



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Review – Ontology, Epistemology, Methodology and Methods

DSAW6075/DSAW7075
Research Methods for Work-
based Learning

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



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Housekeeping Notes

- Moodle access?
- Enrolment on the 2016/2017 Academic Year
 - Email from Registry with a link
- Gill and Johnson book – available online!
- Moodle Learner Zone – updates!
- Day 4 – 10/1/2017
- Draft Submission – Assessment Component 1 – **12/12/2016**
- Draft Submission – Assessment Component 2 – **13/1/2017**
- FINAL ASSESSMENT SUBMISSION – **3/2/2017**

Case Study

- Primarily a **research design**, but can also be used as a method within a larger research design. Involves looking in great depth and detail at a specific (small) instance, situation, event, location, etc. (often, but not always, with the intention of making wider principles)

Experiment

- An isolated, structured, and controlled situation designed to test certain variables and their interaction within situations.

Interview

- A planned (rather than naturally occurring) conversation between two people with a specific purpose

Questionnaire

- An instrument for collecting primarily **descriptive** information at a particular point in time.

Content Analysis

- Extracting numerical data from written content (e.g. how often do newspaper articles use the word 'millennial'? or how many times do customer service survey responses include words such as 'angry' or 'enraged'?)

Focus Group Discussion

- A type of group interview that relies heavily not just on the interaction between interviewer and interviewee(s) but also between interviewees themselves.

Observation

- Looking (often systematically) and noting (systematically) people, events, behaviours, settings, artefacts, routines, etc.

Ontology

Objectivism

- Reality is fundamentally objective, and independent of other factors
- Truth, reality, fact, etc. are things that exist and can be found

Subjectivism

- Reality cannot be understood without accounting for subjective experience
- Truth, reality, fact, etc. do not really exist – everything we know and think comes through our ‘lens’

Epistemology

Positivism

- The scientist!
- We find knowledge/information by measuring, gauging, observing, etc. using the senses
- Research should adhere strictly to the 'scientific method' and remain at arm's length from participants/subjects
- What is important is understanding occurrences

Interpretivism

- The detective!
- We find knowledge/information through interpreting and understanding
- Research should be flexible and interactive, allowing participants/subjects to drive questions
- What is important is understanding experiences

Methodology

Qualitative

- Data have 'qualities' that are generally not numeric and must be understood rather than measured
- Tends to look for meaning or experience
- Inductive = developing theory

Quantitative

- Data are numerical in nature, and can be measured and 'quantified'
- Tends to look for cause and effect or pure fact
- Deductive = testing theory

Crime in apartment buildings

Objectivists wonder:

- Where does crime occur?
- What types of crimes occur?
- Who commits crimes?

Positivists ask:

- Do crimes occur in these buildings?
- What crimes occur in these buildings?
- Is there increased risk in these buildings?

Quantitative questions:

- Are crime statistics available?
- Have we categorised the crimes that occur?
- Can we compare these buildings to others?

Quantitative seeks:

- Statistics on crime
- Rates of crime
- Measurements of crime
- Comparison to other buildings



Subjectivists wonder:

- What is “crime”?
- Do we all view “crime” in the same way?
- What is the impact of behaviour we call “criminal”?

Interpretivists ask:

- Do residents experience crimes in these buildings?
- What do people in these buildings consider to be ‘crimes’?
- Do people feel safe in and around these buildings?

Qualitative questions:

- Have we spoken to residents to get their views?
- Do residents think certain crimes are more or less important?
- Can we observe the interaction of residents or behaviours of passers-by?

Qualitative seeks:

- Experience of crime
- Knowledge of crime
- Interpretations of crime



There is a correct answer to this question, and I can find it by discovering and analysing what has happened/is happening.



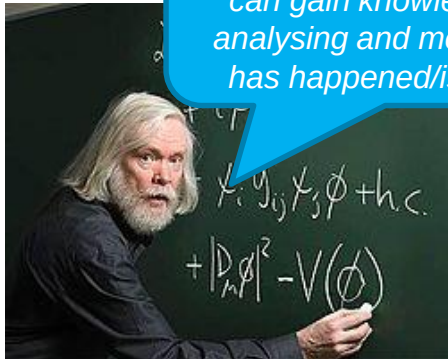
Objectivist

There is a correct answer to this question, but in order to find it I need to see it through the eyes of all the groups involved.



Positivist

There is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer to this question, but I can gain knowledge through analysing and measuring what has happened/is happening.



Interpretivist

There is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer to this question, but I can learn more about it through examining the perspectives of groups involved.



Subjectivist