

Methodological  
issues in research  
domestic violence  
psychology essay



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A critical review of the methodology used in Hoyle, C Being a nosy bloody cow: ethical and methodological issues in research domestic violence. The chapter of the article I am focusing on looks at 'negotiating access to research subjects' and adapting methodology for a doctoral approach to work. The chapter also looks at who would be appropriate subjects for the research and the appropriate means of getting information for the research. Overall the article looks at Hoyle's own experience from her thesis which was based on 'policing domestic violence Thames Valley (Hoyle, C. 1996) but her methods were 'denigrated by critics who were not sympathetic with my findings'.

The types of methodology used by Hoyle in her article is a mix of 'qualitative and quantitative...scrutiny of official documents...interviews... telephone calls' (Hoyle, C. 2000: 397). This is also called triangulation 'different methods to study the same phenomenon' (Hoyle, C. 2000: 398). Triangulation involves 'Uses multiple observers, theoretical perspectives, sources of data, methodologies... methods of investigation' (research methods book) to get more reliable results.

Qualitative data involves 'an approach to documents that emphasis the role of the investigator...emphasises words rather than data' (research book p716). The method involves using interviews, surveys, diaries or questionnaires to get results that are word based rather than numbers, figures or statistics. The definition of quantitative data is 'emphasises quantification... and analysis of data' (research book p717). Quantitative data focuses on numbers rather than words to get results for example, crime figures or statistics.

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The qualitative data that Hoyle uses are interviews, she interviews police officers and victims to 'in order to consider what the role of the criminal justice system is...in relation to domestic violence '(Hoyle, C. 2000: 398). Hoyle occasionally interviewed the offender, the Crown Prosecution Service and the custody officer 'it is necessary to talk to all those involved in disputes and their resolution' (Hoyle, C. 2000: 398). The quantitative data that is used within the text are the scrutiny of official documents, although she doesn't go into detail on what these are they are more likely to be crime figures for domestic violence.

Triangulation in Hoyle's article combines qualitative and quantitative data to get a more accurate result; however there are strengths and weaknesses for both methods. Qualitative data could be using a survey, questionnaire or interview to gather opinions from a group or individual but these can prove time consuming and expensive for example, you might have to travel in order to conduct the interviews. Another weakness of qualitative data is that it is opinion and not fact, Hoyle interviews police officers, victim's and offenders to get their opinion on the dispute that she attends but the victim may be influenced so the interviewer has no way of knowing whether it is the complete truth, this also means the results may be unreliable as the answer may be false. Hoyle also interviewed police officers who responded to the incidents to ensure that accurate information was given in accordance to the victim's wishes. Each set of data collected in an interview provides different perspectives of the incident that generates further accounts in relation to the data that has already been gathered (Fandf 1986 find ref later in hoyles article).

In using validity ' steps may be taken to ensure a method is reliable and/ or valid as such as testing for internal reliability (research methods book p173).

In Hoyles research triangulation data

' does not provide a straightforward check on a reliability and validity...

discrete

data set provides a unique perspective and therefore can be considered in

isolation from others, two (or more) sets of data on the same situation

permits

one to explore the relationship of ' accounts' to what people are actually

observes

to be doing, thereby generating a further account in relation to data already

gathered' (f and f from hoyles article).

Hoyles uses interviews to get the opinion of the victim; however we cannot

validate opinion as it may not be entirely true. It is possible to validate

official documents for example, crime figures but in Hoyles article she does

not reveal what they are then there is no way we can validate them without

knowing specifically what they are.

Hoyle chose to use qualitative and quantitative data so that there is more

than one method to make the results more reliable, if one method looks at

the opinion of the individuals involved then the official documents can back

up the information found out from the interviews. She also chose these

methods as it is good for repeatability; since Hoyle used the same methods over and over to conduct the interview then it is probable that at the end she would have similar results. Hoyle also considered these methods as it is a 'rigorous and thorough methodological approach for doctoral work' (Hoyle, C. 2000: 395).

