Summary

-Qualitative Research Methods-

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Chapter 2: Qualitative Research

The purpose of qualitative research
Qualitative research methods are designed to help understand people and what they say and do. They are designed to understand the social and cultural contexts within which people live. The benefit is that it allows to see and understand the context within which the decision or action takes place. It is argued that it is virtually impossible to understand why someone did something without talking to them about it. This is lost when quantifying the data. The thing that distinguishes humans from the natural world, is their ability to talk. The types of questions that are normally asked are what, why, how and when questions.

The goal of research
Research in university is defined as; “an original investigation undertaken in action to contribute to new knowledge and understandings in a particular field.” It can be seen as a creative activity to produce new knowledge. It involves the enquiry of an empirical or conceptual nature and is conducted by people with specialist knowledge about the subject matter, theories, and methods in a specific field. The only way to tell if the research findings are both sound and original is if those findings are open to scrutiny and formal evaluation by experts in a particular field. This way of evaluating the quality of research in science is called the peer review system.

Qualitative and quantitative research
Quantitative research was developed to study the natural phenomena in natural sciences. There is an emphasis on numbers more than anything else. The numbers come to represent values and levels of theoretical constructs and concepts and the interpretation of the numbers is viewed as strong scientific evidence of how a phenomenon works. Tools and packages are used to analyze the data.
Qualitative research was developed to enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena in social sciences. Qualitative data is mostly a record of what people have said or done. The data helps us to understand people, their motivation and actions, and the broader context in which they work and live.
There used to be a preference for quantitative research, but there was a turning point where the interest in qualitative research increased. Generally, a quantitative approach is best if you want to have a large sample size and you want to generalize that to a large population. A major disadvantage however is that many social and cultural aspects are lost. The context is treated as a noise or something that gets in the way. Qualitative research is used for in-depth and exploratory research. The social, cultural, and political aspects are included. A major disadvantage is that it is difficult to generalize to a larger population.

Qualitative: focus on text	*Quantitative: focus on numbers*
Action research	Surveys
Case study research	Laboratory experiments
Ethnography	Simulation
Grounded theory	Mathematical modeling

Semiotics	Structured equation analysis
Discourse analysis	Statistical analysis
Hermeneutics	Econometrics
Narrative and metaphor	

Ethnography = the scientific description of peoples and cultures with their customs, habits, and mutual differences.
Grounded theory = a systematic methodology in the social sciences involving the construction of theories through methodical gathering and analysis of data.
Semiotics = the study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation.
Discourse analysis = analysis of the language 'beyond the sentence'.
Hermeneutics = the branch of knowledge that deals with interpretation, especially of the Bible or literary texts.

Triangulation
Triangulation is the idea that there should be more than one research method used. This shows a broader perspective on the same topic. It is common that researches triangulate data within a study using just one research method. This is for example an observation and an interview. What is less common is the triangulation of more types of research in one study, this is much harder. It is challenging when the methods are substantially different in their underlying approach. This is for example when combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. An easier way is to include multiple researchers in a single study. This way each researcher brings their own method and experience, there should be mutual respect among the researchers.

Research in business and management
A model of research in business and management can be described as follows: "it is a continuous adaptation of the body of knowledge in a business and management discipline, like theories, concepts, models and believes, on empirical evidence, like qualitative and quantitative data." But also the other way around: "this empirical investigation is opposed to the purely conceptual study. It relies on empirical data from the natural or social world."

Rigorous and relevant research
Rigorous research is usually defined as: "research that meets the standards of scientific research; it is research that has been conducted according to the scientific model of research, subject to peer review, and published in an academic journal."
Relevant research is usually defined as: "research that is immediate relevance to business professionals. The research results can be used right away."

Rigorous research	*Relevant research*
Scientific research	Relevant to business practitioners
Emphasis on meeting scientific standards such as validity and reliability	Emphasis on being immediately relevant to practice
Subject to academic peer review	
Published in academic journals	Published in consulting reports or industry magazines
Theoretical contribution	Physical contribution

Chapter 3: research design

Research design

A ***research design*** is a plan for an entire qualitative research project. Beforehand you should write a research proposal that says what you are going to do. The research design involves deciding upon all components of a research project: philosophical assumptions, research method, data collection technique, approach to qualitative data analysis, approach to writing up and how you plan to publish your findings. It provides a road map to the whole research project. Its research design should be flexible and as research progresses you can change your plan.

Choosing a topic

There are three important requirements in deciding upon a topic:

1. You are interested in the topic
2. A faculty member is prepared to supervise you
3. You can obtain relevant qualitative data on the topic

When you have decided on a topic, the formulation of the research question comes into place. The questions should be asked in such a way that they are answerable empirically. The questions should also be relevant and designed to solve a problem.
To choose a research problem there are multiple steps:

1. Read literature, reflect, discuss and identify gaps
2. Generate list of interesting potential questions
3. Check literature if question is answered already
    a. If this is the case, you should follow steps 1-3 again
    b. If this is not the case, continue to step 4
4. Test the feasibility
5. Eliminate impractical questions
6. Ask whether a suitable problem exists
    a. If this is not the case, you should follow steps 1-5 again
    b. If this is the case continue to move on to the next stage of research design.

Theoretical framework

To make sure your quality of research questions and literature reviews is as high as possible you should make sure that you cite from the top journals in the discipline. Not all sources are created equal. The best place to find a theoretical framework that suits is from the research literature. Although it is believed that qualitative research is more suited to theory-building, qualitative research methods can be used to test theory. This is mostly efficient when researchers have an idea of what to test.
An important distinction to be made is between deductive or inductive reasoning in qualitative research.

Deductive reasoning	*Inductive reasoning*
The researcher starts top-down	The researcher starts bottom-up
The researcher starts with a theory or some hypotheses that they want to test	The researcher starts with empirical data from which they want to build a theory
It is confirmatory	It is exploratory

They can both be used in qualitative research, but ***inductive reasoning*** is more common. Inductive reasoning is more open-ended, where the main purpose is theory-building. ***Deductive reasoning*** is narrower and more constrained.
The deductive line is finding relevant existing theory → developing dimensions and indicators and translating them in interview topics, observation schemes and so on → collecting the data → translating the data in answers for the research questions → developing solutions for the existing problems.

The inductive line is developing sensitizing concepts → preparing the data collection, like protocols for interviews and observations → collecting the data → starting the coding → developing a new theory.

A model of qualitative research design
There is a five-step model of qualitative research design

1. Philosophical assumptions

For example the positivist, interpretive or critical approach.

2. Research method

For example action research, case studies, ethnography or grounded theory.

3. Data collection technique

For example interviews, fieldwork or using documents.

4. Data analysis approach

For example hermeneutics, semiotics or narrative analysis

5. Written record

For example a thesis, book, journal article or research report
There are a lot of possible outcomes for the research design. It does not really matter for example what research method you chose and in which way you write down the record. As long as all the things are explained.

Writing a research proposal
There are ten items in a research proposal that should always be included. They don't have to be in the separate sections or the order, but they should appear somewhere.

1. Title
2. Abstract
3. Introduction
4. Literature review
5. Topic
6. Theoretical framework
7. Research method
8. Qualitative data analysis approach
9. Timeline to completion
10. List of references

Defending a research proposal
When defending your research proposal you should look into the questions or objections that might occur and think about answers beforehand. The questions will most likely be about sample size, reliability and validity. The two-pronged approach to defending a qualitative research proposal works best. First, you should refer to the top influential qualitative works in the first-tier journals of the field. The objections will

melt away sooner. Second, the reasoning behind the qualitative research should be given for the selected topic. You can present your proposal to a sympathetic audience first. This can be done in different ways.

Chapter 4: philosophical perspectives

Underlying assumptions

Positivist research is the dominant form which assumes that reality is objectively given and can be described by measurable properties, which are independent of the observer and their instruments. It attempts to test whether theory can increase the predictive understanding of phenomena. It is assumed that the units of analysis that make up reality can be classified objectively into subjects and predicates. It has been described as the natural science model of social research. Positivist research formulates propositions that portray the subject matter in terms of independent variables, dependent variables, and the relationship between them.
There are five epistemological assumptions of positivism

1. Experience is taken to be objective, testable, and independent of theoretical explanation.
2. Theories are held to be artificial constructions or models, yielding explanation in the sense of a logic of hypothetico-deduction. Meaning that if T is true, phenomenon X follows.
3. Generalizations (law-like relations) are derived from experience and are independent of the investigator, the methods and the object of study.
4. The language of science can be exact, formalizable and literal.
5. Meanings are separate from facts.

Interpretive research is not as common as positivist research, but it is more used over the past 20 years. It assumes that access to reality is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings and instruments. The researchers do not predefine dependent and independent variables but focus on the complexity of human sense-making as a situation emerges. They try to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them. The research methods and tools of the natural science are seen as inappropriate for the study of social and organizational phenomena; human phenomenon of subjective understanding plays a role. They recognize that a social researcher must speak the same language as the people being studied to understand the full data. The raw data for social scientists includes words that have already been meaningfully pre-structured by others. This can be described as double hermeneutic; social researchers are subjects and are just as much interpreters of social situations as the people being study. The focus is on meaning in context and the aim is to understand this context.

There are five epistemological assumptions of interpretivism

1. Data are not detachable from theory, for what counts as data is determined in the light of some theoretical interpretation, and facts themselves have to be reconstructed in the light of interpretation.

