



Professional Doctorate

BMPF7101

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22nd June 2019

Paradigms and Traditions of Qualitative Research

Abstract

Introduction: The research methodology is a significant part of any study that involves research process improving the knowledge and understanding of any complex scenario. Qualitative research focus to understand the question with a humanistic or idealistic approach and it is used to understand people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviour, and interactions. Sixteen research traditions were identified to conduct Qualitative research methodology.

Aims: This article aims to highlight the advantages and disadvantages of the most common qualitative research traditions Ethnography, Case Study, Phenomenology, Grounded Theory, Narrative Research, and Action Research.

Methods: Bielefeld Academic Search Engine (BASE) was used to find the words 'Qualitative Research' AND 'Action Research' OR 'Case Study'; OR 'Ethnography'; OR 'Phenomenology'; OR 'Narrative Research'; OR 'Grounded Theory' in the title. From the 622 references identified; 222 had more than ten years old; 181 were not written in English; 44 were identified as duplicates; and 158 were not accessible or were not relevant. 27 extra references were considered for this article review, previously identified from other studies.

Results: Were identified 44 references, highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of the each qualitative research tradition.

Conclusion: All six traditions have advantages and disadvantages that will have more or less impact in the study outcome depending on the subject itself and also on the assertiveness that the tradition was chosen and applied to the study.

Keywords: Qualitative research, Ethnography, Case Study, Phenomenology, Narrative Research, Grounded Theory, Action Research.

Introduction and Literature Review

Philosophy is the use of abstract ideas and beliefs that supports the research process, and it is divided in four assumptions: ontology, that relates to the nature of reality and its characteristics; epistemology, that relates to the meaning of the true; axiology, that relates to the fundamental values; and methodology, that relates to the method used during the research (Creswell, 2013).

In Positivism, the ontology is realism, existing an external and objective reality; the epistemology is founded on the view of the natural world and logical deductive confrontations are used to test theoretical consistency; and the methodology is observational and experimental, with the use of quantitative methods.

The Constructivism is the opposite of the Positivism, the ontology is the belief that the individuals and their institutions are fundamentally different from natural sciences and they need to be understood and interpreted (Anti-Positivism); the epistemology is founded on the view that the knowledge of the world is a human and social construction; and the methodology is mainly qualitative.

Opting for not using a specific scenario, it becomes difficult to reflect, characterise and apply fundamental values in abstract. Due to such reason, axiology will not be analysed in this article.

According to Pathak et al. (2013), choosing qualitative research as the methodological assumption aims to understand the question with a humanistic or idealistic approach, and it is used to understand people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviour, and interactions (Gallifa, 2018).

The following qualitative research traditions were identified: Action Research (Torbert, 2001); Biographical Research (Roberts, 2002); Case Study (Starman, 2013); Conversational Analysis (Drew, 2013); Discourse Analysis (Hodges et al., 2008); Ethnography (Reeves et al., 2013); Field Research (Serban and Ilie, 2014); Focus Groups (Nyumba et al., 2017); Frame Analysis (Pan and Kosicki, 1993); Grounded Theory (Tie et al., 2019); Hermeneutics (McCaffrey et al., 2012); Life World Analysis (Gorichanaz, 2018); Narrative Research (Colyar and Hollet, 2009); Phenomenology (Davidsen, 2013); Phenomenography (Barnard et al., 1999); and Historical Research (Špiláčková, 2012).

From the sixteen qualitative research traditions identified, six research traditions were selected (Leonard, 2019): Ethnography, Case Study, Phenomenology, Narrative Research, Grounded Theory and Action Research.

I used the Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, and Research Type (SPIDER) Tool (Methley et al., 2014) to formulate the following research question: 'What are the advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research traditions?'

An online search was performed, following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) Protocols flow diagram (Moher et al., 2015).

Bielefeld Academic Search Engine (BASE) was used to find the words 'Qualitative Research' AND 'Action Research' OR 'Case Study'; OR 'Ethnography'; OR 'Phenomenology'; OR 'Narrative Research'; OR 'Grounded Theory' in the title.

From the 622 articles identified; 222 had more than ten years old; 181 were not written in English; 44 were identified as duplicates; and 158 were not accessible or were not relevant. 27 extra references were considered for this article review, previously identified from other studies.

Conducting an Action Research

The cycle starts with an *idea* socially produced within a particular context. It may include visioning, values exploration, conception or initiation, problem identification, exploration and fact-finding. From an idea, a *plan* is developed collaboratively and participative by involving all the affected individuals. The plan is implemented (*act*), with collaborative actions and involving others. After the implementation, it is time to *evaluate* and *reflect* the outcomes. Once the cycle is complete, it may lead to another full or partial cycle (Willig and Stainton-Rogers, 2008).

Advantages

The ultimate goal of Action Research is to reach full participation by all the involved individuals to resolve the problem at hand. Their involvement in the conception and implementation of the plan and in further implementations with a good outcome will develop the feeling of bellowing, ownership and teamwork between the individuals. Action Research has practical relevance in business research and it can be applied to both quantitative and qualitative research method, providing in-depth knowledge about the business problem and issues.

Disadvantages

The human behavior is significantly influenced by the factors such as genetics, social norms, attitudes (McGue and Bouchard, 1998), religion (Speeth, K., 1994), and weather and climate (Liu et al., 2015).

Collaboration and participation may cause problems if an individual with a dominant character and with strong views is involved. Depending of the influence and leadership style that such individual has in the group (Jain, 2017), it may create divisions and will compromise the outcome of the research.

It is possible that the causes, effects and outcomes may not be generalised, with consequences for the development of the feeling of bellowing, ownership and teamwork. Due to such reasons, it is considered a challenge to meet the needs and expectations of every individual involved.

