

Comparison Of Qualitative Research Methods

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Abstract: Purposeful sampling is an important strategy in a qualitative study. In this type of sampling, participants will be selected by the researcher based on the research questions and research purpose [3]. The author will introduce different qualitative research methodologies and compare them with each other. The author will analyze the differences and similarities of these methods and indicate their advantages. Additionally, the author will introduce the knowledge of data collection and data analysis processes, as well as provide insights on how to analyze findings in a research. By understanding the key characters of the qualitative research methods, the researcher will be able to identify when to apply the qualitative methods and how to choose according to the content of a research.

Keywords: Purposeful sampling, data collection, data analysis, reporting finding

1. Introduction

In this research, if the author chooses to use the ethnography method, the purposeful sampling will be conducted by selecting a research setting, developing criteria, mapping different individuals, and categorizing them and the target participants [1]. The narrative method can be conducted by one or two individuals to form a cohesive story, to develop a wider social map, as well as doing the participant observation. In phenomenology study, sampling can be conducted by finding participants who have shared experiences and narrowing down the population [6]. Also, in this method the samples need to be representative of the study [9]. For the action research, the author categorizes groups and the sampling is related to who could make a difference or change [7]. Also, the researcher needs to be purposeful when choosing the sample.

2. Data Collection

Qualitative research data collection is time consuming. Direct interaction between the researcher and individuals is essential and the main methods for collecting qualitative data include individual interviews, observations, focus groups, and action research [8]. In ethnography study, when the researcher tries to collect the data, the researcher is suggested to have a close relationship with the participant, such as living with the targeted group, interviewing them, observing the surroundings, and conducting fully structured or semi-structured interviews [1]. If the researcher tries to use the narrative method, the researcher should take notes, focus on the transcript, do observations, as well as gain information from pictures, movies, or written letters. The researcher can also gather data from archival data, personal diaries, recordings, transcripts, or videos in phenomenology study [10]. For action research, observation and survey conduction are important [7].

3. Data Analysis

Data analysis is also an essential process when conducting research. There are similarities and different details in each qualitative research method. The researcher should categorize the data in the ethnography study, create a framework, and interpret the data [5]. Also, the researcher needs to explain the findings after investigating what the participants believe and how the experience affects their lives. Coding data is an important process in narrative analysis [4]. The researcher needs to explain findings and

focus on the context and the meaning of the findings, as well as seek to learn the why or how of a phenomenon [2]. In phenomenology research, the researcher still needs to summarize the data, code the data [9], and describe the structures of experiences of the participants [3]. For action research, just as the previously discussed research methods, the researcher must categorize the data and identify general findings, but the researcher needs to plan action steps and find solutions to the problems [7].

4. Reporting of Findings

Reporting of findings is a process that should not be ignored when conducting qualitative research. When comparing the four different methods, the researcher should be aware of some details of commonalities and differences. For example, if the researcher chooses ethnography research, he or she can report the findings through gathering information from visual art, dance, film, notes, videos, photographs, or writing reports [5]. Just like the ethnography research method, narrow research allows the researcher to gain information from the participants, such as visual arts or writing reports [4]. In phenomenology study, the researcher can take observation notes and interview questionnaires [6]. Also, tables and figures will help the researcher to have a clear mind of the process of the research plan [7].

5. References

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Ningxin Li is currently a Ph.D. student at Nova Southeastern University. Her research fields are conflict resolution and international relations.