2. In the human sciences, theories are mimetic reconstructions of the facts themselves, and the criterion of a good theory is an understanding of meanings and intentions rather than deductive explanation.
3. The generalizations derived from experience are dependent upon the researcher, the method and the subject of study. The validity of the generalizations does not depend upon statistical inference, but on the plausibility and cogency of the logical reasoning used in describing the results from the cases, and in drawing conclusions from them.
4. The languages of the human sciences are irreducibly equivocal (because of multiple emergent meanings) and continually adapt themselves to changing circumstances.
5. Meanings in the human sciences are what constitute the facts, for data consists of documents, intentional behavior, social rules, human artefacts, etc., and these are inseparable from their meanings for agents.

Besides the five assumptions there are also seven principles of interpretive research

1. The fundamental principle of hermeneutic circle

It suggests that all human understanding is achieved by iterating between considering the interdependent meanings of parts and the whole that they form. This principle of human understanding is fundamental to all other principles.

2. The principle of contextualization

It requires critical reflection on the social and historical background of the research setting, so that the intended audience can see how the current situation under investigation emerged.

3. The principle of interaction between the researchers and the subjects

It requires critical reflection on how research materials or data were socially constructed through the interaction between the researchers and participants.

4. The principle of abstraction and generalization

It requires relating the ideographic details revealed by the data interpretation through the application of principle 1 and 2 to theoretical, general concepts that describe the nature of human understanding and social actions.

5. The principle of dialogical reasoning

It requires the sensitivity to possible contradictions between the theoretical preconceptions guiding the research design and actual findings with subsequent cycles of revision.

6. The principle of multiple interpretations

It requires sensitivity to possible differences in interpretations among the participants as are typically expressed in multiple witness accounts even if all tell it as they saw it.

7. The principle of suspicion

It requires sensitivity to possible biases and systematic distortions in the narratives collected from the participants.

Critical research

While positivist and interpretive forms of research are well known in most business and management disciplines, this is not the case for critical research. ***Critical research*** is comparable with interpretive research since they both explicitly recognize the double hermeneutic in social research. Critical research assumes that social reality is historically constituted, and it is produced and reproduced by people. Although people can consciously act to change circumstances, critical researchers

believe their ability to do so is constrained by forms of social, cultural, and political domination. Some interpretations are preferred over others. The main task of critical research is as being one of social critique where the restrictive and alienating conditions of the status quo are brought to light.

There are six principles of critical research

1. The principle of using core concepts from critical social theorists

This principle suggests that critical researchers should organize their data collection and analysis around core concepts and ideas from one or more critical theorists.

2. The principle of taking a value position

This principle suggests that critical theorists advocate values such as open democracy, equal opportunity, or discursive ethics. These values drive or provide the basis for principles 4-6.

3. The principle of revealing and challenging prevailing beliefs and social practices

This principle suggests that critical researchers should identify important beliefs and social practices and challenge them with potentially conflicting arguments and evidence.

4. The principle of individual emancipation

This principal suggests that all critical social theory is oriented towards facilitating the realization of human needs and potential, critical self-reflection, and associated self-transformation.

5. The principle of improvements in society

This principle suggests that improvements in society are possible. The goal is not just to reveal the current forms of domination, but to suggest how unwarranted uses of power might be overcome. Most critical theorists assume that social improvements are possible, although to very differing degrees.

6. The principle of improvements in social theories

This principle suggests that all critical theorists believe that our theories are fallible and that improvements in social theories are possible. Critical researchers entertain the possibility of competing truth claims arising from alternative theoretical categories, which can guide critical researchers in their analyses and interventions.

Chapter 5: ethics

The importance of ethics

Ethics is defined as the moral principle governing or influencing conduct or the branch of knowledge concerned with moral principles. The first meaning is the one that is most relevant. In research, ethics can be defined as the application of moral principles in planning, conducting and reporting the results of the research studies. The fundamental moral standards involved focus on what is right and what is wrong. For qualitative researchers, ethical practice is usually defined as a moral stance that involves respect and protection for the people actively consenting to be studied. There are four practical ethical principles that are most relevant to research in public administrations.

1. Truthfulness

It is unethical for researchers purposefully to lie, deceive, or in any way applaud fraud.

2. Thoroughness

Researchers should be methodologically thorough and not cut corners.

3. Objectivity

Researchers, especially in positivist studies, should not allow their own values or biases to affect the study.

4. Relevance

Research should never be done for frivolous, wasteful, or irrelevant purposes.

Ethical principles related to research

The Golden Rule states that you should do unto others as you would have them do unto you. This rule is the foundation for the following rules.

Honesty is fundamental to all research. Without this all the edifice and stock of knowledge where a particular discipline is built on will come crumbling down. Researchers should be honest about their data, findings and research methods.

Plagiarism is one of the worst sins in academia. It entails deliberately copying someone else's work and presenting it like your own. Sources must always be properly acknowledged.

Informed consent means that potential informants should be enabled freely to give their informed consent to participate and advised that they can terminate their involvement for any reason at any time. When doing fieldwork this is unrealistic to expect to consent everybody, but you can ask the manager. Also when doing interviews it is important.

Permission to publish is an important aspect when using data. Often data is owned by people or a company, you have to ask them permission to publish it. When you have collected the data yourself, it is still important but a bit more difficult. It is important that you ask the sources if they agree with the use of the data in the way you want it. Confidentiality and the opportunity of using pseudonyms is important when using information that is not supposed to be revealing. Deciding the rights and wrongs in this case might be hard, especially when a company does not agree for the publication of certain information pieces.

The research report includes a number of *ethical concerns*. There should be the maintenance of privacy, people should make sure that confidentiality is preserved. The representation of data should be honesty. You should take responsibility for your findings and make sure that you are prepared to stand behind the results, even when they are unfavorable.

Action research raises a number of ethical concerns. The goals of the researcher and the client can differ significantly, which will result in difficulties. It should be stated clearly what the value premises of the work is. What can also play a role is payment, this can favor the client.

Interviews and fieldwork require informing people what you are doing, why you are doing it and what you are going to do with the findings. It is unethical to say you are going to do one thing and do another. A contentious issue is covert participant observation. Some things are only able to research when doing covert observation. People might argue that it violates principles regarding informed consent, invasion of privacy, and the obligation to avoid bringing harm to subjects.

Online ethics can also play a role nowadays. A large number of unsolicited emails can be seen as spam. When you copy from a site without permission, there can still be a breach of copyright. Even when there is a legitimate research purpose.

Ethical codes are used to define what is or is not ethical behavior in a certain field. For example the academy of management code, this also includes enforced ethical standards. These standards are those that individuals must adhere to when participating in and carrying out the work for the AOM. It provides guidelines that complement or add to the guidelines from institutions.

The law often conflicts on the use of qualitative data. Based on privacy principles in different countries, it is illegal to collect data on people for one purpose, only to use it for another. There can also be legal requirements to protect sensitive personal data.

Chapter 6: action research

Action research
Action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework. In other words, the researcher aims to solve current practical problems while expanding scientific knowledge. This is different to other methods where the researcher wants to study the problems but not change them.

According to Myers and Bakerville (2004) the essence of action research is a two-stage process. First, the diagnostic stage involves a collaborative analysis of the social situation by the researcher and the subjects of the research. Theories are formulated concerning the nature of the research domain. Second, the therapeutic stage involves collaborative change. The changes are introduced, and the effects are studied.

Susman and Evered have a more comprehensive model of five stages. It is seen as a cyclical process with five phases. All together this shows the development of a client-system infrastructure.

1. Diagnosing

This identifies or defines a problem.

2. Action planning

This specifies the courses of action to be taken.

3. Action taking

The implements the planned actions.

4. Evaluating

This analyses the effects of the actions.

5. Specifying learning

This identifies what was learnt.

There are five elements that should be present in some degree for any research to be classified as action research according to Elden and Chisholm. Even though they are essential there is a great diversity in contemporary action research.

1. Purpose and value choice
2. Contextual focus
3. Change-based data and sense-making
4. Participation in the research process
5. Knowledge diffusion

Approaches to action research

As mentioned before, the three philosophical approaches correspond to the approaches of action research. They are positivist, interpretive and critical.

The positivist approach is also called ***classical action research***. Action research can be seen as a social experiment and attempts to meet the requirements of positivist social science. Action research is seen as a method to test and refine hypotheses in the real world. Action research is primarily designed to provide an empirical test of a possible solution. In other words, to see what the effects are of a new policy that is implemented.

The interpretive approach is also called ***contemporary action research***. It tends to rely on an underlying interpretive and constructivist epistemology. In other words, social reality is socially constructed. It is argued that social research is always an emergent process since it is largely controlled by local conditions.

The critical approach is mostly taken in education where they try to combine action research with critical social theory. Action research is here defined as a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices and the situation in which these practices are carried out. They argue that action research should be participatory and aim for emancipation. Action research is based on a view of truth and action as socially constructed and historically embedded. They aim to change the present situation produce a different future. Action research should aim for towards social justice, involve critical reflection on current practices, question the taken-for-granted assumptions which underlie those practices, and aim towards collective actions.

There are also other types of action research. One of them ***is participatory action research***. The practitioners are involved as subjects and co-researchers. Co-researchers have control over the research process by setting their own research agenda, helping to collect and analyze data and controlling the use of the results. It is similar to collaborative practice research.

There is also ***action science***. the emphasis here is on understanding the difference between the behavior of practitioners and their believes. This is the difference between theories-in-use and espoused theories. They recommend the use of single-

and double-loop learning for self-improvement. Espoused theory represents the world view and values that people their behavior is based on. What they think they are doing and what they will tell you in interviews. In contrast, theory-in-use, is the world view and values imply by their behavior, or the maps they use to take action. A fundamental assumption is that there is usually a difference between what people say and what they do. It is argued that people are unaware of this. Single-loop learning is when a correction is made to the process through changes in espoused theories and assumptions. The norms themselves don't undergo change. Double-loop learning does change the norms as well as the espoused theories and assumptions. This is more important and extensive than single-loop learning.

