
UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION INCLUDING ETHNOGRAPHY

Structure

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The unit deals with the basic concepts, implications and uses of qualitative research in psychology. The unit also tries to introduce and describe the meaning and essence of 'ethnography' in qualitative research. It provides the meaning and types of qualitative research. Comparing qualitative with quantitative research, the unit puts forward the relevance of qualitative research in the field of psychology. In this unit, the various methods of ethnographic research are presented. The ethical guidelines in qualitative research.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- define qualitative research;
- differentiate between qualitative and quantitative research;
- explain different types of qualitative research;
- describe the relevance of qualitative research in psychology; and
- explain the concept and importance of ethnography in qualitative research.

1.2 MEANING OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research can be defined as a type of scientific research that tries to bridge the gap of incomplete information, systematically collects evidence, produces findings and thereby seeks answer to a problem or question. It is widely used in collecting and understanding specific information about the behaviour, opinion, values and other social aspects of a particular community, culture or population. An example of a qualitative research can be studying the concepts of spiritual development amongst college students. David (1995) had done such a study at a fairly conservative school. He actually tried to analyse whether there is uniformity or considerable diversity in people's understanding of spiritual development or not.

Qualitative research helps in providing an in depth knowledge regarding human behaviour and tries to find out reasons behind decision making tendencies of humans.

1.3 TYPES OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Attempting to understand human nature, market research purposes, current trends, changing tastes and preferences of people, there are certain approaches of qualitative research. They are:

- i) **Case study:** With the help of this method a case of an individual, group, event, institution or society is studied. It helps in providing an in depth knowledge of the nature, process or phenomena of a specific case under study. Multiple methods of data collection are often used in case study research (example, interviews, observation, documents, and questionnaires). The final report of the case study provides a rich (i.e., vivid and detailed) and holistic (i.e., describes the whole and its parts) description of the case and its context.
- ii) **Ethnography:** This approach mainly focuses on a particular community. It is more of a kind of closefield observation and basically tries to study a socio cultural phenomena. For example, judging others based on the researchers' cultural standards. Ethnography can be used for comparative analysis of cultural groups (e.g. eating habits of North Indians and South Indians), also known 'Ethnology'. Further it can also be used to analyse the cultural past of group of people (e.g. Harrapan civilisation), also known as 'Ethnohistory'.
- iii) **Historical method:** This method helps in understanding and analysing the causal relationships. With the help of this technique, the data related to the occurrence of an event is collected and evaluated in order to understand the reasons behind occurrence of such events. It helps in testing hypothesis concerning cause, effects and trends of events that may help to explain present events and anticipate future events as well.
- iv) **Grounded theory:** This approach involves an active participation of the researcher in the activities of the group, culture or the community under study. The data regarding the required information is collected with the help of observation. It is generally used in generating or developing theories. This means that the ground theorists can not only work upon generation of new theories, they can test or elaborate previously grounded theories.

Four important characteristics of a grounded theory are:

- i) **Fit:** It helps in analysing whether the theory corresponds to real existing community
- ii) **Understanding:** The theory generated by grounding is clear and understandable
- iii) **Generality:** The theory provides much information and scope for further analysis or generating more theories.
- iv) **Control:** The theory generated is valid as it has been analysed under controlled conditions.

Functions of Grounded Theory

- i) It helps in identifying anchors or codes that allow the key points of the data to be gathered
- ii) It helps in making implicit belief systems explicit with the help of researchers' questions and analysis.
- iii) It consists of a set of steps whose careful execution is thought to "guarantee" a good theory as the outcome.
- iv) Data collection and analysis continue throughout the study.
- vi) **Phenomenology:** In this method, the behavioural phenomena is explained with the help of conscious experience of events, without using any theory, calculations or assumptions from other disciplines. The concept can be best understood with the help of one of the studies that was done in which patients were asked to describe about caring and non caring nurses in hospitals Creswell, 1998. The patients explained those nurses to be caring who show their existential presence and not mere their physical presence. The existential presence of caring nurses referred to the positive response showed by them to the patient's request. The relaxation, comfort and security that the client expresses both physically and mentally are an immediate and direct result of the client's stated and unstated needs being heard and responded to by the nurse.

Self Assessment Questions

Fill in the Blanks

- i) approach involves an active participation of the researcher in the activities of the group, culture or the community under study.
- ii) method helps in understanding and analysing the causal relationships.
- iii) helps in testing hypothesis concerning cause, effects and trends of events that may help to explain present events and anticipate future events as well
- iv) Qualitative research can be defined as
- v) The behavioural phenomena is explained with the help of conscious experience of events with the help of method
- vi) Case study is one of the widely used method in (qualitative/quantitative) research.

1.4 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH: A COMPARISON

The basic conceptual difference between both of the research techniques is that, quantitative research is based on numerical or graphical representation of data whereas; qualitative research is based on observation and experiences.

Other differences:

	Qualitative Research	Quantitative Research
General Frame work:	Seeks to explore phenomena using some structured methods such as in depth interviews, experiences, participant observation.	Seeks to confirm hypothesis related to phenomena using highly structured methods such as, questionnaires, surveys, structured observation.
Objectives:	It aims to describe variation, explain relationships, describe behaviour, experiences and norms of individuals and groups.	It aims to quantify variation, predict causal relationships.
Questions:	The questions used for data collection are open ended ones	The questions used for data collection are close ended ones
Representation of data:	Data is represented in form of notes, recordings and video tapes.	Data is represented in form of numbers and graphs.
Research Design:	The research design allows some flexibility in certain situational aspects. The questions used for the data collection differs individually and depends upon the response of the participants.	The research design is predetermined and stable from the beginning. The questions used for data collection are structured and same for all the participants.

(Source: *Qualitative Research Method: A Data Collector's field guide*)

1.5 RELEVANCE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN PSYCHOLOGY

Qualitative research methods has gained much importance in the discipline of psychology leaving other human sciences far below such as sociology and nursing, with the main motive of maintaining the historical attempt to frame psychology as a natural science.

Comparatively, natural science methods use experimental means in order to examine the causal relationships, wherein, this approach uses a large number of participants and effectively captures aspects of our human nature. Qualitative research is less interested in explaining phenomena than in understanding them and that is why it has several good relevance and implications in psychology.

Qualitative research therefore, helps in attaining an in depth knowledge of human nature, attitude, behaviour and experiences.

It has several implications in the discipline of psychology, as it:

- i) Helps in textual description of experiences of people.
- ii) Helps in identifying and explaining social norms, religion, roles of gender and socio economic status.
- iii) Helps in understanding those behavioural phenomena which can not be quantified.
- iv) Helps in collecting data under more natural situations.
- v) Helps in determining those factors which are meaningful and are important to the respondents under study.

The open ended questions used in qualitative research provide a chance to unfold those facts which can not be done with the help of 'to the point' close ended questions.

