

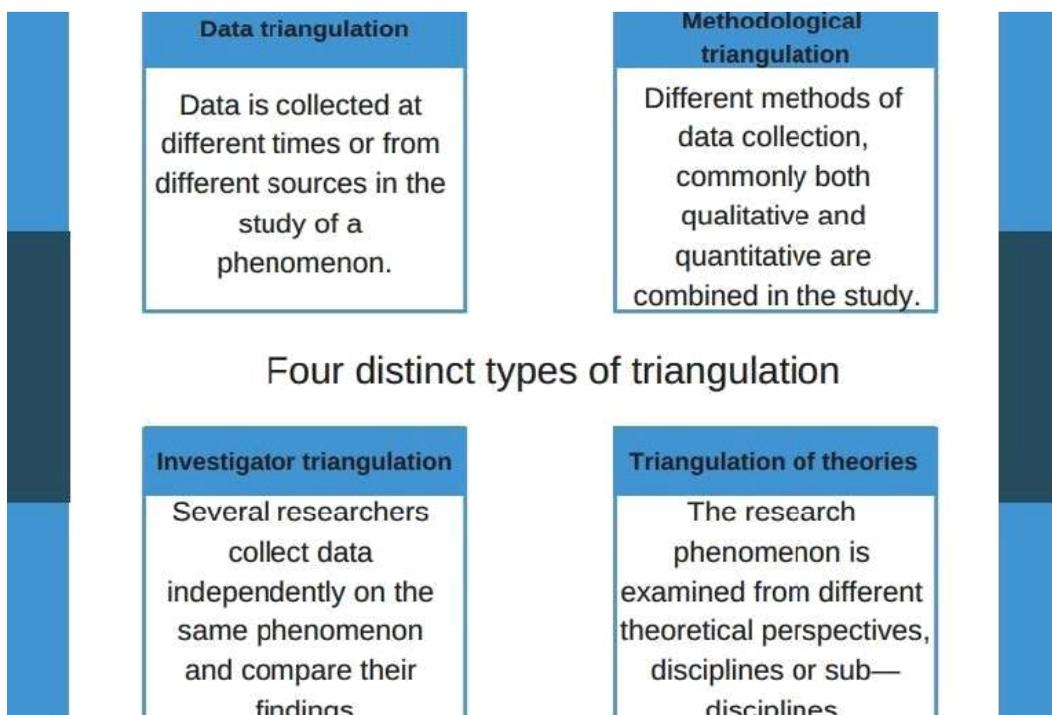
Case study research

- "A case is a single instance ; a sample of one.
- a phenomenon which is spatially delimited and that the unit is studied either at one point or over a bounded period of time.
- Case can be individual, group, project, policy, institution, program.
- a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case/s) over time, through detailed, in depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audio visual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case based themes.
- have been long established in healthcare, medicine, anthropology, and psychology research.
- effective to investigate and understand complex issues in real world settings.
- Usually, considered equivalent to a qualitative research method. in the sense that it studies a smaller sample of something, but in some ways the case study can also be considered a quantitative or mixed methods study.
- The case usually describes a series of events that reflect the activity or problem as it happened.

• Conditions that lead to having more variables than data points in case study research:

1. making an in depth inquiry.
2. studying conditions over time.
3. covering contextual conditions.

- The power of case study research is the ability to use multiple sources and techniques for comprehensive depth and breadth of inquiry.
- Document analysis, archival records, interviews, surveys and participant observation are considered the main data sources for case study research.
- the way researchers use case studies in their research varies which also has resulted in a broad variety in published case studies.
- Triangulation is a must.
- The importance of "... maintaining 'empirical intimacy'".
- One cannot replicate a case study since it is spatially and temporally bounded.
- a single case study can help describing an existing phenomenon,
- multiple case studies can be a better ground for building theory from case studies the phenomenon becomes more generalizable if it occurs in a number of cases Analytical (theoretical) generalization



Types of case study

- **Descriptive:** describe the phenomenon of interest within its context.
- **Exploratory:** define questions and hypotheses or to test out a research procedure for a further piece of research, such as a large scale survey.
- allow the investigation of complex unique phenomena where previous literature to guide the research is lacking.
- if background literature provides a clearer direction for research, questions may be posed that indicate a more explanatory approach
- **Explanatory:** reveal cause effect associations of the studied phenomena and/or how events happen.

