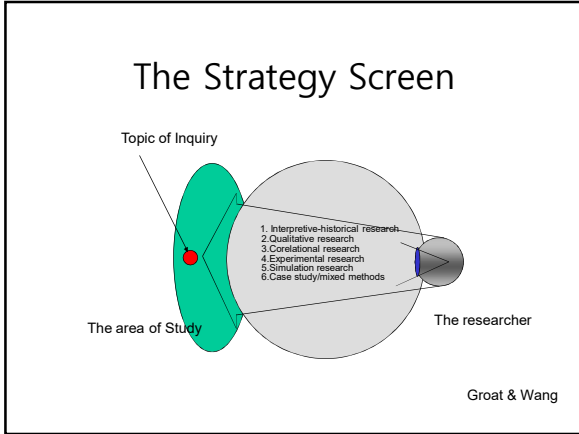


Qualitative Research
 Methodology, strategy, method and techniques

2 – Ethnography



Qualitative Research

- **Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that 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. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials.**
 -(Denzin and Yvonne Lincoln)

Qualitative Research

- **Qualitative research has**
 - **Emphasis on natural settings**
 - Objects of enquiry in their natural settings
 - **A focus on interpretation and meaning**
 - The important role of the researcher and his/her subjective constructions, researcher as the main measurement device.
 - **A focus on how the respondents make sense of their own circumstances**
 - Looking at the object through other eyes & minds
 - **The use of multiple Tactics**
 - Bricolage

Qualitative Research

- Three Qualitative “approaches” or strategies
 - Grounded Theory or Substantive Theory
 - Ethnography
 - Phenomenology
 - Interpretivism
 - Hermeneutics

Ethnography

- Initially from field of anthropology, now used in study of sociology, **organization studies**, education, culture
- Emphasis in study of an entire culture, holistic, and in situ/field.
 - Focus on finding meanings and functions of human action
 - Not aiming at an explanatory theory that can be applied to many settings (like in Grounded Theory) but a richer and fuller description of a particular setting
 - Immersion of the researcher in particular context and bring out how the ones living in the context interpret their situation
- Originally, culture was notionally tied to ethnicity and geographic location > now broadened to include virtually any group or organization, cf. study the “culture” of business or defined group/ Rotary club
- Mode of data collection is **PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION**

Ethnography

- **Ethnography**
 - Is a description of Social groups or situations. Behavior and Shared beliefs of the group.
 - Explains a cultural belief and behavior pattern from within
 - A reliance on unstructured data and a focus on a case. Seeks human meanings as central interpretations
- Can be used to study any well defined environment such as A Classroom, A football team, A Company, A Club etc. and study it from within and possibly with empathy/sympathy towards the studied group, its members and its faiths and beliefs, rules of organization and being together etc.
 - Full cooperation of the group being studied is essential
 - Phenomenology as a theory is dominant in Ethnographic research

Data Collection Techniques

- **Participant Observation**
- Most common technique for qualitative data collection, one of the most demanding
- Requires the researcher become a participant in the culture or context being observed.
- How to enter the context, the role of the researcher as a participant, the collection and storage of field notes, and the analysis of field data.
- Participant observation often requires months or years of intensive work because the researcher needs to become accepted as a natural part of the culture in order to assure that the observations are of the natural phenomenon.

Data Collection Techniques

- **Participant Observation**
 - Researcher becomes immersed in the culture as an active participant and records extensive field notes.
 - No preset limiting of what will be observed
 - No real ending point in an ethnographic study.

Box 6.1 The problem of e-moderating

A university is to introduce tutoring by e-mail (e-moderating) on one of its modules. Seminar groups and tutorials are to be replaced by online group discussions and e-mail communication between students and tutors. This is not a distance learning module. All students are expected to attend lectures in the usual way. The module attracts around 170 students and is run by four tutors. Each student submits two pieces of coursework which count towards the final mark; coursework submission, marking and feedback are all to be conducted using e-mail. While two of the tutors are very enthusiastic about this change, the other two are unsure about the costs and benefits to themselves and to their students. The researchers set out to find out what happens, and why, when the change is introduced.

How do we do this using Ethnography?

- Study the approaches, preparedness, concerns and attitude of the four tutors as individual teachers, as a part of the academic department and as part of the administrative organization. How they did as tutors?
- Study the students and how they are doing, the new system and their learning progress and feeling about the new methods, their concerns about scores. Select cases.
- Study the actual flow of comments and discussions and compare merits/demerits to the class room and seminar presentations, etc
- Read the reference book

Qualitative Research

Strategy, methodology, method and techniques

3 - Phenomenology

Qualitative Research

- **Phenomenology**
 - philosophical perspective as well as an approach to qualitative methodology
 - Used in social research disciplines including psychology, sociology, development, urban planning and social work
 - Emphasizes a focus on people's subjective experiences and interpretations of the world
 - The phenomenologist wants to understand how the world appears to others.