Case Study

Case study is a research tradition that involves the analysis of a contemporary real-life phenomenon which is usually a single case or a small number of cases (Mohajan, 2018); giving the opportunity of real people in real situations to explain ideas more clearly than simply presenting abstract theories or principles (Cohen et al., 2017).

This research tradition should be used when the focus of the study is to answer questions such as “how” and “why”. It can be used in quantitative or qualitative research depending on the purpose of the study, being conducted using multiple methods and instruments such as questionnaires, interviews, observations, written accounts, and audio-visual materials (Creswell, 2013).

Case study research may be intrinsic, when the intent is to capture the case holistically; or instrumental, to be used to accomplish something other than understanding a particular situation (Baxter and Jack, 2008), focusing on an aspect, concern or issue of the case (Hamilton and Corbertt-Whittier, 2013).

A case study may have three forms: exploratory, characterised as the collection of data aiming to explain the presumed causal link in real-life interventions that are too complex; descriptive, characterised by setting out a consideration of possible theories to frame the study; and explanatory, combining the exploratory and descriptive forms in order to develop answers about the issue, situation, person or group (Hamilton et al., 2013); and can be classified according to the time dimension, theory formation (Starman, 2013).

Time dimension

This type of case study can refer to a singular or multiple cases.

For singular case study it is possible to be divided in six sub-types: Retrospective, involving a collection of data relating to a past phenomenon of any kind; Snapshot, when the case is examined in one particular period of time such as a current event or a day in the life of a person; and Diachronic, when the case changes over time and are similar to longitudinal study.

For multiple case studies it is possible to classify as Nested, involving the comparison of elements within one case; Parallel, when the cases are all happening in the same time and are being studied concurrently; and Sequential, when the

cases happen consecutively and there is an assumption that one case will affect the next (Starman, 2013).

Theory formation

This type of case study can be divided in six sub-types: Atheoretical/configurative idiographic, aiming to illustrate a case study that do not accumulate or contribute directly to theory; Disciplined configurative, aiming to established theories to explain the case; Heuristic, aiming to identify new paths for marginal, deviant or outlier cases; Plausibility probes, aiming to determine whether further examination is warranted; and Building block, aiming to study specific types of phenomena that, when put together, contribute to a more comprehensive theory (Starman, 2013).

Conducting a Case Study

A case study method can be based on six major stages. The first stage defines the conceptual theoretical structure where the researcher is going to map the literature over the subject and define boundaries. The second stage defines the units of analysis, the protocol to collect and analyse data collection. The third stage conducts a test pilot. If the results of the test pilot fail, the researcher should go back to the second stage to review the case plan. The fourth stage is dependent on the data collection method. The data collection is posteriorly analysed (fifth stage) leading to the generation of a research report (sixth stage), which can be represented by scientific articles, dissertations or theses (Peixoto et al., 2017).

