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Applying qualitative research in management studies - theory and practical experiences: Using NVivo 15

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Abstract

In response to the difficulties that students and researchers often encounter when applying qualitative research methods in dissertations, theses, and scientific papers, this article offers a conceptual overview of qualitative research, emphasizing the primary methods relevant to management studies. Particular attention is given to the grounded theory approach, which enables researchers to develop theoretical models based on empirical data. The study presents a step-by-step guide for conducting qualitative research using grounded theory as a methodological framework. By providing a structured explanation of the grounded theory process, the article clarifies how researchers can systematically collect, code, and analyze qualitative data to construct or refine theoretical frameworks within the context of management research. Grounded theory is highlighted as a valuable methodological approach for exploring complex phenomena in depth and generating theory grounded in real-world observations. This article enhances understanding of the effective implementation of this approach. Furthermore, the study offers practical guidance for graduate students and early-career researchers in the field of management who wish to adopt qualitative methods, particularly grounded theory, in their academic work. The clearly defined methodological roadmap presented in this article serves as a useful reference for improving the rigor and credibility of qualitative research.

Keywords: NVivo 15, qualitative research, theory experiences.

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1. Introduction

Qualitative research has increasingly appeared in graduation theses, master's theses, doctoral dissertations, and scholarly articles in recent years. The findings from such research often follow repetitive processes across studies. However, many students face challenges in conducting qualitative research. Some have never conducted in-depth interviews or group discussions, do not understand why qualitative research is needed, or lack knowledge of qualitative data processing methods. Consequently, the results are often unreliable and of limited value. Some published articles also present qualitative research results in a rather superficial manner. Students often encounter significant challenges when conducting qualitative research, including in-depth interviews and group discussions. These difficulties are well-documented in the literature. Many students face struggles due to limited experience with these research methods, a poor understanding of the goals of qualitative research, and insufficient knowledge of data analysis techniques. As a result, these shortcomings can lead to findings that are less reliable and of lower value.

For example, in-depth interviews, while valuable for gaining rich and detailed insights, require advanced skills to navigate open-ended conversations, build rapport, and maintain flexibility. They can also be time-consuming and resource-intensive to conduct and analyze effectively, leading to challenges for novice researchers. In a similar vein, group discussions can be challenging due to issues with managing group dynamics and ensuring equal participation from all members. Several studies in qualitative research emphasize these difficulties, underscoring the importance of providing better training in data analysis and reporting to address these challenges effectively. Poorly presented findings, such as superficial analysis or incomplete data contextualization, are common outcomes when these challenges are not adequately addressed [1].

To address this, this article aims to clarify key aspects of qualitative research, including its distinction from quantitative research (including the stages of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding), five qualitative research approaches, and a focus on applying the Grounded Theory (GT) approach from the Straussian school to build and refine theoretical models for quantitative research [2-4].

2. Research Methodology Framework

2.1. Quantitative vs Qualitative Research

Quantitative research relies on deductive reasoning in scientific methods. Quantitative research is a research method used in social sciences, natural sciences, and other fields to collect and analyze data in numerical form. This method focuses on measuring and analyzing relationships between variables using statistical tools, charts, and mathematical models to draw conclusions.

Key characteristics of quantitative research: Numerical data (Information is collected in the form of numbers, such as scores, frequencies, and percentages); Large sample size (It is often applied to large research samples to ensure high representativeness of the results); Objectivity (This method emphasizes objectivity and the ability to replicate results); Statistical analysis (Tools like statistical software: SPSS, R, Stata, Nvivo, Atlas. ti, MAXQDA, Dedoose, QDA Miner are used to analyze data); Deductive reasoning (It begins with a hypothesis, then tests and draws conclusions based on empirical data) [5, 6].

Applications: Recognizing patterns in human behavior, evaluating cause-and-effect relationships between variables, and testing theoretical frameworks or research models.

