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**QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IN EDUCATION**

**ABSTRACT:** Qualitative research is exploratory as its purpose is to discover new ideas and insights or even generate new theories. It focuses on understanding the particular and the distinctive and does not necessarily seek to generalize findings to other contexts. Researcher do not define specific research questions at the outset of the study, as doing so would likely impose their own framework on the research context. Collecting, analyzing and interpreting data are done largely simultaneously, with researcher constantly moving back and forth until new information does not add to their understanding of a topic, a point called data saturation. In fact data analysis steers data collection. Five stages of doing qualitative research; a) Choosing research sites and sample populations; b) Obtaining and encoding qualitative data (taking field notes); c) Preparing for and under taking focused interviews; d) Developing and maintaining field relations; and e) Organizing and analyzing the qualitative data gathered.

**Keywords:** qualitative research, methodology, and education

**METODOLOGI PENELITIAN KUALITATIF DALAM PENDIDIKAN**

**ABSTRAK:** Penelitian kualitatif adalah sebuah eksplorasi dengan tujuan untuk menemukan ide-ide baru dan wawasan atau bahkan menghasilkan teori-teori baru. Ini berfokus pada pemahaman tertentu dan khas dan tidak selalu berusaha untuk mengeneralisasi penemuan-penemuan dengan konteks lainnya. Peneliti tidak menentukan pertanyaan penelitian yang spesifik pada awal penelitian, seperti memaksakan kerangka kerja mereka sendiri pada konteks penelitian. Mengumpulkan, menganalisa dan menafsirkan data dilakukan sebagian besar secara bersamaan, dengan peneliti terus bergerak bolak-balik sampai tidak ada penambahan informasi baru pada topik mereka, pendapat tersebut disebut *saturation data*. Penelitian kualitatif telah diidentifikasi menjadi 5 tahapan, yaitu: a) Memilih lokasi penelitian dan penentuan populasi/sampel; b) Mendapatkan dan menyandi data kualitatif (mengambil catatan lapangan); c) Mempersiapkan dan melakukan wawancara yang terfokus; d) Mengembangkan dan mempertahankan hubungan lapangan; e) Mengorganisir dan menganalisis data kualitatif.

**Kata Kunci:** peneltian kualitatif, metodologi, dan pendidikan

**INTRODUCTION**

Qualitative research design un umbrella term for case studies, ethnography, grounded theory, document analysis, and action research. It has its root in a number of different disciplines such us anthropology, philosophy, and sociology. Even though in different branches of qualitative research approaches to conduct research vary, in data collection, to a varying degree some observation of the case in the setting, informal to semi-formal interviewing, open-response questionnaire items, verbal reports, diaries, and discourse analysis are used. The are two main question researchers are: what is reality? What is knowledge? How they tackle these questions is shaped by their view of

the world. In social sciences a number of generally accepted models have been developed that articulate the conceptual frames. They are called research paradigms. There are two main paradigms of research: Quantitative (positivistic) and Qualitative (constructivists). Even though they adopt different approaches to conduct research, they are not mutually exclusive.

Qualitative researchers believe that these is only ne fixed, agreed upon reality. So research must strive to fine a singular universal truth. They see the world as real, as something that exists independently of themselves. They believe that is reality can be quantified and the purpose of research is

to measure it as precisely as possible. They also believe that any truths they discover about that reality are equally applicable to other situations and groups, regardless of the context. Their primary aim is to formulate hypotheses that will allow them to make predictions or inferences about other contexts. The role of the researchers is to be detached and “objective” both in gathering the data and interpretation of the finding.

They adherents of qualitative research believe that there is no universally agreed upon reality or universal truth. Meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world. There are multiple constructions (of truth) and multiple interpretations of reality. And these constructions and interpretations change, depending on time and circumstances. Reality is not universal but person context, and time bound. Qualitative researchers believe that objective reality can never be fully understood or discovered and there are many possible ways of looking at reality. As qualitative researchers believe that meaning is socially constructed, their research focus is on the participants. That is how participants experience and interact with the phenomenon at a given point in time and in a particular context and the multiple meanings it has for them. Qualitative researchers recognize that the setting are complex, dynamic, and multifaceted. They focus on understanding the process of what is going on in a setting. Qualitative researchers position themselves closely to the participants to endeavor to see the world as their participants do. This *insider* point of view is termed the *emic perspective*; and not the researcher or *outsider* point of view which is also called *the etic view*. Qualitative researchers use participants own terms and concepts to describe their worlds when analyzing data and finding.

By employing the multiple data collection methods researchers make the world visible in a different way to get a fuller, richer picture of the participants’ perspective through thick description (Hammersley, 1986). They use interpretative analysis to sift through their data and group similar ideas together, to discover patterns of behavior and thinking. The data researcher collect permits them to paint a richly descriptive picture of their participants’ own words to augment the researcher’s vivid description and clear interpretation.

In qualitative research the subjectivity of the researcher cannot be ignored as the researcher is the primary research instrument. Researchers themselves collect the data by directly observing or interviewing the participants and interpreting data.

