

## Conceptual Framework on Qualitative Research Design

Dr. Mangalapalli Tirumalesh<sup>1\*</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Qualitative research attempts to broaden and/or deepen our understanding of how things came to be the way they are in our social world. If the research question involves exploring how people experience something, or what their views are, exploring a new area where issues are not yet understood or properly identified. A qualitative research design is probably the most flexible of the various experimental techniques, encompassing a variety of accepted methods and structures. Here, five of the major qualitative research designs namely ethnography, phenomenology, case study, grounded theory, and narrative research has introduced. Description of all five qualitative research designs are given separately. The design of qualitative research provides for the learner to understand the difference between phenomenology and grounded theory or between ethnography and case study and also narrative research and it gives the knowledge about itself.

**Keywords:** *Qualitative Research, Ethnography, Phenomenology, Case Study, Grounded Theory, Narrative Research*

Common sense and research both involve an attempt to understand various aspects of the world. However research, but arguably not common sense, involves an explicit, systematic approach to finding things out, often through a process of testing out preconceptions and researchers working in the social sciences: psychology, sociology, anthropology etc., interested in studying human behaviour and the social world inhabited by human beings, found increasing difficulty in trying to explain human behaviour in quantifiable, measurable terms.

Qualitative research attempts to broaden and/or deepen our understanding of how things came to be the way they are in our social world. If the research question involves exploring how people experience something, or what their views are, exploring a new area where issues are not yet understood or properly identified (e.g. before developing questionnaire items), assessing whether a new service is implementable, looking at 'real-life' context, or a sensitive topic where you need the flexibility to avoid causing distress, your team probably needs to discuss using qualitative methodology.

---

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department Of Psychology, Value Education Cell, KL University, Vaddeswaram, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, India

[\\*Responding Author](#)

**Received: May 6, 2019; Revision Received: June 13, 2019; Accepted: June 28, 2019**

© 2019, Tirumalesh. M.; licensee IJIP. This is an Open Access Research distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License ([www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0](http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0)), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any Medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

## Conceptual Framework on Qualitative Research Design

The purpose of this resource pack is to enable health and social care professionals with little or no previous experience of research to gain a basic understanding of qualitative research and the potential for this type of research in health care.

### *Design of qualitative research*

The design of qualitative research is probably the most flexible of the various experimental techniques, encompassing a variety of accepted methods and structures. Though there is no standardized structure, this type of study still needs to be carefully constructed and designed. Researchers need to continually ensure they are conducting bias-free, open-ended technique and staying alert to potential sources of error. This usually involves awareness of bias and deep sensitivity to the phenomenon in question. Qualitative research design is a research method used extensively by scientists and researchers studying human behaviour, opinions, themes, and motivations.

five major types of qualitative research design are the most commonly used. They are:

- Ethnography
- Phenomenology
- Case Study
- Grounded Theory
- Narrative

### *Ethnography*

Ethnography is a qualitative research study looking at the social interaction of users in a given environment. This research provides an in-depth insight into the user's views and actions along with the sights and sounds they encounter during their day. It provides the researcher with an understanding of how those users see the world and how they interact with everything around them. Ethnography methods include direct observation, diary studies, video recordings, photography and artifact analysis such as devices that a person uses throughout the day. Observations can be made anywhere from the user's workplace, their home or while they are out with family and friends. The length of the studies can vary depending on the research that is being conducted. They can range from a couple of hours of observation to studies that last several months. There are two methods for observation:

#### *1.Passive observation*

A passive observation which can also be known as 'shadowing' is where a user or users are shadowed while they go about their everyday tasks observed by a researcher. Sometimes before the research begins, users will be interviewed on their own or in groups to learn more about them and their needs. Observations will be documented throughout the day using a number of methods such as taking notes, photographs, sketches or videos. The research may be conducted as part of a team so that a larger number of users can be observed and therefore gaining a greater insight quickly. This observation method is a good way for researchers to see how users go about their day first hand and identify any disconnections of when the user tells the researcher one thing but actually interacts in another way.

#### *2. Contextual interviews*

Contextual interviews are where the researcher will interact with users while observing them going about their everyday tasks. The interviews will be held in a natural environment, so as not to feel too formal. The researcher will observe the user going about their everyday tasks and ask questions to gain insight.

### ***Phenomenology***

Phenomenology is a qualitative research method that is used to describe how human beings experience a certain phenomenon. ... It allows the researcher to delve into the perceptions, perspectives, understandings, and feelings of those people who have actually experienced or lived the phenomenon or situation of interest.

Phenomenological research is typically conducted through the use of in-depth interviews of small samples of participants. By studying the perspectives of multiple participants, a researcher can begin to make generalizations regarding what it is like to experience a certain phenomenon from the perspective of those that have lived the experience.

*Following is a list of the main characteristics of phenomenology research:*

- It seeks to understand how people experience a particular situation or phenomenon.
- It is conducted primarily through in-depth conversations and interviews; however, some studies may collect data from diaries, drawings, or observation.
- Small samples sizes, often 10 or less participants, are common in phenomenological studies.
- Interview questions are open-ended to allow the participants to fully describe the experience from their own viewpoint.
- Phenomenology is centered on the participants' experiences with no regard to social or cultural norms, traditions, or preconceived ideas about the experience.
- It focuses on these four aspects of a lived experience: lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived human relations.
- Data collected is qualitative and analysis includes an attempt to identify themes or make generalizations regarding how a particular phenomenon is actually perceived or experienced.

