

Qualitative Guidelines

BASIC CRITERIA FOR ACCEPTABILITY – QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

ALL qualitative research reports

Essential

- findings discussed in relation to the literature
- consideration of rigour, using criteria appropriate for qualitative research

Grounded theory

Essential

- concurrent data collection and analysis
- theoretical sampling used as part of analysis
- identification of a core category grounded in the data (a study may not reach the final stage of fully developing an explanatory theory, but may usefully inform nursing by description and exploration)
- first and second level coding (e.g. open, axial and selective coding)
- theoretical saturation

Not compatible with

- all data being collected and then analysed afterwards – this would be thematic analysis, content analysis or similar
- identification of discrete themes with no linking core category

Phenomenology

Essential

- statement of which form is being used (Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur, etc.)
- if Husserlian, discussion of bracketing and how this was done
- focus on the meaning of experience (if Husserlian) or the interpretation of meaning (if hermeneutic)
- unstructured data collection, e.g. interview starting with a very open question, followed up by general probes (Could you say more about that? How did that make you feel? etc)
- use of appropriate and systematic data analysis method, e.g. Colaizzi, van Manen or an appropriate adaptation of an established, credible process
- transparency about the research process, e.g. use of journal data, how the author's horizon of understanding and preunderstanding operated
- attention is paid to representation (use of participant voice/s in the text)
- identification of the essence of the phenomenon, not just 'themes' or 'categories'

Not compatible with

- structured methods of data collection, e.g. semi-structured interviews
- group methods of data collection, e.g. focus groups, group interviews
- 'member checking', attempt to 'validate' the interpretation with participants

Focus groups

Essential

- discussion of the influence of interaction between participants on the data collected

Not compatible with

- group (rather than individual) interviews done for convenience only, with no focus on interaction.

Biography

Essential

- relevance of individual biography
- objective experiences
- individual/s theorize about their life/lives
- narrative segments included as data
- patterns of meaning identified for events, process, themes

Ethnography

Essential

- describes and interprets a culture or social group
- includes observations, interviews, artefacts
- carried out over an extended period of time
- description, analysis of cultural themes, interpretation – questions raised and lessons learned
- narrative includes description of cultural behaviour of an individual or group

Case study

Essential

- in-depth analysis of single or multiple case/s
- multiple sources of data, e.g. documentation interviews, observation, environmental detail
- description, themes, assertions
- description of case and context
- development of issues, selected issues and assertions
- consideration of rigour, using criteria appropriate for qualitative research
- findings discussed in relation to the literature

Bibliography

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