

The background of the slide features a light beige, marbled paper texture. On the left side, a dark brown branch extends upwards, with a single, dried, brownish leaf attached. On the right side, another dark brown branch extends horizontally, with a single, dried, brownish leaf attached. The overall aesthetic is natural and organic.

Qualitative Research Methods

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Education 604

Characteristics

- *Natural Setting*
- *Direct Data Collection*
- *Rich Narrative Descriptions*
- *Process Orientation*
- *Inductive Data Analysis*
- *Participant Perspectives*
- *Emergent Research Design*



Interactive Inquiry



- In-depth study using *face-to-face techniques* to collect data from people in their *natural settings*



Interactive Modes of Inquiry

- *Ethnography*

- Description and interpretation of a *cultural or social group or system*
- Involves *prolonged field work*
- Focuses on mundane details of everyday life
- Final product is a comprehensive and holistic narrative description integrating all aspects of group life and its complexities



Interactive Modes of Inquiry

- *Case study*

- Examines a case in detail *over an extended period of time*
- Employs multiple data sources
- The case may be an individual, program, or event
- *Cases may be selected for their uniqueness, not generally for representativeness*
- Provides a detailed description of the case, an analysis of themes, and researcher's interpretations



Interactive Modes of Inquiry

- *Phenomenology*

- Describes the *meanings of a lived experience*
- Researcher collects data on how individuals make sense out of their experiences
- Typically involves in-depth interviews
- Enables readers to more fully understand the concept relating to the experience



Interactive Modes of Inquiry

- *Grounded Theory*

- Develops “dense” concepts related to a particular phenomenon
- Primarily uses interview data collected through multiple field visits
- Goal is to *specify the historical and social conditions that influence the phenomenon of interest*



Interactive Modes of Inquiry

- *Critical Studies*

- Assumes that *knowledge is subjective*
- *Researchers view society as structured by class, status, race, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation*
- Begin with a commitment to *expose social manipulation and oppression and to change oppressive social structures*

Noninteractive Inquiry

- Analytical research that investigates *historical concepts and events through analysis of documents*



Qualitative Research Methodologies





Qualitative Techniques

- Data are collected in the form of *words* rather than *numbers*
- Provides *detailed narrative descriptions*, analysis, and interpretation
- Data are analyzed *inductively*



Participants/Sample

- *Purposeful sampling* (Ethnography)
- *Internal sampling* (Case Study)
- Those who have “*lived the experience*” (Phenomenology)
- Those who are able to *provide significant contributions to the theory being developed* (Grounded Theory)

Data Collection Methods





Participant Observation

- Participating in *naturally occurring situations* and writing extensive field notes about what occurs
- Data collection does not address a specific hypothesis, but explanations are derived inductively
- Researchers are careful to document their levels of involvement*
- Researchers learn from their own experience in the setting as a result of having spent so much time there



Levels of Researcher Involvement

- *Participant Observer*: Researcher creates role for purpose of study
- *Insider-Observer*: Researcher has formal role in organization
- *Interviewer*: Researcher establishes role with each person interviewed
- *Participant-researcher*: Researcher establishes a dual role for purpose of the study



Field Observation

- Direct accounts of everyday social action and settings in the form of *field notes*
- Field notes are detailed descriptions of *events, people, actions, and objects in the setting*

Descriptive Fieldnotes

- Portraits of the subjects
- Reconstruction of dialogue
- Description of physical setting
- Accounts of particular events
- Depiction of activities
- The observer's behavior



Reflective Fieldnotes



- Reflections on analysis
- Reflections on method
- Reflections on ethical dilemmas and conflicts
- Reflections on the observer's frame of mind
- Points of clarification



In-Depth *Interviews*

- A conversation with a purpose
- Generally very open ended
- May rely on a general interview guide, but not precisely worded questions for every interview
- Interviewee is encouraged to provide in-depth discussion of areas of interest
- Often recorded, then transcribed



Documents and Artifacts

- Documents are *records of past events that are written or printed* (notes, letters, diaries, internal papers, student personnel files, etc.)
- Artifacts are *material objects and symbols of current or past events, groups, persons, or organizations* (mascots, diplomas, artwork, award plaques)

Establishing *Validity and Reliability*
in Qualitative Research





Promoting *Validity* in Qualitative Research

- *Extended Fieldwork*
 - Data are collected *over a period of time*
- *Low Inference Descriptors*
 - Use of descriptions phrased very closely to the participants' accounts and researcher's field notes
- *Participant Feedback*
 - Feedback and discussion of interpretations and conclusions with participants



Promoting *Validity* in Qualitative Research

- ***Triangulation***: when different sources agree, information is corroborated
 - *Data*: use of multiple data sources
 - *Methods*: use of multiple methods
 - *Investigator*: use of multiple investigators
 - *Theory*: use of multiple theories and perspectives



Promoting *Validity* in Qualitative Research

- *Peer Review*
 - Discussion of conclusions and interpretations with others, including discussion with a “disinterested” peer who can provide insights as well as play devil’s advocate
- *Negative Case Sampling*
 - Locating and examining cases that *disconfirm* expectations and tentative explanations



Promoting *Validity* in Qualitative Research

- *Reflexivity*
 - Self-reflection and critical awareness on potential biases and predispositions
- *Pattern Matching*
 - Predicting a series of events that form a pattern and then matching that to the actual results



Reliability

- Deals with *degree of accuracy of observations* (agreement between observations and setting)
- Enhanced by the use of *supporting documentation* (field notes, recordings, agreement of others in same situation etc.)

Now let's try it!