Self Assessment Questions

Choose the correct alternative

- 1) Data is represented in form of notes, recordings and video tapes in
 - a) Qualitative research
 - b) Quantitative research
 - c) Both of the above
 - d) None of the above
- 2) Qualitative research methods has gained much importance in the discipline of
 - a) Psychology
 - b) Sociology
 - c) Anthropology
 - d) All of the above
- 3) Quantitative research is based on
 - a) Field notes
 - b) Numerical data
 - c) Case study
 - d) Recordings
- 4) Qualitative research helps in collecting data under more situations
 - a) Normal
 - b) Natural
 - c) Experimental
 - d) Artificial
- 5) The questions used for data collection in qualitative research are:
 - a) Open ended ones

- b) Closed ended ones
 - c) Structured ones
 - d) None of the above
- 6) The questions of the qualitative researchers depends upon
- a) The preplanned questions
 - b) Situations
 - c) Response of the respondents
 - d) All of the above

1.6 ETHNOGRAPHY: THE MEANING

The method is also known as 'ethnomethodology' or 'methodology of people'. This type of research method basically intends to study culture through close observation and active participation. It focuses on studying socio cultural phenomena of a community. The ethnographer/ researcher collect information regarding the socio cultural phenomena from a lot of people belonging to the community under study.

On behalf of their community, the participants also identify and provide the researcher some more respondents as a representative of their community (also known as chaining process). The data is therefore collected using a chain sampling in all empirical areas of investigation. The selected samples are re- interviewed in order to elicit deeper and ambiguous responses. The ethnographer stays within the community for months in order to gain more information through chaining process and collect data in form of observational transcripts and interview recordings. The analysis of data leads to development of theories for the socio cultural phenomena under study, only on basis of the views and perspectives of its respondents.

1.7 SOME COMMON TERMS USED BY ETHNOGRAPHERS

- i) **Symbols:** Symbols refers to any tradition or material artifact of a particular culture such as art, clothing, food, technology and rituals. The ethnographer tries to understand the cultural connotations behind the symbols of a particular culture.
- ii) **Cultural patterning:** Ethnographic research believes that the meaning of symbols can not be understood until it is paired with one or more symbols. Cultural patterning refers to the study of cultural patterns formed through relationships between two or more than two symbols.
- iii) **Tacit knowledge:** It refers to those cultural beliefs which are firm in nature. They are so deeply embedded in their culture that they rarely need to be discussed by the members in an explicit way. Such knowledge can not be observed but needs to be inferred by the ethnographer e.g. the prejudices or the orthodox beliefs)
- iv) **Situational reduction:** It refers to the belief of ethnographers that social structures and social dynamism are a result of interactions of several social situations (e.g criminal acts can be due to the poor economic condition, frustration, parenthood, neighbours and peer group of the criminals)

1.8 ASSUMPTIONS IN ETHNOGRAPHY

- i) Ethnographic research assumes that the main objective of research depends upon and is affected by the interpretation of community cultural understandings. There are chances that the researcher over estimates the role of cultural perception and underestimates the role of causal reasons behind such cultural belief.
- ii) It also assumes that it is very important as well as difficult to identify the target community that requires to be studied by the researcher. Nature and size of the community as well as individuals' perception may play an important role on the subject that needs to be studied. Chances exist that the ethnographer may over estimate the role of community culture and underestimate the causal role of individual beliefs and perceptions.
- iii) Ethnography further assumes that that the researcher is an expert and is thorough with the norm and mores of the culture. The researcher is also assumed to be an expert in the language spoken in the community. Chances exist that the researcher may show biasness towards his or her culture while studying the population of another community.

1.9 TYPES OF ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

- i) **Macro ethnography:** It is the study of broadly defined cultural groupings such as – “the Indians”, “the Turkish”. The common perspectives are studied at a more larger level, which are found to be common under a more broader strata.
- ii) **Micro ethnography:** It is the study of more specific cultural groupings such as the “local government”, the “terrorists”.
- iii) **Emic perspectives:** It is the ethnographic approach under which the view points and responses of the ‘ingroup’ or the members of the culture under study are noted down.
- iv) **Etic perspective:** It is the ethnographic approach under which the view points and responses of the ‘out groups’ or the members who do not belong to the culture under study are noted down. Their viewpoints highlight the phenomena being followed under a particular culture.

1.10 PURPOSE OF ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

It helps in cross cultural analysis.

It helps in analysing the past events or the history of the culture

It helps in studying the behaviour, experiences and attitudes of individuals in a more natural environment.

Close observation increases the chances of validity in the reports and theory formulated

1.11 STEPS OF ETHNOGRAPHIC METHOD

- 1) **Selection:** The ethnographic method begins with selection of a culture. The researcher selects the culture/ community or population according to his or her interest.

- 2) **Review of Literature:** Then the researcher reviews the literature pertaining to the culture to get a brief idea and historical sketch of the culture selected for study.
- 3) **Identification of variables:** The researcher then identifies variables which interests him or her as well as the members of the culture and needs to be explored.
- 4) **Entry:** The ethnographer then tries to enter the culture and gain the acceptance of the members of the culture.
- 5) **Cultural Immersion:** Ethnographers live in the culture for months or even years which they have chosen to study. The middle stages of the ethnographic method involve gaining informants, using them to gain yet more informants in a chaining process.
- 6) **Data Collection:** After gaining the confidence of the respondents, the researcher collects information in form of observational transcripts and interview recordings and tapings.
- 7) **Development of theory:** After analysing the data, the researcher formulates theory on the basis of interpretation of the results and reports achieved.

However, the ethnographic researcher tries best to avoid theoretical preconceptions and formulates theory on the basis of the perspectives of the members of the culture and from observation. The researcher may seek validation of induced theories by going back to members of the culture for their reaction.

1.12 ETHICAL GUIDELINES IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The respondents and their responses should be respected by the researcher.

The researcher must show respect and belongingness to the community he or she is studying.

The respondents must be made aware of what is being analysed by the researcher.

Researcher must ensure and maintain the confidentiality of the researcher.

Researcher should be aware of the expected risks and benefits including the psychological and social aspects while performing the research.

Self Assessment Questions

State whether True or False.

- 1) Ethnography is also known as 'methodology of culture'. ()
- 2) The ethnographer/ researcher collects information regarding the socio cultural phenomena from a lot of people belonging to the community under study. ()
- 3) Macro ethnography is the study of undefined cultural groupings ()
- 4) Out groups refers to the people belonging to the same group ()
- 5) The process of identifying and providing the researcher some more respondents by the earlier ones' as a representative of their community is also known as chaining process ()

- 6) The analysis of data leads to development of theories in ethnography.
()

State whether True or False

- i) Ethnography assumes that the researcher is an expert of the culture which he or she has selected for studying. ()
- ii) The main objective of qualitative research does not depend upon interpretation of community cultural understandings by the researcher. ()
- iii) The ethnographer tries to understand the cultural connotations using the symbols of a particular culture. ()
- iv) Cultural patterning refers to the study of cultural patterns formed through relationships between the respondents ()
- v) It is the duty of the researcher to show respect and belongingness to the community they are studying. ()
- vi) Tacit knowledge refers to those cultural beliefs which are firm in nature ()

1.13 LET US SUM UP

Qualitative research is a type of scientific research which helps in collecting, analysing and interpreting the data of a group, community, culture or a market.. It helps in understanding the reasons behind the behaviour experience and attitudes of the people of the group, community, culture or market under study. It is authentic in nature because the researcher takes an active participation in the activities of the population under study. Unlike quantitative research, it does not requires a preplanned framework, objective or interest. The primary interest of the researcher may change according to the community cultural understandings.