Critique of action research
The main advantages are that it helps to ensure that the business research is practically relevant. Business research is often too theoretical. Action research can help to improve the impact and image of business research within the business community.

The main disadvantage is that it is difficult for people to do the action and research. Often, they struggle to do research that contributes to solving a practical business problem and end up at the same time with research that contributes to theory. Also, there is a tendency that the importance of intervention and the contribution to academic research is overstated. Subconsciously, they want to show that the exercise is useful and that their theory or method is valid. This is called self-delusion and groupthink. The use of a devil's advocate is recommended to guard against this. Another disadvantage is that the use of action research is risky. Real-world projects may be more subject to delays. From the failure of a project there can still be something learnt, but if it is delayed this is harder.

What needs to be disclosed is that you need to combine action and research. Action without research is consulting and research without action is some other research method altogether. First, you need something with a problem to be solved. The problem should be important, and a researcher is needed to solve it. There also needs to be full support of the research. This is the action part. The second part is the research part. It needs to be a problem to be solved is something that is of interest to the researchers in the field. Many practical research problems are not research problems. The problem needs to be one where the solution is not currently known. The lesson learned from the action must be generalized to relevant theory in the particular field.

There are different ways to evaluate action research studies. These entail two basic requirements:

- First, the studies must demonstrate a contribution or a potential contribution to practice. Some kind of intervention in a business process or an organization must have been attempted even if it is a failure. For example, the best way to demonstrate a contribution to research is if the sponsor in the organization agrees that the intervention was worthwhile. Some kind of documentation to this effect, like a letter or a report, is a good idea.
- Second, all studies must demonstrate a clear contribution to research. It is important that the study is situated within a wider problem domain and the

write-up specifies how the research contributes to that wider domain. The most convincing way to demonstrate this is if the write-up of the action research project ends up being accepted as a research contribution by the examiners of a thesis or a PhD dissertation. Even better is to get published in a journal or peer-reviewed conference.

Chapter 7: case study research

Case study research
There is a comparison made between teaching and research cases

Teaching cases	Research cases
Written for students	Written for researchers
Designed to illustrate an existing theory or principle	Designed to contribute to a new theory
Published on its own as a teaching case with notes for the instructor	Published as a part of a research article in a journal, conference or book

Although case study research is mostly used in building new theory, but it can also be used to test theory. This leads to the fact that research cases can be used in exploratory and explanatory research. So either to discover to test, explain and compare. Case study research is applicable at any stage of the research on a particular topic. It is important to define that it is not about when it should be used in a research process, but about what is studied.
The purpose of a case study research in business and management is to use empirical evidence from real people in real organizations to make an original contribution to knowledge.
A case study research in business uses empirical evidence from one or more organizations where an attempt is made to study the subject matter in context. Multiple sources of evidence are used, although most of the evidence comes from interviews and documents. There are three important points to this definition.

- It almost always involves a firm or an organization
- It does not normally involve fieldwork or participant observation
- It can be conducted according to positivist, interpretive, critical tenets.

Approaches to case study research
Here there are also the three approaches: positive, interpretive and critical case studies. The positive one used to be the norm, but interpretive cases became more accepted and we expect there to be a growth in the acceptance of critical case studies over the years.
The positive approach attempts to meet the requirements of positivist social science. This work is often justified in positive terms. The case study research is seen as a method for testing and refining hypotheses or proposition in the real world. They define the quality in terms of validity and reliability.
The interpretive approach relies on an underlying interpretive and constructivist epistemology. In other words, social reality is socially constructed. Interpretive case studies usually attempt to understand phenomena through the meanings that people

assign to them. They define the quality in terms of the plausibility of the story and the overall argument.
The critical approach involves critical reflections on current practices, questions, taken-for-granted assumptions, and critiques the status quo based on theories of one or more critical theorists. Validity and reliability are not often used, just like in interpretive studies.

Suggestions for success in doing case study research are as follows
- Choose an interesting case
- Make sure that you have good people skills
- Gather rich data and try to establish the context

Critique of case study research
The main advantage of case study research is face validity. A well-written study based on empirical research in an organization represents a real story that most researchers can identify with. This is mostly the case with well-known companies or products. Another advantage is that it allows researchers to explore or test theories within the context of messy-real life situations. This is different from the neat theories and brings the researchers close to the action.

One of the main disadvantages of case studies in business settings is that it is difficult to gain access to a particular company or group that is desired to be studied. Firms can be skeptical about the value for them and about the unflattering possible findings. It might be difficult to find a suitable company and to get permissions from them. Another disadvantage is that the researcher has no control over the situation. It might be that the company is taken over or the sponsor is fired, this can end the research. Also, younger and inexperienced researchers might have difficulty with focusing on the important issues. The last disadvantage is that it takes up a lot of time; gaining access, doing empirical research and writing up.

Evaluating a case study
There are a few criteria offered as a guideline for evaluating a research case in business
1. The case study must be interesting
2. The case study must display sufficient evidence
3. The case study should be complete
4. The case study must consider alternative perspectives
5. The case study should be written in an engaging manner
6. The case study should contribute to knowledge

These six criteria are applicable for evaluating a research case of all kinds of case study research. However it is possible to add additional quality criteria for evaluating case study research depending upon the type of research that is conducted. The quality criteria will vary depending upon the type of research.

For positivist research, good case study design is vital. Yin came up with five components of good case study design.
1. A study's questions
2. Its propositions, if any
3. Its units of analysis

4. The logic linking of the data to the propositions
5. The criteria for interpreting the findings.

For interpretive research, the plausibility of the case is far more important than the design. Fellow researchers in the field will need some confidence in the case, and its story should be believable. The plausibility of a case is improved by things like the number of sources, the description of how you did it and why you did things. There are seven principles by Klein and Myers that describe evaluating interpretive case studies. They were mentioned in chapter 4 under interpretive research.

For critical case studies, the case should question taken-for-granted assumptions, and open to scrutiny possible agendas, power centers, and assumptions that inhibit, repress and constrain. Most critical studies will use one or more critical theories. The principles of critical research were already mentioned in chapter 4 under critical research.

Chapter 8: ethnographic research

Ethnographic research

Ethnographic research is one of the most in-depth research methods possible. The researcher is in the field and sees what people are doing and what they say they are doing. It is well suited to provide researchers with rich insights in human, social and organizational aspects of business organizations. It gives researchers the opportunity to get close to where the action is. Also, it allows the researcher to understand the broader context within which people work. Context is something that is crucial in this type of research, social as well as cultural context. It is really about the culture of an organization. It recognizes not only the values and behaviors of members but also taken-for-granted assumptions that are impossible to discover if you are there only for a short time.

The differences with a case study are the following

- The main difference is the length of time. The ethnographic researcher will spend months and months in the field and will immerse themselves in the life of the social group under study. Whereas for the case study researcher, this will most likely only be a few weeks.
- The orientation of the researcher also differs. The case study researcher studies people. The ethnographer learns from people about the way they see, hear, speak and act.
- The type of data collected also differs. in a case study, the primary type of data is interviews, supplemented by documentary evidence such as reports. In ethnography, these data sources are supplemented by field work.

Approaches to ethnographic research

The Holistic school argues that empathy and identification with the social group being observed is needed. They argue that the researcher should go native and live just like the local people. The anthropologist should become like a blank slate in order to understand local social and cultural practices. The researcher acts like a sponge; soaking up the language and culture of the people studies.

The Semiotic school argues that researchers do not need to have empathy. The researcher should search out and analyze the symbolic forms with respect to one another and to the whole that they comprise. It is possible to describe and analyze another culture without having to empathize with them. The researchers need to understand the webs of significance, which can only be communicated to others by thickly describing the situation and its context.

Critical Ethnography sees research as an emergent process, in which there is a dialogue between the researcher and the people in the setting. It sees social life as constructed in context power. it tends to open to scrutiny otherwise hidden agendas, power centers, and assumptions that inhibit, repress and constrain. Commonsense assumptions should be questioned.

Netnography is the study of culture and communities on the internet. Instead of doing fieldwork in the real world, the research is done through computer-mediated communications. Data are gathered via participant observation and interaction with members of an online community. It is also called online ethnography or virtual ethnography.

How to do ethnographic research
There are various ways of doing ethnographic research. The positivist view see ethnography as a way of describing the real world. On the other hand there are the post-modern ethnographers that view the writing up of ethnography as akin to writing a novel. In between are the majority of anthropologists that see ethnography as a method and as a genre. Whatever view you choose there are a few practical suggestions that apply to all of them.

- There is a general rule you should write up your field notes on a regular basis. The notes include observations, impressions, feelings, hunches, questions and so on. It is valuable to see what you were thinking at the start.
- An interview should be written up as soon as possible. If the interview was taped it is not as important, but you should write a brief summary of it to remember all the details.
- Reviewing and developing the ideas as the research progresses is something important.
- The researcher should develop strategies to deal with the huge amount of data from the ethnographer. There should be summarizing, indexing and classifying the data as appropriate. A software tool could be used for this.

Critique of ethnographic research
One of the advantages of ethnographic research is that it is very in-depth. This results from the extended period of time where there are observations. There is an intimate familiarity with the dilemmas, frustrations, routines, relationships and risks that are part of the everyday life. Also, knowledge of what happens in real life can provide information to challenge the assumptions. There are often researches about what is usually taken for granted coming from this type of research.
One of the main disadvantages is that it takes a very long time to do the fieldwork, analyze the material and write it up. Besides that it also doesn't have much breath compared to other studies. The fact that the knowledge is only about certain context

or situations. It can also be very hard to write up the research for publication. There is a significant mass of data that is related to a specific context. The preferred publication format is thus a book instead of a journal.

