Lecture 9 (Sampling in Qualitative Research)

Key Differences Between Quantitative and Qualitative Sampling

- Quantitative Studies: Aim to maximize statistical power through large sample sizes, often stripping subjects of context.

- Qualitative Studies: Typically work with smaller, in-depth cases, allowing for exploration of detailed and rich data.

Sample Sizes in Qualitative Research

- Sample sizes vary by technique but are generally small.

- Involve non-probability sampling with little attempt to generate a representative sample.

- Sampling is iterative, developing and refining during the research process.

Iterative Sampling Process

- Data analysis and interpretation after initial sampling influence further sampling methods and decisions on sample size.

- Sampling continues until data saturation is reached, where no new themes or concepts emerge.

- Iteration allows for ongoing adjustment based on emerging data, making the process dynamic and responsive.

Types of Sampling

1. Probability Sampling (not commonly used in qualitative research)

2. Non-Probability Sampling (commonly used in qualitative research)

Approaches to Sample Selection

1. Non-Conceptually-Driven Approaches:

   - Convenience Sampling: Selecting easily accessible participants or settings.

     - Advantages: Less expensive, less time and effort-intensive.

 - Opportunistic Sampling: Leveraging emerging opportunities during the study.

     - Advantages: Flexible, suitable for exploratory research.

2. Conceptually-Driven Approaches:

   - Purposive/Judgment Sampling: Deliberate selection of participants believed to be most useful.

     - Guided by variables such as demographics, attitudes, or beliefs.

Sampling Strategies in Qualitative Research

Convenience Sampling

- Accessible participants/settings are sampled.

- Advantages: Cost-effective, less time-consuming.

Opportunistic Sampling

- Taking advantage of emerging circumstances during the study.

- Suitable for exploratory research with unknown phenomena.

Purposive/Judgment Sampling

- Deliberate selection based on potential contribution.

- Variables may include demographics, attitudes, or beliefs.

Forms of Purposeful Sampling

1. Maximum Variation (Heterogeneous) Sampling:

   - Recruit participants with diverse characteristics.

   - Identifies central themes across a diverse sample.

2. Homogeneous Sampling:

   - Select participants with similar backgrounds.

   - Simplifies analysis and facilitates group interviewing.

3. Deviant Sampling:

   - Select extreme or outlying cases.

   - Aims to gather detailed information from unique cases.

4. Typical Case Sampling:

   - Focus on average or typical cases.

   - Requires consensus on what constitutes a 'typical' case.

5. Critical Case Sampling:

   - Select cases with maximum generalizability.

   - Information gained can be applied to other cases.

6. Confirming and Disconfirming Sampling:

   - Select cases that align or deviate from expectations.

   - Adds depth and challenges the prevailing narrative.

7. Stratified Purposeful Sampling:

   - Select participants from specific sub-groups.

   - Enables comparison across sub-groups.

8. Snowball/Chain Sampling:

   - Participants recommend other potential candidates.

   - Useful for accessing hard-to-reach populations. Examples include patients with specific health problems like muscular dystrophy, sickle cell anemia, or rheumatoid arthritis.

 Theoretical Sampling

- Guided by the theoretical framework or emerging theory.

- Initial cases have similar characteristics, followed by outlying cases.

- Continues until no new insights are derived.

 Conclusion: Flexibility in Qualitative Sampling

- A flexible research and sampling design is crucial.

- When little is known about a phenomenon, flexible design allows for reflection and preliminary analysis.