

Qualitative Research Designs

Discuss Six Common Types Of Qualitative Research Designs

Qualitative Research Designs

- Phenomenological
- Ethnographic
- Grounded theory
- Historical
- Case study
- Action research

The Most Important Features Of The Six Types of Qualitative Research Designs

Phenomenological Studies

- Examines human experiences
- Goal: describe meaning experience holds for subject
- Study areas: areas with little known knowledge

Phenomenological Studies (cont'd)

- Understand experience from subject's vantage point
 - No literature review
 - Bracketing: researcher identifies personal bias.

Phenomenological Process

- Data collection (interviews)
- Data analysis
- Process simultaneously
- Search for themes and patterns

Ethnographic studies

- Systematic collection and analysis of data about cultural groups
- Goal: grasp patterns of people in their familiar environment
- Subjects: entire culture or subgroup of the culture

Ethnographic Goals

- Provide insightful descriptions
- Test established social or cultural theories
- Develop new theories

Ethnographic Process

- Live with subjects
- Become part of their culture
- Simultaneous data collection and analysis
 - Participant observations
 - Key informant interviews

Grounded Theory

- Glaser and Strauss (1967)
- Inductive and deductive approaches

Grounded Theory Process

- Simultaneous data collection and analysis
 - Field setting
 - Constant comparison
- Theory developed
- Theory “grounded” in data from which it was derived

Sampling in Grounded Theory Studies

- Purposeful sampling
- Diversity rather than similarity
- Shed new light on phenomenon

Literature Review in Grounded Theory Studies

- Not performed prior to study
 - Avoid preconceived notions
- After concepts identified and relationships specified
 - Determine similar associations discovered in past

Aim of Grounded Theory Studies

- Discovery of basic social processes
- Hypothesis generation, not testing

Historical Studies

- Identification, location, evaluation, and synthesis of data from the past
- Goal: relate past events to present and future

Process of Historical Research

- Identification of problem or area of interest
- Careful and thorough review of literature
- Formulation of research questions
- Data collection
 - Primary and secondary sources
 - Documents, relics, artifacts
- Data analysis

Evaluating Data in Historical Studies

- External criticism—authenticity of data
- Internal criticism—accuracy of data

Need for Historical Studies

- Preference for action-oriented experimental research
- Increasing historical studies of nursing leaders
- Need for studies of nursing practice

Case Study Research

- In-depth examinations of people, groups of people, or an institution
- Hypothesis generation, not testing
- Goals
 - Formalize experimental knowledge
 - Promote quality nursing care

Case Study Research

- Qualitative—interest in meaning of experiences to subjects themselves
- Quantitative—generalize results

Case Study Process

- Data collection
 - Questionnaires
 - Interviews
 - Observations
 - Written accounts by participants
- Content analysis
 - Search for patterns and themes

Disadvantages of Case Study Research

- Subject selection process
- Time consuming
- Costly
- Participant dropout

Action Research

- Goals
 - Improve practice
 - Study effect of action taken
- One particular hospital or health care setting
- No goal to generalize findings
- Solution implementation immediate, part of research process

Participatory Action Research (PAR)

- Special kind of community-based action research
- Participants and researcher or co-researchers collaborate throughout study.

The Disciplines Associated With Some Of The Various Qualitative Research Designs

Phenomenological Design

- Derived from phenomenological philosophy

Ethnographic Research

- Philosophical orientation
- Discipline of anthropology

Grounded Theory Research

- Based on symbolic interaction theory

Historical Research

- Philosophical orientation
- Discipline of history

Case Study Research

- Philosophical orientation
- Discipline of sociology

The Most Common Qualitative Designs Reported Clinical Research Literature

Qualitative Research Designs in Published Clinical Research

- Phenomenological
- Ethnographic
- Grounded theory
- Historical
- Case study
- Action research