(For example: Surveying the opinions of 1,000 people about their satisfaction with a product using a questionnaire and analyzing the results statistically; Studying the impact of an educational program on students' average grades through an experiment; etc.) [7, 8].

It is typically used to test scientific theories Tho [9] or verify hypothesized relationships between variables [10]. Quantitative research is conducted when theoretical frameworks are under debate or require validation tied to practical market conditions.

In contrast, qualitative research relies on inductive reasoning. According to Creswell [10], qualitative research explores and understands human and social issues through groups or individuals. Creswell and Poth [7] describe five different approaches to qualitative research:

Narrative research: This approach focuses on personal stories and lived experiences. It involves collecting and analyzing the narratives of individuals or groups to explore how they make sense of and communicate the meaning of their lives. The primary aim of narrative research is to gain insight into the cultural, social, and psychological factors that shape these personal narratives.

2.2. Key Characteristics of Narrative Research

Personal lived experience: Narrative research centers on individual lived experiences, shared from the person's own perspective. These stories provide insight into how each individual interprets and understands the world around them.

Stories as a research tool: Stories serve not just as a means of communication, but also as a tool to reflect social and psychological realities. Narrative researchers often encourage participants to freely share their stories without imposing any restrictions.

Narrative content analysis: After collecting data from stories, the researcher analyzes the content to identify patterns, themes, or key ideas that emerge in the stories. This analysis can help gain a better understanding of human behavior, motivations, and thoughts.

Context and social background: Narrative research not only focuses on the story itself but also emphasizes the context and social background of the storyteller. This emphasizes the cultural, social, and historical factors that shape and influence their narrative.

Subjectivity: Narrative research is often highly subjective because it centers on the personal viewpoints and emotions of the participants. However, this is also a strength of the method, as it allows researchers to capture the richness and diversity in how people experience and interpret the world.

2.3. The Narrative Research Process

Data collection: Stories can be gathered through various methods, such as in-depth interviews, group discussions, or even through written documents like diaries, personal letters, or articles.

Data analysis: The data is analyzed by seeking themes, patterns, or overarching narratives, linking personal and social elements.

Reconstructing the narrative: Ultimately, researchers may piece together the story into a coherent narrative, incorporating key aspects from the data and analysis.

2.4. Applications of Narrative Research

Education: Narrative research provides valuable insights into the learning experiences of students, teachers, and educational communities.

Psychology: This approach is used to examine psychological factors that affect individual behavior, such as maturation, life transitions, and key life events.

Social research: Narrative research is instrumental in exploring issues such as social identity, cultural dynamics, and personal experiences within larger societal frameworks [11].

Phenomenology: This approach focuses on describing the shared experiences of individuals related to a specific concept or phenomenon. It is a qualitative research method aimed at exploring and detailing the subjective experiences of individuals as they relate to a particular phenomenon or idea. The goal of phenomenology is to capture the essence of these experiences, understanding how they are perceived, interpreted, and understood within a specific social or cultural context.

2.5. Key Characteristics of Phenomenology

Emphasis on subjective experience: Phenomenology explores how individuals perceive and experience a particular phenomenon or event. This approach highlights the unique aspects of each person’s experience, offering profound insights into their feelings and the meanings they attribute to the phenomenon.

Exploring the essence of the phenomenon: Phenomenology goes beyond simply describing the external features of a phenomenon. It aims to uncover the essence of the experience, focusing on understanding the fundamental elements that shape how individuals perceive and internalize the event or concept.

Data collection methods: In phenomenological research, data is commonly gathered through methods such as in-depth interviews, group discussions, or personal reflective techniques like diaries or recollections. These approaches help reveal the deeper meanings and emotions participants associate with the phenomenon under study.

Description (not explanation): The focus of phenomenology is on describing human experiences rather than explaining or rationalizing the causes of those experiences. The objective is to grasp the "reality" of the experiences as they are lived by participants.

