



Assignment 1

Applied Qualitative Business Research

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Combining with previous study and research experience, the whole report of three sections would be underpinned by the chosen topic of “How does Cultural Shock Influence the Students’ Performance in the Short-term Study Abroad Program? A Case Study of Multiculturalism”.

There are a large number of international students and exchange students new abroad who are struggling with the academic performance due to various reasons. In this report, I would only study cultural shock by case study and make sure that other criteria such as language levels, education system, IQ, financial support and school psychologists are similar among these participants. There are so many international students, exchange students and even new immigrants experiencing the cultural shock, that is why I believe the case may have certain real-life implications.

Report 1: An evaluation of five qualitative approaches

Compared with the quantitative research, cultural shock is related to the social and psychological fields, the statistical data obviously cannot meet all the needs for the research. For this situation, qualitative research methods have showed its unique advantages, and the section 1 will try to address the problem about which qualitative approach is relatively more appropriate for my selected topic and research.

Narrative research

Narrative research is the study of the life of individuals, focusing on the story telling, cultural identity and specific context. Given, L.M. (2008) defined narrative as a unit of discourse, standing in the middle of psychology and sociology. Andrews, M. (2007) referred the challenges of differentiating the data analysis compared with phenomenological analysis; lacking overall rules and criteria of the materials or investigation modes. However, this kind of uncertainty attaches narrative analysis the

opportunities to see the different layers and even contradictory meanings, eventually gaining better understanding of the complexity of the individual or society.

The narrative analysis usually focus on single or limited participants in the research. Given, L.M. (2008) has listed the significance and different occasions of getting permission and access to the participants. The permission is way more important when the research topic is concerned with religious issues or politics. And the very first rule of achieving the persimmon is about to do no harm. For my chosen topic, the access of the individuals would be a challenging task because the participants may be reluctant to be picked up out of a new group. The psychological implication and social stress that he is different from other people may affect his mental health and the research result; Furthermore, the variation and complexity of potential study objects make it difficult to verify who would be more representative on this issue. Thus, the narrative analysis may not be the ideal research method.

Phenomenology study

Compared with narrative study focusing on single or several individuals, phenomenological study aims to figure out what is have in common among all the participants and find out the universal essence in the phenomenon (Creswell,2016).

Creswell (2013) referred that one of the challenges of this method is about the philosophical assumptions and systematic approach. Although the transcendental phenomenology based on Moustakas (1994) enables a concrete framework to gain the balance between the objectivity and subjectivity. But Moerer-Urdahl, T. (2014) has also articulated that the essences of experience can be only partly presented and highly correlated with the interviewed participants, and heterogeny of the participants need to be taken into consideration considering the variation derived from other influential elements. In my chosen topic, testing if the cultural shock is the common variable for the students' performance may be not enough. The causations of deteriorated study performance and difficult adaption to the new environment may varies from one to one

due to the distinctions among the participants. My research also aims to figure out if the cultural shock is the crucial influential element and how does the cultural shock influence the students' performance in the short- term abroad program.

Grounded theory

The Grounded theory tries to generate a theory from examining many individuals who share something in common. According to Creswell (2016), rich details and descriptions would be provided about the theme such as physical description, movement description, and activity description. It also presents the process of identifying the open coding and categorizing the codes a central category.

The need for mix of qualitative and quantitative data grants grounded theory the possibilities in the consideration list. However, the grounded theory would be not the best choice for my chosen topic of multiculturalism. To begin with, the societal and psychological field has a bunch of theories about the multiculturalism already. Scholar of Henry Hale (2008) has discussed the issue of separatism; Will Kymlicka (2007) has studied the Odysseys; Crowder (2013) advocates necessity and rationality of multiculturalism; Also, the "Salad bowl" theory and "Melting pot" theory coined by Kallen are also well accepted and admitted. For me, I tend to figure out how did the students' performance and their environmental adaptations influenced by the cultural shock instead of generating a new theory to explain the phenomenon. Second, based on Given, L.M. (2008), theoretical saturation represent the capability of collecting data to support the theoretical category. For my chosen topic of studying the causations of students' deteriorated performance in the Short-term Study Abroad Program, the students' backgrounds are so distinct so that repetitive data may be hard to gather and fill in the categories, resulting in inadequate and low-level analyses of the data.

Ethnography

Ethnography aims to describe and interpret the shared patterns of a culture in a culture-sharing group through providing rich descriptions by witnessing or participating

in the group. O'Reilly, K. (2004) also highlighted the personal participation in the context, direct contact and communication, and prolonged period of observation matter a lot in the research method. For the chosen topic, classroom is a great place to get involved in the group, and direct contact and a long period of observation time could also be targeted.