There are four questions to consider when evaluating the quality of ethnographic research:

1. Is this a contribution to the field?
2. Does the author offer rich insights?
3. Has a significant amount of material and data been collected?
4. Is there sufficient information about the research method?

Chapter 9: grounded theory research

Grounded theory research
This is a qualitative research method that develops theory grounded in data that is systematically gathered and analyzed. It can be argued that it is an inductive, theory discovery methodology that allows the researcher to develop a theoretical account of the general features of a topic while simultaneously grounding the account in empirical observations and data. The difference with other research methods is that this suggests there should be a continuous interplay between data collection and analysis. It is useful for context-based, process-oriented well-signposted procedures for data analysis. It also allows for the emergence of original and rich findings that are closely tied to the data. It is often used only for coding, but grounded theory can do more. It is also a comprehensive method of theory generation.

A grounded theory researcher does not start with a set of hypotheses that is tested. The concepts and the theory are supposed to emerge from the data. To ensure this the researcher should make sure that they have no preconceived theoretical ideas before starting the research. The key is to be creative and have an open mind.

The purpose of grounded theory research in business and management is to develop new concepts and theories of business-related phenomena, where these concepts and theories are firmly grounded in qualitative data.

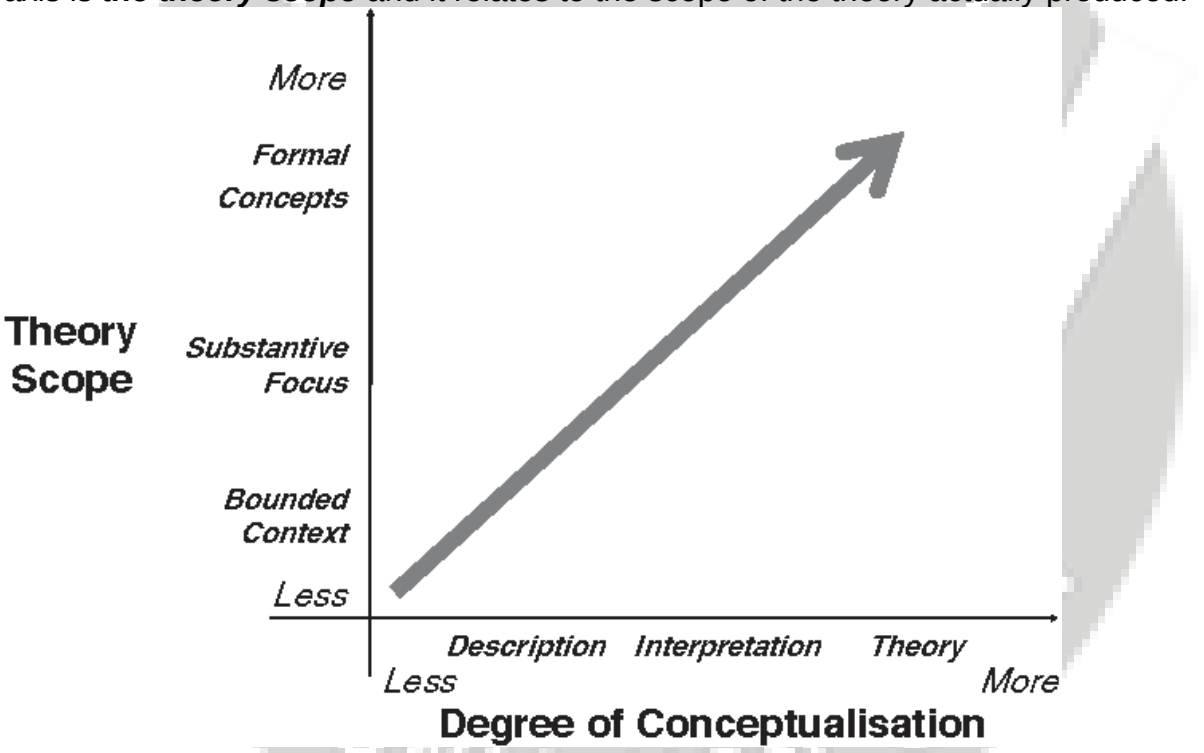
Approaches to grounded theory research
A researcher is recommended to use the theory-generating questions when doing open coding. Some of these questions are

- What is at issue here? What phenomenon is being addressed? → What?
- What persons or actors are involved? What roles do they play? How do they interact? →Who?
- What aspects of the phenomenon are addressed or not addressed? → How?
- How long? Where? How much? How strongly? → When?
- What reasons are given or may be deduced? → Why?

There are three stages to coding
First, there is ***open coding***. Here you analyze the text and summarize it by the use of a succinct (brief) code. Open codes are descriptive: they identify, name and

categorize phenomena. Descriptions are the most basic of conceptual constructs. As you continue to do open coding, you should constantly compare. The differentiated concepts become categories which may have detailed properties.
Second, there is ***axial or selective coding***. This is the interpretation of the categories and properties. The main activity is to refine the conceptual constructs that might help explain whatever interaction occurs between the descriptive categories.
Third, there is ***theoretical coding***. This involves the formulation of a theory. The aim is to create inferential and predictive statements about the phenomena. This is achieved by specifying explicit causal and correlational linkages between individual interpretive constructs.

Urquhart et al. (2010) suggests a framework for theorizing in grounded theory studies. There are two dimensions. The horizontal axis is ***the degree of conceptualization*** and it relates to the degree of analysis carried out. The vertical axis is ***the theory scope*** and it relates to the scope of the theory actually produced.



The horizontal axis draws attention to one of the key objectives of grounded theory, which is to aim for a greater depth analysis of the data. The first stage yields descriptions, the second is the interpretations of categories and properties using selective coding; and the third is the theoretical coding which formulates a theory. The vertical relates to the theory scope. According to grounded theory, the primary objective of the method is to develop more scope. Bounded context represents theory with the narrowest scope. They become wider with substantive focus. They also have more significant empirical support. A formal concept is the widest form of grounded theory that can be developed.

The figure shows that researchers using grounded theory should aim to increase the degree of conceptualization and develop theories of greater scope. They should aim to move up on both axes.

Critique of grounded theory research
Advantages of grounded theory can be summarized as follows:

- It has an intuitive appeal for advanced researchers, since it allows them to become immersed in the data at a detailed level.
- It gets researchers analyzing the data early.
- It encourages systematic, detailed analysis of the data and provides a method for doing so.
- It gives researchers ample evidence to back up their claims.
- It encourages a constant interplay between data collection and analysis.
- It is especially useful for describing repeated processes.

What can be seen as the main advantage is “It encourages systematic, detailed analysis of the data and provides a method for doing so.”. A detailed guidance provides a certain level of comfort that the data are being analyzed in a systematic and rigorous manner. It can be seen as a bottom-up approach for coding data.

This main advantage can also be seen as the main disadvantage. Often, first time researchers get overwhelmed at coding level. They find it difficult to scale up to larger concepts or themes. It can be difficult to see the bigger picture. This explains the tendency for grounded theory to be a coding technique. And then a higher-level social theory is used to explain the findings. This limits the use of grounded theory.

Evaluating grounded theory research studies
There are two fundamental criteria by which all grounded theory studies should be evaluated

- Rigor and validity of the qualitative data analysis

  Questions regarding this can be the following: *“Is there a clear chain of evidence linking the findings to the data?” “Are there multiple instances in the data which support the concepts produced?” “Has the researcher demonstrated that they are familiar with the subject area?*
- The extent to which the researcher has produced theory.

  Questions regarding this can be the following: *“Has the researcher created inferential and/or predictive statements about the phenomena?” “Has the researcher suggested theoretical generalizations that are applicable to a range of situations?”*

If grounded theory study demonstrates rigor in the data analysis and makes a theoretical contribution, it can be seen that the grounded theory method was used in a good way.

Chapter 10: interviews

Interviews

Interviews are broadly used under all types of research. It allows to gather rich data from people in various roles and situations. A good interview can focus on the subjects' world.

Primary sources include data which are unpublished, and which are gathered directly from people or the organization. Primary data includes data from interviews, fieldwork and documents. ***Secondary data*** includes data that has been previously published. For example, books, newspapers, journal articles and so on. Primary data add richness and credibility to qualitative manuscripts. It is unique to you and the project.

Types of interviews
There are three types of interviews

- *Structured interviews*: The use of pre-formulated questions, strictly regulated with regard to the order of the questions, and sometimes regulated with regard to the time available. The main advantage is the consistency, but this is also a main disadvantage.
- *Semi-structured interviews*: The use of some pre-formulated questions, but no strict adherence to them. New questions might emerge during the conversation. This tries to take the best of both approaches while minimizing the risks. This is the one mostly used in business and management.
- *Unstructured interviews*: Few if any pre-formulated questions. In effect, interviewees have free rein to say that they want. Often there is no set time limit. The main advantage is that it allows the interviewee to talk freely, but if the interviewee is not talkative this is a disadvantage.

Another way to classify types of interviews is to make a distinction between individual and group interviews. The majority of interviews are individual interviews in qualitative research.

*A **focus group interview*** can be used as well. Although they are most commonly used in marketing research, focus groups can be used in almost every disciplinary area. The purpose of a focus group is to get a collective view on a certain defined topic of interest from a group of people who are known to have certain experiences. The focus groups allow participants to engage in thoughtful discussion.