Common experiences across a group: While phenomenological research begins with individual perspectives, it also seeks to identify shared experiences across a group, uncovering patterns or universal themes that emerge from the collective understanding of the same phenomenon.

2.6. The Phenomenological Research Process

Data collection: In phenomenological research, in-depth data collection methods, such as semi-structured or unstructured interviews, are used to gain a deeper understanding of participants' personal experiences.

Describing the phenomenon: Once the data is collected, the researcher describes the participants' experiences. The analysis focuses on identifying recurring themes or patterns within these experiences.

Phenomenological theory: The researcher not only describes the experiences but also seeks to uncover the underlying structures and key elements that shape them. Through this process, phenomenological research contributes to the development of theories that capture the essence of the phenomenon.

2.7. Applications of Phenomenological Research

Psychology: Phenomenology can be used to explore the psychological dimensions of personal experiences, such as how individuals perceive pain, happiness, or major life events.

Medicine and healthcare: Phenomenological research can provide insights into patients' experiences with chronic illnesses or medical treatments, helping to enhance the quality of healthcare.

Education: This approach helps to investigate how students, teachers, and parents perceive and understand various teaching and learning strategies.

Social research: Phenomenology can illuminate how different community groups experience social issues like racism, poverty, or injustice, offering a deeper understanding of these challenges.

2.8. Example of Phenomenological Research

A phenomenological study could focus on examining the experiences of individuals who have survived a natural disaster, with the aim of understanding their emotions related to loss, recovery, and the factors that shape how they cope with the

event. This research would go beyond merely describing the event itself, instead exploring the emotional responses, the meanings participants attach to their experiences, and any shifts in their perceptions following the disaster [7, 12, 13].
Ethnography: Investigates cultural practices and social dynamics within specific groups.

Ethnography is a qualitative research approach that seeks to explore and analyze cultural patterns, behaviors, and social interactions within particular groups, communities, or cultures. This method usually involves the researcher immersing themselves in the community they are studying for an extended period to gain a comprehensive understanding of the lives, values, and social processes that shape the group's way of life.

2.9. Key features of Ethnographic Research

Study in a natural setting: Ethnographic research focuses on observing and recording behaviors, social interactions, and cultural aspects within the natural environment of the group being studied. This approach enables the researcher to obtain a genuine and firsthand understanding of how community members interact and operate in their everyday lives.

Researcher involvement: A key aspect of ethnographic research is the researcher's active involvement in the daily life of the study group. The researcher often lives within the community and participates in its activities, which allows for data collection from an insider's perspective. This immersion provides a deeper, more authentic understanding of the group, free from external biases or preconceived notions.

Detailed description: Ethnography goes beyond mere data collection; it involves offering rich, detailed descriptions of the behaviors, values, beliefs, and social processes within the group. Ethnographers carefully observe and analyze patterns of behavior and interactions, focusing on the cultural and social elements that shape the community.

Data collection methods: In ethnographic research, data is typically gathered through direct observation, interviews, focus groups, and sometimes through cultural documents or artifacts. These methods allow the researcher to capture a comprehensive view of the social and cultural dynamics of the group.

In-Depth understanding of culture and society: The ultimate goal of ethnography is to gain a thorough understanding of the cultural and social behavior patterns of a group within its unique context. This approach helps reveal the values, beliefs, and social interactions that define the group's everyday life.

2.10. The Ethnographic Research Process

Identify the research group: The researcher selects a community or group with unique cultural and social traits to study. This choice is often influenced by factors such as location, occupation, beliefs, or other cultural elements.

Participation and observation: The researcher engages in the group's activities and observes social interactions. This involvement fosters relationships and provides deeper insights into the underlying factors that shape behavior and values within the community.

Data collection: Data is gathered through interviews, direct observation, and community documents. This approach uncovers behavioral patterns, beliefs, and values that are central to the group's practices.

