



Review Article

Qualitative Research Methods in Social Science Inquiry

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Abstract

To explore, and investigate a particular studies within the communities as of being social researcher is much about carrying a practical jobs to address the needs and interests of human society like of being academically competent to the real world concerns. Identify and undertake particular study subject matters to conduct social research involves collecting information or data, analyzing and interpreting it, discuss and present the findings of a wide range of particular social problems that need to solved requires critical understanding of which research methods could be employed. However, appropriate research methods and study paradigm approach selection is the backbone of every social science studies. Over several years, social research methods have been evolved to provide scientifically data driven evidence based solution to these problems. As a practical subject discovery some certain standards and procedures as well should be considered to attain studies credibility, while carrying social inquiries to a specific thematic field of studies that makes for efficient use of time and resources. A wide choice of research methods and data collection tools have been devised, despite academic researchers and practitioners to carry their study need to know how these methods work and which one is appropriate for particular types of investigation to the knowledge of possibilities and to make an informed decision. Therefore through employing systematic review methods, this review article aim to analyse and synthesis how, why, when and for what purpose qualitative social research methods can be used and its importance to explore the study matters from actors point of view and perspectives. This will bringing new insight and understanding for future academic researchers, development practitioners, as well as public and private social research scientific entities. The study finding reveal that, in social inquiries methods matter more than the subject chosen by the researchers to investigate. Despite that much of academic researchers and development practitioners across the scientific world qualitative social research methods have been limited employed and used to explore a certain problems. This significantly undermine the validity and reliability of the studies finding.

Keywords

Social Research, Qualitative Research Method, Ethnography, Phenomenology, Case Study, Textual Analysis, Action Research

1. Introduction

The history of social science research is closely bound up with the theoretical developments promoted by different scholars, key thinkers, and development practitioners. The debate about the knowledge of human beings and their society is deeply rooted in philosophical thoughts of early philosophers.

Among the key figures that have been influenced thinking about social research methods including Plato and Aristotle these represent the two most contrasting approaches to acquiring knowledge and understanding of the world of the so called “epistemology”. Plato who is one of the dominant early

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scholar argued that social research need to be “deductive thinking - starting with theory to make sense of what researchers and practitioners observe”. whereas, on the other hand Aristotle argue on the opposite, “inductive thinking - starting with actual observations to build theories from the study findings” [18, 19]. However, Hume recognized the importance of employing inductive thinking in advancing scientific knowledge but also critically highlighted its limitation in finding the truth of the study.

Beyond the above three major proponents Popper formulated a combination of deductive and inductive thinking calling as hypothetico-deductive method commonly known as scientific method. Kuhn on the other hand revealed that scientific research cannot be separated from human influence and subjective thinking of human society social norms and values. On social research, Comte - maintained that society could be analyzed empirically just like other subjects of scientific inquiries, social laws, and theories. In contrary to Comtes “positivism” Marx defined the moral and social aspects of humanity in terms of materials and forces. As oppose to Marx idea, Durkheim argue that social inquiries can be understand through that society develops its system of phenomena that produce collectively shared norms and beliefs - “social facts”. While Weber maintaining that to describe social practices adequately must understand what meaning that societies practices have for the participants themselves. This requires an understanding of social values involved, but without taking sides or making values argument often referred as “Verstehen”. Yet Foucault argued that there is no progress in science, only changing perspective, as the practice of science is shown to control, what is permitted to count as knowledge. Foucault demonstrated how discourse is used to make social regulation and control appear natural [12].

These early scholars debate become stepping stone to the development of social research methods, the phrase qualitative research methodology in the broadest sense to research produces descriptive data which driven from peoples own perspective either its is written or spoken words and phenomena observation in the social settings. Rist 1977 qualitative methodology like quantitative is more than tool to gather data as like of approaching empirical methods [13]. As compare to quantitative researcher, most qualitative academic researcher and development practitioners much more focused on the meaning and attribute attached to certain events or things of communities every day social interaction. Key to the phenomenological perspective and hence to understand people's from their frames of reference and experiencing reality as they experience it [3]. Qualitative researchers emphasize and identify with the people they study to understand how they see things to develop concepts, insights, and understanding from patterns in the data rather than collecting data to assess preconceived models, hypothesis, or theories [3]. Referring to inductive theorizing Glaser and Strauss during early of 1967 coined and defined the term “grounded theory” to describe the goal and objective of qualitative research while building theory driven

from certain social inquiry. To explore and investigate certain social problems through employing qualitative methodology enable researchers and development practitioners to look at setting people's holistically and this setting or certain social groups in the community viewed as a whole instead of reducing to variables. Throughout this article the study will analyze and synthesis diverse range of qualitative social research methods and its significance in exploring and investigating multiple social inquiries.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Systematic Literature Review

The goals of the literature review depend on which type of literature review to answer specified as well as concentrated research questions. That is why the method of systematic literature review can reduce bias in literature analysis. For this article systematic literature review is employed to identify, evaluate as well and summarize relevant studies to show a synthesis of evident qualitative research methods in social inquiries. To critically discuss and analyze the purpose, focus, approach and criteria for truth qualitative social inquiries methods detailed review of existing literature, and debates relevant to this particular topic area of emphasis have been given. Through enumerating, describing, summarizing, and objectively evaluating the existing literature on the strength and limitation of qualitative research methods and practices towards the social reality. This enables how well-established research methods and social knowledge will direct future research that might best be undertaken.

Jesson 2011 suggested that systematic reviews have a clearly stated purpose, questions, a defined research approach and an appraisal of the articles [9]. By following an explicit research methodology, the weaknesses of traditional approaches shall be overcome [5]. These weaknesses may include biases and philosophical mix-ups through heterogeneous sampling [16], or issues with the quality of assessment. Following this, the following steps have been undertaken.

Phase 1- Mapping the field through a scoping review: Conducted a systematic literature review of the scope of the amount of relevant material, by identifying the most often cited texts and following up on the references therein. This gave the first impression of existing knowledge and knowledge gaps under this topic.

