

Lecture 1

Research Overview

Definition:

- Research is a planned course of action aimed at understanding a phenomenon or answering research questions (Johnston, 2010).

Naturalistic Design

- Naturalistic "if it took place in a real - world setting rather than a laboratory, and whatever was being observed and studied was allowed to happen "naturally. "
- In naturalistic inquiry the investigator does not control or manipulate what is being studied

Key Characteristics:

1. Seeks answers to questions.
2. Utilizes predetermined methods to obtain answers.
3. Collects data.
4. Generates results that are not predetermined.
5. Produces results that can often be applied beyond the immediate study boundaries.

Blueprint for Research:

- A detailed plan for achieving research objectives.
- Finalize research questions before deciding on the research design.
- Logical sequence connecting data to research questions and conclusions.
- Includes study conduct, data type, tools and techniques, sample size, and research setting.

Research Methodology and Methods

Research Methodology:

- The approach justifying the selection and use of certain methods.

Research Methods:

- The means of executing the research.

Qualitative Research

Concept:

- Linked to "Quality" and explores the "How" and "Why" of phenomena.
- Focuses on meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, symbols, and descriptions.
- Provides a holistic view of social phenomena and answers "how" questions rather than "how many".

Characteristics:

1. Understands a research problem from the local population's perspective.
2. Obtains culturally specific information about values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts.
3. Describes people's experiences with a research issue.
4. Offers insights into complex situations (Austin & Sutton, 2014).
5. Studies phenomena within the cultural context or setting in which they occur (Al-Busaidi, 2008).

Descriptors:

- Rich, deep, thick descriptions.
- Concerned with the concepts and unique characteristics of a select group, often not generalizable.

Major Characteristics:

1. Understanding the social phenomenon from participants' perspectives.
2. Focus on process, understanding, and meaning.
3. The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.
4. Inductive process and richly descriptive product.
5. Seeks to understand experiences in their uniqueness and context (Patton, 1985).

Data Collection:

- Field notes, face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and document analysis.
- Data analysis involves continuous reflection, analytic questioning, and memo writing.
- Ensuring confirmability includes considering each researcher's reflective comments to prevent their own biases from affecting analysis.

Inductive Approach:

- Often used when there is a lack of theory or existing theory is insufficient.
- Combines bits of information from various sources into larger themes.
- Richly descriptive outcomes with quotes and excerpts from participants.
- A good qualitative question conveys an emerging design tailored to understanding the meaning of the phenomena being studied.
- Deduction involves reasoning from general principles to particular instances, often seen in quantitative research.

Comparison:

- **Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research**

Qualitative	Quantitative
Inductive	Deductive
Subjective	Objective
Holistic	Variable-focused
Purposeful sampling	Random sampling
Focuses on understanding	Focuses on generalization
Words and pictures	Numbers and statistics
Small samples	Large samples

Research Design

Design Elements:

1. Select topic and problem identification.
2. Justify significance of the study.
3. Design the study and identify subjects.
4. Select study subjects and data (purposive sampling).
5. Analyze data and interpret results.

Feasibility Considerations:

- Staffing, budget, and time constraints.
- Practicality of participant requirements.
- Researcher expertise and scope of the project.

Qualitative Research Characteristics

Trustworthiness Components:

1. Credibility: Confidence in the truth of findings. (VS internal validity)
2. Transferability: Applicability to other contexts. (VS external validity)
3. Dependability: Repeatability of the study. (VS reliability)
4. Confirmability: Representation of participants' views.(VS objectivity)
 - Ensuring transferability involves providing thick, vivid descriptions of the data and context.
 - Research questions in qualitative research may evolve during the study as new insights and data are gathered.
 - Socioeconomic status and DM (likely refers to Diabetes Mellitus) focuses on quantitative measures rather than qualitative understanding.

Criterion	Strategy employed
Credibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prolonged engagement • Peer briefing • Triangulation • Member checks
Transferability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing thick description • Purposive sampling
Dependability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an audit trail • Triangulation
Confirmability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triangulation • Practise reflexivity

Strategies for Rigour:

1. Clear sample descriptions.
2. Explanation of sample selection.
3. Engagement with multiple researchers for coding and discussion.
4. Use of quotations to represent findings.
5. Triangulation and peer review.

Conclusion

Key Points:

- Qualitative research provides deep insights into complex social phenomena.
- Emphasizes understanding from participants' perspectives.
- Employs flexible, emergent design tailored to research goals.
- Findings are richly descriptive and context-specific.

Quiz:

Which of the following is true about qualitative research?

- A. Data are usually collected in a laboratory setting.
- B. Focus is on studying the "whole".
- C. Focus is on generalization.
- D. Qualitative research is deductive.

Correct Answer: B. Focus is on studying the "whole".