Chapter 4

Vocalizing Qualitative Methodologies in Education Research: The Grounded Theory and Interpretative Paradigm

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explains the significance of grounded theory and the interpretative paradigm as powerful qualitative methodologies used in data analysis in education research. This chapter defines qualitative methodologies and their history and significance in education research. Authors discuss the science of coding from views advanced by the classical founders of grounded theory like Barney Glaser, Anselm Strauss, Corbin, and Catherine Charmaz. The chapter examines the important elements in content analysis and the interpretative paradigm, and provides practical illustrations on how qualitative methodologies could be used to analyze data in education research.

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INTRODUCTION

Qualitative research methodologies are given minimal attention in education research in most higher education institutions within the East African region. Most educationists and career researchers in education fancy quantitative methodologies most, yet even qualitative methodologies play a significant part in developing social science research. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to encourage early career researchers and postgraduate students in education to appreciate the significance of qualitative methodologies in data analysis, learn them and utilize them in their research and professional experiences. This chapter tries to vocalize the importance of qualitative methodologies in education research. Finally, the author explains the interpretative paradigm by emphasizing inductive and deductive methods, symbolic interactionism as well as hermeneutic-phenomenology. The objectives of the chapter are specifically to explain the meaning and nature of qualitative methodologies in the context of their historical and philosophical perspective. Again, to examine the significance of grounded theory and coding as a data analysis tool in qualitative research. The chapter also describes inductive, deductive, symbolic interactionism and hermeneutic-phenomenology in interpretative data analysis.

BACKGROUND

In the background of this chapter, the author defines qualitative methodologies from a historical context. Using several scholarly arguments, he discusses the concept of grounded theory from the perspective of Barney Glaser, Anselm Strauss, Corbin, and Catherin Charmaz as the proponents of the methodology. He uses this classical explanation to derive the significance of the coding technique in qualitative data analysis in education research (Sekiwu, 2013). Coding is the basis of qualitative data analysis in the humanities, social sciences and education in particular. Therefore, this chapter is timely to vocalize its significance in postgraduate research in universities in Africa.

What are qualitative methodologies? Literature provides a vivid history about the qualitative methodologies in social research. However, from this historical evolution of the subject of qualitative research, the meaning and key characteristics features of qualitative methodologies are articulated. For example, scholars note that qualitative research paradigms date back to 2000 years ago when the Greek scholars, like Thales (640-550 B.C.) and Anaximander (611-547 B.C.), used formal and disciplined
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