Phase 2- Comprehensive search: Here entered into the systematic literature review by using the process described through searches in keywords, titles, abstracts, and some themes using Google Scholar with other combinations of the search terms; Aligned with qualitative research methodologies and its significance in the academic and action research. This enables to presentation comprehensive background of the literature within the topic to highlight how to employ qualitative social research streams by identifying gaps or recognizing inconsistencies for refining, focusing, and shaping the direction

for further analysis.

Phase 3- Quality assessment: The search was subsequently limited to specific publications related to qualitative social research methods.

Phase 4- Data extraction. The articles were analyzed along with the nature of the article (empirical or conceptual), analysis method, theoretical perspective, findings or results, definitions or propositions, and quality-related comments have been summarized. To identify the main categories of this literature, the strategy was first to obtain a broad understanding of these articles, list the keywords of all of the selected articles, and summarize additional keywords by reviewing abstracts, introductions and findings. By grouping the keywords able to identify first-order concepts. Then continued by grouping these keywords into categories.

2.2. Data Interpretation and Analysis

Following data extraction study finding interpretation and analysis from a systematic review is the critical and last step in the review process significantly influence in synthesizing the result of the study.

Phase 5- Synthesis: Relevant identified concepts and supporting sources enable to construct major themes, then analyzed pertinent to the finding of each reviewed article.

Phase 6- Write-up and diffusion: The next section addresses the synthesis of the analysis of the articles as a result and discussion of this article. The Materials and Methods section should provide comprehensive details to enable other researchers to replicate the study and further expand upon the published results. If you have multiple methods, consider using subsections with appropriate headings to enhance clarity and organization.

3. Results

3.1. Social Science Research

The goal of scientific research is to discover laws and postulate theories that can explain natural or social phenomena under investigation, in other terms build scientific knowledge [2]. Under this circumstance it is important to understand that this knowledge may be imperfect or even quite far from the truth, sometimes there may not be a single universal truth, but rather an equilibrium of multiple truth may develop [2]. The progress of science is marked by progression overtime from poorer theories to advance and more scientific theories through better observations using more accurate instruments and informed logical reasoning [2]. The world view of social research is based on social phenomena knowledge and reality inquiring which is called "epistemology" [17]. In the social inquiries search of knowledge and reality significantly vary between quantitative and qualitative research approach. While conducting quantitative knowledge inquiry the assumption to investigate new knowledge or social reality as discovery

which found out there as a physical new insight can be observed by researcher or practitioners. Through employing this approach reality will be dismantled and examined extensively. For example to make epistemological assumption lab scientist examine sub-atomic particles, as to these of social scientist create written evidence to assess their studies findings. Whereas in qualitative research approaches knowledge generation established through conversation and interaction with and between study participants. And knowledge extract from individual perceptions and interpretation of certain phenomena. In general knowledge construction by people with the assumption that entity analysis and understanding cannot be described by analyzing of its parts, rather researchers or development practitioners must examine the larger context which people and their knowledge functions within a society.

The main intended aim of qualitative research is to explore and provide deeper, comprehensive and detailed description of phenomenon from non-numeric data rather than quantifying and testing hypotheses using numeric data as it the case quantitative research. Qualitative research describes and explains relationships, individual experience and groups norms and effective in obtaining specific information about behaviour, values, opinions, and social contexts of particular community. It provides information about the human side of an issues.

3.2. Methods of Qualitative Social Research

In qualitative social research the term method has three meanings. At most general term, it means epistemology or the study of how we know things or phenomena. As well it's about strategic choices, whether to do participant observation field work, dig up information or data from libraries and archive, do a survey, or to run an experiment. These are strategic methods that they comprise multiple methods together. At specific level the term methods is all about the choice of data collection or analysis techniques, like whether to carry stratify sampling or not, to do face - to - face interviews or use of telephone or internet, a solomon four-group design or a static group comparison in running an experiment.

When it comes to epistemology, there are several key questions or inquiring social problems, including how researcher and development practitioners subscribe to the philosophical principles of rationalism or empiricism, or by the assumption of the scientific methods as Comte's coined positivism or favour the competing methods called humanism or interpretivism. Therefore, the term methodology refers to how researchers and practitioners approaches to the social problems and seeks to answer for their inquiries. In social science research, the term mostly used to describe research conduction process while exploring social phenomena. The assumption, interest, and scopes and purposes of the investigation shapes which methodology the researcher need to choose. Scholars when they plunder to their prerequisites discourse over qualitative social research methodology aligned and interlinked

with the assumption, purpose, theory, and perspective of each respective methodological approach. In social science inquires there are two dominant major theoretical perspectives, positivism and interpretativism. The positivism paradigm traces its origin in the social science inquiry to the great theories of the 19th and early 20th C, especially to Auguste Comte (1896), and Emile Durkheim (1938 - 51). The positivist seeks the fact or causes of social phenomena apart from the subjective state of individuals. The second major theoretical perspective, which following the lead of Deutscher (1973) described as phenomenological paradigm, which has extended tradition, specifically in sociology and philosophy.

The phenomenologist or interpretivist proponent Ferguson, & Taylor, in 1992, committed to understanding social phenomena from the actor's perspective and examine how the world is experienced. The important reality is what people perceive it to be. Jack Douglas 1970, "the forces that move human being, as human being rather than simply as human bodies... are 'meaningful stuff.' They are internal ideas, feelings, and motives." since positivist and phenomenologist take on different kinds of problems and seek different kinds of answers, and their research requires different methodologies. Adopting a natural science model of research, the positivist searches for causes through methods, such as questionnaires, inventories, and demography that produce data amenable to statistical analysis. On the other hand interpretivist seeks understanding through qualitative methods, including participant observation, in-depth interviewing, focus group discussion and others that yield descriptive data. In contrast to researchers and practitioners of positivist approach, phenomenologist strive for what Weber in 1968 called *verstehen* - understanding on a personal level motives and beliefs behind people's actions.

A qualitative research method is not a unified set of techniques or philosophies and indeed has grown out of a wide range of intellectual and disciplinary traditions. It represent a broad view to understanding human affairs and behaviour which is insufficient to rely on quantitative surveys and statistics arguing that the qualitative research method is an in-depth and detailed inquiry of the subject issue. In this research approach the researcher can make holistic observation of the entire variables in in-depth study analyzing of social setting, organizations, community culture, individual daily activities and their motives and meaning attached, action and reactions within the context of daily life. This enable to establish naturalistic inquiry that provides a thick of studies description, arguing and consider that reality is some kind of relation exist between actors whether within individuals, or community.

