



The QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Practical Research 1: Lesson 2

Most Essential Learning Competencies *

1

DESCRIBES CHARACTERISTICS,
STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AND KINDS OF
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

2

ILLUSTRATES THE IMPORTANCE OF
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ACROSS FIELDS.

RECAP



In module 1, you are oriented with a more basic and all-inclusive definition of research: Research is a systematic, objective, and comprehensive investigation of a certain phenomenon that involves accurate gathering, recording, and critically analyzing and interpreting of all facts about the phenomenon.

From this definition, it is clear that the ultimate goal of the research is to attain or to establish facts about the phenomenon being investigated. This means by which these facts will be attained is explicit.

RECAP



With the ultimate goal of improving the quality of life, researches give knowledge workers substantive bases for planning and decisions and provide tools and means for monitoring as well as evaluating and implementing interventions. Generally, the purpose of research may be expressed in a capsule as To discover is to find the truth about a subject which was not yet part of the stream of knowledge; To verify is to find whether what was found to be true fifty years ago is still true today; To predict circumstances which are about to happen.

THE PROCESS

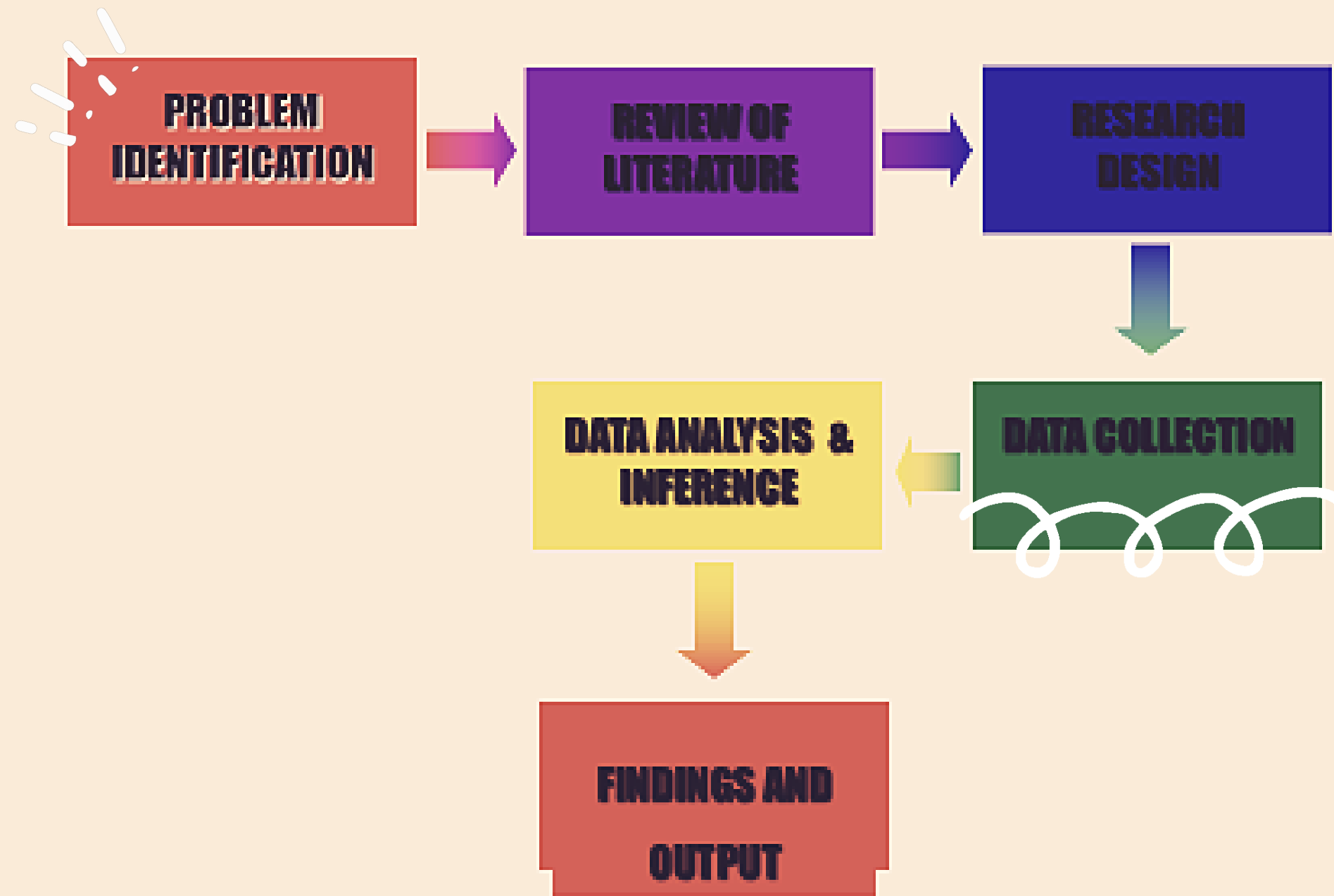


Figure 1

The Research Process

RECAP



Comparing Quantitative and Qualitative Research: Quantitative and qualitative research methods differ primarily in: their analytical objectives; the types of questions they pose; the types of data collection instruments they use; the forms of data they produce; and the degree of flexibility built into the study design.

INTRO



As an introduction, Qualitative research is a type of scientific research. In general terms, scientific research consists of an investigation that: seeks answers to a question; systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the question; collects evidence; produces findings that were not determined in advance; and produces findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study.

