

SOME QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STRATEGIES

Narrative research

This is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals by asking one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives. This information is then often retold or restoried by the researcher into a narrative chronology. In the end, the narrative combines views from the participant's life with those of the researcher's life in a collaborative narrative.

Phenomenology

The phenomenological approach (which goes back to Husserl and then Heidegger) aims to develop a complete, accurate, clear and articulate description and understanding of a particular human experience or experiential moment. It achieves its goal through methods of participant selection, solicitation of information, systematic data treatment, and assembling of interview components into a final report. Schutz (1962, p. 59): 'The world of nature, as explored by the natural scientist, does not 'mean' anything to the molecules, atoms and electrons. But the observational field of the social scientist – social reality – has a specific meaning and reference structure for the human beings living, acting and thinking within it.'

Grounded Theory

This concept (as developed by Glaser, Strauss, Corbin, and their co-workers) uses inductive strategies for analyzing data. The researcher begins with NO pre-existing theory, hypothesis, or expectation of findings but rather permits a theory to emerge directly from the data – the theory is grounded IN the data. The aim is to develop adequate theoretical conceptualizations of findings. The researcher begins with individual cases (chosen purposely, not randomly), collects AND analyzes data simultaneously, conceptualizes from the beginning, and allows findings and conceptualizations to grow in relation to each other and cross-fertilize.

Ethnography

'The ethnographer participates overtly or covertly in people's daily lives for extended periods of time watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions. In fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on issues with which he or she is concerned' (Hammersly & Atkinson 1983, p. 2).

Case Study

In this strategy, the researcher explores in depth one or more individuals, or a program, event, activity, process. Case observations are bounded by time and activity. Researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time.

References:

- Creswell, John W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*, 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Hammersly, M. & Atkinson, P. (1983) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. Tavistock: London.
- Schutz, Alfred. (1962) In M. Natanson, ed. *Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality*. Nijhoff: The Hague.