In the past 10 - 20 years the popularity of qualitative research approach and methods increased significantly as result of the use of this approach makes theoretical purists shudder. The key theoretical criteria that differentiate qualitative social inquiry is its glossed over when adopted by scholars who equipped with qualitative analysis, as well scholars who seduced by qualitative tools such as interviewing, participant

observation, and focus group discussion and are less interested in learning through theoretical foundation [17]. Glaser and Strauss 1967 coined the phrase "grounded theory" to refer to the inductive theorizing process involved in qualitative research that has the goal of building theory. A theory may be said to be grounded to the extent that it is derived from and based on the data themselves. Lofland 1995 described this type of theorizing as "emergent analysis" and pointed out that the process is creative and intuitive as opposed to mechanical [10]. The following section discuss, analysis and synthesis widen range of qualitative social research methods.

3.2.1. Ethnography

Ethnography is one of qualitative social research method, and it place an emphasis on exploring social phenomena rather than testing predetermined hypothesis. which makes different from other methods by its focus and emphasis on studying human society culture and exploration of cultural practices of different settings. Ethnography research method emanates from cultural and social anthropology and involves the researchers getting immersed in the participants environment. This method enable researchers to study a particular social or cultural groups with the goal of better understanding it and utilize different data collection techniques to produce a complete account of phenomena that occurred during the research period [15]. Hence the researcher aim with ethnographical research is to immerse themselves into the research population and document behaviour, actions, and event through the lenses of someone involved with population under study. This enable the researcher to obtain data that is otherwise hard to extract and records [15].

This method involves field observation and recording of social conversation, communities ritual and cultural practices, social artifacts and stories, and this perspective described as a unique way of seeing social events [6]. scholars who use this method sees communities cultural practices and performance as observable that serve broader functions than the obvious symbolic meanings. This functional meanings are very threads which can create, reflect, and sustain the cultural practices of human society. Most ethnographers consider the practices of societal culture as the reflection of the cultural past, performance of the present and directions for cultural change and development. Vanderstoep, and Johnstom 2009, the central tenet of ethnographic method is focus on understanding society culture from the perspective of communities members, rather than the cultural practices of their own and imposition of own interpretation on the cultural behaviour of other. However, for researcher and development practitioners figuring out how to accurately reflect and present the cultural practices of other is a difficult task while employing this method. Ethnographic research which have been studied in the early of 20th century significantly criticized for being lack of sensitive and lack of respect of peoples social value and culture as observed, as well for being over-enmeshment of the researcher in the cultural

study settings. Rosaldo 1989, described as “if classic ethnography was slippage from the ideal perspective of detachment to the actual indifference to that of the present day the tendency of reflexivity is self-absorbed and loss of self sight altogether of the cultural difference of others [14]. Therefore, there is elusive difference between ethnographic researchers involvement, sensitivity, empathy, and perspective taking on one hand, and analytic distance on the other dimension. So ethnographic studies need to be continually negotiate these tension while carrying their social research. The most often difficulty and challenges of ethnography is to see meaning from the perspective of the culture studied. Traditionally ethnographic research method involves fieldwork where some exotic cultural practices takes place. These researchers undertake ethnographic studies carried where local peoples mostly resides, and the researcher conduct his/her fieldwork to observe local villagers engaging in their usual and routine behaviour within the natural settings. The central aspect that embark during ethnographic studies is the tasks of researchers in defining the place where everyday communities living can be observe [8].

While studying cultures and communities interpersonal relationship, ethnographic research methods critically analyze the difference between cultures, communities, and groups of people are countless and complex. Which requires equally complex research to identify key insight and develop theories about the social world. This method seeks to describe and interpret communities social life from the perspective of participants. Most ethnographic researchers immerse themselves in the natural settings of the people they study, aiming to understand how society construct meaning through every day interactions. This distinguish ethnography research method from other qualitative methods that they relay more heavily on interview, focus group discussion or textual data analysis alone. This method typically gather data through extended engagement in the field, and it emphasis depth, context, and lived experience of participants rather than generalization driven from certain variables. As result this method enable to explore detailed pictures of how social realities are formed and maintained through cultural norms, institutional practices, and patterns of communities communication and social interactions. To conduct ethnographic research requires long-term engagement within the communities, appropriate planning, ethical reflection usually begin with defining research questions that benefit from in-depth contextual understanding, like how organizational cultures developed and communities manage share communal resources. Indeed, the data collection process occurs through multiple methods, such as observation, interviews, artifact collection, field-notes serve as a core record of events, impressions, and interpretations. The strong merit of ethnography qualitative research method be placed in its important to explore the in-depth insights of the phenomena under investigation communities cultural and social processes for finer-grained understanding. This method mostly characterized by its significant to excels in a holistic view and understanding of study matters and

communities way of life in capturing complex human behaviour in their natural settings [20]. Most principal term, its is one of an effective method to come across tacit knowledge, communities implicit norms and values that might evade more structured research methods. In addition, the method enable researcher and development practitioners to get in deep beyond the surface of seemingly observable social phenomena. In which it relies on the emic perspective of the researcher in order to unveil data contradictions and subtleties exist within communities culture that may overlooked. The flexibility nature of the method is also one important aspect as it easily adaptive to development perspective in which the throughout the exploration process the finding often leads to other discoveries beyond the initial scopes of propositions. In general, the narrative richness of the method makes the study finding more comprehensive, as well also engaging through offering accessible new insights with a deep resonate to wider users. Even though this method have its own strength, it also poses several challenges, including its resource intensive and difficulty to replicate, subjectivity while interpretation social interaction through own perspectives, and limited generalization since it often describes a specific community.