Analysis and description: Once the data is collected, the researcher analyzes the social interactions, behaviors, and cultural influences within the group. This analysis helps identify behavioral trends and social dynamics, which are then used to draw conclusions about the group's culture and societal norms.

Reporting and presenting results: In the final stage, the researcher presents the findings, offering a thorough description of the cultural and social practices of the group. The researcher also emphasizes the importance of these findings and their relevance to the wider social context.

2.11. Applications of Ethnographic Research

Sociology: Ethnography provides deep insights into social groups by examining social processes, power dynamics, and cultural issues within communities.

Education: This method is useful for studying groups such as students, teachers, or educational communities to better understand how activities and interactions develop in the learning environment.

Medical research: Ethnographic studies can investigate cultural values and beliefs related to health, illness, and healthcare practices across different communities.

Cultural research: This approach analyzes cultural expressions within communities, focusing on aspects such as language, art, customs, and beliefs.

2.12. Example of Ethnographic Research

An ethnographic study might examine farming communities in rural areas to understand how social organization, generational relationships, and cultural values affect their agricultural practices and resource management. This study would not only describe the behaviors of the community members but also analyze the beliefs, values, and social processes that influence their interactions within the community [14, 15].

Case Studies: Investigate specific cases or scenarios through interviews, observations, and documents. There are qualitative research methods that focus on exploring specific cases, events, or situations within real-world contexts. This approach is commonly used to perform a thorough analysis of an individual, group, organization, or community in order to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that influence the specific case or situation.

2.13. Key Characteristics of Case Studies

Studying a specific case: The case study method focuses on examining a particular case in depth, rather than trying to generalize a broader phenomenon. The case could involve an individual, a group, an organization, or a specific event, with the goal of understanding the factors and outcomes associated with that particular case.

Varied data collection methods: In case study research, data is collected through a range of methods such as in-depth interviews, direct observations, documents, reports, and case-related notes. This approach helps to construct a detailed and multi-faceted understanding of the case being studied.

In-depth and detailed analysis: Case studies emphasize the examination of specific factors, events, or situations within a defined context. This approach enables researchers to explore causal relationships, dynamics, and outcomes in great detail within a focused scope.

Providing a comprehensive perspective: Although case studies concentrate on a single case, they can offer valuable insights into larger issues or phenomena. They are often used to develop theories, generate new hypotheses, or provide clarity on different viewpoints in social research.

Flexibility and innovation: The case study method is highly adaptable and can be utilized across various disciplines, including education, healthcare, psychology, business, and social research. This versatility allows researchers to tackle complex problems with a customized approach.

2.14. Case Study Research Process

Identifying the case: The researcher chooses a specific case to examine, which could be an individual, event, organization, or unique situation that is either representative or significant within the research area.

Data collection: Data is gathered through various methods such as interviews, observations, documents, and other pertinent sources related to the case. These techniques are often combined to create a thorough and detailed understanding.

Data analysis: Once the data is collected, the researcher analyzes it by identifying patterns, themes, and key relationships. The analysis focuses on understanding causes, outcomes, and factors that influence the case being studied.

Reporting results: In the final step, the researcher organizes and presents the findings, outlining the case, the factors that impact it, and the conclusions that can be drawn from the research.

2.15. Applications of Case Studies

In Education: Case studies are valuable for gaining a deeper understanding of teaching strategies, the dynamics between teachers and students, and the challenges faced within classrooms or educational communities.

In Psychology: This method can help study specific psychological cases, such as mental health disorders, treatment processes, or changes in an individual's behavior.

In Social research: Case studies help understand social phenomena, such as the behavior of a group within a community or the impact of cultural and social factors on a specific group of individuals.

In Business research: Case studies can analyze business strategies, decision-making processes, or specific events within organizations.

2.16. Example of a Case Study

A case study in education could analyze how a student overcame learning difficulties with the support of teachers and family. This research would not only describe the events but also analyze influencing factors such as teaching methods, student attitudes, and community support.

