



## **GROUNDED THEORY DESIGN A NEW APPROACH OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

**Kasture Padmaja B., Ph. D.**

*Adarsha comprehensive college of education and research, Pune*

### **Abstract**

*The Basic idea of the grounded theory approach is to read a textual database and discover or label variables (called categories, concepts and properties) and their interrelationships. Data could be observations of behavior, such as interactions and events. A Grounded theory design is a systematic, qualitative procedure used to generate a theory that explains, at a broad conceptual level, a process, an action, or an interaction about a substantive topic. This design was developed by sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in the late 1960s. We use grounded theory when we need a broad theory or explanation of a process. Grounded theory generates a theory when existing theories do not address our problem or the participants that we plan to study.*



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### **Introduction**

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. Qualitative research begins with assumption and the use of theoretical frame works that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Grounded theory is one of types of qualitative research.

The Basic idea of the grounded theory approach is to read a textual database and discover or label variables (called categories, concepts and properties) and their interrelationships. Data could be observations of behavior, such as interactions and events. Often they are in the form of field notes, Historical records, documents, video tapes etc.

A Grounded theory design is a systematic, qualitative procedure used to generate a theory that explains, at a broad conceptual level, a process, an action, or an interaction about a substantive topic (Creswell, 2008). The phrase grounded theory refers to theory that is

developed inductively from a corpus of data. Grounded theory is the most common, widely used, and popular analytic technique in qualitative analysis. It is mainly used for qualitative research. Grounded theory enables you to generate a broad theory about your quantitative central phenomenon “grounded” in the data. Two sociologists, Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, developed grounded theory in the 1960. Glaser and Strauss developed a pioneering book that expounded in detail on their grounded theory procedures. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967).

**What is grounded theory research: -**

A grounded theory design is a systematic, qualitative procedure used to generate a theory that explains, at a broad conceptual level, a process, an action, or an interaction about a substantive topic. In grounded theory research, this theory is a process theory-it explains an educational process of events, activities, actions, and interactions that occur data time. Also grounded theorists proceed through systematic procedures of collecting data, identifying categories, connecting these categories, and forming a theory that explains the process.

Grounded Theory is a *general* research method (and thus is not owned by any one school or discipline); which guides you on matters of data collection (where you can use quantitative data or qualitative data of any type e.g. video, images, text, observations, spoken word etc.); and details strict procedures for data analysis.

Grounded Theory is a research tool which enables you to seek out and conceptualize the latent social patterns and structures of your area of interest through the process of constant comparison. Initially you will use an inductive approach to generate substantive codes from your data, later your developing theory will suggest to you where to go next to collect data and which, more-focused, questions to ask; which is the deductive phase of the Grounded Theory process. (<http://www.groundedtheoryonline.com/what-is-grounded-theory>)

**When do we use grounded theory: -**

We use grounded theory when we need a broad theory or explanation of a process. Grounded theory generates a theory when existing theories do not address our problem or the participants that we plan to study. Because a theory is grounded in the data, it provides a better explanation than a theory borrowed ‘off the shelf’ because it fits the situation, actually works in practice, is sensitive to individuals in a setting, and may represent all of the complexities actually found in the process. That means it is helpful when current theories about a phenomenon are either inadequate or nonexistent. We use grounded theory when we wish to study some process.

([www.slideshare.net/SehribanBugday/grounded-theory-11487784](http://www.slideshare.net/SehribanBugday/grounded-theory-11487784))

**Types of Grounded Theory Designs: -**

The systematic design for grounded theory is widely used in educational research. A systematic design in grounded theory emphasizes the use of data analysis steps of **open, axial and selective coding**, and the development of a logic paradigm or a visual picture of theory generated. In this definition, three phases of coding exist.

In the first phase, **open coding**; the grounded theorist forms initial categories of information about the phenomenon being studied by segmenting information. The researcher bases categories on all data collected such as interviews, observations, and researcher's memos or notes. In open coding the data are divided into segments and then scrutinized for commonalities that reflect categories or themes. After the data are categorized, they are further examined for properties that characterize each category. In general, open coding is a process of reducing the data to a small set of themes that appear to describe the phenomenon under investigation. Coding is the process of naming or labeling things, categories, and properties.