3.2.2. Phenomenology

Thinking about the actual object of investigation, that is the lived experience of individual is an essential aspect of phenomenological qualitative research method. Through this method the researchers or development practitioners need to identify their aim by focusing on the lived experience of the subject being interviewed and on the structure of such experience rather than on the opinion of the participants about the experience. However, investigating the experience of individuals is a highly complex phenomenon, as annotating and clarifying human experience can be also a challenging task not only because of the complexity of human nature, but also due to an individual experiences is multidimensional phenomenon, including psychological oriented, cultural driven, and social construct reality. Therefore, much uncertainly and ambiguity are surrounding the description and exploration of an individual experiences. Employing this method and activities for data collection are flexible and the analysis is designed to be aligned with the theoretical and philosophical assumptions qualitative research approaches. This allow researchers and practitioners to present strategies to dialogue with both the participants and the data to produce a multi-layered description of experiences, and enable to generate trustworthy knowledge.

This qualitative research method is based on the the philosophical work of Edmund Husserl 1967. The underlying assumption of his philosophy is that every experience has an important true essence, meaning and social structure of the society. Phenomenological research method inquiry the very nature of the phenomenon under study that makes certain event what it is and without it could not be what it is to the society.

This qualitative research method mainly focus on how community and people experience a particular social, cultural, economic and other phenomenon, which is the sine qua non of an experience exploration approach. Phenomenologist more significantly explore how individuals in the community construct their meaning of their day-to-day experience and how these meanings shape social groups behaviour and their cultural meanings. Which always involves communities retrospective reflection on their experience.

The distinctive feature of phenomenology as a qualitative research methods is its full requirement on the researchers and practitioners to exclude their personal or subjective judgment about the studies under investigation. Almost all phenomenological argue that and maintain human society experience makes sense of meaning to those who live it and have exposure to the phenomenon. The researchers also need to talk about the reality of peoples consciousness which resides in the interpretation of experienced individuals or community members. Therefore, the main objective as well the roles of the researchers or practitioners is to find ways and get into participants experience of the issues and observe or see it as they define, describe and understand the phenomena. At this point study participants considered as co-researcher of the researchers. In the process it always important to the researcher to think as either of a sort of medium or facilitator of the study. Researchers and practitioners who undertake phenomenological studies always strive to find the meaning of communities attached to their everyday life. Therefore, they significantly begin their data analysis through narrating what they find from collected information, then reduce the stores, describe the study finding essential discussion themes, and analysis concept categories used to define the phenomenon under exploration. In this manner study participants and the researchers are co-researcher endeavour, and the ultimate goals of the researcher to create or develop a clear knowledge and understanding of the specific phenomenon through highlighting the interpretation of study participants who experience the issues under study. In general phenomenology as a qualitative research method generally emphasis people's subjective interpretation and experience of the world. It attempts to understand and describe how the world appears to others without deduction, theory or assumptions from other fields of study [15]. Hence this research method is concerned with the subjectivity of the observer, but necessarily confined to the level of the individual, and essentially looks into the lived experience of the participants and aim to explore why and how participants behaved in certain way from participants perspective [15]. And it much more concerned with explaining and describing phenomenon from perspective of those who experience it and ultimate source of all value and meaning is the lived experience of the participants.

(I). Descriptive and Interpretative Phenomenology

This two major phenomenology research approach traditions have been developed form different philosophical foundation. Descriptive phenomenology grounded in the work of

Husserl in 1970 aims to reveal the essential structure of communities experience through careful description and possibly suspending the researcher's preconceptions [1]. Whereas, interpretative phenomenology brought by the influence of Martin Heidegger and other scholars acknowledging that understanding is always conceived as interpretative, shaped by context and the researchers or development practitioners own insight in which it seeks to unveil hidden meaning within peoples and communities experience to certain phenomena [1]. Though their philosophical foundations and methodological approaches are so different, but both approaches are dedicated to exploring communities lived experience. The origin of descriptive phenomenology associated with the works of Edmund Husserl whose ideas laid the key groundwork for employing phenomenology as a scientific research method. He argue that communities lived experience as perceived by consciousness has intrinsic value and should be studied rigorously and without presupposition [1]. This critical view point of Husserl marked one of the key departure from positivist science by asserting that subjectivity phenomena in which how things appear to individual and communities can yield valid knowledge about the social phenomena reality. This Husserl approach towards qualitative research intend to reveal the key essence of the phenomena under exploration through investigating how people's and communities experience from their own perspectives. It focus on the aspect of matters, and the way they experience in which essentially manifest in different manners [20]. As Husserl work, descriptive phenomenology characterized by its scientific rigorous effort in providing detailed description of human society experience to certain event. The backbone of his idea driven from the concept of "epoche" a process of bracketing or setting aside of preconceived researcher notions and bias. And this techniques considered as central aspect of descriptive phenomenology and used to assess the phenomena of consciousness in the purest form that is untainted by either through external theories or researcher subjective interpretation [20]. while Husserl approach in describing the structure of individual or communities experience as they present themselves in consciousness manner without researcher impose an interpretation or providing external meaning to the phenomena to uncover the essential qualities of communities experience through examining from their perspective. Husserl 1913 emphasized that through epoche, the researcher could isolate the essential features of any given experiences that allowing them to describe the fundamental nature of consciousness and social phenomena. In fact the practices of epoche during employing this approach requires a high level of reflexivity and researchers self-centred, it includes personal judgment suspension, putting the setting aside of the natural attitude of communities everyday assumptions, and the belief of the real world [20]. Though, academic researcher's or development practitioners can reach the high level to describe the phenomena that is free from researcher's bias and presuppositions while capturing individual or communities lived experience in its most essential and authentic

manner. This transcendental phenomenology as Husserl (1913) conceived is not just about cataloging individual or communities certain social phenomena experience rather about understanding and describing the structure of consciousness that enable these lived experiences.