Ontological Position

- Experience of the researched – those who live a phenomena
- **PHENOMENOLOGY**
 - Seeks to understanding the world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it

Epistemology

- **Interpretivism**
- **Going beyond the empirical realities of observations** and interpreting and making sense of the data
- Objective interpretation of a subjective human experience
- Takes similar course to 'emplotment' and literary view in interpretive-historical research

Qualitative Research

- ***Hermeneutics: Understanding through Interpretation***
 - *Difference between Understanding and Knowing!*
 - Material and message
 - Material and meaning
 - Perspective of the viewer/receiver/analyst
 - The role of Body of knowledge outside of the data (body of used knowledge)
 - Being Conscious of pre-conceptions
 - The part's role in defining the whole/ whole's role in elucidating the part
 - Openness of interpretation > revision expecting stance

Literature and Content Analysis

- *What was intended and what is understood*
 - *Literature of all times?*
 - values of the writer (poet, etc.) in the work
 - values of the receiver in the analysis/interpretation
- सडक किनारा गाउ छ ईश्वर चराहको तानामा,
बोल्दछ ईश्वर मानिसहरूको पीडा, दुखको गानामा,
दरीन किन्तु कही दि दैन चर्मचुँले कानामा
कुन मन्दिरमा जाँने? यात्री, कुन नवदेरा विरानामा,

Qualitative Research

- **Action Research**
 - Research in active cooperation of the researched group
 - Facts and meanings being researched and ideas put to test in parallel
 - to gain a greater degree of cooperation and
 - to delve deeper into the theme

The process of Qualitative Research

- The key steps and the Interactive relationship between
 - Data collection
 - Data reduction/coding
 - Data display
 - Conclusion drawing/verifying

Data Collection Techniques

- Participant Observation
- Interactive Interviews
 - In-depth Unstructured Interviewing
 - Key informants interviews
 - Case histories
- Focus Groups
 - Guided discussions in small groups
 - questions reconstructed to suit groups

Data Collection Techniques

- **Direct Observation**
- Distinguished from participant observation
 - First, a direct observer is not 'a participant' but an unobtrusive external but direct observer so as not to bias the observations.
 - Second, it has a more detached perspective > watches rather than takes part > Technology such as videotape, one-way mirrors can be a useful
 - Third, it is more focused than participant observation as it samples certain situations or people rather than the entire context.
 - Finally, it does not take as long as participant observation.

Data Collection Techniques

- **Unstructured Interviewing**
- Unstructured interviewing involves direct interaction between the researcher and a respondent or group: cf. structured interviews
- Some initial guiding questions or core concepts to ask about but no formal structured instrument or protocol > interviewer free to move the conversation in any direction of interest that may come up > so particularly useful for exploring a topic broadly

Data Collection Techniques

- **Unstructured Interviewing**
- Because each interview tends to be unique with no predetermined set of questions asked of all respondents, it is usually more difficult to analyze unstructured interview data, especially when synthesizing across respondents.

Data Collection Techniques

- **In-Depth Interviews/FGDs**
- In-Depth Interviews include both individual interviews (e.g., one-on-one) as well as "group" interviews (including focus groups) > may be recorded as audio, video clips or written notes
- Differs from direct observation primarily in the nature of the interaction > questioner and interviewee situation created to probe the ideas of the interviewees about the phenomenon of interest.

Data Reduction/Coding

- Qualitative research data: long interview transcripts, notes, sketches or photographs
- Reduction/coding
 - Is reducing them in volume and into manageable “chunks”
 - Chunks of themes, notes in margin, highlighted and graphic linkage
 - Make and follow a scheme of codes that could be framed from out of one’s research objectives/questions

Data Display

- Qualitative data is displayed as
 - Charts, Graphs or Tables - they should display the data and be directed by the analytical process
 - Maps and Diagrams
 - Check-list matrix
 - Quite a few data displays may go as appendix

Drawing conclusions

- Identifying patterns and providing explanations: Tactics for generating meanings

Descriptive	Noting patterns, themes
	Seeing plausibility
	Clustering
	Making Metaphors
Analytical	Counting
	Making contrasts/comparisons
	Partitioning variables
	Noting relation between variables
Explanatory	Subsuming particulars into the general
	Building a logical chain of evidence
	Making conceptual/theoretical coherence

Verifying: testing or confirming findings

Data quality	Checking for representativeness
	Checking for researcher effects
	Triangulation
	Weighting the evidence
Looking at Unpatterns	Checking the meaning of outliers
	Using extreme cases
	Following up surprises
	Looking for negative evidence
Testing explanations	Making if-then tests
	Ruling out spurious relations
	Replicating a finding
	Checking out rival explanations
Testing with feedback	Getting feedback from informants

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths	Weaknesses
Capacity to take in rich and holistic qualities of real life circumstances	Challenge of dealing with vast quantities of data
Flexibility in design and procedures allowing adjustments in process	Few guidelines or steps-by-step procedures established
Sensitivity to meanings and processes of artifacts and people's activities	The credibility of qualitative data can be seen as suspect with the post-positivist paradigm

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