So analysis in qualitative research is called *interpretative analysis*. Gender, age, ethnicity, cultural background, sexual orientation, politics, religious beliefs, and life experiences are the lenses through which they see their research. They use the process of triangulation-obtaining different perspective on a phenomenon by gathering data from different participants and using a variety of data collection methods like observations, interviews and questionnaires.

## QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PARADIGM

Qualitative research paradigm is an umbrella term which subscribes to a phenomenological, inductive, holistic, subjective process-oriented and social anthropological world view. This paradigm and its variants have emerged in reaction to the dominant positivistic approach and have many common elements. Qualitative methodology is an “inductive approach to data analysis, extracting its concept from the mass of particular detail that constitutes the data base. Qualitative inquiry aims to understand the inner perspective and meaning of actions and events being studied. One of the most important aspects of qualitative research is its concern with context and experience as it is ‘lived’, ‘felt’ or ‘undergone’. A qualitative design is holistic and looks at relationships within a system or culture in order to understand a given social setting rather than making predictions about it. To understand a setting well the researchers as the key instrument of observation stays there over a period of time and enjoys protracted face to face interaction with the people being researched. Qualitative research recognizes that social research is a human construction, framed and presented within a particular set of discourses and conducted in a social context with certain sorts of social arrangement. Qualitative research strategies offer opportunities to examine issues in depth that may yield a clear understanding of what is happening in certain circumstances.

### Main Elements of Qualitative Research

Miles and Huberman (1994) identify the following main elements of qualitative research: 1) Qualitative research is conducted through an intense and/or prolonged contact with a ‘field’ or life situation. These situations are typically normal ones, reflective of everyday life of individuals, groups, societies and organizations; 2) In qualitative research researcher is an integral part of the process. Researcher is viewed as an instrument through which data collection and analysis are conducted. The researcher’s role is to gain a holistic overview

of the context under study: its logic, its instruments, its explicit and implicit rules; 3) The researcher attempts to capture data on the perceptions of local actors 'from the inside', through a process of deep attentiveness, of empathetic understanding of the topic under discussion; 4) A main task is to explicate the ways people in particular settings come to understand, account for. Take action, and otherwise manage their day to day situations; 5) Many interpretations of the collected material are possible, but some are more compelling for theoretical reasons of on grounds of internal consistency; 6) Relatively little standardized instrumentation is used at the outset. The researcher is essentially the main 'measurement device' in the study; 7) Most analysis is done with words. The words can be assembled, sub-clustered, broken into semiotic segments. They can be organized to permit the researcher to contrast, compare, and analyze. Characteristics of qualitative research: 1) Qualitative mode of every human emphasizes the irreplicability of the research process and product because every human experience is viewed as unique and truth is viewed as relative; 2) Qualitatively inclined researchers rarely assign numerical values to their observations but prefer instead to record their data in the language of their subjects; 3) The actual words of the subjects are thought to be critical to the process of conveying systems of the participants which eventually become the interpreted result of the research.

### **Doing Qualitative Research**

Qualitative researchers have identified five stages of doing qualitative research: 1) Choosing research sites and sample populations; 2) Obtaining and encoding qualitative data (taking field notes); 3) Preparing for and undertaking focused interviews; 4) Developing and maintaining field relations; 5) Organizing and analyzing the qualitative data gathered

#### **Choosing research sites and sample populations**

Because qualitative research is a lengthy process, the researcher may not be able to study more than one or two sites (e.g. classroom) given the time and money constraints. Therefore, site should be chosen with care, relying on purposive sampling techniques. After selecting the site, the researcher must decide which elements of the population at the site will be studied in depth. After deciding the sample population the researcher must *cultivate informants* or individual who will agree to be interviewed to describe their views. Informants must represent a good cross section of the sample

population. Researcher should take care not to limit himself/herself to informants who represent only one faction. Key informants should be identified with care and such informants can be very valuable to provide useful information before going.

#### **Obtaining and encoding qualitative data**

Data obtained from focused interviews constitute only one part of the field data. Even to the field the researcher should collect a great deal of background information from various sources. To keep track of what is going on and organize the observations in some meaningful form researcher should take comprehensive notes. By doing so, the researcher moves from *microscopic social phenomena to macroscopic phenomena* (Lofland, 1984). Categorization of events allows the researcher to "see both forest and trees and allows to make sense of what is observed (Rubin, 1983,p.352). Observed events during research make more sense because then s/he is able to categorize the events and give meaning to each one. Get not down as quickly as possible, if you cannot record conversations or event verbatim, jot down an outline of what happened. As soon as the opportunity present itself, transcribe the jottings into full and coherent versions of observations.

#### **Preparing for and undertaking focused interviews**

In focused interviews no uniform set of question is prepared, but the interviewer does try to limit the interview to certain topics of interest to the research project. Because each respondent may have different amounts of knowledge as well as different viewpoint about the topics, the questions in a focused interview will vary from person to person, as will the way the questions are phrased and ordered. To conduct focused interview the following tips may be useful; Try to understand why a person is permitting you to conduct the interview; keep in mind that the physical setting of the interview can effect the validity of the responses; recognize that the way the interview is recorded can affect the validity of the responsive; have clearly in mind the kind of information you wish to obtain; let your respondents know that you are knowledgeable about the subject; learn to cope with lies; keep the interview flowing and on track; make it all right for the respondents to answer; be careful how you word your questions; remember the first question is by far the most important one; probes are important and whenever possible interview key informants more than once.