Given, L.M. (2008) articulated that Ethnography differentiated with the Grounded theory in the choice of participants, who are usually located in the same places and community, sharing same patterns of culture such as behavior, beliefs, and language. The research aims to offer implications to the group of people studying abroad who are experiencing the cultural shock and struggling with their academic performance. If the participants are just restricted in one culture-sharing group, it is not representative within a larger population. Furthermore, the investigations in the field to understand a culture would be extremely time consuming. Also, as a person who experienced the cultural shock before, the risks of going native and compromising the duties of a researcher largely increased.

Case Study

Case Study is about looking into an event in depth and finding out what were wrong through the help of documents, archival records, interviews, observations, and physical artifacts, trying to seek for relevance and value of the conceptual framework and study the relationship within the context. The research from George. A. & Bennett (2005) offers proof that cases can be categorized based on similarity. It means that the findings within the case study could contribute to the similar cases and also offer clues to the future further research.

George. A. & Bennett (2005) also figured out that the case study researchers are more interested in causal mechanisms and fixed routine when a specific phenomenon occurs in the contexts rather than the frequency of the occurrence. Causal necessity or sufficiency in specific contexts is what the case study is good at.

case study well cope with three research natures. The initial insight into the domain together with in-depth research can work with exploratory and explanative nature. Also, it could also be used to examine relationships between variables to cater for the descriptive nature. George. A. & Bennett (2005) also names that cases are able to discover new or omitted variables, test existed hypotheses, or uncover causal pathways and mechanisms.

In my chosen topic, compared with the narrative story of a specific individual lacking the repetitiveness to the whole group of new immigrants; or creating a generalized theory to explain the certain phenomenon; or just focus on a very specific group who share the same culture; or find out the common causation and essence of the deteriorated performance from the students, I prefer to figure out when the deteriorated performance appears; when these students are struggling with their academic performance, what is the role of the cultural shock, and how does cultural shock affect their academic performance in this process. And that is why I choose the case study method.

Advantages and disadvantages well present its characteristics.

Advantages:

1. It focus on a specific person, organization and event and process a relatively more in-depth study.
2. It can take advantages of different methods that you can use such as literature review(what has been written or studied about the topic), personal observations(about what you observed), interviews(about what others observed), archival research(related event, similar cases)
3. it is innately interesting and usually presented as stories with context instead of a bunch of statistics.

Disadvantages

1. The resources of the literature review could be limited and inadequate.
2. Studying all the data and literature review could be time consuming

3. Excellent writing skills are required because rich description ask you to go deeply in describing what happened.
4. It is quite subjective, and biases from the researchers are prone to be reflected in the conclusion. This also leads to little reliability.
5. There is no way to detect the causation, and getting the control variables to run experiments is invalid.
6. There is little external validity because every case is unique and specific and it is hard to generalize and applied outside of the case.

However, the findings within the case study could contribute to further research, and the validity and reliability could be improved, which would be talk further in the Part 3.

Report 2: Comparison Among Various Qualitative Research Methods

Once the qualitative research is selected, there are plenty of available qualitative research methods to collect the data. I would like to list several ones which I presume are most popular nowadays and figure out if they are suitable for my topic with the analysis of its strengths and limitations.

Interviews

The goal of interviews is to gain focused insight into individuals' lived experiences; to explore the internal and external relevance among other study participants or prior research on similar topics; to delve into each person's experience to gain a whole and more comprehensive picture about the studied phenomenon. Given, L.M. (2008) also name the interview method as in-depth interviews, aiming to "discover and explore the range of variation among individuals and to find patterns of similarity and difference." He also suggested the combination of open-ended and semi-structured interview. Similarly, Charmaz (2006) claimed that open-ended and non- judgmental questions can encourage participants to present more details and perspectives.

In my research, Face-to-face interview is preferred because the direct contact could be more easily to build the trust, and open-ended and Semi-structured interviews are preferred because the interviewees could be guided with the structured questions to guarantee the efficiency; and at the same time be included with specific, tailored follow-up questions. Also, it is important to keep in mind that a relaxed and trustful atmosphere is recommended, and the interview also need to be voice or video recorded digitally across the whole process and turn into transcripts after the interview to facilitate the data analysis.

Focus groups

Focus groups, which are sometimes referred to as group interviews, may provide data that is not shown in individual interviews due to the group dynamics and interactions. The obvious benefits are: communication could be viewed and observed among research participants to generate data in a group forum; it can create the context for generating groupthink and group understanding; participants are able to comment each other's thoughts, experiences, and responses to specific questions and therefore generate group discussion. The focus groups are more likely to get an access to a greater number of participants, whereas the in-depth interviews would like to collect more details about each participant. However, Given, L.M. (2008) also put that we do not have to make a choice between the two approach, a combination is practical and works well, the key is to decide the sequence between them.

