

Review Article

Book Review of "Arts-Based Research Methods for Educational Researchers" by Meng Tian (2023)

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Abstract

In review of the book entitled “Arts-Based Research Methods for Educational Researchers”, reviewers found it a priceless resource for contemporary scholars wishing to add cutting-edge arts-based techniques to their qualitative research inquiries. This book offers a thorough examination of how artistic mediums like poetry, theater, and visual arts can be used to investigate the emotional, psychological, and cultural aspects of education that conventional research frequently ignores. One of the prominent features of the book is its ability to combine theoretical understanding with real examples from numerous disciplines with helpful advice. This fusion permits investigators to see the real-world implications of qualitative methods, bridging the gap between abstract concepts and practical application. The book focus on participant empowerment, inclusivity, and ethical considerations when working with vulnerable populations highlights the book’s commitment to social justice, making it especially relevant in today’s educational context. Through concrete examples and case studies, the book illustrates how arts-based methods can be applied in diverse educational settings, bridging the gap between theory and real-world application. This practical emphasis makes the book particularly beneficial for novice and seasoned researchers, offering tools to navigate the moral and emotional complexities inherent in arts-based research. The book also addresses contemporary challenges; encouraging researchers to adapt and innovate in their approaches to educational inquiry. These are remarkable aspects of the book that particularly valued in this review.

Keywords

Arts-based Research, Educational Inquiry, Qualitative Research Methodology

1. Introduction

Research methods continue to grow and develop in exciting new ways, through experience, interdisciplinary conversation, new technologies, and in response to new needs. Qualitative research serves a critical role in understanding human behaviors in social science studies. Qualitative research serves as methodological bedrock for understanding complex social phenomena, enabling researchers to explore nuanced human

experiences. Qualitative research is rapidly evolving with new methods and approaches such as digital and social media research. As a result, new books and journals with qualitative approach and findings are released on a regular basis. Reviewers reviewed this book with the aim of getting better understood about the process, design, and implementation of qualitative research, as well as to critically evaluate the con-

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temporary arguments in qualitative research, theories, and scientific literature reviews presented in the texts, and to provide a critical assessment of the book's contributions to readers. The reason why we choose the book for critical review was due to the following justifications. First, the book is simple to use as guidance to novice and expert researchers, scholars in field of social sciences the book provides a deeper grasp of the process of conducting a qualitative research inquiry in social science. The second justification due the fact that the book is recently published we can get contemporary arguments as well as research approaches and, because this book was published in 2020, it provides a wonderful opportunity to see contemporary qualitative research trends and changes from both theoretical and empirical viewpoints. Finally, this book is useful for researchers and students from different academic disciplines who want to learn the process of conducting qualitative research. The book discusses the theoretical principles as well as the practical application of qualitative research.

Among the overabundance of qualitative research texts available, *Arts-Based Research Methods* by [12] presents arts-based approaches as potent instruments for revealing the intricacies of human experience in educational contexts in the book *Arts-Based Research Methods for Educational Researchers*. The book invites researchers to reevaluate the possibilities of arts-based research in education by providing a text that functions as both a methodological manual and a theoretical investigation. However, most of traditional research methodologies often based on quantitative data and inflexible structures fail to apprehension the rich, complex, and multidimensional nature of lived experiences in education and the complex nature of human behavior, this book methodology are especially important to address these limitations. Moreover, the deeper emotional and contextual layers of educational experiences are frequently missed by traditional methodologies, as [4] emphasizes in *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. In a similar vein, [5] contend in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* that qualitative research techniques especially those rooted in the arts are more appropriate for delving into the intricacies and subjectivities of human experiences, providing deeper understandings of educational practices and results.

According to this book by Tian, arts-based research is a ground-breaking tool in educational research that not only rethinks the way that educational phenomena are investigated but also questions accepted ideas about what makes for reliable and valid data. Arts-based research enables a more comprehensive approach that transcends the cognitive or behavioral aspects of learning by incorporating techniques like theater, poetry, and visual arts into educational inquiry. Insights into students' lived experiences that are frequently missed by traditional research methods are provided by its emphasis on the emotional, psychological, and cultural aspects of education. The book by [3] on qualitative research methods, stress the importance of such varied and compre-

hensive approaches to better capture the social dynamics in educational settings and the complexity of human learning nature. They contend that the emotional and relational factors that influence students' identities and educational experiences should be included in educational research in addition to quantifiable results.