The main advantage of a focus group is that they enable a researcher to elicit opinions, attitudes and beliefs held by members of the group. Also, they enable a researcher to have more control than in participant observation, but less than in individual interviewing. One disadvantage of focus groups is that they are often time intensive and expensive to run. A focus group can have three major problems:

1. The interviewer must keep one person or small coalition of persons from dominating the group.
2. The interviewer must encourage recalcitrant respondents to participate.
3. The interviewer must obtain responses from the entire group to ensure the fullest coverage of the topic.

Positive techniques

Positive techniques can be used in the context of both individual and focus group interviews. People are sometimes reluctant to say what they think, a solution to this can be to ask something indirectly. There are various positive techniques. The more structured ones are for example the Rorschach Inkblot Test and the Thematic Apperception Test. The less structured ones include for example the word association and sentence completion. Positive techniques can provide rich insights into people's beliefs, values, and personality but some training in the method is still needed.

Problems using interviews

Artificiality of the interview

The qualitative interview involves interrogating someone who is a complete stranger. It involves asking subjects to give opinions under a time pressure.

Lack of trust

Since the interviewer is a stranger, interviewees might doubt how much the interviewer can be trusted. This means that the interviewee may choose not to divulge information that they consider sensitive. It is important that this kind of information is known for the data to be complete.

Lack of time

The data gathering can be incomplete because of this. It can also lead to the opposite problem. Subject create opinions under a time pressure when they were in the first case not as strong. The data is still gathered but can be not entirely relatable.

Level of entry

The level at which the researcher enters the organization is crucial. For example, if a researcher enters at a lower level, it may prove difficult, if not impossible, to interview senior managers at a later date. In some organizations, talking to union members can bar access to management and vice versa. Additionally, gatekeepers may inhibit the researcher's ability to access a broader range of subjects.

Elite bias

A researcher may interview only certain people of high status and will therefore fail to gain an understanding of the broader situation.

Hawthorne effects

Qualitative interviews are intrusive and can potentially change the situation. The interviewer is not invisible or neutral. The interviewer is part of the interactions they seek to study and may influence those interactions.

Constructing knowledge

Naïve interviewers may think that they are like sponges, soaking up data that is already there. But they may not realize that as they are gathering data, they are also actively constructing knowledge. In response to an interviewer, interviewees construct a story. They reflect on issues they may have never considered like that before. Interviewees usually want to appear knowledgeable and rational, that is why they need to construct a story that is logical and consistent.

Ambiguity of language
The meaning of an interviewer's words is often ambiguous, and not always certain that subjects fully understand the questions.

Interviews can go wrong
Interviewers have fears, problems and pitfalls. It is possible for an interviewer to offend or unintentionally insult an interviewee, in which case the interview might not continue any further.

A model of the interview
It is argued that a qualitative interview can be seen as a drama. Like there, in the interview there should be direction and attention to stage management. The interviewer should explain clearly the purpose and the aims. But the interviewer must be careful not to over-direct the performance since there still should be some improvisation. The interview should be kept under a reasonable amount of control.

The drama
The interview is a drama with a stage, props, actors, an audience, a script and a performance.

The stage
A variety of organizational settings and social situations, although in business settings the stage is normally the office. Various props might be used such as pens, notes and a tape recorder.

The actor
Both the interviewer and the interviewee can be seen as actors. The researcher has to play the part of an interested interviewer. The interviewee plays the part of a knowledgeable person in the organization.

The audience
Both the interviewee and the interviewer can be seen as the audience. The researcher should listen intently while interviewing. The interviewee should listen to the questions and answer them appropriately. The audience can also be seen more broadly as the readers of the researcher papers produced.

The script
The interviewer has a more or less partially developed script with questions to put to the interviewee to guide the conversation. The interviewee normally has no script and has to improvise.

The entry
Impression management is very important, particularly first impressions. It is important to dress up or dress down according to the situation.

The exit
Leaving the stage, possible preparing the way for the next performance or another performance at a later date.

The performance

All of the above together produce a good or a bad performance. The quality of the performance affects the quality of the discussion which in turn affects the quality of the data.

This model is believed to be helpful, but there are some limitations. The model could encourage manipulative and cynical behavior for one's own ends. It can see the world as one in which people, whether individually or in groups, pursue their own ends in a cynical disregard to others. The individual can be seen as a set of performance masks hiding a manipulative and cynical self. In extremes it can even lead to unethical behavior. It should be seen as a metaphor, but not taken too far.

Suggestions for interviewing

- There should be a variety of people representing diverse views within interviewing. There is the triangulation of subjects, where the idea is to obtain a certain breadth of opinion. It can avoid the elite bias.
- There should be an interview guide to use when talking with interviewees. Even when wanting to do unstructured interviews, you should be well-prepared. Guidelines can for example be:
    - Short, clear questions lead to detailed responses from participants
    - Questions that ask participants to recall specific events or experiences in detail encourage fuller narratives.
    - A few broad, open-ended questions work better than a long series of close-ended questions.
- It is good to practice using mirroring. Here you take the words and phrases the subjects use in order to construct a subsequent question or comment. This allows to focus on their world and their language, instead of imposing your own.
- You should be flexible and open to new ideas and lines of enquiry. This is where the value of interviews lies. Only not when the interview is structured.
- It is a good idea to record the interview, like this, little details will not get lost. The only disadvantage is that the transcribing takes a lot of time. Also, the subject can be sensitive, and people may be reluctant when the recorder is on.
- If you don't tape the interview, you should take brief notes during and write up as full an account as possible immediately after. Even when you delay the writing up a few hours, a lot of details can go up in the air.
- When taping an interview, writing a summary of one page can be helpful. Since the details will not get lost when the transcribing takes a little longer. This can help the memory of the content.

Simple structure for an interview guide

Preparation

You should organize and prepare for the interview by gathering background information about the person to be interviewed and the organization which they represent. They can be looked up on the internet. Prepare the main questions beforehand and check the appropriateness. Also decide what you are going to wear, since you should dress appropriately.

Introduction

First impressions are very important. When you first enter, you should introduce yourself and begin to gain trust and rapport. This is done with some chit-chat to break the ice. You should also explain the purpose of the interview. You need to show that you are credible, and your research project is important. This means you need to be able to explain your project clearly, confidently, and with enthusiasm.

Conversation

An interview is often a one-sided conversation where the interviewee answers all the questions. The questions should be short and to the point, designed to encourage the person to talk. Make sure you use mostly open-ended questions beginning with “who, what, why, where, when and how”. You should listen carefully, be sensitive and show respect. New questions may emerge during the conversation.

Conclusion

Usually you thank the interviewee and ask them if they have any questions. As you exit, you may ask them if they can suggest anyone else that you should interview.

Chapter 11: participant observation and fieldwork

Participant observation and fieldwork
There is no real difference between participant observation and fieldwork. The aims are both the same. It is to gather qualitative data about the social world by interacting with people and observing them in their own natural setting. The data obtained by participant observation and fieldwork can be of much value and can often provide an additional dimension to your understanding that could have never been obtained by interviews alone. A few differences from interviews are:

- Interviews require setting aside a time and place for the questioning, whereas fieldwork does not. The conversations and observations can happen anywhere and at any time.
- Interviews have a short period of engagement, whereas fieldwork involves an extended period of engagement.
- Interviews are relatively formal occasions, whereas fieldwork allows the researcher to engage in numerous informal conversations with people
- Interview informants will often tell you what they think you want to hear, whereas fieldwork allows a researcher to hear the unofficial story and to observe what people actually do.

As mentioned, the terms participant observation and fieldwork are no different. But the terms observation and participant observation do differ.

- ***Observation*** is when you are watching other people from the outside. You can watch something happen, but you will take no part in the activities. You are essentially a spectator. There is little interaction between you and the people you are studying.
- ***Participant observation*** is not only the observation of people, but you also participate to some extent in the activities. The idea is that you are talking and interacting with them in attempt to gain an understanding of their beliefs and activities from the inside.

Most fieldwork of a qualitative nature tends to involve participant observation rather than observation.

Fieldwork concepts
<u>A place, actors and activities</u>
A place is any physical setting where people are engaged in social activities. For example, streets, offices, or villages.
An actor is a person that plays a role in a certain situation. For example, all the people on the bus can take a different role when engaged in a different activity.
An activity is a recognizable pattern or behavior that people perform. For example, people might select a seat on a bus.

<u>9 dimensions of Spradley:</u>
Spradley argues that all social situations have dimensions. They can serve as guides for the participant observer. It can help take comprehensive notes and record everything in detail.

1. Space: the physical place or places
2. Actor: the people involved

3. Activity: a set of related acts that people do
4. Object: the physical things that are present
5. Act: single actions that people do
6. Event: a set of related activities that people carry out
7. Time: the sequencing that takes place over time
8. Goal: the things people are trying to accomplish
9. Feeling: the emotions felt and expressed

Gaining access

When doing fieldwork, the researcher is the research instrument. The level of access affects the quality and nature of the data gathered. If there are limited opportunities, the data will be poorer. But if you have all the freedom, it could also be that the data is too rich. As a researcher you have to get past the gatekeepers, which may be a problem when the organization is very strict, or the managers are busy. There should be a good setup of a plan, an authorized person could contact the organization beforehand and a pre-existing relationship with the organization can all help gaining access to a company.

Becoming accepted

When you get past the gatekeeper, you still need the members of the organization wanting to talk to you. You can build trust by promising that the information is confidential and that you share the findings with the company.

Reciprocity

For a good relationship with the employees of the organization, you should give something back to them. This is the definition of reciprocity. This is in return for the time and knowledge received from people. For example a high-level report can be a thing that is given in return.

