuals: the COVID-19 pandemic. The following section details how unexpected events can arise during a research endeavor and several steps that can be taken to ensure successful completion of a project.

In March 2020, the United States declared a national emergency with statewide stay-at-home orders to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (CDC, 2022). Universities across the nation abided by public health guidelines to ensure the safety of both researchers and participants (Fernandez Lynch et al., 2020; Meagher et al., 2020;

Taylor et al., 2021). Most studies that involved interactions with human subjects came to a halt, and researchers had to develop creative research design solutions that permitted data collection while maintaining ethical protocols set forth by their governing Institutional Review Board (IRB) (for example protocols, see Johns Hopkins University, 2020). In a research facility, this may mean restricting the number of team members working on site at any given time. In a clinical lab setting, this may entail self-administered tests or outcomes collected by telephone or mail (McDermott & Newman, 2020). However, what about social and behavioral studies that rely on in-person participant interviews? How does one recruit, conduct study activities, and establish rapport with participants during a pressing global health pandemic?

The first step to addressing any unexpected research challenge is to keep open avenues of communication across all research team members. To do so requires keeping abreast of IRB requirements outlined by the administrative body overseeing the study (Fernandez Lynch et al., 2020; Taylor et al., 2021). In the example study, the researcher had to submit IRB modifications to request an entirely virtual process. This included a virtual consent process via telephone or mail; activities conducted via telephone, mail, or email; and an interview via telephone. A virtual process (and the use of technology more generally) offers several benefits to the researcher (Block & Erskine, 2012; Fernandez Lynch et al., 2020; Novick, 2008; Sipes et al., 2020). One key benefit includes greater flexibility in meeting times between the participant and the researcher. For example, with online methods, participants can provide consent and complete study activities remotely and at a time convenient for them without the need to meet in person (Block & Erskine, 2012; Novick, 2008; Sipes et al., 2020; Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). In addition, a remote process reduces potential biases that may impact the participant's response, such as biases based on physical appearances or nonverbal cues (Novick, 2008; Sipes et al., 2020). A final key advantage for using a remote data collection process includes the ability to address "sensitive topics" that may present discomfort in a face-to-face interview situation (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004; Sipes et al., 2020). Sensitive topics refer to topics or experiences that may elicit emotional, physical, or psychological distress for the participant or researcher (Sipes et al., 2020). The use of a remote process provides a shield or a perception of anonymity for respondents that may offer comfort when discussing sensitive issues such as illegal behavior or traumatic events (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004; Sipes et al., 2020). As such, these are a few examples of how mixed methods studies can pivot to ensure that participants are safe during a global health crisis while participating in research activities.

The second step when faced with an unexpected research disruption is to maintain clear communication with participants. Clear communication with study participants can help ease concerns participants may have about their safety in the study. Additionally, this allows the researcher to reinforce established protocols set in place should participants or any of the parties feel distress or discomfort (Sanjari et al., 2014). Moreover, some participants may begin their study activities and may later change their minds. Opening a dialogue between the researchers and the participants provides a safety net for participants to express their feelings about participant expectations (Charmaz, 2014; Sanjari et al., 2014). Due to the unexpected

timing of COVID-19, some participants in the example study were in the process of completing parts of their research activities. To ensure that participants were safe and felt safe in continuing in the study, research team members kept participants informed of the study's status and shifted to remote study activities. Because in-person interviews were no longer viable, the researcher explained the temporary discontinuation of in-person meetings. In general, the open dialogue between both parties allowed the research team to address any concerns participants felt surrounding the impact of COVID-19 and provided the team an opportunity to discuss adjusted protocol measures approved by their IRB. In sum, the open communication between the parties allowed the study to move forward in a manner comfortable for both the researcher and the participants.

A final step to consider when faced with an unforeseen interference is to be aware of the researcher's role in the study. As mentioned earlier, challenges and pitfalls of research are normal (Charmaz, 2014). To overcome these challenges, it is important to consider and predict how these disruptions may impact the results of the study (Aquilino, 1994; Sipes et al., 2020). For instance, will results be biased due to modifications in data collection procedures? How will participants respond to changes implemented during their study activities? Although not comprehensive, these are some example questions researchers might consider in the event they have to modify their study.