In the second phase, **axial coding**, the grounded theorist selects one open coding category, positions it at the center of the process being explored and relates other categories to it. These other categories are the causal conditions, strategies, contextual and intervening conditions and consequences. This phase involves drawing a diagram, called a coding paradigm. Strauss and Corbin refer to this phase as axial coding, reflecting the idea of clustering the open codes around specific axes or points of intersection. Thus this step is to group the discrete codes according to conceptual categories that reflect the commonalities among codes.

The third phase of coding consists of **selective coding**. In selective coding the grounded theorist writes a theory from interrelationship of the categories in the axial coding model. At a basic level, this theory provides an abstract explanation for the process being studied in the research. It is the process of integrating and refining the theory through such techniques as writing out their story line that interconnects the categories and sorting through personal memos about theoretical ideas. Thus at this point the researcher treats the various code clusters in a selective fashion, deciding how they relate to each other and what stories they tell. Thus the analyst constructs a set of relational statements that can be used to explain, in a general sense, what is going on.

Use of these three coding procedures means that grounded theorists use set procedures to develop their theory.

**Steps in conducting grounded theory research: -**

Step 1- Decide if a grounded theory design best addresses the research problem: -

A grounded theory design is appropriate when you want to develop or modify a theory, explain a process, and develop a general abstraction of the interaction and action of people. It offers a macro picture of educational situations rather than a detailed microanalysis. Grounded theory seems applicable for those individuals who are trained in quantitative research but who want to explore a qualitative procedure that is rigorous and systematic.

Step 2- Identify a process to study: -

We need to identify early tentative process to examine our grounded theory study because the intent of grounded theory research is to explain a process. This process should naturally follow from the research problem and questions that have to answer. It needs to involve people who are acting or interacting with identifiable steps or sequence in their interactions.

Step 3- Seek approval and access: -

We need to obtain approval from the institutional review board. We also need access to individual who can provide insight into the process that we plan to study. This step involves seeking approval to collect data, appraising individuals of the purpose of the study, and guarantying protection of the site and participants as we conduct inquiry.

Step 4- Conduct theoretical sampling: -

In grounded theory data collection is to gather information that can assist in development of a theory. A characteristic of grounded theory research, however, is that the inquirer collects data more than once and keeps returning to data sources for more information throughout a study until the categories are saturated and the theory is fully developed.

Step 5- Code the data: -

The process of coding data occurs during data collection so that we can determine what data to collect next. It typically begins with the identification of open coding categories and using the constant comparative approach for saturation by comparing data with incident and incident with category. A reasonable number of ten categories may suffice, although this number depends on extent of database and the complexity of the process.

Step 6- Use selective coding and develop the theory: -

The final process of coding is selective coding, and it involves actually developing theory. This procedure includes interrelating the categories in the coding paradigm. It may involve refining the axial coding paradigm and presenting it as a model or theory of the process. It may include writing propositions that provide testable ideas for further research. This stage may also involve writing a story or a narrative that describes the interrelationships among categories.

Step 7- Validate your theory: -

In grounded theory research, validation is an active part of the process of research. For example, during the constant comparative procedure of open coding, the researcher triangulates data between the information and the emerging categories. The same process of checking data against categories occurs in the axial coding phase. The researcher poses questions that relate the categories, and then returns to the data and looks for evidence, incidents and events—a process in grounded theory called discriminate sampling. After developing a theory, the grounded theorist validates the process by comparing it with existing processes found in the literature.

Step 8- Write a grounded theory research report: -

The structure of grounded theory report will vary from flexible structure in the emerging and constructivist design to a more quantitatively oriented structure in the systematic design. All grounded theory projects, however, end with the theory generated by the researcher reporting his or her abstraction of the process under examination. (Creswell, 2011)

Conclusion-

Grounded theory can incorporate a systematic approach, a flexible emerging design, and the use of active codes to capture the experiences of participants.

### **References**

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