



Qualitative Study Design

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This talk will cover the following

- What is qualitative research
- Characteristics of good research design
- Internal and external validity
- Data collection

Qualitative Research

- Qualitative and Quantitative research are both scientific ways of knowing the world in which we live
- Research provides the foundations for reports about and representations of 'the Other'.
- Participants not subjects

Defined as

“Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. ... (qualitative researchers) study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”. (Denzin & Lincoln 2005)

Qualitative Research

- Involves a paradigm shift away from experimental examination, measurement and counting, towards an emphasis on the qualities of phenomena and on processes and meanings in social life
- It questions HOW and WHY

Principles

- Paradigms or theoretical perspectives
- Methodology
- Method

Theoretical Perspectives / Paradigms

- Serves as a model/world view or philosophy which structures knowledge and understanding
- Defines what is to be observed and scrutinized and has questions which probe the field of inquiry
 - Positivism, postpositivist
 - Constructivist - interpretive
 - Critical (Marxist, emancipatory)

Methodology

- Case Study
- Ethnography, participant observation, performance ethnography
- Phenomenology, ethnomethodology
- Grounded theory
- Life history, *testimonia*
- Discourse Analysis
- Action and applied research

Methods of collecting data

- Interviewing
- Observing
- Artifacts, documents, and records
- Visual methods
- Personal experience
- Focus groups

Trustworthiness

Are these findings sufficiently authentic (trustworthy, related to the way others construct their social worlds) that I can trust myself to act on their implications; to implement policy or legislation based on them?

- No method can deliver absolute truth

Trustworthiness

- Internal validity – credibility
 - ‘truth value’ – field/personal journal; tape recording, thematic log, auditing transcript – purposeful sampling, constant comparison, member checking, triangulation, audit trail.
- External validity – transferability – fittingness – simultaneous literature review – purposeful sampling, ‘thick’ description

Rigor/Trustworthiness

- Reliability – dependability – auditability – consistency – field journal, transcript, - triangulation, peer review, audit trail
- Objectivity – confirmability – neutrality – field journal, audit trail

Sampling

- No hard or fast rules
- 10-20 (data sources) when looking for disconfirming evidence or trying to achieve maximum variation (some say 12-20)
- Purposeful
- Data saturation
- Storing Data

Conclusion

- Many constructs of qualitative research
- Continues to evolve
- Not just one 'qualitative research'

Conclusion

Qualitative 'truth'

'Truth' lies in gaining an understanding of the action, beliefs and values of others, from within the participant's frame of reference. This frame is believed to have been socially and historically constructed, and to be delimited by the researcher's views, context and time.

'Truth' lies in the reality constructed by the interaction of the researcher and the researched.

References

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