COUC 750: Textbook Critical Analysis and Synthesis Paper

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Textbook Critical Analysis and Synthesis Paper

Chapter 1: Qualitative Research

Criticality, Reflexivity, Collaboration and Rigor

This chapter provides an overview of what qualitative research is. Much of this is centered on the four key values of collaboration, criticality, reflexivity, and rigor. However, there are 10 dynamic elements that interact with each of these qualitative values. The author would like to highlight three which he considers to be most important.

First, the researcher explains why the observation made is a problem. He must pique the reader's interest to first understand why it is a problem so that the reader can seek to understand what about this is a problem in society and how it affects people.

Secondly, the research question is important because the reader must be able relate to it. If the researcher has observed the problem long enough, he will have numerous questions that he will want to answer while conducting the research. However, the reason why this is highlighted is because he needs to eliminate 80-90% of his questions and select 2 or 3 from the remaining questions. Once he commits to a question, he must place his focus on answering that question for the reader.

Lastly, the research collection and analysis must be written in a clear manner so that the reader can have a moderate to high level of understanding of the results. The discussion portion of a journal article usually encapsulates the overall analysis of the research, but if the writing is done poorly, then the reader may be confused or disappointed that his question was not answered.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Frameworks in Research

Conceptual Frameworks

This chapter begins with defining what conceptual frameworks are and how influential they are in conducting qualitative research. Conceptual frameworks are the layout or outline of how one chooses to design their study along with the questions that elicit the answers for those research questions. The research must pique the reader's interest by arguing for why the topic is important to study, elaborate on how theoretical and actual contexts may affect how the topic is answered, select insightful research questions, and include theories and methods that can provide the most insight into the topic.

Using Your Conceptual Framework

The focus is then moves towards how one can use their conceptual framework. Goals are critical to how one decides to use their conceptual framework. These goals are often introduced from a general perspective, but as time progresses, they become more specific. Time allows one to reflect on previous work, current questions that they have about their observations, and can also stem from conversations with one's professional and academic peers.

Developing a Conceptual Framework

Lastly, it covers how one can build a conceptual framework and how the researcher can explain how they will use it to conduct their research. The researcher's background plays a significant role in the development of his conceptual framework, and thus, there must be a level of self-awareness that allows him to examine how his background informs his interpretation of the various contexts that influence facets of his study. Additionally, the author makes reference to tacit theories which are unconscious ways in which we make think about, make sense of, and explain our observations about the context we are studying.

Chapter 3: Qualitative Research Design

Defining Qualitative Research Design

The qualitative research design process entails how the researcher approaches conducting the study. There are research questions that have been formulated and the researcher understands that he needs to make the connections between the theories, concepts, goals, contexts, beliefs, and sets of relationships within the specific topic. Within most research studies, there will often be times where new material becomes available and could be a significant factor in the outcomes of the study. The researcher considers the evolution of real-time learning and thus makes any necessary changes that produce the most informed results for the study.

The researcher considers each of the following when designing the process for conducting research: 1) topic, goals and rationale, 2) research questions, 3) theoretical framework, 4) determining and sequencing research methods, 5) site and participant selection, 6) piloting and refining research design and methods, and 7) validity of the study. The most important point the writer of this paper is describing the topic, goals, and rationale for the study.

Topic, Goals and Rationale

The topic should be one that is of interest to the general audience at the very least but must certainly have relevance to the others in said field of study. Choosing a relatable topic can also provide the researcher with a base interest and even motivation to conduct the study. The goals are important because they provide direction for the study. In particular, the researcher must choose whether he wants to pursue goals that are exploratory, descriptive, relational, and/or causal/explanatory. Lastly, the researcher provides a rationale for the reader to understand his perspective on why the topic addressed is significant and how the questions answered in the study will impact the reader's life.

Chapter 4: Reflexivity in Data Collection

What Is Reflexivity?