Key informants

Key informants are those whose social positions in a research setting give them specialist knowledge about other people, processes, or happenings that is more extensive, detailed or privileged than ordinary people, and who are therefore particularly valuable sources of information to a researcher, not least in the early stages of a project. It is important to try to identify key informants early on in your project not only do they provide useful information, they can also advise on behavior in certain situations.

Length of fieldwork

The period of fieldwork in business and management tends to be shorter than in anthropology. This is because often there is no need to learn a new language, and the culture may be similar. The subject will most likely be familiar to the researcher and the time spent will be during business hours. A general rule of thumb is that it is time to conclude your period of fieldwork when what initially appeared strange is now taken for granted. When you find that you understand almost everything that is going on, and that you are not discovering any new insights, it is probably a good idea to consider leaving.

Equipment

Some people use recording equipment, this adds richness to the story. Some topics may require the use of a videorecorder almost exclusively. There are a few guidelines that should be kept in mind when using any recording equipment.

1. You should be familiar with the equipment.
2. You should only take as much equipment as you need.
3. You should try to make your equipment as invisible as possible.
4. You should make sure you have permission beforehand to use the equipment.

Field notes

You should write down as many notes possible, even when you are making a recording. The field notes are in effect to what was happening. They record what you were thinking and feeling. As a general rule you should write up your field notes at the end of each day. This is because you will soon forget many important details about what happened if you leave too long. To not be left as a stream of consciousness, the notes should be organized and indexed systematically.

Approaches to fieldwork

The British Anthropological tradition

Malinowski was one of the first anthropologists who used the ethnographic research method. He pioneered the technique of intensive fieldwork. This included living in a completely different culture or society for an extend period. The language should be learnt and there would be participation in and observation of the activities of the people. The researcher should take notes in attempt to provide a full description as possible of the way of life, practices and beliefs. Fieldwork was seen as the only method of gaining empirical data. Much of the fieldwork has positivistic tendencies; they assumed that they were documenting a single, relatively stable reality. However, there is now a tremendous variety in the approaches the anthropologists take. The most common approach can be described as the interpretive one.

The Chicago Sociological tradition

They studied urban cultures that were often already partially known to the researcher. The city became the social laboratory. The researcher would examine people and their social behaviors in Chicago. Some observers were members of the social groups that were studied, and kept living in their own homes, the challenge was not so much to become acculturated, but to maintain a limbo' status. This is someone who understand and emphasizes with the group under study, but who retains an alternate perspective. Most of the fieldwork conducted was positivistic, firmly located in the realist tradition. There is now a much greater variety of fieldwork approaches in sociology.

How to conduct fieldwork

Phases in fieldwork

- Planning

You decide what you want to do, why you want to do it, what resources you need, and what research may have been done on the same subject.

- Collecting

You gather information, make notes and observations about the information, its character, and the collecting events.

- Analyzing

You need to index the field-collected materials for an archive, summarize them, and write them up.

Preparing for participant observation and fieldwork

- Purpose

Make sure that you clearly understand the purpose of your fieldwork and check this with your supervisor. You need to be able to explain your project clearly, confidently, and with enthusiasm to everyone you meet in the field.

- Gather information

Make sure that you organize and prepare for the fieldwork by gathering background information about the field site. Find out as much as you can about the people and the place on the internet.

- Key informants

If possible, it is a good idea to identify a few key informants before you begin the fieldwork. These people must be respected by others in the research site.

- Enculturation

Enculturation is the process of becoming familiar with the organization and its culture. You need to gain people's trust and build rapport with them. Even before you begin fieldwork you can start learning the language if needed and decide what you are going to wear since you should dress appropriately.

- Gain access

You need to get past the gatekeepers to gain access to the research site. Follow the suggestions provided earlier to gain access. It is crucial that you enter the organization at the right level, this is usually senior management. It is also important to address any ethical concerns at your first meeting. For example how you will preserve the anonymity of the informants and how you will publish the findings.

- Equipment

Make sure that you are familiar with the equipment, like discussed earlier.

Advantages and disadvantages of fieldwork

The main advantage is that it enables an in-depth understanding of the attitudes, beliefs, values, norms and practices of the social group or organization being studied. It is the best way to gain understanding in this. A limitation is that you can only study a small group or one organization at a time. The domain of analysis can be limited and the topics narrow. Another limitation is the tendency to be purely descriptive and to make little contribution to theory. Also, fieldwork requires a researcher to have excellent social skills.

Chapter 12: using documents

Documents

Document scan provide some evidence that allow you to build a richer picture than can be obtained by fieldwork or interviewing. Sometimes the only empirical data you have access to can be documents. Document scan serve as more than just a historical record of someone's thoughts or actions. They can also be seen as actors. There are various types of documents that can be classified.

- Personal, private and public documents
- Written documents and records
- Historical documents

There is a distinction made between various types of documents used by historians: contemporary records, confidential reports, public reports, questionnaires, government documents, expressions of opinion, fiction, song, poetry and folklore.

- Photographs, films and videos
- Electronic documents
- The internet

How to find documents

There are many sources that can be used for documents. Annual reports, press releases, minutes of meetings, etc. this can be used to supplement the data provided by interviewing and fieldwork. There is often useful background information coming from documents.

- The internet

Over time all sorts of documents are posted online. There are many relevant documents you can find by typing a few keywords. The search terms you use should be clear and relevant, this saves time in the finding of documents.

- University library

There are various databases with different documents. As well as the obvious ones for searching academic literature, there are also databases that focus specifically on certain subjects.

- Local librarian

An issue can be that you find too many documents and don't know which one to use or which are relevant. On the other hand, it could also be that you don't find anything that is relevant to the project. A third option to find documents is then asking the local librarian.

- The organization

Often documents like minutes of meetings or project status reports are not publicly available. The ideal way is to obtain a username and password that give access to this. It can also be that you ask for them in hard copy or soft copy.

- Archives

When you are looking for historical documents, searching archives might be a useful option. You should first write a literature review. This list can be used to help direct the search for archival material by using the bibliography from the review. You should develop a master name list; it is key to locating archival deposits in a name-oriented archival search. If you visit an archive further away, it may be necessary to contact a curator. This can prevent problems with gaining access for example.

How to use documents

Scott (1990) suggests the following four criteria to access the quality of social research evidence such as documents

- Authenticity

Authenticity refers to that the object is what it claims it is. The famous forgery of the "Hitler Diaries" shows how academic researchers can be misled. "Is the evidence genuine and of unquestionable origin?"

- Credibility

Credibility refers to how far the author is to be believed. Was he or she an eyewitness, or learned something second hand? Did the author set down an accurate, or mistaken, or deliberately self-serving version of the event? “Is the evidence free from error and distortion?”

- Representativeness

Representativeness refers to the extent to which a subsample, like a single letter, can be taken as representative of a wider set of documents. “Is the evidence typical of its kind, and, if not, is the extent of its untypicality known?”

- Meaning

Meaning refers to how the document should be interpreted and understood. “Is the evidence clear and comprehensible?”

Platt (2005) suggests 8 criteria to which a document can be judged as authentic. It is brought into question not being authentic when:

1. The document does not appear to make sense or has errors in it.
2. Different versions of the same original document are current.
3. The document contains internal inconsistencies
4. The document is known to have been transmitted via many copies
5. The document is known to have been transmitted by someone with a vested interest in the version given passing as the correct one.
6. The version available is derived from a secondary source suspected of being unreliable.
7. The style or content is in some way inconsistent with that of other instances of the same class
8. The documents fits too neatly into a standard formula or literal norm.

Prior (2003) makes the suggestion that instead of analyzing documents for the meaning, the documents should be analyzed for references. “What entities are referred to”. It is useful to look at networks of references in a document.

Advantages and disadvantages

Advantages are that documents are relatively cheap and quick to access. But the recommendation is to use documents as an additional source. Often, documents make things visible and documents are traceable. If there are many documents on the same topic, it might be possible to triangulate them, and study developments that are possible over time. But a disadvantage is that the access can be difficult for tome time of documents like emails or documents that are archived far away. It is also not always very straightforward to assess the authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning of a document.

Chapter 13: analyzing qualitative data

Approaches to analyzing qualitative data

<u>Top down versus bottom up approach</u>

Top down means that the concepts you are using to analyze the data will come from research literature. Bottom up means that the concepts will emerge from your own detailed analysis of the data you have collected. If the research is exploratory and

theory building; the approach will be most likely bottom up. If it is designed to be theory-testing, a top-down approach is needed. Also there is a view that suggest iterating between the two, since they are two extremes. It is important to know where you want to go with the research and base the approach on this.

Depth versus broad analysis

You can tradeoff between how much data you collect and how deep you analyze it. The more data sources and the more data you have, the less deep you can analyze it. The advice is to collect more data than you need instead of too little. You can later realize which data is important and which is not.

Coding

Codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled to a study. Codes are attached to parts of the text like words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs. There are various types of codes: descriptive or open codes, interpretive or axial or selective codes, theoretical codes, pattern codes.

There are six fundamental tasks associated with coding.

- Sampling: This identifies the texts that are to be analyzed, and the basic units of analysis within these texts.
- Identifying items: This usually involves the researcher inducing themes from the text itself. However, themes can also be derived from the literature.
- Building codebooks: This involves organizing lists of codes, often in hierarchies, and their definitions.
- Marking texts: This involves the assigning of codes to units of text.
- Constructing models: This involves identifying how the themes, concepts, beliefs and behaviors are linked to each other.
- Testing models: This involves testing the model developed in constructing models on a different or wider set of data.

Memos

Memos are your own commentary on what was happening and what you were doing. They describe the feeling, thinking and doing at a certain time. There are two types of memos: procedural and analytic. ***Procedural memos*** help focus on the research process; they show what you did and how you did it. ***Analytic memos*** show the subject matter. They focus on the data and show interpretation about the meaning of data.