For my research, due to the limited participants, focus groups may be not the prior choice. However, if the amount of data provided by each participant is not sufficient, maybe the focus groups could be processed as the supplement.

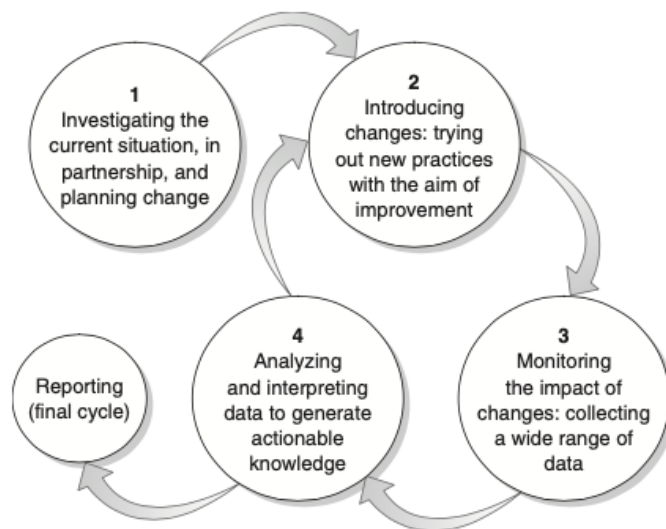
Observation

Observation is one of the most popular methods and owns a long history, and it could be widely used in both the qualitative and quantitative analysis. Baker (2006) said that observation is a more holistic method, and it enables researchers to observe the participants in their native environment to gain a better understanding of the

participant's ideas. Spradley, J. P. (1980) clarified in his book "Participant observation", about how to process the participant observation. Participant observation gets the researchers present or play a role in the setting. However, the researchers' role need to be negotiated with gatekeepers and other participants. In my research, classroom is a perfect spot to process the participant observation, and students are less likely to be reluctant to this.

Action research

Given, L.M. (2008) clarified that action research is widely applied in education, and the researchers are usually present in the situation with the participants. Action research is based on its participants' communities and the outcomes are both practical and theoretical, bridging the gap between knowledge generation and development of new practices to inform action. In my research, there will be four steps in the process, which is shown in the graph below.



Content Analysis

Unobtrusive research is these methodologies which do not directly collect data from the research subjects. Content analysis belong to unobtrusive research, and it is the study of record of the human communication derived such as books, websites, videos, text messages and letters and so on to gain the secondary data derived from the

literature review. According to Babbie (2010, pp. 328–329), content analysis mainly solves the questions of “Who says what, to whom, why, how, and with what effect?” And observable manifest content and underlying latent content could be both analysed to generate the conceptual analysis and relational analysis.

Strengths are listed as it is unobtrusive, cheap, and suitable for both the qualitative and quantitative research. Limitations is mainly listed like the low validity and the ignorance of contexts lead to failure of having a whole view of the reality. In my research, the books and blogs may be a good source to get understanding of these participants or target group.

Experimentation

Controlling variables in the experiments will influence the phenomenon, and the case study is just completely opposite to the experimentation which means the researchers need to be completely independent from the context and environment. Just as Given, L.M. (2008) said, the differentiation between the experiments and case study is that the experiments cases are created by the researcher and factors of influence can be controlled, which is totally different from the case study. Thus, experimentation should be excluded in my research.

Archive documents

Documents that existed in a group or organization are often an important source to help researchers understand the complexities of the study. And there are three types: personal documents such as letters, emails, scrapbooks, notes and lists; official documents like websites, mission statements, handbooks, brochures; popular culture documents including blogs, films, books, magazines, photographs. In my research, the documents and data from the school psychologists or the consultant department would be quite helpful for my research.

Report 3: A Brief Plan of My Research

My research question is: When these students are struggling with their academic performance, What is the role of the cultural shock? and How does cultural shock affect their academic performance in this process? And below is just a brief research plan of five steps, which absolutely need to be more concrete and detailed in the practice.

Step 1, Determine suitability of a case study approach

According to Given, L.M. (2008), there are three type of case study, “natural generalization” presents comprehensive and consistent picture of a case; “statistic generalizations” based on logical inferences and empirical data; “analytic generalization” based on “theories and abstract concepts. In my research, I prefer to adopt the natural generalization to let the readers fit their own situation in the context.

Step 2, Identify and select a case.