How to perform a case study?

Step 1: Determine and Define the Research Questions

- The focus or intent is established once an intensive review of the relevant literature has been completed and the problem has been well identified.
- framing your research direction in the form of questions to consider you methods :
 - a. How would I answer those questions?
 - b. What information do I need?
 - c. how would I go about getting it?
- **'Good' research questions:** enable you to achieve your aim , answered in the research setting.
- Broad aims often remain the same. What changes is the set of research questions.
- Carefully formulated research question(s), informed by the existing literature and a prior appreciation of the theoretical issues and setting, are all important in appropriately and succinctly defining the case.
- each case should have a **pre-defined boundary:** clarifies the nature and time period covered by the case study (i.e. its scope, beginning and end), relevant social group ,organization or geographical area of interest to the investigator, types of evidence to be collected , and priorities for data collection and analysis.

Step 2: Select the Cases and Determine Data Gathering and Analysis Techniques

- Case= Unit of Analysis.
- researcher must select cases that reflect the questions in Step 1.
- number of cases are carefully selected in multiple case studies. **Advantage:** comparisons across several cases and/or replication.
 - a "typical" case findings may be generalized to theory (i.e. analytical generalization)
- The selected site(s) should allow research team access to the unit of analysis group of individuals, the organization, the processes.
- consider in advance the likely burden and risks associated with participation or site(s) that comprise the case study.

Step 3: Prepare to collect data

- save much time and frustration later.
- Due to the nature of case study research, a large amounts of data from multiple sources will generate so organize multiple databases and set categories for sorting and managing data.

The importance of piloting: reveal any need for fundamental changes in a research inquiry, design , or data collection.

Step 4: Collect data in the field

- Data collection is emergent.
- The importance of field notes.
- time and budgetary limitations.
- Criteria for end data collection:
 - a. **Exhaustion of sources** : Data sources (e.g., key informants, document analysis) can be recycled and tapped many times, but at some point little information or relevance will be gained from further engagement with them.
 - b. **Saturation of categories** : categories used to code data appear to be definitively established and continuing data collection produces only tiny increments of new information in comparison to the effort expended to get them.
 - c. **Overextension** : Even if new information is still coming in, the researcher might develop a sense that the new information is far removed from the central core of viable categories that have emerged and does not contribute usefully to the emergence of additional viable categories

Step 5: Evaluate and Analyze data=Triangulation.

Step 6: Prepare the report

- provide the reader with enough contextual information to understand the processes that were followed and how the conclusions were reached.
- Care must be taken to ensure the anonymity of case sites and individual participants.

Limitations of case study

- large quantity of data+ limited timeframe may impact on the depth of data analysis
- Deciding the "boundaries" of a case constrained in terms of time, events, and processes .
- Large quantity of data may veer away from the research focus.
- Providing little basis for generalization but you can use large number of cases

Ethnography(Definition)

- the study of social interactions, behaviors, and perceptions within groups, teams, organizations, and communities.
- The central aim is to provide rich, holistic insights into people's views and actions, nature of the location they inhabit, through the collection of detailed observations and interviews.
- is a study at first-hand about what people do and say in a particular context .
- Most researchers collect data through participant's observation and/or open ended interviews, and various documents .
- A method to explore the nature of a certain social phenomenon and it tends to use unstructured data.
- focus on a specific culture, characteristics and all information embedded in it.
- a qualitative methodology that uses 'qualitative methods' : observation (participant and non-participant), interviews and textual analysis.
- It is the 'emphasis on observation alongside' other qualitative methods as well as the 'analytic focus on culture'.
- a well-established anthropological method of writing a holistic description and analysis of a culture .
- Usually, ethnographies are created through participant observation and are a key part of anthropological research.
- overcome the limitations of relying solely on interview data through collection of observations, interviews and documentary data, which are triangulated.
- Through its use of in situ observations ethnographers can 'immerse ' themselves in a social setting, generating a rich understanding of social action.
- Participant observation also provides an opportunity to gather empirical insights into social practices which are normally 'hidden' from the public gaze
- Ethnographic research is exploratory in nature (ethnographer goes into the field to explore a cultural group and/or explore certain social interactions).
- Ethnographer can make modification to the research questions, design and technique from the beginning until the completion of the study= interactive reactive approach .
- Due to complexity of ethnography it's more difficult to undertake (limitation).
- The unpredictability of everyday life often means that data collection activities can be disrupted or access withdrawn depending on ever changing local circumstances and politics (limitation).