Strengths of Qualitative Research

One advantage of qualitative methods in exploratory research is that use of open-ended questions and probing allows participants to respond in their own words, rather than forcing them to choose from fixed responses, as quantitative methods do.

Open-ended questions can evoke responses that are: meaningful and culturally salient to the participant; unanticipated by the researcher and rich and explanatory.

Characteristics of Qualitative Research

Qualitative Research involves finding out what people think, and how they feel - or at any rate, what they say they think and how they say they feel. This kind of information is subjective. It involves feelings and impressions, rather than numbers (Mack 2005, 28-36).

Strengths of Qualitative Research

Another strength/ advantage of qualitative methods is that they allow the researcher the flexibility to probe initial participant responses – that is, to ask why or how.

It has also an exploratory advantage where the researcher can get in-depth responses to make the study substantial.

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Weaknesses of Qualitative Research

(MACK 2005, 41-49)

1

GAINING ENTRY. ACCESS IS VERY MUCH DEPENDENT UPON THE RESEARCHER'S CHARACTERISTICS AND HOW OTHERS PERCEIVE THE RESEARCHER. MAY REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE NEGOTIATION AND COMPROMISE WITH A GATEKEEPER.

2

CONTACTING PARTICIPANTS. THIS INCLUDES ISSUES OF BUILDING TRUST AND ENSURING CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY AND DEALING WITH THE RIGHT PARTICIPANTS.

3

SELECTING PARTICIPANTS. THIS IS FRAUGHT WITH DIFFICULTIES IN IDENTIFYING AND SELECTING AN APPROPRIATE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO CAN PROVIDE USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTICULAR TOPIC AND SETTING BEING STUDIED.

4

THE THREATS TO VALIDITY IN QUALITATIVE STUDIES. THIS HAPPENS WHEN INVALID INFORMATION RESULTING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE THE RESEARCHER BRINGS TO THE STUDY AND IMPOSES UPON IT

Kinds of Qualitative Research

- a Biographical
- b Phenomenology
- c Grounded Theory
- d Ethnography
- e Case Study

Biographical

1

THE STUDY OF AN INDIVIDUAL AND HER OR HIS EXPERIENCES AS TOLD TO THE RESEARCHER OR FOUND IN DOCUMENTS AND ARCHIVAL MATERIAL.

2

LIFE HISTORY--THE STUDY OF AN INDIVIDUAL'S LIFE AND HOW IT REFLECTS CULTURAL THEMES OF THE SOCIETY.

3

ORAL HISTORY--THE RESEARCHER GATHERS PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF EVENTS, THEIR CAUSES, AND THEIR EFFECTS FROM AN INDIVIDUAL OR SEVERAL INDIVIDUALS.

4

THE RESEARCHER NEEDS TO COLLECT EXTENSIVE INFORMATION ABOUT THE SUBJECT OF THE BIOGRAPHY

Phenomenology

1

DESCRIBES THE MEANING OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCE ABOUT A CONCEPT OR A PHENOMENON FOR SEVERAL INDIVIDUALS.

2

"TO DETERMINE WHAT AN EXPERIENCE MEANS FOR THE PERSONS WHO HAVE HAD THE EXPERIENCE AND CAN PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE DESCRIPTION OF IT. FROM THE INDIVIDUAL DESCRIPTIONS, GENERAL OR UNIVERSAL MEANINGS ARE DERIVED, IN OTHER WORDS, THE ESSENCES OF STRUCTURES OF THE EXPERIENCE" (MACK 2005, 34).

Grounded Theory

1

BASED ON SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM WHICH POSITS THAT HUMANS ACT AND INTERACT BASED ON SYMBOLS, WHICH HAVE MEANING AND VALUE FOR THE ACTORS (MACK 2005, 37).

2

GROUNDING THEORY INTENDS TO GENERATE OR DISCOVER A THEORY THAT RELATES TO A PARTICULAR SITUATION. IF LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT A TOPIC, GROUNDING THEORY IS ESPECIALLY USEFUL

Ethnography

1

A DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF A CULTURAL OR SOCIAL GROUP OR SYSTEM. THE RESEARCHER EXAMINES THE GROUP'S OBSERVABLE AND LEARNED PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR, CUSTOMS, AND WAYS OF LIFE.

2

INVOLVES PROLONGED OBSERVATION OF THE GROUP, TYPICALLY THROUGH PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION. A THEORY IS ESPECIALLY USEFUL

Case Study

1

A CASE STUDY IS AN EXPLORATION OF A "BOUNDED SYSTEM" OR A CASE (OR MULTIPLE CASES) OVER TIME THROUGH DETAILED, IN-DEPTH DATA COLLECTION INVOLVING MULTIPLE SOURCES OF INFORMATION-RICH IN CONTEXT.

2

IN A CASE STUDY, A SINGLE PERSON, PROGRAM, EVENT, PROCESS, INSTITUTION, ORGANIZATION, SOCIAL GROUP, OR PHENOMENON IS INVESTIGATED WITHIN A SPECIFIED TIME FRAME, USING A COMBINATION OF APPROPRIATE DATA COLLECTION DEVICES

Importance of Qualitative Research

The role of Qualitative research is to describe variation; describe and explain relationships; describe individual experiences, and describe group norms. It is an approach used largely in the social sciences to explore social interactions, systems, and processes. It provides an in-depth understanding of the ways people come to understand, act, and manage their day-to-day situations in particular settings.

END OF DISCUSSION



We hope that you have learned something new!