The Reasons for Using Qualitative Designs In Their Studies

Quantitative Versus Qualitative Research

- Quantitative approach not always appropriate
- Uncover new phenomena
- Not for generalizations

Focus of Quantitative Research

- Gain insight
- Individual's perception of events and circumstances

Critique The Design Section Of Qualitative Research Studies

Critiquing the Qualitative Research Design

- Criteria different from quantitative critiques
- No standard set of criteria
- Each qualitative method unique

Critiquing the Qualitative Research Design (cont'd)

- General guidelines
 - Would a quantitative approach have been more appropriate?
 - Is the focus on the subjective nature of human experience?
 - Is the specific qualitative approach named and described?
 - Will the findings have significance for nursing?

Critiquing the Qualitative Research Design (cont'd)

- General guidelines
 - Is the participant selection process clearly described?
 - How was the sample size determined?
 - Is the data collection and recording process fully presented?
 - Is it clear how researcher bias was avoided?
 - Is the data analysis method consistent with the study's purpose and approach?

Critiquing the Qualitative Research Design (cont'd)

- General guidelines
 - Are the findings clearly presented and limitations acknowledged?
 - Are suggestions made for further research?



**QUALITATIVE
EVALUATION METHODS**

DEFINITION

- Procedures that yield non-numerical information to:
 - a) help understand the program or the participants relation to the program
 - b) interpret qualitative information
 - c) recognize uniqueness of different program settings

GOOD SETTINGS FOR QUALITATIVE EVALUATIONS

- Programs with identifiable objectives that can be specified and measured quantitatively.
- Determine if influence of the program caused changes in participants.

CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITATIVE EVALUATION SITUATIONS

- Longer cycle between program input and outcome
- Global Success Index based on program, not individuals
- Need for results in a short timeframe
- Multiple stakeholders
- Agency specifically requests improvement suggestions from evaluator
- Social setting is different from any other program



GATHERING QUALITATIVE INFORMATION

CENTRAL IMPORTANCE OF THE OBSERVER

- Personal involvement of the evaluator in data collection
 - To understand program from the inside
 - To respond to the information that is gathered
- Corroborating conclusions with evidence from multiple sources
- Confirm conclusions with people who know the program



Where have you seen this before?

→ Synthesis of information

- Integrating evidence from different sources into a credible, persuasive story
- Eg: even when a credible eyewitness is not available, a defendant can be convicted when caught in a web of evidence.



OBSERVATION METHODS

NONPARTICIPANT OBSERVERS

- Present in the program setting, but do not administer or deliver the service.
- Seek to develop an understanding of how a program operates -- not looking for predefined details.
- Make observations to detect what is important and how details fit into the overall understanding of the program.
- Works best in settings that are public: schools, libraries, businesses, etc.
- Use when evaluators can be sure that their presence would not change the social system of the program.

IMPORTANT

- Avoiding mental blinders and remaining open to many possible interpretations.
- Staff may act in a guarded way in an effort to control the impression of the evaluator.
- Observers can make program staff nervous and lower their effectiveness.

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

- Observer takes legitimate role in the program.
- May act as *pseudo-participant* to gauge quality of normal treatment.
 - Eg. Secret Shoppers
- Use when services are too private to permit a non-participant observer or when the staff members are so defensive that they would not be able to carry out their duties.

DOWNFALLS OF PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

- Unethical and incompatible with the philosophy of evaluation if done without staff consent
- Also violates spirit of mutual trust that is important in effective functioning of agencies.

Gain cooperation by:

- Explaining that the evaluation is a way to learn about the program and what problems staff members face.

EXAMINING TRACES

- Tangible items associated with living.
 - E.g. Records, tests, minutes, graffiti, photos - pre and post intervention, etc.
- Accumulation of evidence from many traces leads to a conclusion.
- Tentative interpretations are compared with information observed through interviews and observations of behaviours.
- Evaluators seek information from different sources to draw conclusions that are collaborated in several ways.
- Use triangulation to learn about the program they are evaluating.