Returning to this chapter's example, one key concern that the researcher considered was how the virtual consent process may impact rapport with participants. In general, establishing rapport with participants is important to obtain but difficult to achieve (Aquilino, 1994; Charmaz, 2014; Novick, 2008; Sipes et al., 2020; Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). In mixed methods research, especially research designs that rely on participant interviews, participant relationships are invaluable. So, while a shift toward technology offers greater flexibility with data collection during a global pandemic, there are challenges to moving to an entirely virtual process. Attrition, for example, remains a key concern for interview research (Charmaz, 2014). A pivot toward technology-based data collection can potentially exacerbate the attrition problem by isolating select disadvantaged groups who may be less comfortable with its use (Marhefka et al., 2020; Santana et al., 2021). For example, individuals who do not have reliable communication forms such as a telephone or stable housing may have greater difficulties completing study tasks by telephone or mail (Block & Erskine, 2012; Santana et al., 2021). In addition, individuals with low technological literacy may also be disproportionately affected (Irani, 2019). Likewise, some individuals may not respond well to structural, status, and psychological distance such as silence over the telephone that may interfere with the quality of data being collected (Block & Erskine, 2012). Rather than elaborating on responses, participants may provide brief or short answers to minimize any perceived distance between the researcher (Block & Erskine, 2012). Although these are potential problems that researchers may face, it is important to be mindful of the study's overall research design. Every design decision must be given careful consideration of how it will impact the study's overall outcomes and whether it is the best solution given the research question.

Discussion

In summary, mixed methods study designs offer several advantages for addressing research questions. However, researchers need to recognize that there are challenges in this approach. Depending on the research question, a mixed methods approach may illuminate social processes that can only be understood by combining a quantitative and qualitative approach to data collection. For example, the works of Laub and Sampson (2003) and Klinger and Brunson (2009)—two seminal pieces in criminal justice literature—demonstrate how pairing the two types of research methods can lead to theory development and theory testing. Of course, every research question should be given careful thought as to what the most appropriate research design is to answer any particular question. The mixed methods approach works well for some questions, but either strictly quantitative or qualitative methods may work better for others.

In this chapter, we focused on the benefits of using a survey paired with participant interviews in a concurrent nested design. Specifically, the researcher used a concurrent nested design to better understand the special sensitivity and special resiliency hypotheses among a sample of formerly incarcerated individuals. This mixed methods design offered two main advantages. First, the survey allowed the researcher to ask specific questions as it related to the two guiding theories and to prior quantitative research on prison adjustment. Second, the survey answers provided a baseline for the researcher to develop an interview protocol catered to each participant. This was important because the study was designed to investigate the assumption that adjustment is diverse and varies by gender, race/ethnicity, and social class. Findings from the study will offer insight into how adults from different social backgrounds navigate the prison system and their reentry into civilian life.

Although the example study that was discussed throughout this chapter is not yet completed, preliminary analyses already indicate that the mixed methods design will enable the researcher to accomplish two important objectives: (1) identify differences in adjustment based on gender, race/ethnicity, and social class and then (2) provide a tentative explanation as to why these differences exist. In other words, the researcher may be able to develop a theory of adjustment that advances what is already known about reactions to prison life and to the reentry experience. This process of going back and forth between analysis and theory building is one of the prime advantages that flows out of this form of mixed methods design. Assuming the best of all possible worlds, the theory developed by the research will then motivate additional quantitative studies to ascertain its validity and hopefully science will progress.

As with all research, challenges and disruptions may arise at any time regardless of one's particular research design, and it is important to be aware of this likelihood and to consider the potential problems that may develop during the research process. Unfortunately, in mixed methods studies, things can go wrong in a couple of ways, that is, with either or both the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. For example, a mixed methods researcher might be faced with a series of systematic coding errors in their quantitative data. Likewise, in the qualitative data

audio distortions in a participant interview recording may lead to a whole interview being rendered unusable. Regardless of what the issue is, the researcher should demonstrate flexibility and have a clear plan in place to overcome these challenges. Moreover, researchers should always keep in mind that no research design is perfect. They all have weaknesses and shortcomings that need to be acknowledged in publications, but they are rarely completely fatal to any given project.