Case studies are a useful method for studying unique situations or when researchers want to gain deep insights into a specific issue within a real-world context [16-19].

Grounded Theory (GT**)**: Explores and develops theories based on data analysis.

Additionally, **Netnography**[20-24] has emerged as a novel qualitative approach for studying digital communities.

The narrative research approach "starts with the experiences that have occurred in life and the stories told by individuals" [7]. This approach, originates from fields such as literature, history, anthropology, sociology, sociolinguistics, education, and psychology [7].

The second approach, phenomenological research, is a broader form of narrative research. It describes the lived experiences of multiple individuals under a single "concept" or "phenomenon." The goal of the phenomenologist is to describe the phenomenon at a general level, beyond individual personal experiences. Phenomenological research is widely used in the fields of social sciences, health sciences, sociology, psychology, and education [7].

Ethnographic research is the third approach in qualitative research. In this approach, "the researcher describes and interprets the shared patterns of learned and shared values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a group of people who share the same culture" [7]. Ethnographers aim to understand the meanings behind behaviors, language, and interactions within this cultural group. Ethnography is used in fields like anthropology and sociology.

Case study research is the fourth type of qualitative research, where researchers explore an issue in one or multiple cases through observations, interviews, documents, and reports [7, 25, 26]. Case studies are widely applied in psychology, pharmacy, law, political science, education [7], management [26], marketing [27], business, and economics [18]. Beyond its purpose of theory building, case study research is also used to test theories [26].

The "Grounded Theory" (GT) approach in qualitative research is presented in detail in this report. The GT approach is widely used in fields such as sociology [28], psychology, education [7], business and marketing [29]. Researchers adopting the GT approach explore existing issues in their fields. These issues, once uncovered, are "transformed" into theories through

the "thinking" of scientists. This is the foundation of the perspective "theory is built from data," established by sociologists [28].

According to Cooney [30], there are two approaches to the GT method. The pure grounded theory approach involves exploring data sources, analyzing them, and building theory without being guided by any pre-existing theories. In this approach, "theory emerges from the process of data collection and analysis" [31]. This is the qualitative approach aligned with the Glaserian school of thought.

While in Strauss [32] both emphasized the unimportance of theory in conducting qualitative research, two decades later, Strauss [32] and Heath [33] argued that theory plays a crucial role in qualitative research. This perspective implies that researchers must thoroughly and deeply synthesize existing theories before conducting qualitative studies.

According to Thang [34], qualitative research can have four main objectives. The first objective is "to build theories or models," the second is "to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of the issue," the third is "to preliminarily test the suitability of models and/or measurement scales," and the final objective is "to explain the results of quantitative research."

Purely academic researchers or those pursuing Type III research, aiming to develop a new theory that has not yet been explored, may focus on the first and second objectives. They can choose either the Glasserian or Straussian school of thought. The third objective is well-suited for Type I and II repeated studies. Lastly, qualitative research also serves the purpose of "explaining the results of quantitative research."

2.17. Grounded Theory Approach

Grounded Theory (GT), pioneered by sociologists [28] builds theories directly from data. Researchers use this method to uncover existing problems within their fields, which can then evolve into theoretical frameworks.

The qualitative research process using the Grounded Theory method includes the following steps:

Step 1: Preparation

Define the research objectives and research questions.

Identify relevant theoretical foundations.

Develop a semi-structured/structured questionnaire.

In this step, researchers first need to define their research objectives. If the goal is to build a new theory from data, Objective 1 (developing models or hypotheses) can be applied in this case. If the goal is to conduct an extended replication study, Objectives 1, 2, and 3 may be applied.

Research questions in qualitative research are often open-ended and commonly begin with keywords such as What, Where, How, Why, or Who. Among these, What, How, and Why are the three most frequently used keywords for formulating research questions in qualitative studies.