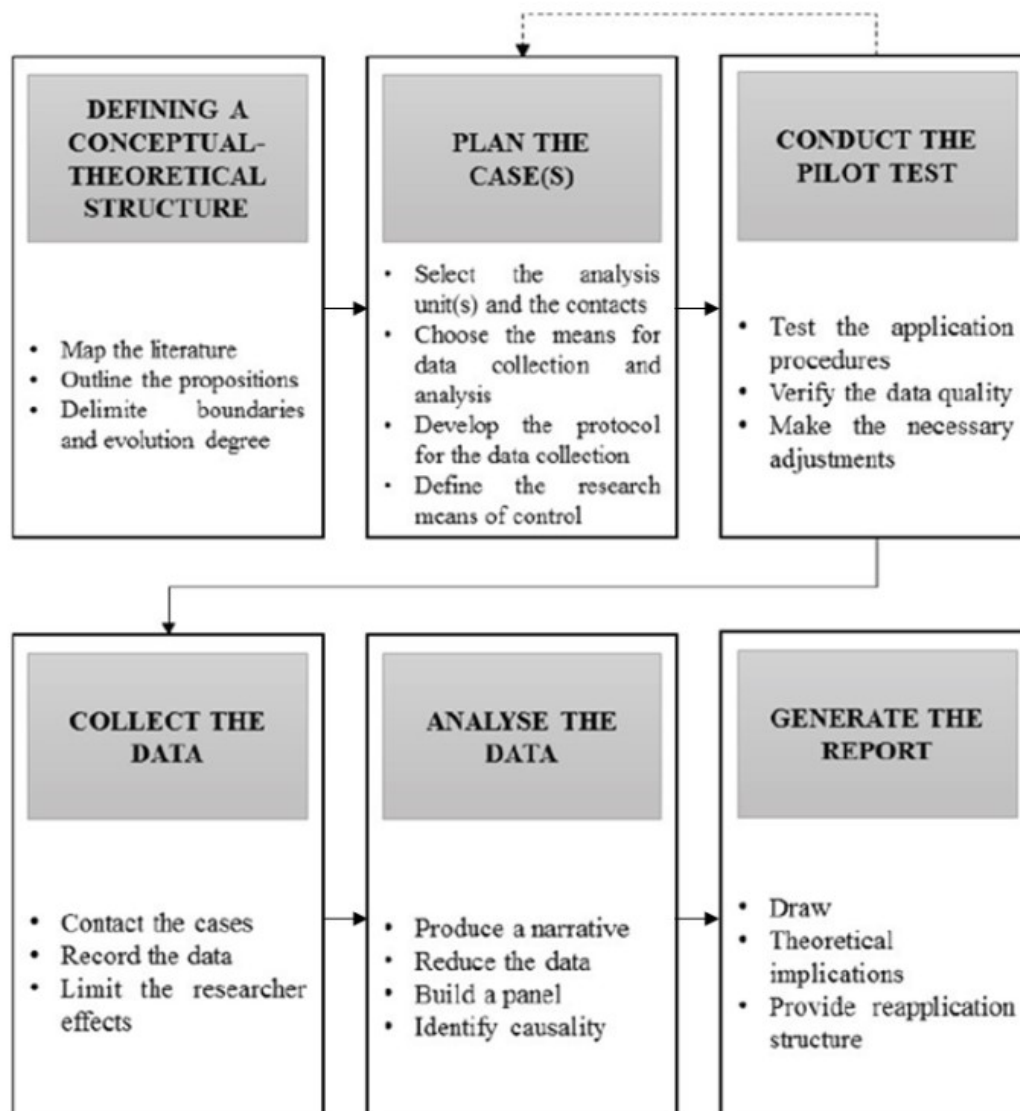


Figure 2 – Sequence of steps to conduct a case study
(Adapted from Peixoto et al., 2017)

The case study has to be correct and credible; being necessary to implement the following strategies: explain data collection procedures; display collected data so it is ready to be re-analysed; all negative instances should be reported; biases should be acknowledged; fieldwork analysis need to be documented; the relationship between assertion and evidence should be clarified; primary evidences should be distinguished from secondary evidences; description and interpretation should be distinguished from secondary evidences; diaries and/or logs should be used to track what was actually done during different stages of the study; and methods should be devised to check the quality of data (Starman, 2013).

Advantages

Case study allows a collection in detail of factors that would not normally be possible to obtain using other research traditions. Due to such a reason, the data collected is rich and of a greater depth in comparison with others.

Depending on the purpose of the study, case study is considered as quantitative or qualitative research, being suitable to be used in scientific experiments. Case study is suitable for serving heuristic purposes of inductively, identifying additional variables and new hypotheses, and can accommodate complex causal relations, such as complex interaction effects and path dependency.

Case study tends to be conducted on rare cases where large samples of similar participants are not available (Starman, 2013).

Disadvantages

The rigour of the case study may be open to dispute if evidence seems overwhelmingly in favour of a given position. The implementation of the strategies previously mentioned is paramount to assure the verifiability and credibility of the study.

Case study has a limited generalizability to the wider population on the basis of an individual case. Therefore, the single qualitative case study cannot contribute to scientific development (Starman, 2013).

Ethnography

Ethnography is a research tradition characterised by in-depth observation and interpretation of groups of individuals, taking into consideration patterns of values, behaviours, beliefs, languages, historical and cultural contexts, and social interactions (Jones and Smith, 2017 and Creswell, 2013).

With this qualitative research tradition, the researcher is interested in examining shared patterns of behaviours, beliefs, languages, and the unit of analysis is typically larger than twenty (Creswell, 2013).

Different approaches have led to a lack of orthodoxy and have resulted in subtypes of ethnography with different theoretical orientations and aims, such as:

Auto-ethnography

Auto-ethnography is an approach to research seeking to describe and analyse personal experiences in order to understand cultural involvement. Auto-ethnography combines characteristics of autobiography and ethnography, retroactively and selectively writing about past experiences of the researcher (Ellis et al., 2011).

Consumer ethnography

Consumer ethnography is an approach turned to the business, aiming to focus on the consumer to answer questions such as who buys a specific product or uses a specific service and why. The outcome will advise the entrepreneurs to develop or change market strategies in order to improve their own products or services aiming to attract more customers (Ayres, 2016). Profit is the main stimulant for this approach.

Critical ethnography

In critical ethnography, the researcher advocates for the emancipation of groups marginalised in society taking into consideration their race, class and gender. Researchers typically are politically minded individuals who seek, through their research, to speak out against inequality and domination (Creswell, 2013).

Critical race ethnography

This is a critical ethnography specifically focused on race and how racism is deeply embedded within the framework of a society, even if such principle does not exist. It has three main goals: to present stories about discrimination from the perspective of people of colour, building cases against discrimination and racism; to argue for the eradication of racial subjugation while simultaneously recognises that race is a social structure; and to address other areas of difference such as gender, class, and any inequities experienced by individuals (Creswell, 2013). Critical race ethnography frequently uses racialized discourses, and the language used (spoken and written) that sorts some people, things, places and practices into social categories is marked as inherently dangerous (Dick and Wirtz, 2011).

Cultural and cognitive ethnography

Cultural and cognitive ethnography crosses with other disciplines such as cognitive science, anthropology of science, naturalised epistemology and ethnoscience (Heinz, 2004). According to Heinz (2004), cultural and cognitive ethnography can show how cognitive constraints have contributed to the contents of a given science and can be analysed as a specific cultural model or scheme of an individual.

Disability Ethnography

In Disability ethnography, the researcher uses the perspective of a disabled person to address the meaning of inclusion of disabled individuals in the society, focusing on disability as a dimension of human difference and not as a defect (Creswell, 2013).

Ethnomethodology

Ethnomethodology is an approach to research who share a primary interest in social actions and also how language is used to achieve different things, rather than in language itself. It is both a theoretical perspective on social actions and a method for researching these actions. The unit of analysis is interaction among individuals rather than the individual itself, with the focus on what participants are doing with their utterances or gestures in this interaction (Ingram, 2018).

Feminism ethnography

According to Schrock (2018), feminism ethnography is an approach who does not have a single, coherent definition and it is caught between struggles over the definition and goals of feminism. However, according to Davis and Craven (2016), it is defined as a woman-centred ethnographic approach, taking into account all people in a field site, community or organisation, paying particular attention to gender.