It is always challenging to identify the choice of cases, as it is discussed before, the cases could be categorised with its similarities. John (2007) summarised George. A. & Bennett’s definition of the case: the case is an instance chosen from a certain group and the case studies is described as “small-n” compared with “large-N” module of statistical studies. The selection of the cases of “small” is essential. Given, L.M. (2008) also highlighted the significance of the case selection. A representative case which owns implication to other cases in the context may lead to statistical generalizations within a larger population, and can be used to test statistically proven causal proposition. Given, L.M. (2008) also pointed out that Cross-case comparisons, or ‘comparable cases’ coined by Arend Lijphart, the attempt to control the variance makes the basis for causal inference.

Multiple cases is preferred out of the consideration of the generalisation. And embedded case study would just examine the influence from cultural shock. The selected three participants come from three different countries in east Asia: Japan,

Korea and China. To control variance and avoid the intervenes, I tried to make sure they are at same level of language, education system, IQ, financial support and school psychologists help.

IELTS score of them are all 6.5 to ensure their same language level. And their GDP are all 3.3 out of 4.0 to make sure they are in the same status of IQ level. They are all Junior students, and will exchange in UK for 1 year and exactly in the same program. All of these is to ensure a similar education system, a relatively similar study background and the validity of the psychological consultation and support. Also, all of them come from the middle class families to ensure they have enough financial support and do not have heavy financial burden to increase their pressure.

Step 3, Collect extensive data drawing on multiple sources

Data collection is challenging, Tsofa, B. (2017) referred that devolution implementation in the early stage of data collection is unavoidable. And Given, L.M. (2008) also pointed out that case studies focus on one or a few instances, phenomena, or units of analysis, but, luckily, they are not restricted to one observation. There are plenty of methods and multiple sources to collect the data. As is analyzed in Part 2, interviews, observations and action research would be adopted to gain the first data, and content analysis and archive documents would be used to collect the secondary data.

Each of the interview will last about one hour. And an observation will be conducted during a lesson after the first interview. These issues or confusions arising in the observation would be proposed in the second interview with guided questions.

Step 4, Describing, Analyzing, Interpreting, and Documenting Empirical Evidence

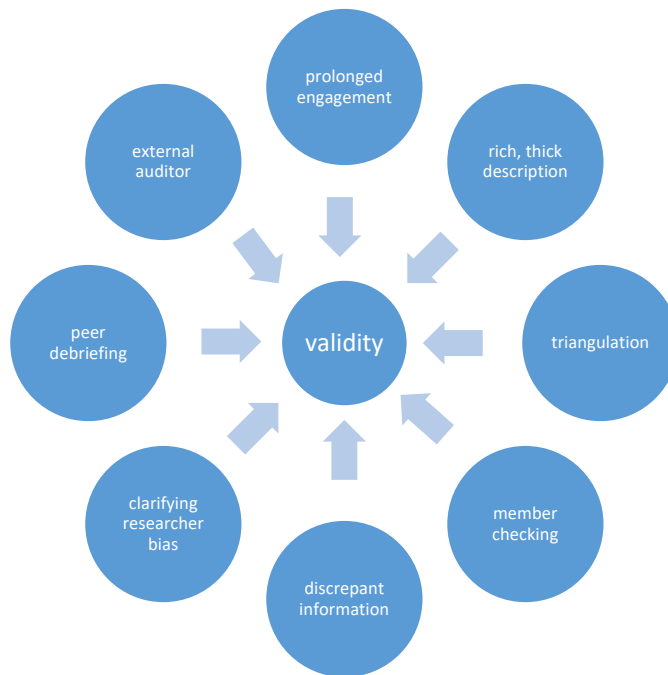
Data is not only the numbers and statistics, words are also data and need to be read line by line. The organization and analysis of the data would be finished with the help of NVivo.

Step 5, Report the case study and lessons learned

Organize the data and write into a journal

Validity and reliability

According to Creswell (2007), there are plenty of strategies to ensure the validity which is shown as the diagram below.



In my research, I will choose the four strategies to guarantee the validity.

1. Triangulation

It “can involve the use of multiple data sources, multiple investigators, multiple theoretical perspectives, or multiple methods.”, and the aim is to check if the data is accurate and adequate to respond the research questions.

2. Thick description

It is a term coined by Clifford Geertz, refers to the detailed description of the research setting, and the goal is to accurately and thoroughly describe the important contextual factors.

3. Peer Review

It is the process of including qualified experts to provide critical and consultative evaluation of the merits of a research.

4. Member Checking

It is a term commonly used for how a researcher will “check in” with participants in his study to see how they think and feel about various aspects of the research process.

In my research, reliability will be improved mainly by three ways.

1. Content Analysis could improve the reliability because the secondary data derived from the literature review shed a light with the help of similar cases.

2. Archive documents to ensure the reliability through the organize of related event and similar cases.

3. The findings within the case study could lead to further research, and the validity and reliability could be improved by proposing the hypotheses tested by some quantitative methods.

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