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# Master One

## Research Methodology

### Syllabus

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**Phenomenology**

Phenomenology is not primarily concerned with explaining the causes of things, but tries, instead, to provide a description of how things are experienced at first hand by those involved.

The phenomenological research generally deals with:

- People's perceptions of meaning;
- People's attitudes and beliefs; and
- People's feelings and emotions.

Phenomenology is concerned with matters, such as:

- The explanation of human experience;
- The description of everyday world;
- Seeing things through the eyes of others; and
- Reflecting multiple realities.

In sum, phenomenological research should involve a detailed description of the experience that is being investigated- one that does not gloss over the complexities and contradictions that inhabit real life.

The main benefits of phenomenology are examples as:

- It suits to small-scale research.
- It describes experiences in a way that is immediately accessible and interesting to a wide range of readers.
- It offers the prospects of authentic accounts of complex phenomena.
- It is a humanistic style of research (ibid).

### **1. Grounded Theory (GT)**

Grounded Theory is a research strategy dedicated to generating theories. In this sense, it contrasts with approaches concerned with testing theories, and is different from researches whose main purpose is to provide descriptive accounts of the subject matter. It is a research strategy that emphasises the importance of empirical fieldwork and the need to link any explanations very closely to what happens in practical situations in the 'real world'. It is different, here, from approaches that are thought up in the abstract as a neat system of ideas, and then afterwards checked to see if they work in reality.

This research strategy is well suited to the needs of four kinds of research:

1. Qualitative research
2. Exploratory research
3. Studies of human interaction
4. Small-scale research

In practice, this research strategy has not a particular method of data collection. However, in general, Grounded Theory lends itself to be better used in the collection of data in 'raw state'. In this respect, it is more appropriate to be employed to produce unstructured data through:

Unstructured interviews;  
Open-ended questions; and  
Field-notes based on observations.

The main benefits of Grounded Theory are examples, such as:

- It is suitable to small-scale research;
- It recognises rationale for qualitative research; It is adaptable;
- It is a systematic way for analysing data;
- It is meant for developing theoretical propositions from data;

It is based on explanations that are grounded in reality;  
and It is well-suited to the exploratory research (ibid).

## **2. Action Research**

Action research is a research strategy based on with practical issues. These practical issues are about problem, concerns, and needs that arise as a routine part of activity in the ‘real world’. This specifically practical orientation has remained a defining characteristic of an Action Research.

In particular, Action Research as a research strategy has the following characteristics:

It is aimed at dealing with the real-world problems and  
issues; It regards change as an integral part of research;

It is concerned with active participants, not passive ones.

In terms of data collection methods, action research uses different techniques to collect information. Action researchers generally prefer questionnaires for such purposes. They may also retrieve data from the records, memos, and reports that the investigated content routinely produced. The benefits of Action Research as research strategy are examples as:

It involves participation in the research for practitioners. It  
contributes to professional self-development.

It is geared to improving practice and resolving problems (ibid).

## **3. Mixed-methods**

Mixed-methods refers to a research strategy that crosses the boundaries of conventional paradigms of research by deliberately combining methods drawn from different traditions with different underlying assumptions. At its simplest, a mixed-method strategy uses both qualitative and quantitative methods.

In specific terms, a mixed-methods research strategy has three characteristic features. These can be outlined as follows:

1. It uses qualitative and quantitative approaches within a single research project.
2. It elucidates forms on the link between approaches (triangulation).
3. It emphasises on practical approaches to research problems (pragmatism).

Drawing on the available literature, researchers use mixed-methods strategies for one or more of the following purposes:

to improve accuracy;  
to obtain a more complete picture;

to compensate strengths and weaknesses;  
to develop the analysis; and  
to be used as an aid to sampling.

Mixed-methods research strategy has its underpinnings in the philosophical assumptions of pragmatism. In context of research, pragmatism tends to revolve around the following core ideas:

Knowledge is based on practical outcomes.

Research should test what works through empirical enquiry. Knowledge is provisional; and

Traditional dualisms in science are regarded as not helpful.

The main benefits of mixed-method research strategy are examples as:

It is a more comprehensive account of the thing being researched;

It provides clearer links between different methods and different kinds of data;

It emphasises on the rationale for combining different approaches (triangulation);  
and

It is a practical, problem-driven approach to research (ibid).

#### **4. Longitudinal**

Longitudinal research strategy refers to a family of methods that share something in common; information is gathered about the target of the research during a period of time. According to Dörnyei (2002) cited in Hoadjli (2015), a longitudinal research in an investigation in which:

- (a) Data are collected for two or more distinct periods;
- (b) The subject or cases analysed are the same or comparable from one period to the next; and
- (c) The analysis involves some comparison of data between the periods (p.78).

A longitudinal design, considering the above assumptions, would permit the measurement of differences or change in a variable from one period to another.

In terms of types, there are as many as four types of longitudinal design. These are:

1. Prospective longitudinal studies;
2. Repeated cross-sectional studies;
3. Retrospective studies; and
4. Simultaneous cross-sectional studies.

For research methodologies, longitudinal research strategy is advantageous because:

It allows the researchers to collect information about change at the micro-level; it enables the researchers to save money and time; and it aids the researchers to gain data about changes across age groups