Marxist ethnography

Marxist ethnography is another sub-type critical ethnography approach created by Karl Marx with the assumption that knowledge is constructed as a result of its historical dependency on unequal relationships in society. Karl Marx describes this sub-type of ethnography in five dimensions (Fuchs, 2016):

The first dimension assumes it as normative and realistic.

The second argument aims to overthrow all conditions in which a man is degraded, enslaved or neglected. Marx considered that conflict exists between the proletariat and the elite, causing transformations and extremism in societies; proposing a form of rule in which the government attempts to maintain control over society, including all aspects of the public and private lives of its citizens, the totalitarianism (Lenzi, 2007).

The third dimension supports the use of dialectical reasoning as method of analysis, aiming to cause contradictions. Dialectical thinking argues that capitalism is a form of domination. On the other hand, the capitalism produces new forms of co-operation among classes.

The fourth dimension assumes it as a critique of ideology, creating the impression that the results of social activity are unchangeable.

The fifth dimension is connected to struggles for a just and fair society, aiming to explain the causes, conditions, potentials and limits of struggles.

Marxism advocates that there is no neutrality in science and the access to knowledge depends on the subject social standing. Therefore, the interests of research derive from the relevant subject social standing. Marxism also advocates that objectivity, defended by natural sciences and positivism, imprisons reality. Employing the methods of natural sciences in the social world offers a fragment view of the problem under study and captures reality in stasis, thus hiding the dynamics

that indicate the framework of determination of what is being studied in the conscience plane (Soares et al., 2013).

Queer Ethnography

Queer ethnography is an approach characterised by a variety of methods and strategies relating to individual identity (Creswell, 2013). According to Creswell (2013), queer theory assumes that both the heterosexual/homosexual/binary and the sex/gender split are challenged. Queer ethnography supports that all normalising strategies should be avoided; making academic work ironic, and often comic and paradoxical. Due to that reason, common objectives of study are films, videos, novels, poetry and visual images; and the most frequent interests include the social work of the drag kings, drag queens and sexual playfulness.

Realist/Naturalist ethnography

Realist/Naturalist ethnography is an approach used by cultural anthropologist, reflecting a particular posture taken by the researcher toward the individual being study. The researcher remains in the background as a specialist and, without interfering, reporting facts with more or less relevance about everyday life among the people studied (Creswell, 2013).

Structural functionalism

In structural functionalism, the researcher has an interest to relate part of a society or social system to another part. There are two types of functional analysis: Traditional Functional Analysis, based on the premise that all social patterns work to maintain the integration and adaptation of the larger system in the society; and Formal Functional Analysis, that examines the relationships between elements and reject the attributes of integration and adaptation supported by the Traditional Functional Analysis. The Formal Functional Analysis does not include a theoretical orientation or a substantive hypothesis about events (Fisher, 2010).

Symbolic interactionism

Symbolic interactionism addresses how society is created and maintained through repeated interaction among individuals. This traditional approach looks at society as a constraining entity that ultimately defines an individual (Carter and Fuller, 2015).

Visual ethnography

Visual ethnography uses photography, motion pictures, hypermedia, the web, interactive CDs, CD_ROM and virtual reality as ways of capturing and expressing perceptions and social realities of people (Given, 2008).

Conducting an ethnographic study

Conducting an ethnographic study may be described in nine steps (Newbold, 2018; Creswell, 2013 and Ladner, 2008).

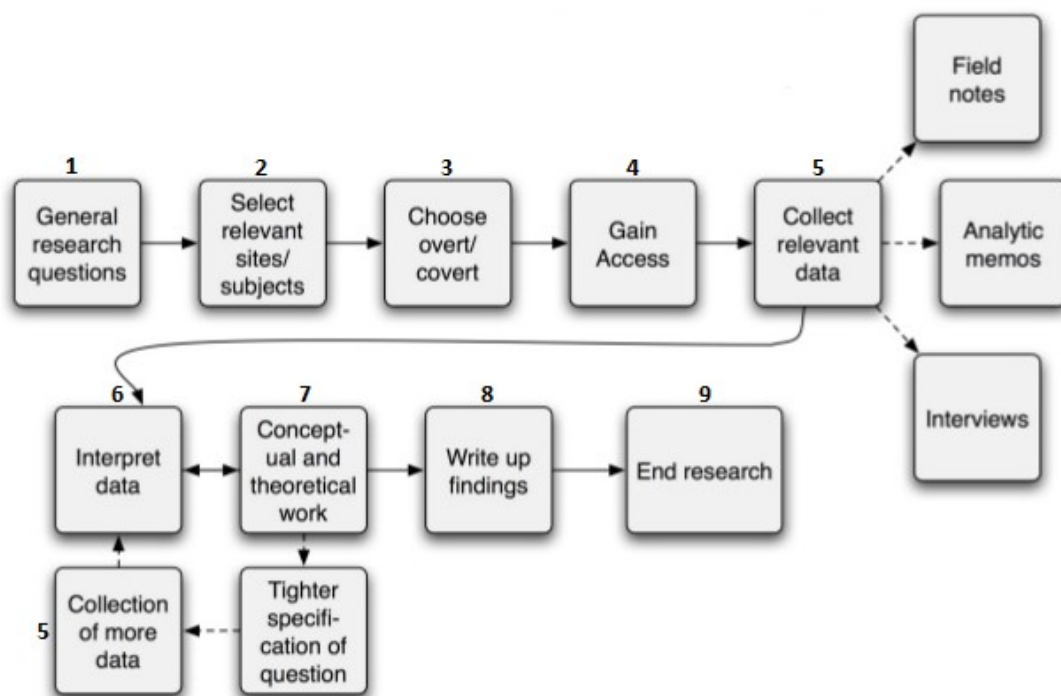


Figure 3 – Sequence of steps to conduct an ethnographic study
(Adapted from Ladner, 2008)

It starts with the conception of the research question, determining if ethnography is the most appropriate design to use to study the research problem. It is followed by the selection of the location or locations for research and the culture-sharing group to study. The identification of evidences supports the meaning of the research; followed by the acquisition of permissions and accesses to collect relevant data (fifth step). The collection of data occurs through observation and participation but without interfering, being recorded in field notes or analytic memos, of thorough interviews. The collection of data is followed by its analysis and the use of codes, the application

of the sub-type of ethnography chosen by the researcher, and considering the most effective ways to obtain objective information. Frequently, it is necessary to come back to the fifth step in order to collect more data, aiming to find more evidences to support the research. After the step seven, the research writes the findings elaborating a report or an article, ending the research.