Out of the different techniques or types of qualitative research, 'ethnographic research' is one the most important and preferred one. Ethnography involves collection of data/ information from a number of respondents following a chain process, that is, the researcher is provided more respondents by the group of respondents who have already given their response or the required information. Data can be collected by the help of ethnography through different ways and perspectives as well.

1.14 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) Define qualitative research and discuss the relevance of qualitative research in psychology.
- 2) Differentiate between qualitative and quantitative research. Do you think that qualitative research is advantageous over quantitative research? Give reasons.
- 3) Elaborate the different types of qualitative research
- 4) What do you understand by the term 'ethnography'? Describe its types and assumptions.

1.15 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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Clifford, J. (1999). On Ethnographic Authority. Ch. 11 in Alan Bryman and Robert

Gold, Raymond L. (1997). *The Ethnographic Method in Sociology. Qualitative Inquiry*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (December): 388-402. Gold writes this summary near the end of his 50-year career in ethnographic research. The article discusses the requirements of ethnographic research, validity, reliability, sampling, and systematic data collection.

Hammersley, Martyn, & Atkinson, Paul (1995). *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, Second Ed. . London: Routledge.

Lareau, Annette & Schultz, Jeffrey, eds. (1996). *Journeys Through Ethnography: Realistic Accounts of Field Work*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Websites: <http://qualitative-research.ratcliffs.net/examples.pdf>

<http://www.southalabama.edu/coe/bset/johnson/lectures/lec12.htm>

Course: 5(Research Methods) Block: 4 (Qualitative Research in Psychology)

UNIT 2 GROUNDED THEORY

Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Goals and Perspectives of Grounded Theory
- 2.3 Methods of Grounded Theory
- 2.4 Steps of Grounded Theory
 - 2.4.1 Memoing
 - 2.4.2 Sorting in Grounded Theory
 - 2.4.3 Writing in Grounded Theory
- 2.5 Types of Coding in Grounded Theory
 - 2.5.1 Selective Coding
 - 2.5.2 Open Coding
 - 2.5.3 Axial Coding
- 2.6 Relevance of Grounded Theory
- 2.7 Implications of Grounded Theory
- 2.8 Criticism of Grounded Theory
- 2.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.10 Unit End Questions
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2.0 INTRODUCTION

Grounded theory is one of the basic approach and most prominently used technique in qualitative research. Grounded theory refers to ‘the process of generation of theory which is based on collection of data from multiple sources’. It is the only method of qualitative research which uses quantitative data also, as and when required. The grounded theory approach aims to collect data and interpret the data from the textual base (for example, a collection of field notes or video recordings). After the process of interpreting, the data base is categorised in to different variables and then the interrelationship between these variables are analysed and studied.

Any how, the process of dividing and forming variables requires a thorough knowledge of the literature as well as the selection of the technique for creating the variables is equally important. The ability to analyse and interpret variables is termed as “theoretical sensitivity”. The theorist needs to emphasise and enhance this sensitivity. The approach of grounded theory was developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1960’s. This unit deals with the basic goals and perspectives of grounded theory. It further deals with the different methods or techniques used in grounded theory. The steps or stages used in formulation of the theory by this method will also be discussed. The unit tries to clarify the concept of the grounded theory approach and discuss the other related facts to the theoretical approach.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the basic approach of grounded theory;
- explain the basic goals and perspectives of grounded theory;
- analyse the different methods applied for generation of theories using the grounded theory approach;
- describe the different stages of grounded theory methodology; and
- explain the significance of grounded theory in the field of research.

2.2 GOALS AND PERSPECTIVES OF GROUNDED THEORY

Grounded theory provides a direction to the researcher and directs them to generate new theories or modify the existing ones. The interpretation and conclusion of the grounded theory approach is more reliable as it is based on data collected from multiple sources. The theory takes similar cases for analysis rather than variable perspective. The selected cases are similar on the variables, that is the variables of the cases are similar in nature but the outcome of these cases are different. The ground theorists/ researcher take these cases and compare them to analyse the causes and reasons behind the different outcomes of similar variables of the selected cases.

The *basic goals* of the grounded theory are:

- i) Since the approach consists of a series of systematic steps and the data is collected from more than one source, it assures to provide a 'good theory' as the output.
- ii) The grounded theory approach emphasises on the process by which the theory is evaluated. This determines the quality of the theory.
- iii) The grounded theory approach also emphasises on enhancing the theoretical sensitivity.
- iv) One goal of a grounded theory is to formulate hypotheses based on conceptual ideas.
- v) On the basis of the questions asked the researcher tries to discover the participants' main concern and how they continually try to resolve it.
- vi) It also aims to generate those concepts which explain people's actions regardless of time and place. The descriptive parts of a GT are there mainly to illustrate the concepts.

In the words of Glaser (1998), "GT (grounded theory) is multivariate. It happens sequentially, subsequently, simultaneously, serendipitously, and scheduled".

However, the results of grounded theories are not a reporting of facts but a set of probability statements about the relationship between concepts, or an integrated set of conceptual hypotheses developed from empirical data (Glaser 1998).

Self Assessment Questions

Fill in the Blanks.

- 1) The ability to analyse and interpret variables is termed as
- 2) The process of generation of theory which is based on collection of data from multiple sources is termed as
..... helps in formulating hypotheses based on conceptual ideas.
- 3) Grounded theories are a set of about the relationship between concepts.
- 4) Grounded theory approach is the only method of which uses quantitative data also, as and when required.
- 5) The approach of grounded theory was developed by

2.3 METHODS OF GROUNDED THEORY

Unlike other methods of qualitative research, the grounded theorists do not believe in collecting data through taping and transcribing interviews as it is believed to be a waste of time in grounded theories. The process of grounded theories is far quick and faster as the researcher delimits the data by field-noting interviews and soon after generates concepts that fit with data, are relevant and work in explaining what participants are doing to resolve their main concern.

Discussing about the theory before it is written up drains the researcher of motivational energy. Discussions and talks can either render praise or criticism, and both diminish the motivational drive to write memos that develop and refine the concepts and the theory (Glaser, 1998). Data is a fundamental property of the grounded theory which means that everything that gets in the researcher's way when studying a certain area is data. Not only interviews or observations but anything is data that helps the researcher generating concepts for the emerging theory. Field notes can come from informal interviews, lectures, seminars, expert group meetings, newspaper articles, Internet mail lists, even television shows, conversations with friends etc. It is even possible, and sometimes a good idea, for a researcher with much knowledge in the studied area to interview own self, treating that interview like any other data, coding and comparing it to other data and generating concepts from it. Interviewing one's own self helps in gaining an insight from the knowledge that the researcher has at the conceptual level and grounded theory deals with nothing but the conceptual level data.

2.4 STEPS OF GROUNDED THEORY

Grounded theory approach helps in generating theories on the basis of the following systematic steps –

2.4.1 Memoing

The first objective of the researcher is to collect data in form of memos. Memos are a form of short notes that the researcher writes and prepares. These memos act as a source of data which is further put in other processes of analysis and interpretation. These short notes or memos can be prepared in three ways:

a) *Theoretical note*

This form of note contains the details regarding how a textual data base is related to the existing literature of the concerned study. The note consists of about one to five pages. Anyhow, the final theory and report consists of an integration of several such theoretical notes.

b) *Field note*

Field note consists of the notes prepared when the researcher actively participates with the population/ culture or the community under study. It can be the observations of behaviours, interactions, events or situations that occurs on the spot and it also contains the causal notes behind such actions.

c) *Code notes*

The researcher or the ground theorist may also prepare notes by naming, labeling or categorising things, properties and events. The code notes are those notes which discuss the codes of such labeling. These code notes further acts as a source of formation of final reports. Further, these code notes also acts as a guide to the ground theorists while analysing a text or a case.