In conclusion, the authors strongly hope that the COVID-19 pandemic that impacted the example study will be a once-in-a-lifetime event. However, even if the world never faces another global crisis such as the pandemic, future researchers will undoubtedly confront equally troubling challenges to their projects. Thus, we spent some time discussing how the researcher responded to the totally unprecedented interruption to the project caused by the pandemic. There are several important lessons to be learned here. The first and most significant lesson is this: do not give up. Despite the bleak days of the spring of 2020, the researcher kept trying to figure out how to arrange the data collection so that the project could continue and eventually after some delays the project did continue. Second, keep lines of communication open, especially with the local IRB. As a regulatory body, the IRB is duty-bound to follow and enforce regulations regarding research with human subjects, but IRBs also have an interest in seeing that research progresses in their institutions. Finally, do not forget about your participants. They have invested time and emotional energy in you and your project. Be sure to acknowledge their contribution and keep them informed about where things stand with the study. Even if a study has to be completely abandoned for some reason, the researcher has an obligation to let the participants know what has happened and why and to be open to continuing communication with them if they want to do so.

References

- Alvesson, M. (2003). Beyond neopositivists, romantics, and localists: A reflexive approach to interviews in organizational research. *Academy of Management Review*, 28(1), 13–33.
- Alvesson, M., & Sandberg, J. (2011). Generating research questions through problematization. *Academy of Management Review*, 36(2), 247–271.
- Aquilino, W. S. (1994). Interview mode effects in surveys of drug and alcohol use: A field experiment. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 58(2), 210–240.
- Benson, M. L., & Cullen, F. T. (1988). The special sensitivity of white-collar offenders to prison: A critique and research agenda. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 16(3), 207–215.
- Benson, M. L., & Moore, E. (1992). Are white-collar and common offenders the same? An empirical and theoretical critique of a recently proposed general theory of crime. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 29(3), 251–272.
- Benson, M. L., & Simpson, S. S. (2018). *White collar crime: An opportunity perspective* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Block, E. S., & Erskine, L. (2012). Interviewing by telephone: Specific considerations, opportunities, and challenges. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 11(4), 428–445.
- Budhwani, H., & Sun, R. (2020). Creating COVID-19 stigma by referencing the novel coronavirus as the “Chinese virus” on Twitter: Quantitative analysis of social media data. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 22(5), e19301.

- Centers for Disease Control. (2022, January 5). *CDC museum COVID-19 timeline*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention David J. Sencer CDC Museum. <https://www.cdc.gov/museum/timeline/covid19.html>
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Charmaz, K., & Belgrave, L. (2012). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. In *The SAGE handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft* (Vol. 2, pp. 347–365). <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452218403.n25>
- Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, 13(1), 3–21.
- Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L., Gutmann, M. L., & Hanson, W. E. (2003). Advanced mixed methods research designs. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (pp. 209–240). SAGE Publications.
- Fernandez Lynch, H., Dickert, N. W., Zettler, P. J., Joffe, S., & Largent, E. A. (2020). Regulatory flexibility for COVID-19 research. *Journal of Law and the Biosciences*, 7(1), Isaa057.
- Gibson, C. B. (2017). Elaboration, generalization, triangulation, and interpretation: On enhancing the value of mixed method research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 20(2), 193–223.
- Irani, E. (2019). The use of videoconferencing for qualitative interviewing: Opportunities, challenges, and considerations. *Clinical Nursing Research*, 28(1), 3–8.
- Jenkins, D. G., & Quintana-Ascencio, P. F. (2020). A solution to minimum sample size for regressions. *PLoS One*, 15(2), e0229345.
- Johns Hopkins University. (2020). April 4. Johns Hopkins University Research. <https://research.jhu.edu/covid-19/hsr/>
- Johnson, B., & Gray, R. (2015). A history of philosophical and theoretical issues for mixed methods research. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *SAGE handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (pp. 69–94). SAGE Publications.
- Klinger, D. A., & Brunson, R. K. (2009). Police officers' perceptual distortions during lethal force situations: Informing the reasonableness standard. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 8(1), 117–140.
- Kruttschnitt, C., & Gartner, R. (2004). *Women in prison in the 1990s: A temporal and institutional comparison* [Data set]. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2011-10-27.
- Laub, J. H., & Sampson, R. J. (2003). *Shared beginnings, divergent lives: Delinquents boys to age 70*. Harvard University Press.
- Locke, K. (2002). The grounded theory approach to qualitative research. In F. Drasgow & N. Schmitt (Eds.), *Measuring and analyzing behavior in organizations: Advances in measurement and data analysis* (pp. 17–43). Jossey-Bass.
- Logan, M. W., Morgan, M. A., Benson, M. L., & Cullen, F. T. (2019). Coping with imprisonment: Testing the special sensitivity hypothesis for white-collar offenders. *Justice Quarterly*, 36(2), 225–254.
- Marhefka, S., Lockhart, E., & Turner, D. (2020). Achieve research continuity during social distancing by rapidly implementing individual and group videoconferencing with participants: Key considerations, best practices, and protocols. *AIDS and Behavior*, 24(7), 1983–1989.
- Mathison, S. (1988). Why triangulate? *Educational Researcher*, 17(2), 13–17.
- McDermott, M. M., & Newman, A. B. (2020). Preserving clinical trial integrity during the coronavirus pandemic. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 323(21), 2135–2136.
- Meagher, K. M., Cummins, N. W., Bharucha, A. E., Badley, A. D., Chlan, L. L., & Wright, R. S. (2020). COVID-19 ethics and research. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, 95(6), 1119–1123.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. SAGE Publications.
- Morris, N. A., & Slocum, L. A. (2010). The validity of self-reported prevalence, frequency, and timing of arrest: An evaluation of data collected using a life event calendar. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 47(2), 210–240.
- Novick, G. (2008). Is there a bias against telephone interviews in qualitative research? *Research in Nursing & Health*, 31(4), 391–398.