Advantages

It allows the researcher to acquire knowledge about other cultures, traditions and norms and the human behaviour (Ayres, 2016).

The complexity of group behaviours can be easily identified.

Qualities of group experience can be determined.

The researcher can identify the reason for occurring a specific behaviour, based on the understanding of the influence factors.

Disadvantages

The results depend on the relation between the researcher and the individuals in study. The relationship may be easy or difficult as well as the researcher's experience. An auto-ethnographer researcher normally supports theories using their own believes, originating feelings and opinions toward the social structure in study. A good or bad experience will eventually create a bias that will influence the outcome of the study.

The interaction of the researcher may affect the result of the study because it may change the social structure in study. According to Schrock (2018), feminist ethnographers do not assume they can perform research without affecting it in some way.

The behaviour and answers of the individuals in study may also be compromised depending on the influence and expectations of the researcher. Knowing to be observed, either unconsciously or not, the individuals may adopt behaviour different from usual, misleading the researcher (Ayres, 2016).

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is a tradition that aims to generate theory from data (Khan, 2014), systematically obtained and analysed using comparative analysis (Tie et al., 2019).

Conducting a grounded theory study

It starts with an area of interest that the research may know little or nothing.

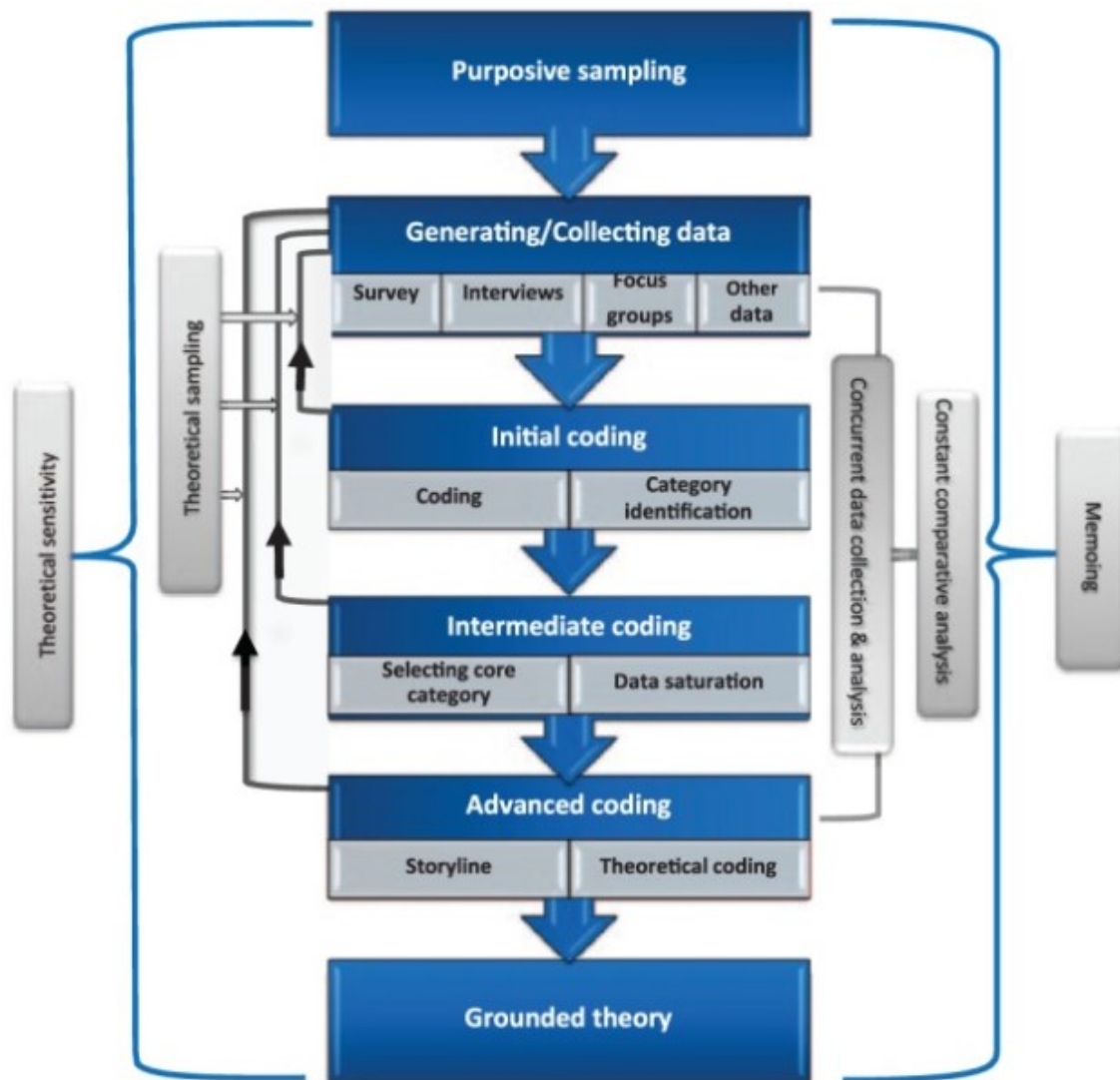


Figure 4 – Sequence of steps to conduct a grounded theory study (Tie et al., 2019)

Through surveys, interviews, focus groups and other data sources; data is collected and generated. Interviews are a common method of generating data and can be structured, semi-structured, open-ended, face-to-face, telephonic, one-to-one,

computer assisted, groups and focus (Khan, 2014). Other data sources can include focus groups, questionnaires, surveys, transcripts, letters, government reports, documents, grey literature, music, artefacts, videos, blogs and memos.