There are some differences that make using qualitative and quantitative data good or bad, the research done with qualitative data shows the point of view from the participants instead of quantitative data which is shown from the researcher's point of view. I think it is better to show research from the participants view as it gives the reader a clearer insight into their world or perspectives for example, Karen Sharpe partly uses qualitative data to interview prostitutes on the street. The research shows the prostitutes and Sharpe's perspective whilst on the streets '..... quote' this gives us a feel for how they feel working on the streets and the trust involved to approach Sharpe and answer the questions (reference to the Sharpe article). A strength of using quantitative data is that it is more structured than qualitative data, qualitative is usually unstructured or semi-structured as qualitative data is meant to give the researcher a view of the world from the participants eyes. (Research book p498). Quantitative data is more concerned with a group or individuals behaviour such as finding out why people work as prostitutes and what abused they endure on the streets, where as qualitative data is focused on the meaning of the actions.

Several writers have written contrasts about qualitative and quantitative data, such as Halfpenny 1979 (research book p407). The similarities of qualitative and quantitative data are both set out to answer research <https://assignbuster.com/methodological-issues-in-research-domestic-violence-psychology-essay/>

questions although both sets of data are different but the overall goal is focused on 'answering questions about the nature of social reality (research book p409). 'Hardy and Bryman (2004) have pointed out that... there... are differences between qualitative and quantitative research... should be recognised that there are similarities too' (research book p409). Both qualitative and quantitative data are focused on variation, researchers 'seek to uncover and then represent the variation that they uncover' (research book p409). This means researchers explore how people are different and their connection to variation. Another similarity is that the research method used has to have appropriate questions to ask the subject, researchers have to ensure that they specify questions and select methods and data analysis that are appropriate with the questions (research book p410). Both of qualitative and quantitative data focuses on data reduction as researchers tend to collect a lot of data. If a researcher reduces the amount of data then it is easier to make sense of it all. In quantitative data researchers reduce data by statistical analysis. In qualitative data researchers 'develop concepts out of... rich data' (research book p409).

The ethical issues that come from using qualitative methodology such as interviews are that Hoyle had to be taken to the victim's house by the police officer on duty as she had to think about her personal safety, the officer was not required to participate in the interview except when the offender remained in the house after the dispute. However using the police officer to secure access looks like the victim had no choice but to be interviewed by Hoyle, before conducting the interview Hoyle had to make sure that the victim knew they had to rights whether to be interviewed or not. Consent

had to be given for the interviews and Hoyle had to tell them information such as who she was, what the research was about, how it was funded and how the data would eventually be used. She also had to make sure they remained anonymous to protect the privacy of the people involved, this was important as to not cause more stress to the individuals and persuade them to open up to her since they couldn't be identified. Another issue was that with the offender still in the house the victim could be dissuade from being entirely truthful with Hoyle so separate interview schedules were set up and the offender was taken to the police station for the interview. A major ethical issue was the fact that Hoyle was deceitful to the perpetrator of the dispute; she asked the offender to leave her alone with the victim and told them that their partner would be asked the same questions as them about ' public perception of police handling disputes'. Some of the questions that Hoyle asked were the same as the offenders but some were not. ' Consented to interviews with officers without fully understanding the reasons behind the interviews' (Hoyle, C. 2000: 401) Hoyle basically lied to the offender to gain the information she needed, if she hadn't then there is a chance that the victim would have been dishonest.

Other issues that are involved with this type of research are access, Hoyle would of have to of gone through the police first and would of needed police escort to the dispute. Also to get to the victims she would have needed access from the police and from the offender as Hoyle had to ask the offender for permission to ask the victim questions. Another issue would have been trust, to talk to the victims Hoyle of needed a certain amount of trust before she could get them to answer the questions although they had

the choice of backing out and not taking part if they wished. She would also need to get the trust of the offender so that they would let the victim alone with her.

Overall I think that using both quantitative and qualitative data together is better as it produces more reliable information and results. Using qualitative data means that we get to see the research from the point of view from the individual or group to give us a clearer view of their life, however it is time consuming as you would have to earn their trust enough that you can ask questions and conduct the research. Qualitative data is also useful as it shows the participant in their natural settings ‘most qualitative researchers reveal a preference for seeing through the eyes of the participant’ (research book p412) so they don’t change their behaviour too much and so that they are comfortable in their environment. Quantitative data is distanced from the research subject, so we don’t get a feel for the research as with qualitative data as the researcher is in close proximity to the subject. An advantage of using quantitative data is that it can be proven as it is fact where qualitative data is opinion, as having research that can be verified is useful.