INTERVIEWING TO OBTAIN QUALITATIVE INFORMATION

- Qualitative evaluators use open-ended, unstructured surveys to learn detailed information .
- Encourage use of own words, thought patterns and values when answering the questions.
 - E.g. multiple choice exams vs. essay exams

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

- Interviewee understands purpose and has consented to be interviewed.
- Rapport established between interviewer and respondent - asking orientation questions.
- Avoid asking close-ended questions.
- Opportunity to tailor interview to the respondent.
- Use rephrasing and reflecting to fully understand interviewee statements.

RECORDING ANSWERS

- Hand written notes are less threatening and keep interviewer involved
- Allow interviewer to record own thoughts
- Easier to work with than tapes
- May use computer to record comments, but can be awkward for both parties
- May use relational database for large-scale studies.

NATURALISTIC OBSERVATIONS

- Require more involvement and creativity than methods using surveys and checklists
- Four phases involved in process

PHASE ONE: MAKING UNRESTRICTED OBSERVATION

- Use field notes
- Observe crucial program events, activities, written materials and settings.
- Seek out those who can provide more information on how things work in that setting.
- Direct the information gathering process toward important elements of the program
- Should have unrestricted access and should gather information from all aspects of the program.

PHASE TWO: INGRATING IMPRESSIONS

- Begins with first observations - aims to integrate impressions formed during phase one.
- Develop ideas about the program
- Requires further observations and interviews to “fill in the holes”.
- Refine their initial impressions.
- Complete when additional observations no longer change the impressions.

PHASE THREE: SHARING INTERPRETATIONS

- Share their views with stakeholders and other evaluators.
- Obtain additional feedback to correct any misunderstandings.
- Experienced and uninvolved evaluators can challenge interpretations that are not adequately supported.

PHASE FOUR: PREPARING REPORTS

- Present descriptions of the program and draw evaluative conclusion.
- Provide detailed descriptions of programs through the eyes of the stakeholders along with the insights of the evaluators.
- Facilitate better understanding of program.
- Results can be applied at other locations.

SUBJECTIVITY?

- Permits the development of understandings that cannot be obtained with predefined surveys and checklists.
- Contains more reasonable recommendations that are more likely to be used.
- Choice of variables to assess control can also affect the findings of evaluations.
- Must be aware of prejudgements and unexamined assumptions.

COORDINATING BOTH METHODS

- How to use qualitative and quantitative methods so they complement each other in the best ways possible.
- Emphasis on each approach depends on the evaluation question to be answered.
- The pursuit of good science should transcend personal preferences, for members or narrative.



**SUBSTANCE OF THE
EVALUATION**

CHANGING EMPHASIS AS UNDERSTANDING EXPANDS

- Single evaluation design - enrich quantitative approach by adding qualitative component.
- Evaluation procedures change when plans for comparison and control groups cannot be carried out.
 - may be necessary to utilize a more qualitative approach to interpret data.
- Qualitative evaluations can become more quantitative as the evaluations become more focused and clear.

THE EVALUATION QUESTION

- Evaluations are classified as evaluations of need, process, outcome and cost effectiveness.
- Different questions require emphasis on either qualitative method or quantitative method.
- Most evaluations have multiple purposes.
- Implementations must occur before outcomes are observed.

COST OF EVALUATION

- Using observers is more expensive than sending surveys or reading records.
- The expense of qualitative evaluation is compounded by its open nature.
- Costs can be contained better and estimated more accurately if qualitative methods are combined with quantitative methods and used to verify particular issues.

PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS

- Purpose of the evaluation - improve the delivery of services to people in need by studying the implementation and impact of programs.
- Evaluations should be consciously directed toward empowering the most disadvantage groups in the society.

Determine Trustworthiness

- Credibility
- Dependability
- Confirmability
- Transferability
- Authenticity