

Assignment 1- Narrative Research Approach

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Introduction

The goal of this researcher's paper is to describe what narrative research is, introduce the researcher's proposed topic of discussion, determine whether narrative research is suitable to the researcher's topic of discussion, share additional information on selection of participants, data collection, context, reporting and validation and strengths and weaknesses of using the narrative research. Narrative research according to Daiute and Lightfoot (as cited in Creswell, 2018, p. 67) has many forms, uses a variety of analytic practices, and is rooted in different social and humanities disciplines. Narrative research is one that has been around for ages. It has been popular in the sense that it has been preferred or used over most or all the other research approaches. Narrative research, as a method begins with experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals (Creswell, 2018, p. 67). The use of narrative research has allowed for stories of old and new to be told, repeated to other generations, recorded in diaries and journals and published in books for all to be educated on the lives and journeys of people from all around the world and all walks of life.

According to Creswell (2018) researchers have the liberty to record their participant's stories in a diary and journal or the researcher might observe the individuals and record field notes (p. 67). Where would the world be without narrative research that keeps record of the truth vs. the lies of people that are recorded for whatever reasons and purposes. Narrative research from a research focus standpoint allows the researcher to explore the life of an individual and to answer the research problem at hand the researcher tell stories of the individual's experiences (Creswell, 2018, p. 67).

This researcher's proposed topic of discussion is gender equality. According to Casimir, Chukwuelobe and Collins (2014), gender equality goes beyond biological struggle for sex sameness, rather it is about giving both men and women equal opportunities to contribute to societal development through the recognition accorded to individual expertise,

training, education, experience, exposure, abilities and competencies, regardless of the person's biological sex attributes (p. 169). In Africa, oppressive, cultural and socio-economic practices coupled with theological misinterpretation of key religious literature such as the Bible have encouraged centuries old injustice and inequality that have denied the recognition of women's roles in development (Casimir, Chukwuelobe & Collins, 2014, p. 170).

According to Casimir, Chukwuelobe & Collins (2014), these theological and scriptural basis for justifying inequality and injustice against women in Africa rested upon inadequate and false misinterpretation of biblical passages. In almost all developing countries it is well recognized that there are certain institutional obstacles which seriously and negatively affect any progress towards achieving gender equality (Quagliariello, Hamdy, Liuzzi & Ciannamea, 2015, p. 261).

In the modern-day church, the deliberate ignorance to recognize the significant roles played by women is ever present (Rugwiji & Masoja, 2017, p. 9060). As a Minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for 15 years, there is an increase in passion for this topic of discussion due to my increased knowledge of gender equality in Genesis 1:26, "God said, let us make (the human) in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves." According to Uchem (as cited in Casimir, Chukwuelobe & Collins, 2014, p. 170), biblically, gender equality, is "rooted in the fact that men and women are equally made in God's image. Other situations that have contributed to this researcher's passion for gender equality is the increase of women in leadership roles in the church including pastoring but also witnessing the continued struggles of women serving in the ministry without respect and appreciation from male colleagues and male clergy. Gender equality is becoming a popular topic of discussion in the 21st century because it is a need for more representation of women at the board meetings and table of politics, math, science, technology, religion and the list goes on. There is a need for gender equality in all sectors not to exclude the ministry. In exploring gender equality, this

researcher finds that there is a greater need for it in third-world countries such as China, India and South Korea in comparison to the United States. Gender equality can be achieved when men and women realize the fact that the ideas of men and women can help shape the world for the betterment of all ethnicities, organizations and companies.

In determining whether the researcher's topic of discussion is suitable, it is best to look at Figure 4.1-A Flowchart for Assessing Fit of Five Qualitative Approaches With Various Research Needs and determine which approach closely fits the aim and research needs of the research problem and research focus. Depending on what you want your research problem and research focus' data results to display will also determine what qualitative approach is best suited for your research. As a researcher you might find that you can use more than one qualitative research approach but to select one approach you will need to examine your research problem and research focus closely as well as look at other related studies and see what research approach is best suited for your research topic of discussion and end results/outcome of data results. For example, this researcher can use narrative research or ethnographic research in regard to examining gender equality. In selecting narrative research, the research problem would be to tell the stories of individual stories (Creswell, 2018, p. 67). The research focus of narrative research would be to explore the life of an individual (Creswell, 2018, p. 67). In looking at the research problem in ethnographic research, this researcher would describe and interpret the shared patterns of culture of a group and the research focus of ethnographic research would be to describe and interpret a culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2018, p. 67). This researcher will most likely use the narrative research approach because it closely fits the aim of wanting to share the life and stories of individuals who have experienced gender inequality and have been affected by it in many ways: socially, financially, psychologically, spiritually, etc.