Analytic induction

Analytic induction is a way to develop causal explanation of a phenomenon from one or more cases. First, a phenomenon that requires explanation is defined and explanations are proposed. Second, a case is examined to see if the explanation fits. When it does, another case is examined. The explanation is accepted until there is a case that falsifies it. The alternatives are to change the explanation or to redefine the phenomenon. The process ideally continues until there is a universal explanation for all known cases of the phenomena.

Series of events
An event listing is a series of events organized by chronological time periods. The events can be sorted into categories. They can be described in narrative form and summarized in a table or flow chart.

Critical incidents
This involves asking people to discuss events or incidents that are deemed as important and pertinent to the research. It is a shorter form of the series of events. it provides a systematic means for gathering the significances others attach to events, analyzing the patterns and laying of tentative conclusions. The incidents are then analyzed all together to see if there are commonalities.

Hermeneutics
Hermeneutics can be treated as both an underlying philosophy and a specific approach to qualitative data analysis. It suggests a way of understanding textual data. It is concerned with the meaning of a text. It is useful when the text appears to be confusing or contradictory. One of the key concepts is the hermeneutic circle. It is the dialectic between the understanding of the text as a whole and the interpretation of its parts. Hermeneutics suggests that we are constantly interpreting texts by moving from the whole to the part and back to the whole again, often without even realizing it.

Semiotics
This is concerned with the analysis of signs and symbols and their meanings. Words, images, and objects can all be studies as signs, as long as they have been recorded in some way and can be studies. For example writing or on video. There are more ways of semiotics, but there are two main traditions. The European tradition is based on Saussure and the American is based on Peirce. Saussure was concerned with the role of signs as part of social life, whereas Peirce was more interested in a more abstract “formal doctrine of signs”.

Content analysis
Content analysis seeks to demonstrate the meaning of sources by systematically allocating their content to pre-determined, detailed categories, and then both quantifying and interpreting the outcomes. It can be seen as a research technique for making replicable and valid references from data to their contexts. The researchers are looking for structures and patterned regularities in the text and making inferences on the basis of the regularities.

Conversation analysis
It looks at the use of language by people as a type of action. A key concept is the idea of the speaking turn. This is claimed to be a universal feature of all conversations. Verbal conversations tend to be informal, semi-structured and ungrammatical. The topic can change without finishing the other topic. It is useful for analyzing the change in meanings that can occur during verbal communications. It assumes that meanings are shaped in the context of the exchange. To understand and explain them, the researcher should be present in the interaction.

Discourse analysis

It looks at the way texts are constructed and concerns with the social context within which the text is imbedded. Discourse refers to the communication that goes back and forth. It focuses on the language in use. Most researchers using this analysis focus on language games. This is a well-defined unit of interaction consisting of a sequence of verbal moves in which turns to phrases, the use of metaphor, and allegory all play an important part. There are three broad traditions of discourse analysis:

1. Critical linguistics, social semiotics or critical language studies.
2. Speech-act theory, ethnomethodology and conversation analysis.
3. Post-structuralism.

Narrative analysis

Narrative analysis is a qualitative approach to the interpretation and analysis of qualitative data. There are different types:

- ***Oral narrative***: the narrative is a record of events that are seen as significant by one person.
- ***Ante-narrative***: they tend to reject grand narratives a single voiced, instead of looking at the fragments of multiple stories. This is very post-modern.

Metaphorical analysis

A metaphor is the application of a name or descriptive term or phrase to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable. Metaphors don't appear in isolation but are part of a larger meaningful structure. The first step here is to determine the metaphor in the text. It can be determined when:

- A word or phrase can be understood beyond the literal meaning in context of what is being said.
- The literal meaning stems from an area of physical or cultural experience called the source area.
- Which however is transferred to a second, abstract area called the target area.

The second step is to sort the metaphorical idioms and clustering them under a smaller number of concepts.

Choosing the qualitative data approach

Some approaches are similar, whereas others are completely different and can have underlying assumptions which are opposed. When choosing a way to analyze it, the following considerations should be:

1. Do you find the approach interesting?
2. Is the approach reasonably consistent with your own philosophical assumptions about knowledge and reality?
3. Is the approach reasonably consistent with the research method you employed?
4. Have you gathered the right quantity and quality of data for the particular qualitative analysis method?
5. Do you have a supervisor or some other faculty member who can provide advice and guidance on the use of the preferred approach?

Use of qualitative data analysis software

Computer applications are often used to help researchers with the research. Most logically a software like Microsoft Word. Also, bibliographic software can be used.

Emails, internet and online journals are also part of this. But qualitative data analysis software is something different from the software mentioned above. This can help with the analysis of qualitative data in the following ways:

- Making notes in the field, writing up or transcribing field notes.
- Editing: correcting, extending and revising field notes.
- Memoing: writing reflective commentaries on some aspects of the data.
- Coding: attaching keywords or tags to segments of text to allow for later retrieval.
- Storage: keeping text in an organized database.
- Search and retrieval: locating relevant segments of texts
- Data "linking": forming categories, clusters, or networks of information.
- Content analysis: counting frequencies, sequence, or locations of words and phrases.
- Data display: placing selected or reduced data in a condensed organized format.
- Conclusion-drawing and verification: helping the interpretation of data and testing findings.
- Theory-building: developing systematic explanations of findings; testing hypotheses.
- Graphic mapping: creating diagrams that depict findings or theories.
- Preparing interim and final reports

Should you use QDA software?
When you use a method and QDA approach that require you to code, search, and retrieve text, like grounded theory and content analysis, it is recommended to use a good QDA software package. It will make the process quicker and easier. If you use a method and QDA approach that is more holistic, like hermeneutics and narrative analysis, you may prefer not to use it. This is because it cannot mechanize the kind of analysis that characterizes the approaches. It should be used as a tool. You should remember it can become a temptation to be too detailed in the analysis because the software allows you to do so.

Chapter 17: writing up

Writing up
Writing up is an important part of doing the research. It is often underestimated how much time and effort this might take. The research will not be written up itself. Since the only way most people can learn about the work is through a finished article, book, or thesis, it is an important aspect. There are many different ways of writing up. It can for example be in a dissertation, thesis, book, conference paper, journal article, blog, website, newspaper or magazine article.

A writing plan
Title
"What is the title of the thesis, article, or book I am writing?". Starting with a title can help focus on the other questions to follow, while still being able to change it later if needed. A title that captures the purpose and contribution of the work is helpful.

Purpose
"What is the purpose of the article or book I am writing?". A purpose should be described in one sentence. If it cannot be any shorter and more succinct, the most likely reason is that you yourself are not entirely clear about what it is about.

Authors
"Who are the authors of the work, and what is their intended contribution?". If there is only one author, it is not an appropriate question. But if there are multiple authors, this might be something to consider. The order of the names should be sorted at first; it might change depending on the work, but it should be good when discussing this early, so the issue is out in the open.

Audience
"Who is the intended audience for the work?". You should write down the names of people you think might be the potential audience. For example with a PhD, the examiners and your supervisor are important. You write for the audience, so that is why it may be helpful to write this down. The finished work will then have a greater chance of being appropriate and of interest to the target audience.

Method
"What research method am I planning to use?". It is important to have good support for the research method, including the supervisor. It also includes having the right research training before you start. The support should come from within the institution you are from.

Publication outlet
"Which journal, conference, or book publisher will I submit the work to?". You should think about the most appropriate publication outlet of the research. When wanting to write up your work as a journal, paper or book, you should think about writing for that outlet from the start. This is because that influences the sort of topic, the research method, research style and intended audience. You should really consider the style and standard of a particular outlet.

Theoretical contribution
"What is my proposed theoretical contribution?". This is important because it is a requirement for most top journals in business and management. A purely descriptive study is hard to sell, a conceptual contribution is then better. For second- or third-tier journals, it is not as important but should still be considered. It should be described in one paragraph. It may be general at the start, but it can help focus on the contribution to the wider discipline. It will most likely emerge from your literature review.

Practical contribution
"What is the practical relevance of my work, if any?". It is a good idea to describe this in one paragraph. It might not be essential for every discipline, but it can still be useful. The practical relevance might change the answers to other questions.

Writing styles and genres
- Realist style

It is the most positivist style of writing. It gives an extremely detailed description of cultural traditions, beliefs and practices. It gives preference to so-called typical forms. The cultural practices or forms supposedly typify the culture being described. ignores the view of the researcher but shows the native's perspective. It can be read as an extremely objective, authorative, and politically neutral account. A classic literary device used is the ethnographic present. This gives the impression that things have always been the same. This is a-historical, since it neglects to mention when the activities started. Also, it is failed to acknowledge that things may change over time.

- Confessional style

It is almost the opposite of the realist style. It adopts a highly personalized and self-absorbed style. The emphasis is not on the natives' perspective, but on that of the researcher. The writing style emphasizes the authority of the researcher and their account of what happened. A weakness is that the quality of it varies. Some authors can write interesting tales, while others can be boring. The authors then become too self-absorbed. A good confessional story should read like an adventure story.

- Impressionist style

This focuses on the recall of experiences and impressions from the field. It is about capturing a scene in the moment of time and talks about doing fieldwork in a novelistic way. There is a selection of the atypical in the writing account. This is the opposite of the realist style. The impressionist avoids interpreting or analyzing a story too much, since the mission is to deny the all-embracing answer. It is about inviting the reader to make their own sense of the story. A weakness is that very little people are able to use it, since you have to be an excellent writer.