From the research questions, researchers will transform them into investigative questions in the form of interview/group discussion questionnaires. There is no fixed format for qualitative research questionnaires. In qualitative research, participants need to be interviewed using open-ended/closed-ended questions.

According to Saunders et al. [31] researchers may not need to prepare a questionnaire in advance. Instead, during the interview, participants are allowed to freely respond about events, behaviors, or beliefs related to the topics. Alternatively, researchers can prepare a questionnaire in advance but adjust and supplement it flexibly during the interview (this is called a semi - structured questionnaire).

If researchers lack experience in qualitative research, the best approach is to prepare a questionnaire centered around the research topic, ensuring the content aligns closely with the research questions. Based on the situation, researchers can delve deeper into the interviewees' responses. In many cases, researchers may wish to discuss the clarity of existing scales with the interview group (particularly when replicating studies using previously established scales in other markets). Researchers should also prepare an additional questionnaire containing these scales for interviewees to review and provide feedback.

Step 2: Implementation

Select interview techniques: One-on-one interviews, group discussions.

Identify participants: Determine the interview targets.

Estimate the sample size: Decide on the expected number of participants.

Plan the interviews: Prepare invitations, topics, schedules, locations, budgets, etc.

Gather necessary tools: Include notebooks, audio recorders, video recorders, and assistants as required.

Conduct interviews: Manage situations that arise during the process.

The choice of interview technique depends on the research topic and interviewees. For example, a researcher exploring the topic "Understanding the process of developing and forming international business strategies for seafood companies in the Mekong Delta region" should interview individuals responsible for strategy development and implementation, such as CEOs or strategic directors. Conducting group discussions may be challenging due to factors like companies' reluctance to share business strategies, especially with competitors, or limited availability for group meetings. A more feasible approach would be one-on-one interviews, where researchers can schedule private meetings at the interviewees' offices.

In qualitative research, sampling is non-probabilistic, and the sample size depends on the saturation point of information. Thus, researchers cannot predetermine the number of participants required. The critical factor is recognizing the “saturation point”—the point at which no new information emerges. This approach is known as theoretical sampling. According to Charmaz [35] “Theoretical sampling involves seeking data that is relevant to developing an emerging theory. The primary goal of theoretical sampling is to construct and refine the ‘components’ of the theory. You perform theoretical sampling to develop these components until no new content emerges.”

The "components" here refer to concepts, and the theory is built on the relationships between these concepts. The information saturation point is when no new concepts arise. In the next section (Step 3), we will analyze this further through a specific study by Kim et al. [36].

Before conducting an interview, a detailed interview plan is crucial. This plan should clearly outline all the necessary steps to be taken, such as the interview invitation, estimated budget, and other relevant details. The interview invitation letter should include a clear description of the interview topic, scheduled time, location, and a final statement guaranteeing confidentiality for the interviewee.

During the interview, audio and video recording can be very helpful because researchers need to transcribe the recordings to perform coding and analysis. However, some interviewees may not want to be recorded, so the researcher must be prepared with alternative approaches. It is also helpful for researchers to develop strong note-taking skills to accurately summarize the interview responses. Another useful strategy is to hire support personnel; this could be two or three individuals, depending on the budget, but they must have good note-taking skills to accurately capture information in the interview log.

In many cases, interviewees can be very reticent because the topic is sensitive (e.g., asking about their opinion on their superior's leadership style or the quality of life at work). If this happens, the interviewer should maintain a respectful attitude, not force the interviewee to complete the interview, and instead give them space and time to express their opinions comfortably [34, 36].

Step 3: Data Analysis and Result Synthesis

This step is carried out through the following detailed activities:

Transcribing the content of interviews or discussions.

Coding the topics and content related to the research subjects.

Analyzing the data (grouping newly discovered information, adjusting information, and eliminating irrelevant data).

Continuously comparing and contrasting the results with the theoretical framework.

Determining the point of data saturation.

Using specialized software for qualitative data processing.