The relationship the researcher has with the data and how it is generated and collected, will determine the value it contributes to the development of the conclusions.

From the data generated or collected, the researcher will do the initial coding, the process of fracturing the data to compare event to event and to look for similarities and differences in beginning patterns in the data. The researcher will generate as many codes as possible from words or groups of words representing reactions, emotions, thoughts and ideas.

From the initial coding, the researcher will start to transform primary data into more abstract concepts allowing the theory to emerge from the data, the intermediate coding. A core category will start to become evident as developed categories form around a core concept; relationships are identified between categories and the analysis is refined. Data saturation ensues when new data analysis does not provide additional material to existing theoretical categories, and the categories are sufficiently explained.

From the intermediate coding, the researcher will apply techniques used to facilitate integration of the final grounded theory, the advanced coding. During this phase, the concepts that reach the stage of categories will be abstract, representing stories of many, reduced into highly conceptual terms. Storyline is a strategy for facilitating integration, construction, formulation, and presentation of research findings through the production of a coherent grounded theory. This procedure builds a story that connects the categories and produces a discursive set of theoretical propositions.

Theoretical coding occurs as the final culminating stage towards achieving a grounded theory. The purpose of theoretical coding is to integrate and synthesise the categories derived from coding and analysis to now create a theory.

After each phase, theoretical sampling and constant comparative analysis are applied; and after each cycle, theoretical sensitivity and memoing.

Theoretical sampling is an integral part of the grounded theory approach as lead the researcher what to collect next, deducting information about whole population instead of going to measure every unit of the population (Khan, 2014). So, grounded

theory researchers select participants and/or data sources that can answer the research question.

Constant comparative analysis is an analytical process used in grounded theory for coding and category development. The initial stage of analysis compares incident to incident in each code. Initial codes are then compared to other codes. Codes are then collapsed into categories. This process means the researcher will compare incidents in a category with previous incidents, in both the same and different categories. Future codes are compared and categories are compared with other categories. New data is then compared with data obtained earlier during the analysis phases.

Theoretical sensitivity is the ability to distinguish the meaningful from the data for theory development. Conducting grounded theory research requires a balance between keeping an open mind and the ability to identify elements of theoretical significance during data generation and/or collection and data analysis.

Memoing is an analytic process considered essential to ensure the quality in grounded theory. They are memos that build a historic audit trail to document ideas, events and the thought processes inherent in the research process and developing thinking of the analyst. Memos detail why and how decisions made related to sampling, coding, collapsing of codes, making of new codes, separating codes, producing a category and identifying relationships abstracted to a higher level of analysis. Memoing is an ongoing activity that builds intellectual assets, fosters analytic momentum and informs the grounded theory findings.

Advantages

Grounded theory studies provide an intuitive appeal for new investigators because it is not limited to a specific field, discipline or any type of data.

The researcher knows little or nothing about the subject, preventing bias from occurring and avoiding preconceived theoretical data.

Grounded theory has the potential to conceptualise, simplifying and separating the relevant from the irrelevant; and provides data collection in depth and richness, allowing the researcher to execute a thorough analysis of the data (Hussein et al., 2014)

Disadvantages

The coding process of grounded theory studies is time consuming, tiring and laborious process.

Grounded theory studies have a high potential for methodological errors by selecting purposeful instead of theoretical sampling, controlled by the emerging theory.

It is possible to have multiple approaches to grounded theory, depending of the data collection and interpretation of each researcher. Consequently, its generalization is very limited (Hussein et al., 2014).

Narrative Research

Narrative research is a tradition who look for ways to understand and then present real-life experiences through the stories of the research participants. It has many forms, uses a variety of analytic practices, and it is rooted in different social and humanities disciplines (Wang and Geale, 2015).

The narrative structure can be considered three-dimensional to find meaning. The dimensions are: Interaction, involving both the personal and social aspect of the experience; Continuity/Temporality, considering the past and present actions of the storyteller as those actions are likely to occur in the future; and Situation/Place, looking for specific locations in the storyteller's landscape that give meaning to the narrative (Wang and Geale, 2015).

According to Creswell (2013), there are four types of Narrative: Biographical study, when the researcher writes and records the experiences of another person's life; Auto-ethnography, when the experiences are written and recorded by the individuals who are subject of the study; Life history, describing an individual entire life; and Oral history, gathering personal reflections of events and their causes and effects from one individual or several individuals.

Conducting a narrative research

Conducting a narrative research may be described in seven steps (Alemdag, 2016):



Figure 5 – Sequence of steps to conduct a narrative research (Alemdag, 2016)

In order to conduct a narrative research, it is necessary first to identify a phenomenon to explore (step one). Next, the research should select one or more individuals who have stories or life experiences to tell (step two), and spend considerable time with them gathering their stories through multiple types of information (step three). Consequently, the researcher will analyse the stories applying codes and identifying categories, themes and patterns chronologically, organising it into a framework that makes sense (step four); and collaborate with the individuals actively involving them in the research (step five). Finally, the researcher will write a narrative about the event (step six), seeking for the validation of the accuracy of it (step seven) (Creswell, 2013 and Alemdag, 2016).