- Narrative style

This tends to see the case study as the writing of history. The researcher and the subject matter are in history. The researcher pays attention to the chronological nature of events. The advantage is that it is often easy for the reader to see how things progressed over time. It requires details being included and making good decisions on what can be left out.

- Literary style

This uses fiction writing techniques to tell the research findings. Dramatic plots, narration and so on are used to tell about it. They are often very interesting to read. However, these research accounts tend to be emotionally charged and this can distort the reality.

- Jointly told style

Here the research report is co-authored by the researcher and a so-called native. This could be appropriate when doing research that is concerned with international and cross-cultural issues in business and management. The advantage is that both points of view are included. A weakness can be that the report is less critical than others. This is expected since one of the authors is from the research site. Another weakness is in the selection of the native. There can be a whole different perspective.

Practical suggestions

- Start writing as soon as possible

After doing research it is important that you start writing as soon as possible. It is no issue that not all things are thought out first. When you leave until the end this can result in getting the ideas wrong when you don't write them down due to the large amount of data. When you start to write things down, you will also be forced to clarify

what you are thinking. Writing can thus help getting your story straight and figuring things out.

- Write a “good” story

There is not always the need to write in an academic style. The research is thought to be more objective when for example writing in third person. But this is not the key for a good story. Every researcher should write a story that is interesting and compelling for the audience. That is what is most important.

- Data selection

Since there is so much data collected, one of the struggles can be deciding what to include and exclude from the document. Not everything is very important, including too much may overwhelm the readers. It is important to spend time editing the article so that the story can be told within the word limit set by the editor. But it is also important to provide a thick description of the findings. In short papers, there should be some direct quotations from the interviews. This can bring the story to life.

- Get the details right first time

The first thing you should have right at the first time is the spelling of proper names like those of people and places. They should be consistent throughout the whole paper. Another thing is the direct quotation from the sources. They should be completely accurate. This can save some time when you get this right from the start.

- Bibliographic Database and Reference Management Software

The use of a bibliographic database and a reference management software program is recommended. One of the benefits is that you only need to enter a reference once. When you get the details right the first time, you can use it over and over. The software will format the reference in the reference style of choice, like APA.

Chapter 18: getting published

Getting published

A motto for everybody should be “research is not finished until it is published. If you have this attitude you will keep working on it until it is achieved. It ensures that you finish a project before you get sidetracked with many other things. One of the most important reasons to publish your findings is so that others might learn from it and maybe use it as a basis for their own future work. Also, there comes a personal satisfaction from publishing.

<u>Publication outlets</u>

There are numbers of publication outlets like magazines, peer-reviewed journal articles, papers, books or chapters in edited books. Many publication outlets are also available on the internet, next to a paper version of them. They each have their advantages and disadvantages.

- An advantage of presenting a paper at a conference is the feedback on the work. You can also get to see what other researchers in the area are working on.
- An advantage of an article is that it demonstrates the relevance of the work to practice. It can also improve the consulting practice.
- A book is regarded as the defining publication for a researcher, because this is the only place where an author can show the richness of the data.

- But for academics, the most important might be peer-reviewed academic journal publication.

The peer-review process

The peer-review process gives some assurance of quality. In the top journals, the review is very though since they only want the best articles. The research is subject to review by another qualified researcher who is able to judge the quality of the work. When the findings are significant and robust, the article will be accepted and published as a new contribution to knowledge. But, when the findings appear to be insignificant, the paper will be rejected. It is a social process where your work is evaluated by others. It is likely that the reviewers are experts in some particular aspect of the paper. Also, the peer review process is double-blind. This means that the author does not know the reviewers and the reviewers don't know the author.

Common mistakes and pitfalls

Getting the paper rejected

Especially papers submitted to top journals will often get rejected. The more times you submit papers, the more times you will get rejected. Even the best and most published researchers get their papers rejected. A top researcher will revise the paper and submit it to another journal. They don't spend time wallowing in their sorrows. Complaining about the unfairness. A mistake is leaving the paper and not revising it. Another mistake is assuming it was rejected because the reviewers did not understand it. What happened then is that you just did not explain it clear enough.

Why papers get rejected

There are two main reasons papers get rejected:

1. The lack of a contribution to knowledge

Reviewers might reject it when they think the paper is unfocused. They are unsure about the main pint. There can be too many points in the paper. Also, the literature review could be inadequate in their perception. It might not be up to date, or some things might be missing. It can also be that they think it is not new or original. It might not contradict conventional wisdom. The last objective is hard to overcome. New knowledge can be to someone when to others it is not. It is hard to convince them then that it is really new knowledge.

2. The story is not convincing

You might think that this criterion only applies to qualitative research, in most journals there should be a good story. Reviewers might think it is not convincing when there is a lack of depth. This can be from a limited number of sources or because the important data is missing. Reviewers can also be unsure about what and how research is done.

Solutions

A good way to solve the lack of contribution to knowledge is to formulate the purpose of the paper in the correct way. "The purpose of this paper is …". There should just be one main point. One of the things that can help is when starting the research, to keep the paper in the back of your mind. Also, it is helpful to ensure that the literature review is up-to-date and complete. This might be more difficult than it seems. If the literature review includes a recently published article from a top journal, the article is most likely to be already three or four years old. This is because it takes a lot of time

writing it and navigating the review process. A solution to this is to become a reviewer for journals and conferences, you can see the articles long before the publishing. Another way of solving it is to attend conferences.

To solve the problem that the story is not convincing, there are a few things you can do. You should ensure that a significant amount of data is collected. It is also a good idea to include verbatim comments from interviews. This adds validity and credibility. Also, the research method should be described very clearly. The details will help others evaluating the research. Besides that you should specify how your research should be evaluated. Especially when there is a new method or method of analysis.

Tips
A journal should just have one main point, sometimes it is ethnographic studies will have multiple points. A solution is to treat each paper is a part of a whole. you have to devise a way to carve up the work so that parts can be published separately. A problem from this can be that you have to figure out which part of the story is told in one particular paper. An advantage is that there is a potential to publish multiple papers from one research. It is possible to publish the same story from different angles.

Another tip is to seek to improve the manuscript before submitting it to a conference or journal. This can be done by asking colleagues to comment on the working paper version. Another approach is a more senior colleague to join as a co-author. There can be a win-win for both parties. But you should make sure there isn't a power differential.

- A collaboration should be purely voluntary
- Discussing and agreeing upon a proposed publishing plan with the co-authors right at the start is suggested.
- A co-author should really contribute something to the paper. Sometimes, the names are on the paper, but no work is done.

It is easier to get your paper accepted for a conference than to get it accepted for a journal. You can use the feedback to improve the manuscript. It is allowed to resubmit a revised version of a paper published in the conference proceedings to a journal.

It is important that you send the article to an appropriate journal regarding the subject matter and the style of the article. The work should be of a similar standard to what is normally published there.

Overview of skills

Chapter 2
- Understand the purpose and benefits of qualitative research
- See how qualitative research contributes to rigor and relevance.
- Recognize what is research and what is not
- Know the difference between qualitative and quantitative research
- Understand the concept of triangulation

Chapter 3
- Understand the purpose of a research design
- Know how to choose a topic
- Become more confident in writing a proposal
- Know the difference between inductive versus deductive
- Understand the model for qualitative research

Chapter 4
- Understand the underlying assumptions in research
- Identify the positivist, interpretive, and critical research

Chapter 5
- Understand the importance of ethics
- Understand the importance of the ethical principles related to research
- Acknowledge the ethical dilemmas that arise in practice.

Chapter 6
- Understand the purpose and features of action research
- Know the three different approaches in action research
- Identify the advantages and disadvantages of action research
- Know the basic requirements for evaluating action research studies

Chapter 7
- See the purpose of a case study
- Understand the three different approaches of case studies
- Know the advantages and disadvantages of case studies
- Be able to evaluate a case study per approach

Chapter 8
- Understand the purpose of ethnographic research
- Know the differences between an ethnographic research and a case study
- Identify the three approaches to ethnographic research
- Understand the way of doing ethnographic research
- See the advantages and disadvantages of ethnographic research

Chapter 9
- Understand the purpose of grounded theory research
- Identify the various approaches of grounded theory research
- Understand the framework for theorizing in grounded theory studies

- See the advantages and disadvantages of grounded theory research\
- Know how to evaluate grounded theory research studies

Chapter 10
- See the purpose of interviews
- Understand the different types of interviews
- See the difference between individual and focus group interviews
- Understand the positive techniques in interviews
- Understand the problems using interviews
- See how a model of the interview can be used
- Acknowledge the suggestions for interviewing
- Understand the simple structure for an interview guide

Chapter 11
- Understand the purpose of participant observation/fieldwork
- Know the difference between observation and participant observation
- Recognize the concepts in fieldwork; including the 9 dimensions of Spradley
- Distinguish between the two main types of fieldwork
- Understand how to conduct fieldwork
- See the advantages and disadvantages of fieldwork

Chapter 12
- Recognize the purpose and different types of documents
- Learn how to find documents
- See how to use documents
- Understand the advantages and disadvantages of using documents

Chapter 13
- Understand the purpose of analyzing and interpreting qualitative data
- Acknowledge the different approaches to analyzing and interpreting qualitative data
- Understand which qualitative data analysis approach to use
- See in what way qualitative data analysis software can be used
- Recognize when to use the qualitative data analysis software

Chapter 17
- Understand the purpose of writing up
- Develop a writing plan
- Acknowledge the different writing styles and genres
- Recognize the mistakes that are commonly made in writing up
- Understand how you can improve your own writing

Chapter 18
- Understand the purpose of getting published
- Acknowledge the differences between publication outlets
- Understand the reasons why papers get rejected
- Know the solutions and tips when your paper is rejected

Disclaimer

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