Qualitative Research Approach-Narrative Research

Qualitative research is the most appropriate approach to use when the researcher is trying to explore and provide answers or solutions to a problem or issue. To conduct narrative research, this researcher must select one or more individuals who have life stories or life experiences to share (Creswell, 2018, p. 71). Spending considerable with the individuals and gathering their stories through multiple types of information is an obligation and responsibility of the researcher to get substantial results (Creswell, 2018, p. 71). Measures according to Creswell (2018), collected letters sent by individuals, stories about the individuals from family members, documents such as memos or correspondence about the individuals, photographs, memory boxes and personal-family-social artifacts are useful in narrative research, in that it allows the researcher to draw from these measures to draw the picture that is needed to answer the research problem (p. 71). Data collection is an important and critical step in conducting research. As a researcher, it is important to know what kind of data (interviews, surveys, etc.) needs to be collected to drive the research. According to Creswell (2018), it is imperative that a researcher embed information about the context of the individual's stories within participants' personal experiences (their jobs, their homes), their culture (racial or ethnic), and their historical contexts (time and place) (p. 72). According to Czarniawska (as cited in Creswell, 2018, p. 72), the skill of being context-sensitive is considered essential to narrative inquiry.

Reporting and Validation

After the researcher has selected their participants, collected data and provided information about the context of data, the next role of the researcher is to report the data in written form and validate the data collected. Data can be reported in many ways, such as charts, graphs, interviews, surveys, etc. According to Creswell (2018) as a researcher, you will analyze the participants' stories using the process of reorganizing the stories into some general type of framework called "restorying" (p. 72). Ollerenshaw and Creswell (as cited in

Creswell, 2018) stated that “the framework may consist of gathering stories, analyzing them for key elements of the story and then rewriting the stories in a chronological sequence” (p. 72). Another way to report the data of the stories is by providing a description of both the story and the themes that emerge from it (Creswell, 2018, p. 72). In reporting the stories in narrative form, Creswell (2018) has provided the researcher with a general reporting structure: introduction of the reader with the participants and the intended purpose for the story; research procedures; telling of the story to theorize about the participants’ lives including narrative segments, patterns of meaning and a final interpretation of the meaning of the story (p. 72). Alongside reporting, the researcher has the responsibility of validating the data collected, analyzed and reported. Validation is very important to the research process. According to Maxwell (2005), identifying and analyzing discrepant data and negative cases is a key part of the logic of validity testing in qualitative research. Maxwell (2005) provides some validity tests that are useful in the validation process: intensive, long-term involvement, “rich” data, respondent validation, searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases, triangulation, quasi-statistics and comparison (control groups and multisite students) (pp. 244-245).

Strengths and Weaknesses of Narrative Research

In examination of the narrative research approach, this researcher finds the strengths to be 1.) it allows the participants to tell their stories in detail about their lives and experiences 2.) it allows the participants and the researcher to build a casual relationship 3.) it allows the researcher to uncover the “figure under the carpet” that explains the multi-layered context of a life (Edel, as cited in Creswell, 2018, p. 73) 4.) it allows the researcher to be actively collaborate with the participant if necessary (Creswell, 2018, p. 73) and 5.) it allows you the opportunity to develop a keen eye for the individual’s life and capture the key themes (Creswell, 2018, p. 73). It weaknesses of narrative research are 1.) the researcher needs to

collect extensive information collected 2.) the researcher has to be able to “re-story” the collected stories as well as acquire the skill of being contextual-sensitive 3.) the researcher may have to allot more time for the collection of the stories 4.) the researcher has to be sensitive to interruptions of the participants and 5.) multiple issues may arise in the collecting, analyzing, and telling of individual stories (Creswell, 2018, p. 73).

Conclusion

In studying gender equality, you can use the quantitative or qualitative method. Quantitative research takes less time whereas qualitative research is a tedious task and after exploring the narrative research approach, the researcher can see how it can be difficult and burdensome in collecting data, analyzing data and validating data. There is no effortless way to do this type of research, it requires the participation and collaboration of both the researcher and participants. It could take you months or years to complete the research because it is dependent upon the collection, analysis and validation of the data. The journey of collecting data, analyzing data, reporting and validation is rewarding and instrumental to the researcher’s study to give the results or outcome of the data that will support or not support the researcher’s hypothesis.

References

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