- Payne, B. K. (2003). *Incarcerating white-collar offenders: The prison experience and beyond*. Charles C. Thomas Publisher Ltd.
- Porcellato, L., Carmichael, F., & Hulme, C. (2016). Using occupational history calendars to capture lengthy and complex working lives: A mixed method approach with older people. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 19(3), 269–286.
- Sampson, R. J., & Raudenbush, S. W. (1999). Systematic social observation of public spaces: A new look at disorder in urban neighborhoods. *American Journal of Sociology*, 105(3), 603–651.
- Sanjari, M., Bahramnezhad, F., Fomani, F. K., Shoghi, M., & Cheraghi, M. A. (2014). Ethical challenges of researchers in qualitative studies: The necessity to develop a specific guideline. *Journal of Medical Ethics and History of Medicine*, 7, 14.
- Santana, F. N., Hammond Wagner, C., Berlin Rubin, N., Bloomfield, L. S., Bower, E. R., Fischer, S. L., Santos, B. S., Smith, G. E., Muraida, C. T., & Wong-Parodi, G. (2021). A path forward for qualitative research on sustainability in the COVID-19 pandemic. *Sustainability Science*, 16(3), 1061–1067.
- Sipes, J. B., Mullan, B., & Roberts, L. D. (2020). Ethical considerations when using online research methods to study sensitive topics. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science*, 6(3), 235–239.
- Stadler, W. A., Benson, M. L., & Cullen, F. T. (2013). Revisiting the special sensitivity hypothesis: The prison experience of white-collar inmates. *Justice Quarterly*, 30(6), 1090–1114.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. M. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Sturges, J. E., & Hanrahan, K. J. (2004). Comparing telephone and face-to-face qualitative interviewing: A research note. *Qualitative Research*, 4(1), 107–118.
- Sutherland, E. H. (1940). White-collar criminality. *American Sociological Review*, 5(1), 1–12.
- Taylor, H. A., Serpico, K., Lynch, H. F., Baumann, J., & Anderson, E. E. (2021). A snapshot of U.S. IRB review of COVID-19 research in the early pandemic. *Journal of Clinical and Translational Science*, 5(1), e205–e205.
- United States Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2004). *Survey of inmates in state and federal correctional facilities* [Data set]. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2019-12-12.
- Warren, J. I. (2006). *Women coping in prison at the Fluvanna correctional center for women in Virginia, 1999-2000* [Data set]. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2006-03-30.
- Weisburd, D., Wheeler, S., Waring, E., & Bode, N. (1991). *Crimes of the middle classes: White-collar offenders in the federal courts*. Yale University Press.
- Wheeler, S., Weisburd, D., Waring, E., & Bode, N. (1988). White collar crime and criminals. *American Law Review*, 25, 331–337.

Diana Sun is an Assistant Professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Florida Atlantic University. Her research interests include the effects of incarceration on white-collar offenders, the drug overdose epidemic, and macro-level patterns of crime across race/ethnicity. Her work has been published in outlets such as *Race and Social Problems* and *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World* and *Deviant Behavior*.

Michael L. Benson is Professor Emeritus and Senior Research Associate in the School of Criminal Justice at the University of Cincinnati. He is a Fellow of the American Society of Criminology and has published extensively on white-collar and corporate crime.