Even though Husserl's approach much more focus on describing the phenomena through epoche, Heidegger in 1927 developed a more of interpretative phenomenology which intertwine the existential with hermeneutic elements that offer a more richer, contextually grounded understanding of the phenomena [20]. Heidegger's interpretive phenomenological tradition in qualitative social research grown out from the critique and extension of Husserl's descriptive ideas. Whereas Husserl emphasis on describing the consciousness content, later Heidegger shifted this attention to the existence of interpretation [1]. His interpretive idea frequently referred by most scholar as hermeneutic phenomenology to indicate its emphasis on the interpretation of the phenomena. In contrary to Husserl's more abstract and transcendental approach to qualitative research, Heidegger's interpretive phenomenology assert that individual and communities are all the time already embedded in a world of social relationships, tradition, culture and history. Later on He introduced the concept of "Dasein" i.e being there to denote the situated nature of human experience to the phenomena emphasizing that researcher's or development practitioners cannot separate themselves from the world they live in [1]. So for Heidegger's "being in the world" is the fundamental unit of analysis that individuals or communities experience are inextricably linked to their social environment context, their background and historical events. Indeed, based on his view phenomenology should or need to explore this inseparable relationship exist between individuals and the world rather than bracketing it out [1]. Heidegger's in his interpretative approach incorporate the key principles of hermeneutic ideas to make an important qualitative social research methodological shift. In the hermeneutic science of interpretation become a key figure to understands how person's or communities make sense to their phenomena experience. In addition, Heidegger in 1927 posits that human societies comprehension of experience is inextricable linked to their historical, cultural and linguistic background [20]. According to his perspective meanings to certain phenomena are not intrinsically present in the real world, rather are consistently co-constructed by individuals or communities interaction within their unique context in the society. The process involves the deep or active engagement and participation of researcher's with the perspective of individuals or communities and understanding is not mere what their experiences are, but also hoe these experience are imbued with their sociocultural significance. In Hiedegger's approach, researcher's or development practitioners need to focus on the narrative dimension of experience through exploring how communities construct or articulate the phenomena and make sense of it, and how these narrative are shaped by broader or holistic societal discourse [20]. His interpreta-

tive approach also often integrate dialogue between researcher's the phenomena under investigation. To explore people's interpretation and finding meaning in their experience, interpretive phenomenology much more suited then descriptive while seeking multiple definitive essence of meaning. And the quality criteria for such kind of research hing on the credibility and richness of the interpretation, researcher transparency and reflexivity, and the extent to which the finding are grounded in study participant's most lived experience [1]. Through Hiedegger interpretive approach significantly widen the scope of phenomenological inquiry that includes the social as well cultural dimension that enable the researcher to generate implication not just for mere understanding of experience purse rather for informing policy and real world practices or for further theory. Most importantly it aligns with contemporary emphasis in its reflexivity and the co-construction of knowledge in qualitative social research. However, both Husserl's descriptive phenomenology (1913), and Heidegger (1927) the interpretative approach mainly intend to explain the nature of individuals or communities experience to certain phenomena in fact they vary significantly in their methodological philosophy.

3.2.3. Case Study

Human actions are an essential feature of the holistic approach that researcher continually are cognizant of the the relationship between epistemology, theory, and method. To conduct research using a holistic approach, case study research method has been used by many researchers. Case study as a qualitative research method can play several potential roles but much more focus on exploration. This method particularly suitable for where the researcher is allowed to adopt a holistic orientation and it stress holistic examination of a phenomenon and they seek to avoid the separation of components from the larger context.

What makes a case study method differs from other qualitative research methods its focus and analyze a specific, complex functioning things within a bounded system. So the case study approach emphasis on an integrated system in which parts do not have to be working well, the purpose may be irrational but it work as a system. There are several types of case study methods, however the researcher may choose to conduct a single case study as a comparison of several other phenomenon. A case study can also be focus on single individual which is called "biographical case study, or focus on certain event - "critical incident study". In this method the role of the researcher or practitioners less specifically defined compare to other qualitative social inquiry methods. Even though the voice and perspective of the researcher are typically prevalent than study participants in which mainly intend to understand the characteristics that define a particular bounding system, perhaps it describe an event and its occurrence within the system. Sometimes case studies can be also carried on-site and historical documents despite the researcher need to define the

sampling group rationally for the selected specific case analysis. However, the sample rationality varies according to the nature of the study objective or research questions. On certain circumstance the researcher can select similar case as longitudinal study or will select cases based on typicality and criterion of uniqueness. In general the the finding outcome of conducting a case study is to interpretation and describe the phenomenon which are either social, economic, cultural, geographical or historical settings. Beyond description the researcher can also present an analysis of discussed major themes that emerged from collected data, and also can provide interpretation or recommendation for future. In this method the voice of researcher's much more apparent than in an ethnography or phenomenological study. However, this method is also have its own limitation. One of the common criticism of case study is generalization because a case may not be representative of the population or even if representative the findings are unique, and theories enable to overcome this gap. Most importantly case study rely on theoretical inferences for the generalization of their findings. Therefore theoretical generalization is possible instead of statistical generalization in case studies. In general a case study is a detailed, in-depth investigation of the development of a single event, individual or situation over a period of time within a real world context. This method most often utilized to explore and lay bare complex social issues.

3.2.4. Textual Analysis

Textual analysis involves the identification and interpretation of a set of verbal or non-verbal signs. Everything that the researcher encounter, from clothing to books to food to architecture is a sign. In this method selected text to analysis were interpreted by researchers, the assumption that in textual analysis method there are multiple possibility of interpretation of any given text and each of them have significantly valid to the extend that it reflects the meaning in which the interpreter attribute to the text. Therefore, researcher interpretation is one of the many possible valid analysis of a given texts. Despite the researcher may seldom seeks the interpretation of others when his interpretation salient. Under this method meanings attached to each text considered as the heart of analysis that can be analyzed from the perspective and point of view of the speakers intent, mass audience reaction, and historical and cultural context in which the text created and experienced. However, each perspective on the meaning of the text more likely yields different interpretations. In fact there are three broad types of study approach under this method, each of which takes slightly varied perspective on the meaning of the study subject. These includes rhetorical perspective, the critical studies perspective, and discourse analysis perspective. Rhetorical approach mainly emphasis on and assume that text have persuasive meaning and this meaning influence people. Researchers engaged in textual analysis believe that peoples belief, attitude and behaviour do influence the meaning attached to each text. Even though not all researchers

or practitioners agree as to the specific type or degree of this effect, but in textual analysis meaning do have varied level of effect. The second approach - the critical studies perspective describe texts as sites of power struggle in most scholars who employ this approach examine texts for the purpose of evidence of overt and latent oppression, including stereotyping and social discrimination. Considering that text often present a single point of view often constructs and reinforces the power of a particular social groups. Whereas the discourse analytic approach focus on maintaining the window to understand a particular culture, social groups or certain phenomenon through detailed analysis of conversations and stories. The most underlying assumption of this textual analysis approach is that through communication meaning can be created and sustained and have two specific types of discourse analysis (conventional and narrative) were commonly used in qualitative social research inquiries. The conventional analysis mainly focus on the interpretation of the conversation that occurs in the natural settings, in which the meaning of the words and non-verbal interactions and behaviour analyzed to explore and investigate how communities conversation socially structured and the functions its serve in specific utterance. When the researcher main focus emphasis on storytelling narrative analysis become more important than conventional which enable to build and establish community groups identity and values.