This book agrees, highlighting the value of incorporating participant assistance and opinion in research while acknowledging that creative, arts-based approaches provide effective means for participants to share their experiences and narratives. The book's support of arts-based approaches is also consistent with more general developments in qualitative research, where the significance of addressing the affective and emotional aspects of human behavior in educational research is becoming increasingly acknowledged. Similar book "In Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice by [10] supports this argument that; arts-based approaches offer a way to interact with research participants in ways that go beyond simple data collection. These approaches give research participants the opportunity to actively create and communicate their stories, which helps to produce more insightful, contextualized data. With the help of these techniques, research can be conducted collaboratively, allowing participants and researchers to have more solid and dynamic boundaries and a sense of shared ownership over the research process. This argument is consistent with the participatory approaches covered by authors like [11, 7] in *Researching with Children and Young People*, who stress how crucial it is to give research participants particularly those from vulnerable groups a voice and active engagement during the overall process of the study.

To sum up, this book provides a critical and timely examination of the ways in which arts-based research methodologies can enhance educational research. The book has a strategy in line with the expanding understanding among researchers that orthodox qualitative research approaches might not adequately capture the complexity of educational experiences and participants' behaviors. By introducing arts-based research methods, investigators can engage with the emotional, cultural, and social dimensions of educational inquires, eventually leading to a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of educational phenomena. [8] In their book entitle "The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research", arts-based research presents a viable route to achieving the goal of research methods developing to reflect the complexity of the frameworks in which they are applied.

2. Book Content

"Arts-based research" serves as a complete guide for both beginner and experienced researchers navigating the complex landscape of qualitative research inquiry. In order to place arts-based research within the larger evolution of qualitative research methodologies, Tian starts by giving a thorough historical overview of the field. The book is organized in to

six separate parts; this classification is consistent with [13] *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, which charts the development of qualitative methodologies from conventional scientific approaches. As stated in [4] *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, Tian asserts that arts-based approaches not only enable a deeper, more complex examination of human experience but also assist researchers in addressing concerns of power, agency, and social justice. By overcoming the limitations of more traditional research techniques and highlighting the significance of participant voice and agency, these approaches provide the chance to investigate intricate social dynamics and power relations [4]. This work's focus on the ways that arts-based research promotes participant empowerment is among its most notable aspects. As [10] points out in *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice*, Tian investigates how techniques like collage, poetry, and theater give participants the chance to create and convey their own stories. According to [10, 1], these artistic modalities not only improve the quality of data gathered but also democratize the research process by enabling meaningful participation from participants in the creation of knowledge.

Part I: is Introduction and philosophy, that establishes the foundation for the significance of arts-based research methodologies in this introductory section, contending that they provide distinctive approaches to investigating and illustrating educational phenomena. The author considers the historical function of art in research, highlighting the philosophical underpinnings of these approaches. The focus is on creating a space for meaning-making by comprehending the interactions among artists, artworks, and viewers. The tone of the book is established in this section, which emphasizes how arts-based approaches can go beyond conventional methods and interact with the complexity of human experiences in educational settings. Tian explores the philosophical foundations of arts-based research in the following section, utilizing ontological and epistemological viewpoints that question the conventional division between subject and researcher. This method is in line with the feminist and post humanist viewpoints of [15], which support more flexible, relational approaches that acknowledge participant agency and the significance of researcher positionality in knowledge construction. This method encourages a more participatory and cooperative model of knowledge production in addition to challenging the strict subject-object divide. This theoretical framework, which echoes concepts covered by [8] in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, encourages researchers to critically engage with the power dynamics involved in research processes. According to [8], the positionality of the researcher and the dynamics of the relationship between the researcher and the participant have a big impact on the research findings. Their work promotes a thoughtful, moral method of conducting qualitative research that prioritizes ethical flexibility, respects participants' lived experience, and seeks to generate knowledge that is both socially respon-

sible and contextually grounded.

Part II; of the book contends about research design and methodology, here, Tian offers a thorough examination of several research designs that are relevant to arts-based approaches. The preparation of materials and ethical issues that are necessary for carrying out ethical research are covered in this section. Additionally, it covers practical topics like data collection, analysis, and reporting protocols. The goal is to produce an approachable manual that emphasizes accessibility and clarity so that researchers can use these approaches in their own work. The emphasis on ethics is especially crucial for guaranteeing that participants' opinions are valued and fairly represented.

Part III: provide case studies and practical examples, this part of the book provide real-world examples and case studies in this section of the book to show how arts-based approaches can be successfully incorporated into educational research. The theoretical discussions from previous sections are placed in context by these examples. Collages and other artistic methods are emphasized as ways to collect information and promote discussion. By giving readers concrete examples to help them envision how to use arts-based approaches in their research, this section seeks to empower readers. Tables and visual aids improve understanding and relevance.