2.4.2 Sorting in Grounded Theory

Once the short notes or the memos are prepared, the collected information (or the data) is sorted in order to organise them in proper order. Sorting helps in putting all the data in proper order which leads to proper linkage of information and ideas. The researcher may also get an insight of some more relevant information and ideas which were not revealed during the preparation of memos.

2.4.3 Writing in Grounded Theory

After the memos are sorted, the next stage towards preparation of theory is “writing”. The ground theorist arranges, relates and puts the collected information in to words. Therefore, in this step the researcher tries to give a shape as well as meaning to the relevant data. This may be said to be a crucial stage, as it is this stage in which the researcher interprets the information on the basis of his own perspectives. The collected information is also linked with the existing relevant literature in order to put the theory in a scholarly context.

Self Assessment Questions

State whether the statements are true or false:

- 1) The process of grounded theories is far quick and faster as the researcher delimits the data by field-noting interviews. ()
- 2) Data is not a fundamental property of the grounded theory ()
- 3) Memos are long notes that the researcher writes and prepares during his or her survey. ()
- 4) Sorting helps in putting all the data in proper order which leads to proper linkage of information and ideas. ()
- 5) Sorting may be said to be a crucial stage in the steps of generating theories through grounded theory approach. ()
- 6) Code notes acts as a guide to the ground theorists ()

2.5 TYPES OF CODING IN GROUNDED THEORY

Ground theorists analyse and categorise events and try to identify the meaning of the text with the help of the prepared code notes. Preparation of the code notes can be done in three ways-

2.5.1 Selective Coding

In this type of coding out of all the available categories, the ground theorist selects one category to be the center or the major one and then tries to relate the other categories with the selected major category. In this way, the ground theorist tries to analyse how other categories are affecting the major category or how the major category is having an effect on the other related categories.

2.5.2 Open Coding

It is the process of identifying, labeling and analysing the phenomena found in the text. The ground theorist on the basis of generalisation categorises names, events or properties in to more general categories or dimensions.

2.5.3 Axial Coding

It is the process of relating the categories or properties (that is the codes) to each other with the help of deductive and inductive thinking. The ground theorists try to analyse the causal relations between these variables, that is, which of the code is the 'cause' which has led to the occurrence of other codes- the 'context'. The ground theorist analyses and interprets the 'cause' codes and the 'context' codes without showing much interest on the 'consequences' of the phenomenon itself.

2.6 RELEVANCE OF GROUNDED THEORY

The data or the information collected and the theory generated with the help of grounded theory is significant because –

- i) The ground theorists prepare report on the basis of information collected with the help of various sources which increases the chances of reliability and validity of the theory.
- ii) The ground theory approach gives an opportunity for exploring the facts and analysing the causal reasons behind those facts.
- iii) It is an inductive type of research which has its basis or is 'grounded' on the base of observations and data collected.
- iv) The grounded theory approach also provides a base to specify how a knowledge base should be changed in the light of new information.
- v) The grounded theory data often categorises data which further forms a basis for organising and reporting results.

2.7 IMPLICATIONS OF GROUNDED THEORY

On the basis of the significance and importance of the research based grounded theory, the discipline of research is having much gains and benefits. Following are some of the important implications of the grounded theory approach –

- i) Grounded theory is often used in formulation of policies and program evaluation research, since it can more effectively help in solving the unanswered questions,
- ii) Grounded theory approach can also be used to analyse the consumers' demands and preferences in the existing market.
- iii) The approach can also be used to analyse product positioning and advertising opportunities.
- iv) It is one of the best theoretical approaches that can be used in the field of education, management, women's studies, information studies, politics and communities, etc.
- v) It helps in understanding, analysing and describing human psychology and experience.

2.8 CRITICISM OF GROUNDED THEORY

Basically grounded theory is an approach which systematically analyses the data and generates a theory. But unlike the theory says, there exists chances that the researcher may involve some preconceptions and in collection and analysis of data. Further, there is no doubt that the collection of corpus data helps in attaining more and more information, yet the content validity is questionable in this approach.

However, the grounded theory approach is still one of the most widely used and prominent methodology in the field of social science. It has a propensity to systematically generate theories.

Self Assessment Questions

Choose the correct alternative:

- 1) In this type of coding out of all the available categories, the ground theorist selects one category to be the center or the major one—
 - a) Selecting
 - b) Axial
 - c) Open
 - d) All of the above
- 2) The process of relating the categories or properties (that is the codes) to each other with the help of deductive and inductive thinking is also known as—
 - a) Writing
 - b) Sorting
 - c) Coding
 - d) Analysing
- 3) Grounded theory is often used in formulation of—
 - a) Policies and program evaluation research
 - b) Opportunity for exploring the facts

- c) Categorising data
 - d) None of the above
- 4) The ground theorists prepare report on the basis of–
- a) The information collected
 - b) The existing information
 - c) The unexplored information
 - d) All of the above

2.9 LET US SUM UP

It can be summed up that, grounded theory is one of the best ways of systematically generating a theory on the basis of a corpus (that is a collected mass) of data. The data collected by the theorists is analysed systematically and their interpretation leads to formation of reports, which ultimately leads to creation of theories. Wherein, theory can be defined as a framework on the basis of which things, properties, behaviour and events can be interpreted. The basic purpose of the grounded theory approach is to emphasise on the process or method of formulation of a theory. Grounded theorists therefore help in providing a classic theory.

Memoring, sorting and writing are the systematic steps or stages of the grounded theory. The researcher needs to take care of the data or the information collected he or she needs to enhance the sensitivity of the variables. Grounded theory is the only qualitative research which allows the researcher to take the help of quantitative data as well. The theory has gained much importance and utilisation not only in the field of psychology, but also in management, sociology, anthropology, information, political science and several other fields. It has also gained much popularity in the field of market research.

2.10 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) Describe the basic goals and perspectives of grounded theory?
- 2) Explain the steps of grounded theory?
- 3) How can you say that the grounded theory approach is one of the systematic way to generate a theory?
- 4) What are the different types of coding?
- 5) Describe the relevance and implications of the grounded theory?

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UNIT 3 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Definition of Discourse/Content Analysis
- 3.3 Assumptions of Discourse Analysis
- 3.4 Approaches or Theories of Discourse Analysis
- 3.5 Steps of Discourse Analysis
- 3.6 Relevance/Implications/Significance of the Discourse Analysis
- 3.7 Issues of Reliability and Validity in Discourse Analysis
- 3.8 Concept of Critical Discourse Analysis
- 3.9 Implications of Critical Discourse Analysis
- 3.10 Concept of Content Analysis
- 3.11 Examples of Content Analysis
- 3.12 Implications of Content Analysis
- 3.13 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.14 Unit End Questions
- 3.15 Suggested Readings and References

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The unit enlightens knowledge upon the basic concept of discourse analysis in the field of research. Talking about the term –‘discourse or content analysis’, in a lay man’s language, the word ‘discourse’ refers to ‘talk’, which refers to the ways in which people describe or explain their experiences. The term ‘discourse analysis’ has its origin since 1960s, and is prominently being used in interdisciplinary fields. It basically refers to the explanation of the researchers or analysts in form of talks or texts. It may be a talk or text of historical incidents or any kind of social activity like- the discourses of academic activity, the discourses of the family, domesticity or of the gang.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

With the help of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the concept of discourse analysis;
- define discourse analysis;
- explain different assumptions, theories and approaches of discourse analysis;
- describe the steps and implications of the discourse analysis;
- explain the concept and significance of critical discourse analysis; and
- explain the concept and significance of content analysis.