However, the method of textual analysis can be also based on referring existing transcribed oral data or other written scholarly documents in which preexisting text like driven from films, speech, news paper and others several analytic techniques can be used. For instance when Marxist criticized for being too focus on looking signs of disparity in wealth and power, feminist on gender inequality. That culture centered exploration of interpretation of a text from diverse range of cultural perspectives of meanings. When the researcher employ and working with conventional analysis the research questions and objectives need to focus on the function of constructed particular social realities and the meaning attached to it. During the process of transcribing interview and conversational data become tedious and time taking in which the researcher not only type the words but also need to record or take notes of the physical non-verbal, like leans forwards and the paralinguistic cues. Then the final finding report does not incorporate a transcription of the whole documents in which conversation analyzed. Throughout this process the researcher can present a single interpretation of the text along with certain examples without the text to support his or her data interpretation. In the meantime its also important to provide detailed description of the historical and cultural contexts of analyzed texts in comparison with contemporary and most decent one in which the text comprehensively analyzed [17]. In textual analysis the two major types of texts includes primary and secondary. The primary text comprises original information collected for analysis by the researcher, it includes the text collected for the first time by researcher or development

practitioners. Even though considering the study matter objectives, several methods can be employed to collect primary data, but in textual analysis two common methods of primary data collection are interviewing and observation. Whereas the secondary text includes the text used from the descriptive study which helps to understand the primary text or clarify its analysis. Secondary text includes the reference works selected from existing literature and these sources are commonly termed as documents.

3.2.5. Action Research (Applied and Evaluation)

In the contemporary social science research these traditional research methods were significantly criticized for being too abstract, too scientific, too theoretical, laden with jargon and focused on data. The main goal to undertake action research is to make more clearer and easier to understand the methods employed as well finding or result of the research carried. The assumption that research need to be more of an ethical and moral calling of the community to use the findings as stepping stone or ground for action to address the socioeconomic, cultural and other concerns of individuals, social groups and communities, as so called action research. This research method not only focus on building theoretical foundation that increase knowledge for its own sake, rather oriented towards solving problems. In fact action research scholars argue that the sole justifiable objective of undertaking field work with participants of the study is the finding can be serve directly to improve or address their concerns. While employing this method the key role of researcher or practitioners to work in collaboration with study participants or communities in which the intended audience of the result are participants themselves. These participants engage in the research process actively participate in the decision, specifically during data collection, interpretation and analysis process were the researcher and participants have an egalitarian relation. Ideally, Reinharz 1992, noted that “the distinction between the researcher(s) and those on whom the research is done disappears”, that participants in the study process can empower the researcher or development practitioners to execute the findings to make an important contributions while addressing their common developmental challenges either of economic, social, cultural or political concerns. Compared to other qualitative social research methods, this methods more focus on outcome or solve the problem or to evaluate the impact of implemented programs.

Action research is one of an interactive research method that assumes complex social phenomena are best understood by introducing changes, interventions or action into those phenomena and observing the outcomes of such action on the phenomena of interest [2, 11]. In this method the researcher is usually a consultant embedded into a social context who initiates an action in response to a social problem, and examines hoe action influence the phenomenon while also learning and generating insights about the relationship between the action and the phenomenon [2]. The researcher choices of action

must based on theory which should explain why and how such actions may bring forth the desired social change. Then the theory is validated by the extent to which the chosen action is successful in remedying the targeted problem [2]. simultaneous problem solving and insight generation is the central feature that distinguishes action research from other research method.

Therefore, action research is not primarily focused on to understand and analyze the constructed meaning made by study participants, social groups or communities, rather it considered as an integral or certain aspect of the study processes [17]. In which the researchers or practitioners involve and interact with study participants in the field or context as a process to explore their experience in collaborative approach. At each single stage of the study, starting from identifying research questions, data collection procedures and techniques, data interpretation and analysis participants of the study have meaningful role to draft the final finding the study.

On the other hand evaluation research method emphasis on assessing the the impact or outcomes of the particular program or course of action in addressing or solving the specific communities problems. Most of the time this method used in education researches in which the researcher makes an effective comparison of various teaching models used. Even though compared to other qualitative social research methods, evaluation research methods less common and important in social inquiries but have significantly used along with applied research methods. This research method immensely employed and begins with specific case study to describe the background and context of the program or course of action being implemented. Following this the researcher will develop or drive evaluation criteria to make value judgment about the merit and demerit of the program. Based on this the researcher will collect and analyze evaluation data to assess the strength and weakness of the action undertaken. The result driven from both action and evaluation research can includes key recommendation for future change or improvement to the course of actions, ideally not solely from the researcher point of view rather from the collaborative efforts or perspectives of all involved throughout the study. In this manner all participants and entities involved in the process feels that they have strong ownership towards the recommendations made and proposed changes [17].

In general action research also can be called “a cycle of action” which normally follow the same process, like identify the core problem, develop research plan, collect data, analyze data, embed the finding into planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluating the actions. Most importantly this type of research focus on generating solutions to practical problems and its ability to empower practitioners by getting them to engage with research and the subsequent development or implementation activities. Beyond this action research creates knowledge based on enquirers conducted within specific and often practical contexts.

