

# Good research paper about five approaches and theory

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## **Introduction**

Qualitative research, as defined by Thomas from the book of Sampa (2012), “ involves gathering and interpreting information from the viewpoint of kinds of objects, ideas, or events” (as cited in Sampa, 2012, p. 5). Qualitative research has five approaches, which are narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. Each design should be anchored to a theory in order for the progress of a research to be guided. According to Creswell (2009), in qualitative research, a theory acts as a lens for understanding the study, although it may also be formulated during or after the study.

## **Implication of Theory in the Five Approaches**

### Phenomenology

This type of approach, as defined by Sampa (2012), is the understanding of the essence of experience and an explication on what constitutes an experience. Another definition by Creswell (2009) states that it “ is a design of inquiry coming from philosophy and psychology in which researcher describes the lived experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2009, p. 14). Thus, phenomenology helps the researcher describe the lived experiences that the respondents had undergone.

Sampa (2012) provided two important concepts in the phenomenological approach: epoché and intentionality. Epoché is the bracketing or setting aside of the researcher’s own experiences so that their perspective will not be impaired. Intentionality, on the other hand, means that the person has an idea of the experience even before it happens.

There are also challenges in using the phenomenological approach, which a researcher must consider. This approach requires at least an understanding of the broader philosophical assumptions, which should be identified by the researcher (Creswell, 2009). Understanding philosophical assumptions means that one can draw out themes when analyzing the answers that the participants provided. This process is called thematic analysis (Sampa, 2012). After this process is completed, the researcher will be able to uncover the connection of these themes to one another in order to obtain the overall meaning, which is the eidetic analysis (Sampa, 2012).

In sum, theory is not a prerequisite for understanding the lived experiences of the participants; rather, there is only a philosophical assumption of the phenomenon. After the completion of the study, however, a theory will be formulated based on the interpretation of the lived experiences of the participants.

## **Narrative Approach**

Narrative research, as cited in the book of Creswell (2009), is defined as a spoken or written text that provides an account of an event or action or a series of events or actions, which are chronologically connected. Marshall and Rossman (2011), on the other hand, gave another definition, which is that “ narrative analysis seeks to describe the meaning of experience for those who frequently are socially marginalized or oppressed as they construct stories (narratives) about their lives (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 23).

The narrative approach has two types. According to Creswell (2009), one type is the analysis of narratives, which uses paradigm thinking to create

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descriptions of themes that hold across stories or taxonomies of types of stories and then configured into a story using a plot line. Another type of approach is the biographical study, a narrative study in which the researcher writes and records the experiences of another person's life.

The role of theory in a narrative research is that it provides a theoretical lens or perspective (Creswell, 2009). The lens may be used to advocate women stories or poverty stories (Creswell, 2009). In addition, using this theoretical lens highlights the importance of the individual and their stories, which will show or result in common themes (Lapan, Quartaroli & Riemer, 2011). Thus, the use of theory in a narrative approach is important since it will bring out the themes from the stories provided by the participants.

## **Grounded Theory Research**

The intention of grounded theory is to put data beyond description and to generate or discover a theory (Creswell, 2009). Furthermore, Sampa (2012) explained “ that grounded theory is utilized to unfurl a coherent theory, abstract, scheme, or set of proposition to explain a specific experience, a phenomenon, situation, context or setting” (Sampa, 2012, p. 60).

The two types of grounded theory are systematic procedures by Strauss and Corbin and the constructivist approach of Charmaz (Creswell, 2009). Strauss and Corbin's systematic procedures entail a process as follows: category, which represents a unit of information; constant comparative method, which is the collecting and comparing of data; open coding, which is extracting the major categories; and the selective coding where the researcher takes the model and develops a proposition. On the other hand, Charmaz (2014) indicates that the “ constructivist approach treats research as a construction

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but acknowledges that it occurs under specific conditions of which we may not be aware and which may not be of our choosing” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 28). Moreover, Charmaz stated that constructivist grounded theory places more emphasis on the views, values, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, and ideologies of individuals than on the methods of research (Creswell, 2009).

Using grounded theory, one does not have to be guided with a theory; rather, the grounded theory method basically aims to form a theory from the phenomenon observed. The only problem that a researcher will encounter, as suggested by Creswell (2009), is when the researcher is faced with the difficulty of determining when categories are saturated or when the theory is sufficiently exhausted.

## **Ethnographic Approach**

Sampa (2012) stated that the background of ethnography is anthropology. It has particularly been used in cultural anthropology to study groups of people and cultures from inside using skilled eyes (Sampa, 2012). Ethnography as defined by Harris in the book of Creswell (2009) “ is a qualitative design in which the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs, and languages of a culture-sharing group” (Creswell, 2009, p. 68).

Just like the other approaches, there are types of ethnography. According to Creswell (2009), realist ethnography is a traditional approach used by cultural anthropologists, and which is characterized by Van Maanen as reflective of a particular perspective taken by the researcher toward the individuals being studied. On the other hand, critical ethnography is a type of ethnographic research in which the researchers support the emancipation of

groups that are marginalized in the society. In this regard, theories in an ethnographic research, as explained by Creswell (2009), should include cultural themes in order to understand the group being studied.

The nature of case studies was in general devised as exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive (Sampa, 2012). Case study research involves the study of an issue to be discovered -- through one or multiple cases -- within a bounded system (Creswell, 2009).

There are also various types of case studies. The first is the instrumental case study where the researcher focuses on an issue or concern and then chooses one bounded case. The second type is the collective case study where there will also be one issue or concern to be selected but where the researcher might select a study for several programs from several research sites (Creswell, 2009). In a case study, the theory is not well-established since it comes in an interdisciplinary form. The researcher will instead draw themes from the participants' answers.

## **Comparisons of the Five Approaches**

The five approaches have similarities and differences. If a researcher wants to study stories behind someone else's experience, a narrative research should be used. With the use of a theoretical lens, the inquirer will be able to obtain themes and then develop a narrative about it. Although phenomenology requires the conduct of interviews, its focus is on understanding the essence of the experience. In this method, knowledge of a philosophical assumption is imperative in drawing out themes or categories from the responses of the participants. On the other hand, grounded theory is essentially used to generate a theory from the data gathered from the

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field, which focuses on actions or processes involving many individuals. Ethnography is describing and interpreting culture-shared behavior or attitudes and needs a comprehension of cultural themes from sociology and anthropology, which will veer the direction of the study. Lastly, a case study is used in developing an in-depth analysis of one or more issues or concerns. It needs a grasp on the assumptions of different cases from various disciplines.

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