3.2 DEFINITION OF DISCOURSE/CONTENT ANALYSIS

Discourse analysis has been defined in different ways. Some of the basic definitions are as follows:

In the words of Hammersley, M. (2002) It is a study of the way versions or the world, society, events and psyche are produced in the use of language and discourse. The Semiotics, deconstruction and narrative analysis are forms of discourse analysis.

Bernard Berelson defined content analysis as “a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of manifest content of communications” (Berelson, 1974). It can also be defined as an analysis of speech units larger than the sentence and of their relationship to the contexts in which they are used.

Basically the discourse analysis identifies the linguistic dependencies which exist between sentences or utterances. Anyhow, it is really difficult to define the concept of discourse analysis. Instead of categorising it under the different kinds of research methods, it can be alleged as one of the creative ways of approaching and thinking about a problem. Alternatively, it can be said to be a way of providing a tangible answer to problems based on scientific research. Eventually the method of discourse analysis will help in unveiling the hidden motivations behind a text or behind the choice of a particular method of research to interpret that text. Expressed in today’s more trendy vocabulary, Critical or Discourse Analysis is nothing more than a deconstructive reading and interpretation of a problem or text.

Self Assessment Questions

Fill in the blanks:

- i) Discourse analysis identifies the which exist between sentences or utterances.
- ii) The term ‘discourse analysis’ has its origin since
- iii) The discourse analysis may be in form of a of historical incidents or any kind of social activity like
- iv) Critical or Discourse Analysis is nothing more than a reading and interpretation of a problem or text.

3.3 ASSUMPTIONS OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Theoretically discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary approach and has been widely used by the social scientists and cognitive psychologists. Some of the basic assumption of this approach can be outlined as follows:

Psychologists assume that the human behaviour can only be studied with objectivity that is, without involvement of any biasness or subjectivity of the researcher as well as the subject/people under study. However, this has been disputed – people, including researchers, cannot be objective. A researcher is

very likely to hold some position (expectation, belief, or set of cultural values) when they are conducting their research.

Those expectations may be revealed while interpreting and explaining the events and experiences.

The approach also assumes that, reality is socially constructed. It is assumed in a scientific research that ‘reality’ can be categorised. The constructs generally used by psychologists like – personality, intelligence and thinking are explained as real and naturally occurring categories or events. However, the assumption ignores the fact that it is language which gives a shape to the categories and constructs we use. Since language is a social and cultural thing, our sense of reality is socially and culturally constructed.

It is also assumed that, people are the result of social interaction. In the scientific approach it is assumed that many of the constructs used are ‘inner essences’. That is to say that personality, anxiety, drives, and so on exist somewhere within our heads and our bodies and are revealed only when the individual socially interacts with others. However, it may be the case that many of these so-called essences are actually the products of social interaction.

3.4 APPROACHES OR THEORIES OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

There are numerous “types” or theories of discourse analysis. The various discourses has been explained or categorised on basis of several theories and approaches. Some of them are:

Modernism: The theorists of modernism were guided by achievement and reality based orientation. Thereby they viewed discourse as being relative to talking or way of talking. They emphasised that the discourse and language transformations are needed to develop new or more “accurate” words in order to describe new inventions, innovations, understandings, or areas of interest. Both language and discourse are now conceptualised as natural or real products of common sense usage or progress. Modernism gave rise to various discourses of rights, equality, freedom, and justice

Structuralism: The structuralism theorists squabble that the human actions and social formations are related to language and discourse and they can be implicated or considered as systems of related elements. The approach believed that the individual elements of a system only have significance when they are considered in context to the structure as a whole. The structures can be defined as self-contained, self-regulated, and self-transforming entities. In other words, it is the structure itself that determines the significance, meaning and function of the individual elements of a system. Structuralism has made an eminent contribution to the world of language and social systems.

Postmodernism: Unlike the approaches of the modern theory, the postmodern theorists examined and investigated the variety of experience of individuals and groups and emphasised more on differences over similarities and common experiences. Postmodern researchers insisted more upon analysing discourses as texts, language, policies and practices. In the field of discourse analysis, the

most prominent figure was Michel Foucault. Foucault (1977, 1980) has defined discourse as “systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak.” He emphasised that the discourse analysis has a significant role in social processes of legitimating and power. Discourses can help researchers in emphasising the construction of current truths, how they are maintained and what power relations they carry with them. He later added that discourse is a channel through which power relations (for example– power relation between boss and subordinate, professor and students) produce speaking subjects and that power is an in evitable or unavoidable aspect. Foucault (1977, 1980) argued that power and knowledge are inter-related and therefore every human relationship is a struggle and negotiation of power. Discourse according to Foucault (1977, 1980, 2003) is related to power as it operates by rules of exclusion. Post-modernism was one of the mid- to late 20th century development and believes that the human mind is free from the constraints of tradition, belief, faith and tries to explore the furthestmost horizons of human development.

Feminism: Feminists explained discourse as events of the social practices. They investigated the complex relationships that exist among power, ideology, language and discourse. They emphasised on the concept of ‘performing gender’. According to them gender is a property, not of persons themselves but of the behaviours to which members of a society ascribe a gendering meaning.

Self Assessment Questions

Fill in the blanks

- i) The theorists of modernism were guided by
- ii) The term ‘discourse analysis’ has its origin since
- iii) The postmodern theorists examined and investigated the
- iv) Critical or Discourse Analysis is nothing more than a reading and interpretation of a problem or text.
- v) The approach also assumes that, reality is socially constructed. It is assumed in a scientific research that ‘reality’ can be

3.5 STEPS IN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The method of discourse analysis evaluates the patterns of speech, such as how people talk about a particular subject, what metaphors they use, how they take turns in conversation, and so on. These analysts see speech as a performance. The analysts or the researchers of the discourse analysis believe that the speech performs an action instead of describing a specific state of affairs or specific state of mind. Much of this analysis is intuitive and reflective, but it may also involve some form of counting, such as counting instances of turn-taking and their influence on the conversation and the way in which people speak to others.

The researchers collect and interpret information in the following steps:

- i) *Target orientation:* First of all, the analysts need to know their target or focus of study. Since beginning, they need to think about the ways by which they will analyse and interpret data after collecting the information.

- ii) *Significance of data:* Once the relevant information is collected, the researchers need to judge or examine the value of the collected data, especially those which may have come from more than one source.
- iii) *Interpretation of the data:* As the research progresses the analyst needs to try to understand and interpret the data so that the researchers as well as others can gain an understanding of what is going on.
- iv) *Analysis of the findings:* Finally, the researcher needs to undertake the mechanical process of analysing, interpreting and summarising the data collected. On basis of the analysis of the information, the findings can be summarised and concluded. There are many qualitative analysis programs available to social researchers that can be used for a variety of different tasks. For example, software could locate particular words or phrases; make lists of words and put them into alphabetical order; insert key words or comments; count occurrences of words or phrases or attach numeric codes. With the help of the software's, the analysts or the researcher can retrieve text, analyse text and build theories. Although a computer can undertake these mechanical processes, it cannot think about, judge or interpret qualitative data.