Action research brings a unique set of strength with its iterative, participatory and problem solving that offers a dynamic avenue social inquiry exploration and interventions [20]. The cyclical nature of the approach enable researcher's and development practitioners through fostering a consistent improvement and adaptation, which is highly effective in the environment that requires ongoing refinement and responsive intervention. This collective aspects of action research ensure that created knowledge relevant and actionable to the social phenomena, as it involves multiple entities these often considered as the study finding end beneficiary [20]. in addition, through integrating the study finding reflection into each cycle, the approach perpetuate a learning environment that consistently seeks to understand the final outcome of the action undertaken to bring sustainable and impact change in the society. Yet its practical appeal, the method is not free from any challenges and limitation. Potential subjectivity and bias given the researcher involvement in the action being studied considered as one of the significant limitation of this approach. Despite the researcher can mitigate this concern through employing logical rigor, including data source triangulation to validate their findings.

4. Discussion

Almost all qualitative researchers, and practitioners follow highly complex abstract principles which bring together diverse range of beliefs and perspectives about ontology, epistemology, and methodologies [4]. And these beliefs govern them how to perceive and acts during their exploration of the social phenomenon. In social science inquiry qualitative research methods have been emerged as an important and indispensable approach to generate a more deep, and insightful understanding of complex social phenomena instead of providing numerical data with statistical analysis. Employing qualitative social research methods enable researcher's and practitioners delves into rich textures of human society experience and perspectives through capturing context often impossible to generate through numerical translations [20]. In fact employing qualitative research methods is not about a methodological choices, rather its is researchers commitment to in-depth exploration of social phenomena. This enable researcher's to connect the subjective experience of individual or communities to the subject matters. Its focus emphasis on context, existence, experiences, perspective, meaning and subjectivity that offers a unique lens of through which to explore and interpret the complexities of social phenomenon [20].

As scientific social inquiry it focus in exploring the in-depth understanding of the context and aim to unveil the "what, why, when, where, who, and how" of communities social behaviour and social relationship instead of mere quantifying the occurrence [20]. During social phenomena exploration the subjective matters, perspective, and meanings that peoples attributes to the social inquiry employing qualitative social research

methods embrace broader openness through a variety of data collection tools. And its adaptability and flexibility are paramount as it commitment to capture a wide spectrum of communities experience and perspectives to the broader social inquires.

4.1. Purpose, Focus, and Criteria for Truth

Purpose: - Conducting qualitative social research enable to bring multiple social realities and untouched social phenomena through their unique abilities of employed methods to capture the richness of communities diverse social context involving human ecology experiences and perspectives. Which intend to describe instead of predicting the study under exploration through understanding in-depth experience and viewpoints of the study matters. Considering that all these social realities constructed through individual and communities social interaction and has different interpretation of their own experiences within the social settings in which they interact. Even though the researchers or development practitioners influenced by their cultural, social, and personal identity on the interpretation of participants experiences and perspectives, qualitative research methods typically less concerned with aggregate generalization, rather it claims the finding only to represent the people studied [17].

Focus: - The focus of qualitative research is to give voice to people at the margins of a culture to generalize a larger population. According to qualitative research, every case is valid and potentially worthy of study. Every case is representative of a specific person's life experiences and interpretations of those experiences; as such it represents truth and reality for that person. Qualitative researchers would contend that there are a lot of people who are not accurately represented by the typical case, average, or trend. Rather, we can at best achieve an approximate understanding of how an individual interprets his or her experience. The focus of qualitative research is to describe the meaning of participants' experiences even if the participant or experience is not typical of the majority experience [17].

Approach: - The key distinguishing feature of qualitative social research methods from quantitative methods is that of its inductive approach reasoning that follows a reverse path quantitative method. In qualitative social research observation precedes theory, hypothesis, and interpretation. Qualitative researchers let the data "speak" to them and try to avoid going into a study with a preconceived idea of what they will find [17].

Criteria for Truth: - The key to any types of qualitative social research its criteria for truth and set standards of what constitutes proof of evidence. Qualitative research does not use statistical or replication ad a standard of proof and it does not translate variables into numerical data, so can be no statistical analysis. In addition, qualitative research paradigms assume that the analysis of a text is idiosyncratic to the researchers to do their analysis, and to the time, culture, and social situation

in which the analysis is carried. Thus true replication is impossible. So the sign of good quantitative research study is the analysis provides a new and compelling interpretations of the study matters [17].

The basic assumption of qualitative social research relies on a shared product and attribute of meanings in which social realities are understood; and assumes social reality as a processual nature and reflexivity. In which objective life circumstances are made relevant to a life-world through subjective meanings. The communicative nature of social reality permits the reconstruction of constructions of social reality to become the starting point for research. Qualitative social research practices are mostly characterized by:- the Spectrum of methods rather than only relying on a single method; Appropriateness of methods; its orientation to everyday events and/or everyday knowledge; Conceptuality as a guiding principle; Perspectives of participants; Reflective capability of the investigator; Understanding as a discovery principle; Principle of openness; Case analysis as a starting point; Construction of reality as a basis; Qualitative research as a textual discipline, and Discovery and theory formation as a goal. Thus assumptions and characteristics of qualitative social research significantly influence the kind/types of research going to be studied; which means its purposes (exploratory, explanatory, or descriptive). To do so, the research methods play an immense role to attain or achieve the purpose of the studies.

Therefore, the research needs to have a critical understanding each of qualitative research method including; its focus, philosophical assumption, paradigms, tools, and techniques, as well as the merit and demerits of each method. This may help the researcher to choose the best-suited methods most appropriate for the study, as well as to combine more than one method to address the gaps of each method. Indeed, social researches have also flexible approach in using quantitative social research methods when the proposed or selected study requires statistical information or data; we call it a mixed approach. Therefore, the researcher should be enthusiastic about his/her study. In this section, authors are advised to provide a thorough analysis of the results and make comparisons with relevant literature, not a short summary or conclusion. Any future research directions could also be stated in the discussion.