Part IV: impact and controversies, and conclusion and Future direction. In this section, the book delves deeply into the important influence that arts-based research methods have on educational practice and policy-making. The book discusses a number of important issues and difficulties that researchers may run into when using these techniques, including the nature of participant engagement and how to balance emotional involvement in an ethical manner. This conversation is essential to comprehending the complex field of arts-based research because it recognizes that although these approaches can yield significant insights, they also have risks that should be carefully considered. The discussion of assessing the results of arts-based research is especially pertinent since it highlights that the goal should be to provoke fresh viewpoints rather than pursue unchanging truth. Part V: discusses prospective advancements in arts-based research in the final chapters. The book stresses the significance of integrating cutting-edge artistic techniques into research practices and expanding theorization of arts-based methodologies. New technologies' role in supporting arts-based research is also covered, with the idea that these developments can reduce obstacles and increase the methods' accessibility. The book encourages researchers to keep pushing the envelope and reconsidering the traditional methods of conducting educational research by promoting constant investigation and adaptation. In Part VI of the book, the transformative potential of arts-based research methods in education is reaffirmed in the book's conclusion. The book urges academics to be innovative and creative in their research methods while acknowledging the moral and useful consequences of their work. By emphasizing how incorporating arts-based approaches

into research can result in more comprehensive and inclusive understandings of educational phenomena, this section acts as a call to action for scholars. All things considered, the book provides a comprehensive and thoughtful examination of arts-based research methodologies, fusing theory, practice, and critical engagement in a way that is understandable to both inexperienced and seasoned educational researchers.

3. Reviewers' Evaluation

In-depth analysis of arts-based research methodologies is provided in Tian's book, along with an exploration of how these approaches might revolutionize educational research. Integrating emotional and psychological aspects into educational research which are frequently ignored in traditional qualitative methodologies is one of the book's main issues. In *Art Practice as Research* by [14] highlights the importance of arts-based approaches in bridging the gap between the arts and sciences, offering a more comprehensive method of investigation. This is supported by this book, which shows how arts-based approaches can capture more nuanced and profound facets of the human experience that conventional research methodologies might overlook. One of the book's main strengths is the inclusion of participant empowerment. The book argues that arts-based research approaches enable participants to actively engage in knowledge creation, highlighting the significance of intervention and opinion in the research process. The book by [9] in *Participatory Action Research: A Handbook for Individuals Seeking to Change the World* elucidates how these techniques ensure that participants have control over their own stories while promoting a collaborative process. Comparably, [2] emphasize the importance of narrative as a methodology that tributes and increases participant agency, providing insights into lived experiences that conventional methodologies might not be able to provide.

The book gains depth from the ethical issues that it addresses. The book gives cautious thought to how arts-based methods affect participants emotionally, which is an important consideration when conducting qualitative research with vulnerable populations. [6] *Researching with Children and Young People*, which explores the difficulties of emotional engagement when conducting research with children, support this emphasis on ethical issues. When conducting arts-based research, the researcher should give careful attention to these ethical issues aids researchers in overcoming the difficulties presented by emotional vulnerability. Furthermore, the book strikes a balance between the advantages of arts-based approaches and a practical recognition of their drawbacks. As [14] notes, using creative processes in research can make participants and researchers more vulnerable and emotionally complex. Instead of avoiding these difficulties, the book offers ways to reduce the possibility of emotional distress, making the atmosphere safer and more encouraging for participants.

In conclusion, despite covering a number of current research techniques as well as philosophical underpinnings and theories in arts-based research, the book has the following drawbacks: it excels at collage research, but it might fall short in covering other art-based approaches like performance arts or audiovisuals. Although the books attempt to discuss the fundamentals of philosophy, some philosophical perspectives such as post-humanism, pragmatism, and feminist epistemology are either not addressed or are only partially explored. A thorough examination of these theories could improve the theoretical framework and make the arguments made more complex. The book offers useful examples, but it might not go far enough in addressing the difficulties and nuances that researchers face when applying arts-based approaches in authentic contexts. To better assist practitioners, more thorough discussions of potential hazards, methodological constraints, and how to handle ethical quandaries could be held. The book's advocacy of arts-based research as a liberating and empowering approach may make the realities of doing so easier to understand. It might downplay the dangers, like misinterpreting participant expressions or the difficulties in obtaining true cooperation and representation in the study process. The text addresses ethical issues and data collection, but it might not go far enough in explaining data analysis unique to arts-based approaches. Researchers hoping to gain insight from their findings would benefit from a detailed examination of how to evaluate and interpret data produced by these creative practices.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions on the Book