3.6 RELEVANCE/ IMPLICATIONS/ SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

With the usage of talks, languages and texts the analysts or the researchers can easily understand the connotations behind historical events as well as current social practices.

Some of the other relevance or significance of this approach are:

Discourse analysis enable us to understand the conditions behind a specific “problem” and make us realise that the essence of that “problem”

Discourse Analysis helps us in gaining a comprehensive view of the “problem” and helps ourselves to relate with that “problem”.

It helps the researcher in understanding hidden motivations within ourselves and researchers as well and therefore enable us to solve concrete problems.

Though critical thinking about and analysis of situations/texts is as ancient as mankind or philosophy itself, and no method or theory as such.

It helps in meaningful interpretation of the people and the world.

It also aids in “deconstructing” concepts, belief-systems, or generally held social values and assumptions.

Discourse Analysis can be applied to any text that is, to any problem or situation and requires no guidelines to be followed.

Self Assessment Questions

State whether the following are true or false.

- 1) Discourse analysis enables us to understand the conditions behind a specific “problem”. ()
- 2) On basis of the discourse analysis of the information, the findings can be summarised and concluded. ()

- | |
|---|
| 3) Once the relevant information is collected, the researchers need not judge or examine the value of the collected data. () |
| 4) Discourse analysis does not lead to meaningful interpretation of the people and the world. () |
| 5) Discourse Analysis can be applied to any text or problem. () |

3.7 ISSUES OF RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY IN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

No doubt the method of discourse analysis has been well appreciated and it is being used by several disciplines, yet the approach or the methodology of this analysis lacks reliability and validity on certain grounds, like-

- i) Since the method of discourse analysis lacks a proper format or guideline, the processing of data through this approach is controversial.
- ii) Further, the interpretation of the information collected through this data is again questionable, as it may involve the subjectivity or biasness of the researcher or the analysts.
- iii) As there is no hard data provided through discourse analysis, the reliability and the validity of one's research/findings depends on the force and logic of one's arguments. Even the best constructed arguments are subject to their own deconstructive reading and counter-interpretations.
- iv) The validity of critical analysis is, therefore, dependent on the quality of the rhetoric. Despite of the above controversies and arguments, the method is well appreciated and withholds a good position and has certain concrete applications.

3.8 CONCEPT OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The emergence of television, broadcastings and media has given a way to the out growth of the implications of discourse analysis. The method of critical discourse analysis (CDA) is nothing but one of the type of discourse based research. It is one of the method which tries to study the current social and political activities like, the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and are discussed in the social and political context. With the help of this research, the researcher explicitly (that is, overtly) tries to realise, experience, and ultimately overcome social inequality and injustice occurring within the society. The researcher focuses on the powerful groups of the society, especially the leaders, social groups and institutions who have a good control over one or more types of public discourse. Thus, professors control scholarly discourse, teachers educational discourse, journalists media discourse, lawyers legal discourse, and politicians policy and other public political discourse.

3.9 IMPLICATIONS OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In order to understand, create awareness, expose and fight against the social unjust, the researcher or the critical discourse analysts takes full use of media and broadcasts. The method has the following implications for the individuals, groups, institution and society:

- i) The method allows the researcher as well as the research to be an “active agent” while attempting to expose “inequality and injustice”.
- ii) As the researcher critically tries to evaluate the social conditions, the method emphasises on both the structure and the social context of media texts .This enables the media critic to “denaturalise,” or expose the “taken-for-granted” of ideological messages as they appear in isolated speech when combined with methods of discourse analysis.
- iii) The discourse analysis is also being used critically (CDA) in applied linguistics which has led to the development of a different approach to understand the messages spread by the media.
- iv) With the help of critical discourse analysis language can be used as an interdisciplinary tool and can be used by scholars with various backgrounds, including media criticism.
- v) Undoubtedly, the method of critical discourse analysis helps in having a cross cultural study of the social activities with the help of media texts.
- vi) The method of critical discourse analysis critically tries to examine the dimensions of theoretical and descriptive accounts of texts.
- vii) CDA is one of the best forms of discourse analysis which ideologically uses language as a type of social practice.

Self Assessment Questions

State whether the following are true or false.

- i) The method of CDA allows the researcher to act as an “active agent”.
()
- ii) Language can not be used as an interdisciplinary tool. ()
- iii) The method of discourse analysis does not require proper format or guideline. ()
- iv) The method of critical discourse analysis helps in having a cross cultural study. ()

3.10 CONCEPT OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

Another form of discourse analysis is content analysis. It is one of the method which is used in summarising any form of content only after having a deep study of the actual content. This enables the researcher to more objectively evaluate and understand the situations. For example, an impressionistic summary of a TV program, can not help in analysing the over all aspects of the content of the program.

Content analysis, tries to analyse written words. The results of content analysis are numbers and percentages. It starts with the process of selecting content for analysis, then preparing the content for coding. After the content is coded, it is counted and weighed. Later, conclusions are drawn on the basis of the weighing. After doing a content analysis, the researcher can make a statement such as “27% of programs on FM Radio in November 2009 mentioned at least one aspect of antiterrorism, compared with only 3% of the programs in 2006”.

The content analysis therefore serves two basic purposes:

- i) It helps in removing much of the subjectivity from summaries
- ii) It also helps in detection of trends in an easier and simpler manner.

3.11 EXAMPLES OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis can be done with the help of media content (when the sources of media) is being used or audience content (when individual feedbacks are being used). Few of the examples of media content are: print media, broadcasts, and recordings. While, the audience content is analysed with the help of questionnaire, interviews, group discussions and letters to the editors.

3.12 IMPLICATIONS OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis has several implications:

- i) Content analysis enables the researcher to make links between causes (e.g. program content) and effect (e.g. audience size).
- ii) The content analysis is used to evaluate and improve the programming of the media world.
- iii) It also helps in increasing awareness and summarising the various notes or documentaries which focus on a specific issue.
- iv) It also helps in making inferences of the causes.

3.13 LET US SUM UP

It can therefore be summarised that discourse analysis is one of the techniques which uses language in form of talks and texts to analyse human behaviour and social situations. Discourse analysis and critical thinking is applicable to every situation and every subject. The new perspective provided by discourse analysis allows personal growth and a high level of creative fulfillment. The method does not require any set guidelines or framework. Rather it can help in bringing about fundamental changes in the practices of an institution, the profession, and society as a whole. However, Discourse Analysis does not provide definite answers; it is not a “hard” science, but an insight/knowledge based on content analysis and critical thinking.

Yet the method is being used as an interdisciplinary a cross cultural approach to create and experience the social and political practices.

3.14 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- i) What do you understand by the term- discourse analysis?
- ii) Explain different assumptions, theories and approaches of discourse analysis.
- iii) How can you say that the discourse analysis is a systematic process? Give your answer with respect to the steps of discourse analysis.
- iv) Explain the concept and significance of critical discourse analysis.
- v) Explain the concept and significance of content analysis.