### **Developing and maintaining field relations**

1) *Getting the right foot in the door.* Getting involved with the group you wish to study takes a careful preparation. 2) *Don't go in cold.* Read everything that you can about the social situation you plan to study; 3) *Use personal linkages.* If you know someone within the organization or group you wish to study, use the friendship to your advantage to gain credibility. Be careful, however, not to rely too much on this linkage person. She/he may be the marginal member of the group; 4) *When studying an organization try to gain multiple entry points.* Let the people at different organizational levels know who you are and what you are up to right away to keep stories from arising that you are some sort of a management spy or efficiency expert.

Be honest but ambiguous about your research goals. At the beginning of a qualitative research project, you cannot be completely certain of just what it is that is important to study. Don't commit yourself too narrowly; you may need to change your research hypotheses along the way.

### **Organizing and analyzing the qualitative data gathered**

#### **Data gathering in qualitative research**

In most qualitative research data are gathered through participant observation, case studies, and interviews. Data consist of verbal descriptions of social processes and behaviors rather than numbers and statistics. In participant observation the researcher studies an organization or a group by becoming a part of that organization or group. This involvement can be open or disguised. Sometimes, the person doing the research is already a member of the group. Ethically, it may seem better to make it clear to group members who you are and what you intend to do. Once the researcher is accepted as a bona fide member of the group, she/he may change the interaction of the group by his/her interaction with it.

Focused interview is a way of gathering qualitative data by asking respondent specific questions concerning social processes or behaviors of interest. A focused interview is an open ended approach where the respondents are free to answer the question in his/her own words. Although the researcher would have worked out in advance the particular topics that will be raised in the questions, the questions themselves are not written down in a formal questionnaire. The topics raised in the focused interview would vary from individual to individual.

A focused interview is not a normal rambling

chat; topics for inclusion in the interview must be worked out before hand. Respondent's answers may be recorded by taking notes either during the interview or directly afterwards, or with a tape recorder. Because of the time constraints in applied research, the focused interview is often the major data gathering tool. Participant observation, which would permit more detailed data to be gathered, is not possible, given the time frame, but skillfully done focused interview can provide valuable insight into social processes.

#### **Analyzing qualitative data**

Analyzing qualitative data requires understanding how to make sense of text and images in order to answer the research questions. At the end of a fieldwork there is huge quantity of data in the form of field notes. After completing the first round of interviews the researcher starts the process of analyzing his/her qualitative data. Now start organizing data into categories of interest. Also, categorize the events that took place during research. As you read the written notes write some note in the margins and get the first impression of emerging themes.

Creswell (2004) suggests six steps are taken to analyze qualitative data: 1) It is inductive in form, going from particular to the detailed data to the general codes and themes. Although the initial analysis consists of sub-dividing the data, the final goal is to generate a large, consolidated picture; 2) It involves a simultaneous process of analyzing while you are also collecting data; 3) The phases are also iterative, in which you cycle back and forth between data collection and analysis; 4) Qualitative researchers analyze their data by reading several times and conducting an analysis each time so as to develop deeper understanding of the data; 5) There is no single, accepted approach to analyzing qualitative data. It is an eclectic approach; 6) It is interpretative research in which you make a personal assessment as to a description that fits the situation or themes that capture the major categories.

In qualitative research data collection and analysis are a simultaneous process. Qualitative data are emergent. Hunches, working hypotheses and educated guesses direct the investigator's attention to certain data and then to refining and/or verifying one's hunches. In the initial stage data will reveal certain themes, patterns, categories of events and activities.

The process of data collection and data analysis is recursive and dynamic. Data analysis is an ongoing process but there is a difference. Data analysis which is done during fieldwork is called *infor-*

*mal analysis* and the *data analysis* which done after most of the data are called *formal analysis*. Data analysis becomes more intensive once all the data are in. Without on-going analysis one runs the risk of ending up with data that are unfocused, repetitive, and overwhelming in sheer volume of material that needs to be processed. Each time field notes are added it is helpful to put observer's comments in order to stimulate critical thinking on what is being recorded. Write memos about what is emerging. These memos provide time to issues, events in the setting. While in the field for a while, going through the substantive literature in the area enhances analysis, metaphors, analogies, and concepts are used in data analysis.

### CONCLUSION

Although anthropologists and sociologists have been using qualitative methodology for more

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- than 100 years, researchers in the field of education adopted methods drawn from the natural sciences and psychology. It was not until the 1990s qualitative research was adopted in education because there was a growing dissatisfaction with educational research based on quantitative studies alone. Interest in qualitative research methodology since the 1990s has increased markedly. Qualitative research certainly does not represent a unified set of techniques and has grown out of a wide range of intellectual and disciplinary traditions. Qualitative methodology recognizes that social research is a human construction, framed and presented within a particular set of discourses and conducted in a social context with certain sorts of social arrangement.