Advantages

Narrative research provides a holistic picture about the event, and a highly flexible theoretical framework in comparison with other traditions. It is useful to develop studies with a limited number of cases in depth, allowing a close relationship between the researcher and the participants.

Disadvantages

The researcher needs to collect extensive information about the participant, and needs to have a clear understanding of the context of the individual's life.

The conclusions are concerned due to the interpretation of the narrative and such consequences.

The narrative relies on the skills of the narrator and can be constructed for the benefit of someone.

There is a danger of data collection coming from a minority, the risk of bias, and the risk of false conclusions due to the lack of knowledge about the subject.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a tradition who analyses and describes a phenomenon, objective and subjective, involving individuals in their everyday world, and giving less importance to understand the reasons why the individuals experience life the way they do (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). The primary purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence and can be Descriptive, capturing the lived experience with minimum interpretation, focusing on that which lies before one; or Interpretive, focusing on another person's thoughts and beliefs in relation to the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

Conducting a phenomenological research

The first step to conduct a phenomenological research is to identify a group of individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon. The researcher determines a research question to best approach the phenomenon. A heterogeneous group is identified and data is collected through phenomenological interviews, where questions are concerning the participant's perceptions of their everyday lived experiences.

The data collected is posteriorly analysed, identifying the experiential content and intentionality of the interviewed (ontological description) and, after the application of codes, it is applied phenomenological reduction and elimination of superfluous data. The significant statements and themes are submitted to a hermeneutical analysis and will be posteriorly synthesised what the participants experienced, and a description of the context or setting that influenced how the participants experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013 and Creely, 2016).

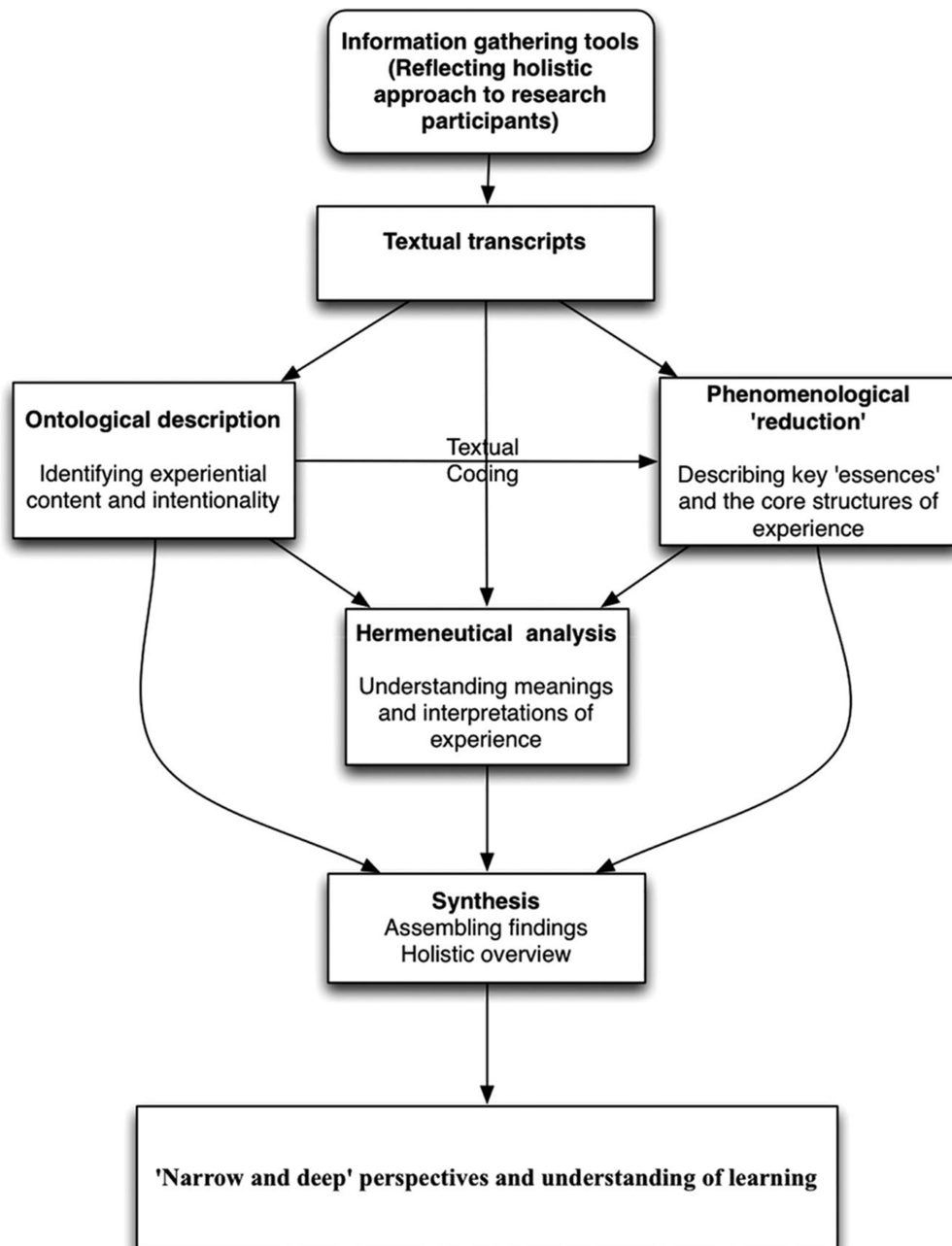


Figure 6 – Sequence of steps to conduct a phenomenological research (Creely, 2016)

Advantages

The ability of the researcher to use their motivation and personal interest to fuel the study (Maxwell, 2013).