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UNIT 4 REPORTING AND EVALUATING IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Concept and Meaning of Evaluating or Analysing of Data in Qualitative Research
- 4.3 Steps of Evaluating or Analysing of Data in Qualitative Research
- 4.4 Concept and Meaning of Interpreting of Data in Qualitative Research
- 4.5 Strategies of Data Interpretation in Qualitative Research
- 4.6 Concept and Meaning of Reporting of the Data in Qualitative Research
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- 4.10 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.11 Unit End Questions
- 4.12 Suggested Readings and References

4.0 INTRODUCTION

No research is complete without having detailed information of the results or achievements in form of reports of the research survey conducted by the researcher. After the collection of data, the researcher needs to analyse, evaluate and then report data in an organised and systematic way. The reports thus generated not only helps in understanding the basics behind certain events, objects, behaviours or practices; it also serves as a source for scope of future research. The present unit tries to discuss the systematic ways in which research interpretations are evaluated and reported by the researcher. It also will emphasise on the practical implications of evaluation and presentation of such reports basically in qualitative research.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit, you will be able to:

- define and describe the meaning of evaluating, interpreting and reporting data in qualitative research;
- explain the steps of evaluating or analysing of data in qualitative research;
- enumerate the steps in preparing report in qualitative research;
- analyse the Strategies of data interpretation in qualitative research;
- list the contents of research report; and
- explain the do's and don'ts in evaluating, interpreting and reporting data in qualitative research.

4.2 CONCEPT AND MEANING OF EVALUATING OR ANALYSING OF DATA IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

After collecting of data through various techniques or methods of research, the researcher tries to find out a solution to a problem, behaviour or uncertain environment. Such a solution or conclusion can be reached only with the help of systematically analysing or evaluating the data or information gathered and then organising the analysis and interpretations in form of reports. Once the data has been collected with the help of questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, or whatever, the data needs to be analysed or evaluated.

The concept of evaluation in qualitative research refers to an attempt to understand the extent to which the information collected helps in providing an answer to the pre planned aims and objectives or goals of the research. The researcher tries to evaluate the information, on basis of which he or she tries to understand the reasons, justifications or predictions of certain objects, behaviours, incidents or practices of the existing world. Evaluation helps in providing an insight to the problems or aims and goals of the research.

4.3 STEPS OF EVALUATING OR ANALYSING OF DATA IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The process of evaluating the collected information or the data follows a systematic step. The researcher tries to organise and give meaning to the collected information in such a way, so that there is less chance of bias or confusion. With the help of systematically evaluating a data, the researcher can find several answers, purpose and also unveil several facts of the variables, events, behaviour or practices under study.

Following are the steps of the process of evaluating data:

- i) Reading the overall collected data
- ii) Categorising the collected data
- iii) Naming or labeling the categories
- iv) Identification of the causal relationships
- v) Recording or filing the data

Let us take up each of these steps and explain.

- i) *Reading the overall collected data:* Firstly, the researcher tries to go through the details of the information collected through various sources (for example- interviews, video tapes, audio tapes, observation and so on). This step helps in getting as much information as is required regarding the variables which the researcher selects for studying.
- ii) *Categorising the collected data:* From the collected information, the researcher or the analysts sorts relevant information, which may have a direct or indirect effect on the behaviour, objects, events or practices selected for the study. After sorting the data, the researcher categorises similar information under various categories or themes, as for example, the researcher may

categorise the information into concerns, suggestions, strengths, weaknesses, similar experiences, program inputs, recommendations, outputs, outcome indicators, and so on .

- iii) *Naming or labeling the categories:* The third systematic step in evaluation process of the research is labeling the sorted and categorised themes, for example keeping all the information of suggestions under the category of propositions.
- iv) *Identification of the causal relationships:* With the help of categorising and labeling of information, the researcher gets an idea of the direction or flow of information. This helps the researcher or the analysts to discover patterns, or associations and causal relationships amongst the categorised themes. For example, if most people of the sample under study belonged to the same geographic area, we may state that people if live in that area may have a certain problem. Or, most people of the sample under study belonged to same salary strata, then we would state that because they all have the same salary strata they are not adequately motivated. These patterns or associations of the themes are done on the basis of the experience of the responses of the sample and experience of the researcher during the study.
- v) *Recording or filing the data:* Once the patterns of relationships are analysed, the analysts need to keep a track or record of the same. These records or files serves as a guide for future reference, while the similar sample is being studied.

4.4 CONCEPT AND MEANING OF INTERPRETING OF DATA IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Interpretation of data refers to summarising the findings of the data analysis in such a way that it provides useful information related to the goals of research. The researcher or the analysts attempts to put the information in the form of a viewpoint. For example, the researcher may compare the findings of the results with what was expected in the beginning stage.

It may also be a comparison or description in context of the standardised products, services or goals. Or it may simply be an explanation of the achievements and accomplishments. The interpretation may also be in a simple way of SWOT analysis (that is, analysing the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats) of the research conducted.

While interpreting the data, it is suggested that the researchers should summarise the findings in such a way that it would not only help the group under study but also provide an opportunity for the other researchers to conduct the related research in a better and more efficient way. It is also taken care that the interpretations are summarised in such a way that the findings can be justified later on in the process of reporting. The findings should also have a proper support of the relevant literature review.

Self Assessment Questions

Choose the correct alternative.

- 1) Which of the following best differentiates evaluation from interpretation?

- a) Interpretation requires more conceptual and integrative thinking than data analysis.
 - b) Interpretation involves computerised analysis of data.
 - c) Evaluation is explanatory and interpretation conceptual
 - d) Evaluation involves conceptualisation but interpretation does not.
- 2) Which of the following describes the nature of qualitative data interpretation?
- a) Reflection
 - b) Integrative
 - c) Explanatory
 - d) None of the above

4.5 STRATEGIES OF DATA INTERPRETATION IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

There are various ways in which data can be interpreted or summarised. Few of them are:

- (i) Making a final list, (ii) Elaborate narratives, (iii) Use of matrices.

The researcher may summarise the labeled categories and also code them and prepare a final list of findings which can further be explained in the later stage of forming reports.

Elaborate narratives

The researcher can also give meaning or elaborate the findings from the data collected through interviews, recordings and discussion.

Use of Matrices

A matrix is a type of chart which contains words and it looks like a cross table. The researchers may use matrices if they need to compare different groups or data sets on important variables, presented in key words.

For example if the researcher wants to compare the number of girls and boys of a school who are using a cosmetic product of a company, then he may represent the information in form of the following matrix–

Table: Matrix indicating age group and gender

Age Groups	No. of boys	No. of girls
>15 yrs	45	48
>20 yrs	11	13

Figure: Matrix on introduction of a cosmetic product among students of different age groups

Flow chart

A flow chart is a diagrammatic representation of boxes containing variables and arrows indicating the relationships between these variables.