### **CASE STUDY**

Case study research refers to an in-depth, detailed study of an individual or a small group of individuals. Such studies are typically qualitative in nature, resulting in a narrative description of behaviour or experience. Case study research is not used to determine cause and effect, nor is it used to discover generalizable truths or make predictions. Rather, the emphasis in case study research is placed on exploration and description of a phenomenon. The main characteristics of case study research are that it is narrowly focused, provides a high level of detail, and is able to combine both objective and subjective data to achieve an in-depth understanding.

There are several types of case study methods. The method selected depends upon the nature of the question being asked and the goals of the researcher. Following is a list of the different types of case studies:

- Illustrative – This type of method is used to “illustrate” or describe an event or situation in such a way that people can become more familiar with the topic in question and perhaps become acquainted with the terminology associated with the topic.
- Exploratory – This method is a condensed case study and the purpose is to gather basic, initial data that could be used to identify a particular question for a larger study. This study is not designed to produce detailed data from which any conclusions could be drawn. It is simply exploratory in nature.

## Conceptual Framework on Qualitative Research Design

- Cumulative – The cumulative method is designed to pull together information for several events/situations and aggregate it in such a way that it allows for greater generalization. It has the advantage of saving time and money by not creating new and repetitive studies.
- Critical Instance – These studies are used to examine situations of unique interest or to challenge a universal or generalized belief. Such studies are not to create new generalizations. Rather, several situations or events may be examined to raise questions or challenge previously held assertions.

### ***Grounded theory***

The grounded theory refers to a set of systematic inductive methods for conducting qualitative research aimed toward theory development. The term grounded theory denotes dual referents: (a) a method consisting of flexible methodological strategies and (b) the products of this type of inquiry. Increasingly, researchers use the term to mean the methods of inquiry for collecting and, in particular, analyzing data.

Grounded theory has considerable significance because it (a) provides explicit, sequential guidelines for conducting qualitative research; (b) offers specific strategies for handling the analytic phases of inquiry; (c) streamlines and integrates data collection and analysis; (d) advances conceptual analysis of qualitative data; and (e) legitimizes qualitative research as scientific inquiry.

### ***Narrative research:***

Narrative research is a term that subsumes a group of approaches that in turn rely on the written or spoken words or visual representation of individuals. These approaches typically focus on the lives of individuals as told through their own stories. The emphasis in such approaches is on the story, typically both what and how is narrated. Narrative research can be considered both a research method in itself but also the phenomenon under study.

Narrative methods can be considered “real world measures” that are appropriate when “real life problems” are investigated. In a basic linear approach, they encompass the study of the experiences of a single individual embracing stories of life and exploring the learned significance of those individual experiences. However, in most cases, one will be creating an aggregate of narratives each bearing on the others.

Narrative research is set out by the validation of the audience. It is a useful part of the social science investigation, but may not always stand alone for evidence and support for the conclusions of a report. Whether or not it is a part of a great presentation or whether it is a stand-alone piece of research, it has to be accepted on its own merits as individual experience and the interpretation of thereof. The question arises as to the accuracy of the story looked at objectively even though it must be viewed in its socio-cultural context. The narrative gives one's individual view to be accessed on its merits. Such validation is possible by corroboration from another narrative.

## **CONCLUSION**

## Conceptual Framework on Qualitative Research Design

Here we discussed the four types of qualitative research designs. These various qualitative research designs do not form a comprehensive list and some research methods can be applied with either a qualitative or a quantitative orientation. The language of qualitative research is somewhat difficult for the beginner researcher to understand the notion used in its design. It is very clear that the differences between the assorted qualitative research designs can be difficult to understand at first. The differences are somewhat slight and are mainly concerned with the original research question, the people or situations being studied and the way the data is analyzed, interpreted and presented. It is very easy for the learner to understand the difference between phenomenology and grounded theory or between ethnography and case study. The main purpose of the various qualitative research designs is to provide the appropriate knowledge about the different qualitative methodologies and what the terms mean.

### REFERENCES

- Bent Flyvbjerg, (2011). "Case Study" in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 4th Edition (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage), pp. 301- 316.
- Hancock B., Windridge K., and Ockleford E (2007). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. The NIHR RDS EM / YH
- Mason J (2002). *Qualitative Researching* (2nd edn) London: Sage Publications.
- McMillan, J. H. & Schumacher, S. (1993). *Research in education: A conceptual understanding*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Robson C (2002) *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner Researchers*, 2nd edn Oxford: Blackwell.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin J. (1998) *Basic of Qualitative Research: Technique and Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (2nd Edition) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

### Acknowledgment

The authors profoundly appreciate all the people who have successfully contributed to ensuring this paper in place. Their contributions are acknowledged however their names cannot be mentioned.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors carefully declare this paper to bear not a conflict of interests

**How to cite this article:** Tirumalesh. M. (2019). Conceptual Framework on Qualitative Research Design. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 7(2), 621-625. DIP:18.01.075/20190702, DOI:10.25215/0702.075