Transcribing the content of interviews or discussions is a mandatory procedure for researchers. Without doing this, researchers will face many difficulties in coding and processing the data. After recording or videotaping the interview/discussion, the researcher must listen to or watch the content and transcribe the entire interview into text. According to Saunders, et al. [31], researchers should also observe, recognize, and record in the transcript every small detail, such as sighs or hesitations from the interviewee. If recording or filming is not possible (because the interviewee does not agree), the notes in the interview log must be summarized into text. After transcribing the content, the researcher begins coding the data. Referring to the example by Kim et al. [36], the authors applied a grounded theory method based on the Straussian Grounded Theory approach to "build a model of local food consumption during holidays and festive events."

Twenty (20) consumers were interviewed to develop the model. The research team used a semi-structured questionnaire for the interviews. The main focus of the questionnaire revolved around the key question: "How do interviewees choose food and beverages at the places they visit during holidays or vacation periods?"

Standardized questions (frequently asked during the interviews) included: "Where did you go on holiday? Who did you go with? [...] Why did you choose local food during your vacation? [...], What satisfied/dissatisfied you about the food at that location?"

When processing the data, the research team classified the factors influencing food choices into three categories, with the most significant being motivational factors. This category included elements such as "enjoyable experiences," "breaking away from routine," "health concerns," and "a sense of attraction," among others [36].

Regarding the use of specialized software for qualitative data analysis, one of the most renowned tools today is QSR NVivo. Recently, Al-Yahmadi and Al-Wahaibi [37], Alhur and Aldosari [38], Arnout et al. [39], and Beekhuyzen and Bazeley [40] published papers and, book analyzing the outstanding advantages of QSR NVivo in qualitative data analysis, such as its ability to document "categories," codes, and its incredibly powerful data search and retrieval capabilities.

Currently, we are using QSR Nvivo 14, while the latest version, Nvivo 15 (2024) by QSR International Pty Ltd (www.qsrinternational.com), is an extremely effective software for data analysis, especially when researchers have a large amount of data to analyze.

According to Limna [41], NVivo is commercial software, and acquiring a license can be quite expensive, especially for students with limited funding. This is an important factor to consider. One alternative is to check if your university offers institutional licenses for NVivo. Some universities (for example: Rangsit University - Thailand, Ho Chi Minh city University of Technology - Vietnam, King Khalid University - Saudi Arabia, The Social Life Research Institute is based in Ho Chi Minh City - Vietnam, Vietnam National University, Hanoi (VNU), Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education (HCMUTE), etc…) provide site licenses that allow students to access the software at no extra cost. Besides that, some limitations of NVivo include:

High cost: NVivo is commercial software, and the license fee can be a significant obstacle for students or organizations with limited budgets.

Complexity in usage: Although NVivo is powerful and feature-rich, its interface and tools can be challenging for beginners, especially those without experience in qualitative research.

Requires strong computer specifications: NVivo demands relatively high hardware specifications, especially when working with large projects that contain complex data and coding.

Limited support for non-expert users: While NVivo offers many advanced features, not all users can easily access the more sophisticated tools without in-depth guidance.

Compatibility with operating systems: The macOS version of NVivo often has reduced functionality compared to its Windows counterpart, which can present challenges for users on the Mac platform.

Challenges with software integration: Although NVivo allows for data import from various sources, integrating it with other tools or software can sometimes lead to compatibility issues.

Nevertheless, despite these drawbacks, NVivo remains one of the most widely used and powerful tools for qualitative research, particularly when dealing with large and complex datasets [5].

3. Qualitative Research Findings

Connecting the theoretical framework and qualitative research results

In qualitative research, particularly when applying the grounded theory method, there is typically a strong connection between the theoretical framework and the research outcomes. Dul and Hak [26] explain that the findings from qualitative research contribute to theory development in gradual stages, with each new discovery acting as a "brick" that adds to the construction of a broader theoretical framework.