Data collection

- Ethnographer not only observes but engages in the participation actively with a general commitment to observing everyday social life.
- researchers obtain information about certain socio cultural phenomena through the members of the society or documents.

data collection methods:

- *ethnographic fieldwork =Observation + interview.
- *ethno-historic research=earlier written records .
- Long term involvement and observation are considered necessary to understand the complexity of people's beliefs, and behaviors.
- Prolonged exposure in the field through **immersion**: *the researchers are making observations over time. Therefore, there is not just one observation that will conclusively define evolving understanding of the phenomena.* allows the ethnographer to build relationships and gain an understanding of the broader social context in which the research is embedded.
- Portable audio and video recording devices may rapidly provide large amounts of data and support understanding the phenomena .

Reflexivity concept:

- the ways in which the products of research are affected by the personnel and process of doing research.
- generally understood as awareness of the influence the researcher has on the people or topic being studied, while recognizing how the research experience is affecting the researcher.
- a process of self-examination (exploring one's assumptions, emotional reactions, cultural positioning) through specific actions (keeping a journal, debriefing with others) within a field of inquiry.
- Reflexive researchers are gazing in two directions at the same time.
- The key is "to make the relationship between and the influence of the researcher and the participants explicit".
- it enhances the quality (trustworthiness) of research through its ability to extend understanding of how researchers positions and interests affect all stages of the research process.
- Reflexivity, in the form of an account of researcher continuous self-critique and self-appraisal, reveals signposts for readers that tell them "what is going on throughout the research process".

Use of Ethnography in Healthcare

- becoming increasingly popular in the field of health care research to study behavior and social interactions.
- Hospitals are often cultures within themselves. And, while some can be very similar, the community of the hospital is often unique. Because hospitals reflect dominant culture and belief systems, the care in each hospital can be different based on the cultural influences. The patient care and decision making processes can vary widely.
- when behaviors are understood and used to treat through means that fit the needs of the patient.
- * **benefits brought by the ethnography:** understanding of social and cultural backgrounds of the patients and how health behaviors differ across groups.

Limitations of Ethnography

1. Sample size, The time required being involved in participant observation and conducting long interviews greatly limits the sample size.
2. 'Hawthorne Effect': if people know they are being observed they may change their behavior.
3. It is difficult to generalize. When researching a certain culture, the results cannot necessarily be generalized to other populations.
4. acceptance of the culture.

Steps of Ethnographic research

Step 1: Planning

- Access and ethics: it's essential to ask for approval from the appropriate decision makers for access to a research setting which may be challenging (some people are often reluctant at the thought of being 'scrutinized' by Researchers).
- Establish rapport.
- Gatekeepers.
- Ethical approvals
- **Ethical issues:** 1. Avoidance of harm. 2. Informed consent. 3. Privacy and confidentiality.

Step 2: Sampling

- it's purposive sampling: researcher chooses a specific group and setting to be studied
- Often, a single site, but multiple individuals, actions and activities embedded within this setting are selected to develop an insightful account of daily life.

Step 3: Data collection

Participant observation

- a field strategy that simultaneously combines document analysis, interviewing of respondents and informants, direct participation and observation.
- fieldwork typically involves the development of close connections between the fieldworker and subjects and situations being studied

In-depth interviews= focused, unstructured or ethnographic interviews.

- does not use fixed questions, but aims to engage the interviewee in conversation to elicit their understandings and interpretations.
- characterized by active involvement in engaging the participant to converse about a particular topic or discussion relevant to research questions or topic being explored.
- Interviews are complimentary to participant observation.

Triangulation: an analytical technique that incorporates and compares multiple methods with the intent of providing a more in depth and holistic understanding of a phenomenon.

Step 4: Data Analysis

- data collected in the field notes should be: 'analyzed and compared with the transcripts from interviews to identify similarities and differences'.
- Thematic analysis: when field notes and interviews should be transcribed and together are analyzed for themes and meanings allowing the observations to be understood.
- 'descriptive analysis' is the more traditional approach to use to analyze ethnographic studies.

Step 5: write up

- To help ensure trustworthiness of findings, researchers must be able to illustrate their steps in data collection and in the data analysis process.