When analysing the number of boys and girls of different age groups using the product as in the above example, it can be represented in form of the following figure

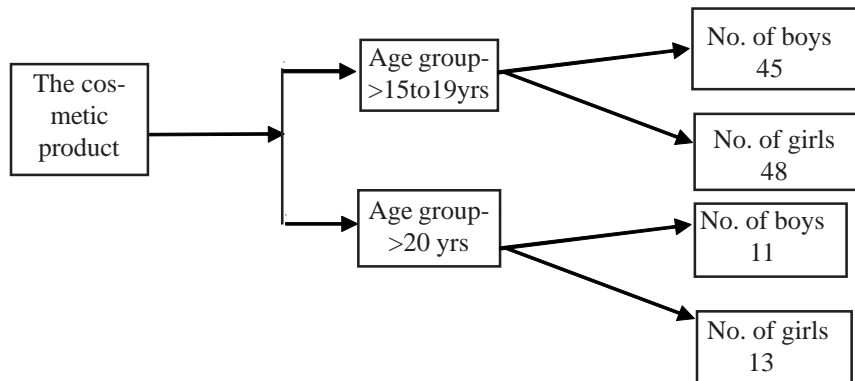


Fig.: A flow chart on introduction of a cosmetic product among students of different age groups

4.6 CONCEPT AND MEANING OF REPORTING OF THE DATA IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Preparing a report of the findings of the research conducted is the ultimate challenge to the researcher or the analyst. Reporting of a data refers the ultimate discussion of the interpretations and findings backed by relevant support of relevant literature and the reasons behind such findings.

4.7 STEPS OF PREPARING A REPORT OF THE DATA IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

While preparing the final report of the research conducted, the researcher needs to be very cautious and least biased. The reports can be represented in an organised way, only if the following steps are followed by them, viz., (i) Preparation of the content of the report (ii) Review and discussion of the report (iii) Preparation of the executive summary (iv) Scope of future research.

i) *Preparation of the content of report*

Even before starting the procedure of writing down the report, the researcher needs to formulate the findings according to the need and requirement of those for whom the report is intended to. For example, the researcher has to create the scope and content of research on basis of the funders / bankers, employees, clients, customers, the public, etc. for whom the research was being conducted.

ii) *Review and discussion of the report*

The researcher then needs to review and also discuss the interpretations and results with the people on whom the research was conducted.

iii) *Preparation of the executive summary*

The researcher then prepares an executive summary (that is, a summing up of the conclusions and recommendations). The summary may contain the description of the organisation people, event, and practices under study. It also contains an

explanation of the research goals, methods, and analysis procedures; listing of conclusions and recommendations; and any relevant attachments. If required, the summary may also include the details of questionnaires, interview guides which have been used by the researcher.

iv) *Scope of future research*

On basis of the over all research conducted, the analyst also prepares a list of areas which may be studied further. Such scope acts as a research plan which can be referred when a similar research is conducted in the future.

Self Assessment Questions

Fill in the blanks

- 1) A flow chart is a diagrammatic representation of
- 2) Reporting of a data refers the ultimate discussion of the and findings
- 3) A matrix is a type of

4.8 CONTENTS OF RESEARCH REPORT

Since the research reports are not only a descriptive summary of the over all findings, they also act as a guide for future research in similar areas, the documentation of the report is very crucial and sensitive. The report should have a record of enough information which can be easily understood and followed as and when required. There are several ways in which the contents of a report is prepared. One of them can be discussed as follows:

1) *Title Page*

The first page of the report contains the details of the topic of the research as well as the name of the organisation that is being, or has a product/service/program that is being researched as well as the date.

2) *Table of Contents*

After getting done with the title page, the researcher prepares the list of contents of the research work and their page numbers.

3) *Executive Summary*

Then the report contains an executive summary or abstract of the research and its findings. It is usually a one-page, concise overview of findings and recommendations of the research conducted.

4) *Purpose of the Report*

The purpose of the report shows the aims and objectives of the research. It also shows the details of the type of the research (qualitative or quantitative) that was used by the researcher.

5) *Contextual background of the research target*

This topic shows a historical background of the people/ event/ practice/ program/organisation under study. It also mentions the problem that needs to be studied and also the over all goals of the research as well as the suggested outcomes of the research. The topic also shows what questions are being

answered by conducting the present research. This section may also involve the relevant literature review which was done by the researcher.

6) *Methodology*

The section of methodology deals with measures and procedures used for conducting the research. Basically it contains the following details:

- i) **Sample:** It represents the number of sample which are being used from the total population for the research study.
- ii) **Scales used:** The details of the instruments and questionnaires which are being referred for the concerned research are mentioned in this section.
- iii) **Type of data collected:** The details of the types of data (for example- interviews, questionnaires, recordings, observations etc.) are also mentioned in the methodology section.

7) *Results and findings*

This section deals with the analysis of the data collected. It discusses the results and findings of the research.

8) *Interpretation and Conclusion*

This section deals with the interpretation and discussion of the findings of the data analysed. On basis of the interpretations, the results are concluded. The conclusion section shows how the result is significant and to what extent is it helpful to the research targets and other researchers.

9) *Limitations of the study or research*

This section consists of the restrictions of limitations of the findings. It shows how and under which conditions the results can be generalised.

10) *Recommendations and implications*

The researcher recommends suggestions and implications of the study conducted.

11) *References*

The researcher acknowledges the authors, books, studies and journals which were helpful in providing relevant literature review for the research conducted.

12) *Appendices*

The last section of the research report contains the various sources (like questionnaire, company forms, case studies, data in tabular format, testimonials) which were analysed and used by the researcher.

4.9 DO'S AND DON'TS IN EVALUATING, INTERPRETING AND REPORTING DATA IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

While evaluating, analysing and reporting the data, the analyst needs to be cautious regarding the following do's and don'ts –

Do's:

The researcher should take full care and always try to include the following aspects while processing the data.

- 1) The analyst should be clear, specific and describe the sample populations
- 2) The analyst should code the data for their convenience in processing the data.
- 3) The analyst should frequently use diagrams, flow charts or matrices for conveniently summarising and explaining the data.
- 4) The analyst should draw conclusion on basis of the present study and other related study in the similar field.
- 5) As and when required, the analyst should develop policies for further evaluating or confirming the (qualitative) data in order to prove their validity.

Don'ts

The researcher should take full care and always try to exclude or avoid the following aspects while processing the data:

- 1) The analyst should not depend fully upon the research design selected as no research design is perfect on its own.
- 2) The analyst should not interview about only the successes, the failures can also provide significant information to them.
- 3) The analyst should not completely depend upon questionnaires, as much of the information can only be available through observations and interviews.

Self Assessment Questions

State whether the following statements are true or false—

- 1) The analyst should be clear, specific and describe the sample populations. ()
- 2) The analyst should interview about only the successes. ()
- 3) Results are concluded on basis of interpretations. ()
- 4) The analyst should avoid the frequent use of diagrams, flow charts or matrices. ()

4.10 LET US SUM UP

On basis of the above discussions, it can be summed up that the quality assessment of qualitative research studies still remains a challenging area. The systematic steps of each procedure in the way of processing the data (that is, evaluating, interpreting and reporting) is equally significant and case sensitive.

The reliability of the report depends upon the selection of good strategies while interpreting the data. The researcher also needs to be cautious with certain do's and certain don't's (pitfalls) while processing the data of the research conducted.

4.11 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) Describe the concept and meaning of evaluating, interpreting and reporting the data in qualitative research?
- 2) Explain the steps of evaluating or analysing of data as well as preparing report in qualitative research?
- 3) Illustrate the strategies of data interpretation in qualitative research?
- 4) What are the basic requirements that are needed to be included as well as avoided while processing the data ?

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