Proposed research model

In the context of our study, we borrow this perspective from Dul and Hak [26] to discuss how qualitative research contributes to theory-building. For example, according to the [36] study, the authors consistently compared and contrasted their findings with previous research. They identified nine factors related to motivation, seven 07 of which had been previously published. Thus, two new factors were discovered through qualitative research, highlighting the expansion of existing theory.

This illustrates an open-ended, iterative approach to research: the new findings only add to the existing theoretical framework by introducing new components. In this case, Kim et al. [36] proposed a new model for future research, which builds on their findings, particularly the two new factors uncovered through qualitative analysis. This represents both the conclusion of their qualitative study and the starting point for future researchers (for example, those pursuing quantitative studies) to test and validate the model.

Qualitative research findings refer to the outcomes or results derived from qualitative research methods. These findings are typically descriptive, providing insights into people's experiences, behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions. Unlike quantitative research, which deals with numerical data, qualitative research findings are often more focused on understanding meaning, context, and the complexity of the subject matter.

Key characteristics of qualitative research findings:

Non-Numerical Data: Findings are often presented in the form of themes, patterns, quotes, narratives, or case studies rather than statistical data.

Rich and Detailed: Qualitative findings provide deep, detailed insights into a topic, often exploring the "why" and "how" behind phenomena.

Subjectivity: The findings are influenced by the researcher’s perspective and interpretation. This subjectivity can serve as both an advantage (offering deep insights) and a limitation (introducing the possibility of researcher bias).

Emerging Themes: As researchers analyze qualitative data—often through techniques like coding or thematic analysis—they identify recurring themes, categories, or patterns that help address the research question.

Contextual Understanding: The findings from qualitative research emphasize the significance of context, highlighting the social, cultural, or environmental factors that shape the phenomenon being studied.

Examples of How Findings are Presented:

Interviews: Researchers may include direct quotes from participants to illustrate key themes or insights.

Focus Groups: Findings might be presented by identifying common attitudes or opinions shared by group members.

Case Studies: Detailed analysis of individual or organizational experiences, offering unique insights.

Observations: Descriptive accounts of behaviors or interactions observed in a specific setting.

Applications:

Understanding human behavior: Investigating how individuals or groups act, think, or feel in particular circumstances.

Developing theories: Qualitative methods like Grounded Theory aim to create new theories directly from data, rather than testing existing ones.

Improving Practices: Findings from qualitative research are often used to improve practices in fields like education, healthcare, and social services.

Example of Qualitative Research Findings:

In a study exploring employee satisfaction in a company, the findings might reveal common themes about work-life balance, leadership styles, and job satisfaction, with direct quotes from employees illustrating the importance of supportive management and flexible work hours [5, 7, 35, 42].

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Qualitative research, regardless of the method applied or the type of research objectives it meets, is always a systematic scientific process. Therefore, it must be reported in detail, with qualitative results accompanied by supporting data. Specifically, the data analysis process should clearly demonstrate the process of coding and continuous comparison with existing theory. The findings must show how they contribute, even if marginally, to the development of scientific theory.

Thus, the results of qualitative research cannot emerge naturally, as is often presented in many mixed-methods theses and dissertations (combining both qualitative and quantitative research), as well as numerous mixed-method studies published in domestic journals. The authors suggest that qualitative research should be separated from mixed-method studies to

highlight its importance and role. Alternatively, researchers should provide more detailed presentations and more substantial evidence for their qualitative research. This approach will increase the quality of research work.

Graduate students and doctoral candidates should choose qualitative research with the goal of testing one or more theories. However, they must aim to explore new concepts, relationships, or at least contribute to or expand upon concepts that are still debated.

There are many other useful approaches not addressed in this report, such as videography or netnography [43]. These methods are extremely useful for both academic and applied research in fields like management, business, and marketing today. Researchers should also consider paying attention to these approaches.

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