There are values to be found in focusing research on how people perceive an event or phenomena, collecting individual and unique perspectives.

Phenomenology can provide a profound and detailed understanding of a single pheromone.

Through subjective and direct responses, the researcher is able to gain first-hand knowledge about what participants experience through broad and open-ended inquiry, acquiring rich and impressive data (Maxwell, 2013).

Disadvantages

The process can be time consuming and labour intensive (Creswell, 2013).

There are limitations linked to credibility and reliability of phenomenology due to being too subjective

Researcher induced bias beliefs, and values can influence the phenomenological studies (Patton, 2002).

Recommendations and Conclusion

Philosophy is the use of abstract ideas and beliefs that supports the research process, and it is divided in four assumptions: ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology. As the chosen methodological assumption, qualitative research aims to understand the question with a humanistic or idealistic approach, and it is used to understand people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviour, and interactions.

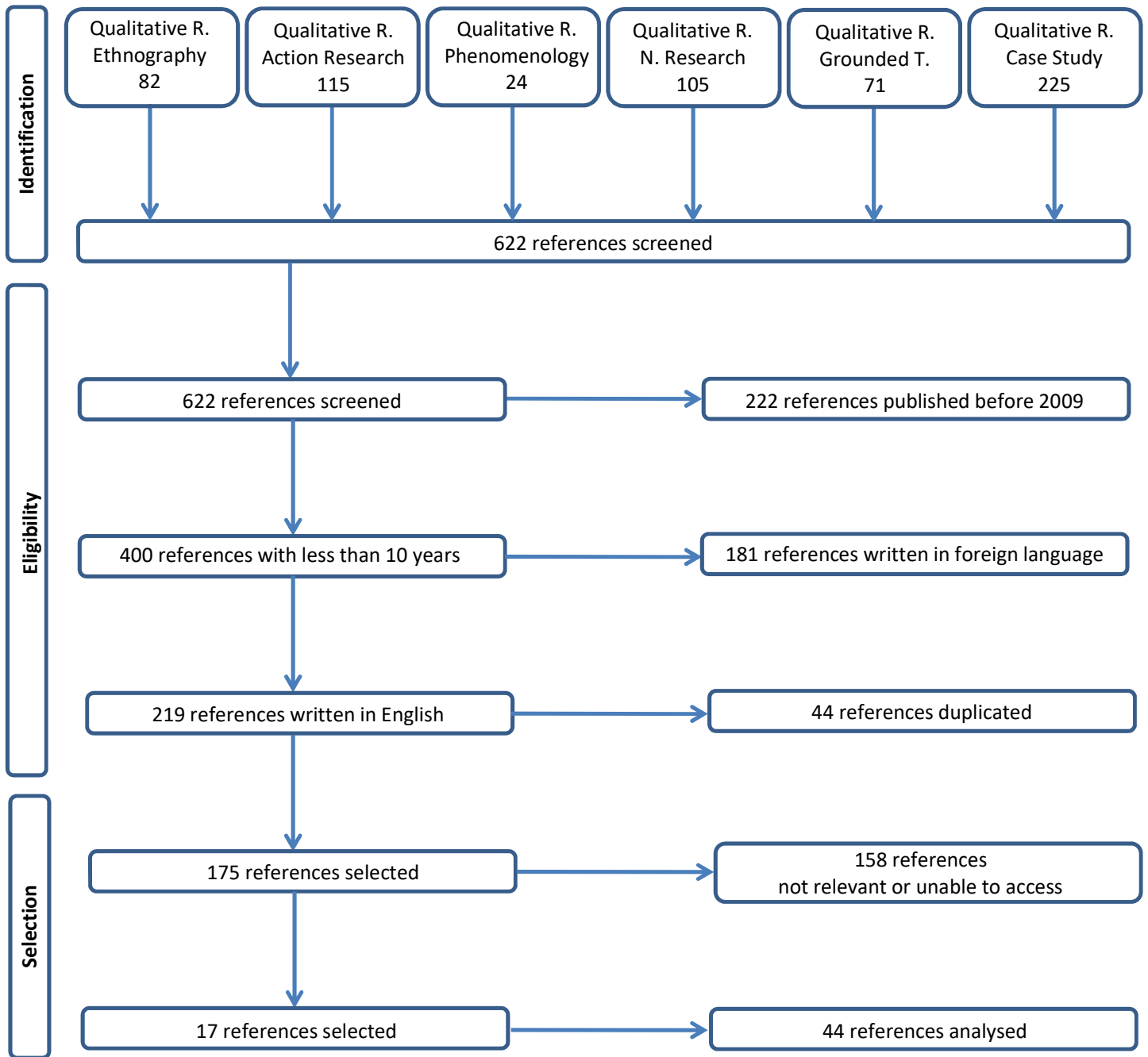
Among the sixteen identified qualitative research traditions, the most common six were presented separately, acknowledging that they overlap in numerous areas. Are example the case study approaches to research and some of the ethnographic traditions who share similar rationale and methods; as well as action research who may adopt an ethnographic orientation during the course of an inquiry.

The selection of the tradition begins with the research question and the phenomena being studied. Understanding the purpose of each tradition will help the researcher to select the best design for answering their research question.

Scientifically, qualitative research traditions often serve not only as groundwork for theory development but also for the design, implementation, and refinement of quantitative studies.

All six traditions have advantages and disadvantages that will have more or less impact in the study outcome depending on the subject itself and also on the assertiveness that the tradition was chosen and applied to the study.

PRISMA FLOW DIAGRAM



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