

The use of vignette method in interpretative research

Syllabus

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Course objectives

The course is based on a vignette method process - from how to develop one (or more) vignettes to how to use them in data collection and how to analyze reactions to vignettes and how to interpret and draw valid conclusions. Students will come to understand the logic of vignette method and will be able to decide if, when and how to develop vignettes suitable with their own research question. The course provides students with a working knowledge of vignette method, including insights into how they can be used in practice in an interpretive or qualitative research process.

The course follows five objectives: 1) To examine the scientific criteria of vignette method and to give PhD students basic training in how to develop vignettes suitable for interpretive or qualitative research questions; 2) To expose PhD students to issues of conceptualization, theory, research design, and strategies of framing vignettes. (3) To help PhD students in how to organize and process vignettes through the phase of data collection and analysis. (4) To provide PhD students with knowledge about how to choose the best strategy of vignette method for the research question and finally (5) how to draw conclusions from vignette analyses.

The course is structured as follow and alternates between lectures and classroom exercises:

- - What is vignette method?
- - Why use vignette method?
- - When do you use vignette method?
- - Vignettes as result or treatment?
- - What' should be in your vignette and how to find out?
- - Horizontal or vertical constructed vignette variance?
- - How to interpret vignette responses in systematic ways?
- - How to draw valid conclusions from vignette analyses?

Day 1: November 25, 14-18

Vignette method in social research: introducing vignette

In this lesson we will understand what a vignette is and what the vignette method is, and discuss its use in qualitative and quantitative research. We will understand how to target interviews using the vignette method and why (and when) it makes sense to use it. We will also do a classroom exercise.

Day 2: December 6, 14-17

Positions in vignette methods

This lesson will focus on the methodology of experimental vignettes. We will then move on to understanding what needs to be in a vignette and how to find it out, with vignette construction and validity at the centre of the lesson. We will then look at two examples of experimental logic in vignette studies, understanding the placement of vignettes and how to deal with validity threads. We will then do an exercise in which we discuss your vignettes (constructed on the basis of your research questions).

Day 3: December 10, 14-17

Vignette method in practice

This last lesson will focus on how to draw valid conclusions from the analysis of the cartoons. You will continue to work in class on your vignettes, which will be presented to the class.

References:

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- Leonardi, D. (2021). "How to use the vignette technique to uncover judgments, values, relationships with norms. Methodological reflections from a research project on professional discretion", *Sociologia Italiana–AIS Journal of Sociology*, 18, pp. 53-68.
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