The ability to reflect on one's work and progress is important because it provides an avenue for constant self-reflection. Some creative ways to practice reflexivity are by having a research memo, research journal, dialogic engagement, and researcher interviews. The research memo consists of creating meaning by writing down one's thoughts, challenges, insights, and ongoing questions about the research being conducted. Though these memos include fieldwork information, data collection, ongoing questions, and emerging themes, it is still heavily focused on self-reflection and meaning making.

The second way to practice reflexivity is to have a research journal. This is where the researcher writes down thoughts, questions, struggles, and ideas, but does so as an ongoing real-time reflection. They provide a train of thought that the researcher can follow as he continues to add more content to the original idea.

Thirdly, there is dialogic engagement. This consists of the researcher being intentional with the people he interacts with. This level of engagement is focused and structured. It seeks insights and recommendations from colleagues and peers who are engaged in similar content areas so they can add to his understanding of his own research. The people selected provide value in that they can help the researcher refine questions that are unclear, challenge ideas that are not clearly articulated, share their own research with him so that he can see his research from a different perspective and have his biases challenged.

Lastly, the researcher seeks to be interviewed at different stages of the research process to understand his research from the perspective of an interviewee. The goal is to provide insights and an opportunity for the researcher to process his study.

Chapter 5: Methods of Data Collection

This chapter covers a variety of methods used to collect and generate data. Each method provides the researcher with the potential to help him understand his data in a substantive manner and in a way that assists him in explaining the data.

Using Technology

As the field of counseling continues to become more accepting of technology in conducting research, one must acknowledge the challenges and benefits of using technology for interviews. The advantages are cost-effectiveness, accessibility to larger numbers of people, and potential efficiency with being able to schedule interviews more often. The downsides are the lack of "togetherness" in sessions, which limits the ability to assess non-verbal communication in the interview, less focus, difficulty establishing rapport, and tech-related issues. However, the use of technology depends on how it can help the researcher meet his study's goals and answer his research questions.

Aligning Methods with their Research Questions

The question that needs to be clearly answered to align the methods with the research questions is, "What am I studying?" This moves the researcher to explore the terms, phrases and concepts he is looking to define. The research then looks to understand what he hopes to accomplish in conducting this research. Focusing on the goals of the research can direct his attention where it is necessary. Selecting the correct population for the study is important to know to who exactly the results of the study apply to and from where will this pool of participants be selected from. The research then decides how to gather the necessary data to answer his research questions. He provides his reasoning as to why he chose the selected group and determines what instruments are most applicable for the group and purposes of his study.

Chapter 6: Validity in Qualitative Research

This chapter covers the trustworthiness of the process in conducting qualitative research. This is a time-consuming process because it speaks to the diligence the researcher has in making sure that his work is honest, reliable, authentic, or good.

Assessing Validity

The main criterion for assessing validity must include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is about the researcher being accountable that the instruments being used, the design process, and the data are considered when he is explaining his conclusions. The researcher establishes this credibility by providing in-depth descriptions of the data, high engagement and experience in the field, debriefing with colleagues, and even using an outside source to evaluate the process.

Transferability considers the context that of the study. In other words, this part of the process finds connections and applications to other similar contexts, but the focus is placed on how to maintain its integrity within the context provided in the study. The more detailed the description of the specifics of the study allows readers to contextualize the information and see what connections it has to other research.

Dependability refers to the consistency of the researcher's argument aligning with the data that is being collected. The theme with dependability is stability. This is accomplished by taking the time to develop a well-organized research design.

Lastly, confirmability considers the subjective nature of interpreting qualitative data. The goal in qualitative research is not to establish truth or objectivity, but rather to present information that can be helpful in interpreting other qualitative data.

Chapter 7: Ethics and Relational Research

Relational Approach to Research

This chapter focuses on how the ethics of the research can influence how he conducts research. This is especially true when it comes to considering the research from the perspective of the interviewee. The researcher must consider potential harms, risks, and hinderances that may impact the people involved in the research process. As researchers engage with their participants, they acknowledge natural differences in how they may interpret the process and they must be continually reflective about the ongoing collaboration between them and the participants.

Reference

Ravitch, S. M. & Carl, N. M. (2021). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical,*

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