The book *Arts-Based Research Methods for Educational Researchers* by [12] is an innovative and crucial addition to the field of educational research and for Educational Researchers. The book overcomes the drawbacks of traditional research approaches, which frequently place a premium on quantitative data and inflexible frameworks, by incorporating the arts into educational inquiry. The book provides fresh perspectives on how to comprehend intricate educational experiences in a more comprehensive and multifaceted way. The book encourages researchers to investigate the emotional, psychological, and social facets of learning areas that conventional research instruments frequently ignore through arts-based approaches like theater, poetry, and visual arts. This makes it possible to examine educational phenomena in greater detail and with greater nuance. The book is not only a theoretical exploration but also a practical guide, offering actionable strategies for effectively applying arts-based methods. Both inexperienced and seasoned researchers can use these innovative approaches because the book offers simple, understandable instructions for incorporating them into research procedures. This useful feature makes arts-based approaches accessible to people who are not familiar with

how to use them, increasing the resources available to researchers and encouraging a more inclusive approach to educational research.

The book's focus on treating participants ethically is one of the book's strongest points. Vulnerable populations are frequently included in arts-based research, and participants may experience significant emotional effects. The author of the book takes care to address these issues, offering guidelines to make sure that researchers handle their subjects responsibly and sensitively. She emphasizes how crucial it is to establish secure, encouraging spaces where participants feel free to use their creativity to express their experiences, which is particularly important in educational research.

Moreover, the book's emphasis on participant empowerment is relevant and timely. Social justice, agency, and inclusivity are becoming increasingly important in today's research environment. By giving them a voice and a sense of ownership over their stories, arts-based approaches enable participants to actively participate in the research process. In addition to improving the quality of the data gathered, this participatory approach gives participants a sense of agency and self-determination. The book's approach is in line with current research movements that support more collaborative, reflexive, and democratized forms of knowledge production by empowering participants to creatively shape their stories. The book serves as a timely and potent reminder of the value of creativity, critical reflection, and ethical integrity in research in an educational environment that is becoming more and more focused on inclusivity, equity, and social justice. This book offers a strong framework for integrating arts-based approaches into the larger trend toward more varied, comprehensive, and participatory methodologies as educational research advances. The book's investigation into how the arts might influence educational research gives scholars a new way to approach and depict the complexity of educational phenomena.

The book will surely be a foundational text for anyone interested in the transformative potential of arts-based research as educational research develops further. The book's work offers both theoretical depth and practical insight, regardless of whether one is new to qualitative methodologies or an experienced researcher looking to add more tools to their toolbox. It gives readers the resources they need to incorporate artistic techniques into their work, encouraging a creative, inclusive, and morally sound approach. Even though *Arts-Based Research Methods for Educational Researchers* offers thorough advice, there are still some areas in which more research could advance the field of arts-based educational inquiry. Examining how these approaches function in various educational contexts across cultures, communities, and educational systems, for instance, may offer important insights into their universal applicability. The long-term effects of creative engagement in educational research may also be clarified by longitudinal studies that look at the long-term effects of arts-based research on participants, particularly

marginalized groups.

Furthermore, combining technology and arts-based research techniques may open up fascinating new avenues. Particularly for participants who have limited access to physical spaces for creative expression, research could examine how digital tools and virtual spaces might improve accessibility and engagement. Additionally, bringing arts-based research into other fields like community development, healthcare, and the social sciences may reveal fresh approaches to difficult societal problems. The book's thorough analysis of the moral implications of arts-based research lays a solid groundwork for further research in this field. Although she covers a lot of the emotional risks associated with creative research, more research on ways to protect participants' welfare and lessen potential harm would be beneficial. Future studies could also look into ways to modify arts-based approaches to make sure they are morally sound when working with vulnerable groups.

To sum up, *Arts-Based Research Methods for Educational Researchers* is a vital tool for anybody curious about how the arts can expand and enhance the comprehension of educational experiences. It provides insightful information about how arts-based research can reveal aspects of education that are emotional, cultural, and social but may be missed by traditional approaches. For scholars, educators, and legislators looking for creative, inclusive, and morally sound methods of conducting educational research, reviewers highly recommend this book. Researchers can help develop a more complex, sympathetic, and all-encompassing understanding of the educational landscape by embracing the creative potential of the arts.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Biography

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