4.2. Necessity and Importance to Address Complex Social Phenomena

To generate rich insight about certain social phenomena through human centered understanding, qualitative research methods are indispensable in its ability unpack and make an important sense of complex and multifaceted diverse range of social realities. during social phenomena exploration research questions devised through qualitative methods mostly embedded within the social context that are too often complex to be reduced to numerical or statistical analysis [20]. Qualitative methods provides the tools necessary to explore multiple nuances, including characteristics and contradictions of human

behaviour like beliefs, perceptions, and action, interactions capturing the complexity that these phenomena entails [20]. Without employing these methods, researchers and development practitioners may face a challenge of oversimplification and misinterpretations of the social phenomena, that lead to incomplete and skewed understanding of the realities. In which the value of these methods lies in it's the capacities while generating rich and contextualized insights through offering human-centered understanding of the real world. Therefore, the depth understanding of the social phenomena were crucial to drive theories, informed policies making and to formulate intervention strategies that are not only effective, but also has cultural sensitivity and socially relevant to the communities. These methods inherently enable researchers, scholars, and development practitioners to connect to real world issues, and seeks to explore phenomena within their natural settings. New insights generated or emerged holds particular relevance for social scientist, policy makers and other development entities those who are interested to invest their resource to address identified societal development concerns. In which qualitative social research methods enable researcher and development practitioners to ensure that study finding driven or generated knowledge directly applicable and responsive to the complex needs of human society.

4.3. Data Collection and Analysis

Qualitative data collection methods in qualitative research focuses on gathering non-numerical information that enable the researcher understand experience, behaviour, and perspectives. Often involves methods like participant observation, field work, interview, focus group and soon that capture depth and detail rather than measurement. However, effective qualitative data collection requires thoughtful planning, ethical consideration, and tools that support accurate recording and analysis. The process of collecting qualitative data often involves iterative cycle, where the researcher gather, review and refine data as the study progresses. Through effective planning and reflexive engagement it helps to build a deep understanding of societies social, economic, and cultural phenomenon, and the resulting data provides the foundation for analysis and interpretation, revealing insights that contributes to later theory development, program evaluation and policy decisions.

The most common strategies in analyzing qualitative data is qualitative analysis including grounded theory, content analysis, and Hermeneutic Analysis. These strategies heavily dependent on the researchers analytic and integrative skills and knowledge of the social context where the data is collected. The major emphasis in qualitative analysis is sense making about the study or understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, rather than predicting or explaining the issues. A creative and investigative mindset of the researcher is needed to analyse qualitative data, which is based on ethnically enlightened and participants in context attitude and a set of analytic strategies.

4.4. Validity and Reliability

Methodology employed in qualitative social research enable academic researcher's and development practitioners to gain an important insights from the context of lived experience of study matter participants or communities. Though examining the complex social and cultural process, and interaction of human society can be captured through in-depth understanding of the the community instead of breath. Qualitative research as an umbrella term representing variety of research approaches and methods which share certain common elements [7]. Studying qualitative research are not interested in casual law rather in people's belief, experience, and meaning systems from actors perspectives. These qualitative research methods are more subjective than in quantitative methods, do not includes statistical analysis and empirical calculation in which phenomena are viewed holistically and in their social context. So in qualitative research validity and reliability are the key aspect that can make the difference between good research and poor research. This will assure fellow researcher accept findings as credible and trustworthy. These two concepts in the world of social inquiries stand out as the backbone of credible and objective finding of social research. Researchers ability to demonstrate the validity and reliability of research finding is an important factors that determine the value of scientific research, and it is necessary for the researcher to describe the criteria they have taken into consideration for the findings obtained during the validity and reliability process of the research conducted. Irrespective of the the methods employed used for data collection and analysis, qualitative scientific inquiry need to produce original and meaningful outcomes. So to ensure this researchers are expected to adhere appropriate procedures to ensure validity and reliability of the study they undertaken.

5. Conclusions

In social research, the term method applies to how research is conducted. Our assumptions, interests, and purposes shape which methods we choose. When stripped to their essentials, debates over methodology are debates over assumptions and purposes, over theory and perspective. Qualitative social research is more inductive in which concepts, insights, and understandings from patterns in the data rather than collecting data to assess preconceived models, hypotheses, or theories. In qualitative social research the methods chosen to employ to the specific social phenomena determined by five key question in which the study intend to explore, including the focus of the study, role of researcher, the focus of each methods in searching meaning to the matter, context where the study carried, and the scientific rigorousness of the finding and its final objective.

These qualitative social research methods renowned for its flexibility and reflexivity and offer unique advantages to understand complex social phenomena. However, they are not

without challenges and limitation. So examining these dual aspect of each respective methods in detail enables the researcher to recognize the situations where it may face constraints, and make informed choices about when and how to employ these methods. In fact each method has its advantages, and drawbacks or limitations. While the assumption and characteristics of qualitative social research significantly influence the method the researcher going to use for his/her subject matter or emphasis; which means that its purposes either exploratory, explanatory, or descriptive. Though, the chosen method enables the researcher to view and critically understand how his/her research stands with the philosophical paradigm of epistemological principles; - Empiricism, Rationalism, Positivism, and Humanism/Interpretive perspectives. Therefore, to explore certain social phenomena the chosen research methods play an immense role to attain or achieve the purpose of the study. Indeed, the researcher needs to have a critical understanding of each of qualitative research method instead seemingly or arbitrary selection, including; its focus, philosophical assumption, tools and techniques, as well as merit and demerits of each method. This may help the researcher to choose the best-suited and appropriate methods. As well may also need to consider employing more than one method to address the gaps or limitations of each chosen method.

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Author Contributions

Seid Ahmed: Conceptualization, data curation, resources, formal analysis, methodology, validation, writing – original draft, writing – review & editing

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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Biography

Seid Ahmed has wide range of academic and professional foundation and aspiration towards social research particularly on climate resilience, rural livelihood, food security, social policy analysis, resilience building, gender, youth and women equality, social equity, child protection, disaster risk management, social protection, migration and displacement, and Indigenous knowledge system and practices among other. He is currently working for Ayuda en Acción and have well equipped professional experience with nearly 10 years of expertise's in humanitarian and development thematic field, while worked for non-governmental international organizations, including Vita Impact, SCI, iDE, and ASE. He has immense experiences in performing and excel tasks in meticulous attitude and wide spectrum of an integrated multi-sectoral community based projects and programs. As far as educational background he accredited his first degree in Sociology and Social Work with honor second upper class from Jimma University, and has master degree in Sociology from Hawassa University, Ethiopia.

Research Field

Seid Ahmed: Climate resilience, livelihood based climate change adaptation, food security, social and economic policy analysis, resilience building, gender, youth and women, social equity, child protection, disaster risk management, social protection, migration and displacement, and Indigenous knowledge system and practices among other