

A CHOICE OF RESEARCH STRATEGY FOR IDENTIFYING COMMUNITY-BASED ACTION SKILL REQUIREMENTS IN THE PROCESS OF DELIVERING HOUSING MARKET RENEWAL

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ABSTRACT: This paper focuses on the choice of research strategy for investigating necessary skills and competencies that need to be acquired by the relevant participants involved in the process of delivering Housing Market Renewal in the East Lancashire Pathfinder area, England. It outlines the methodology adopted for the research and presents evidence for choosing the particular methodology during the development of research design. This paper reviews the differences and similarities among the common research strategies. The strengths and weaknesses of research paradigms with issues highlighted by reference to the research on skills for community-based action in the process of delivering Housing Market Renewal are discussed to provide valid reasons for the choice of the appropriate research strategy. From this study, it draws out lessons about research strategy, specifying from the research questions reaching closure and about the strengths and weaknesses of exploratory case study approach as a research tool.

Keywords - Exploratory Case Study; Housing Market Renewal; Research Paradigms

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses methodology aspects of the PhD research work on investigating skills that need to be required by three key participants involved in the process of delivering Housing Market Renewal (HMR) in the East Lancashire Pathfinder, England. It describes and justifies the choice of methodology based on the epistemological and ontological assumptions made in the context of the nature of the research questions. The paper starts by defining the research paradigm and outlining the reasons for the selection of the particular paradigm and its phenomenological orientation in the context of the research work. This leads to the justification of case study approach as a research strategy.

2. THE NATURE OF THE RESEARCH AREA

HMR programme is a new opportunity to tackle the substantial problems of housing demand decline in some parts of North and Midlands, England. The programme was introduced shortly after the publication of the report on *Empty Homes* by the Transport, Local Government and the Regions Select Committee in March 2002. However, details of the HMR initiative were only first announced as part of the ODPM's Sustainable Communities Plan in February 2003. The broad objective for the programme was for Pathfinder strategic plans to *entail radical and sustained action to replace obsolete housing with modern sustainable accommodation, through demolition and new building or refurbishment. This will mean a better mix of homes and sometimes fewer homes* (ODPM, 2003).

However, housing market failure is not only central to the physical condition of housing but also about non-physical interventions factors such as social deprivation, economic and environmental issues that cause housing to be unpopular (CPRE, 2004 and Nevin et al., 2001). The aspirations of local community also need to be investigated as the latest protest by the local residents on the scale of clearances within the Pathfinder scheme in the North of England (Clover, 2004 and Ungood-Thomas, 2005) suggesting a gap between Pathfinder intentions and community expectations. The conflict between the aspirations of the local community and the objectives of the Pathfinder suggests that local residents are unclear about

some of the terminology, options and possible outcomes that are being put forward by the Pathfinder in their areas. It highlighted the need for generic guidance or skills on how local community should be consulted and engaged in the process of delivering HMR.

The shortcomings of necessary skills to manage regeneration schemes were first noted in the *Urban Task Force* report in 1999. The report proposed the setting up of regional resource centre for addressing skills shortages and good practice in urban professionals. Five years later, the UK government responded to the issue and appointed Sir John Egan to lead a task force into skills for sustainable communities. As a result of Egan's report and during the Sustainable Communities Summit 2005, the UK government announced the establishment of the Academy for Sustainable Communities in Leeds, England. This Academy will give priority to training in the broad range of skills and expertise that are required for delivering sustainable communities in the UK.

A review of the existing models of professional competences indicated that the professionals have recognised the important of the generic skills such as *working with others*, *communication*, *problem solving* incorporated into their professional practices. These models of professional development works and approaches can be found in: *The UK occupational standards models* (cited by Cheetham and Chivers, 1996); *The job competence model* (Mansfield and Mathews, 1985); *The reflective practitioner approach* (Schon, 1983); *Meta-competencies* (Reynolds and Snell, 1988 and Nordhaug, 1990); *Core skills* (Cheetham and Chivers, 1998); *Ethics and values* (Eraut et al, 1994); *Model for professional competence framework for RICS* (Kennie and Green, 2001) and *BIFM professional qualification* (BIFM, c1999). These models have their own strengths and weaknesses within the context of their own professions. However, the researchers seek to study the ability of the existing models to deal with the demand of skills in the process of delivering HMR. Understanding the existing models of professional competences also leads to the identification of shortcomings skills that need to be addressed by the participants involved in the process of delivering HMR. Furthermore, the community-based and people focus skills development have been recognised as the crucial education and training needs for the sustainable development programme in the UK (Hartley, 2002; Egan, 2004; Turner and Townsend, 2004; The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, 2003; Martin & Hall, 2002; Sterling, 2001).

Meanwhile, an exploratory pilot case study at the East Lancashire Pathfinder was undertaken in February 2005 until August 2005. This particular Pathfinder comprises seven intervention areas known as Area of Development Frameworks (ADFs), containing approximately 85,000 properties across five local authorities of Blackburn with Darwen, Hyndburn, Burnley, Rossendale and Pendle Borough Councils (Elevate, 2004). The aim of this study was to seek insights of the participants involved in the 'real life' situations of HMR delivery process and draw attention to the issues and complexities of shortcomings skills necessary for community engagement. The study was conducted in three separate interview visits with three different participants in the process of delivering HMR. These three key participants are summarised as follows (*Figure 1*):

- *Participant 1(Skill Level 1): the representatives of the Elevate East Lancashire Pathfinder;*
- *Participant 2(Skill Level 2): the representatives of the Blackburn with Darwen HMR Teams and;*
- *Participant 3(Skill Level 3): the representatives of the Local Community Groups of Bank Top ADF.*

Figure 1 illustrates the delivery process of HMR that involves three key participants in three different levels of community-based action skills and competencies.

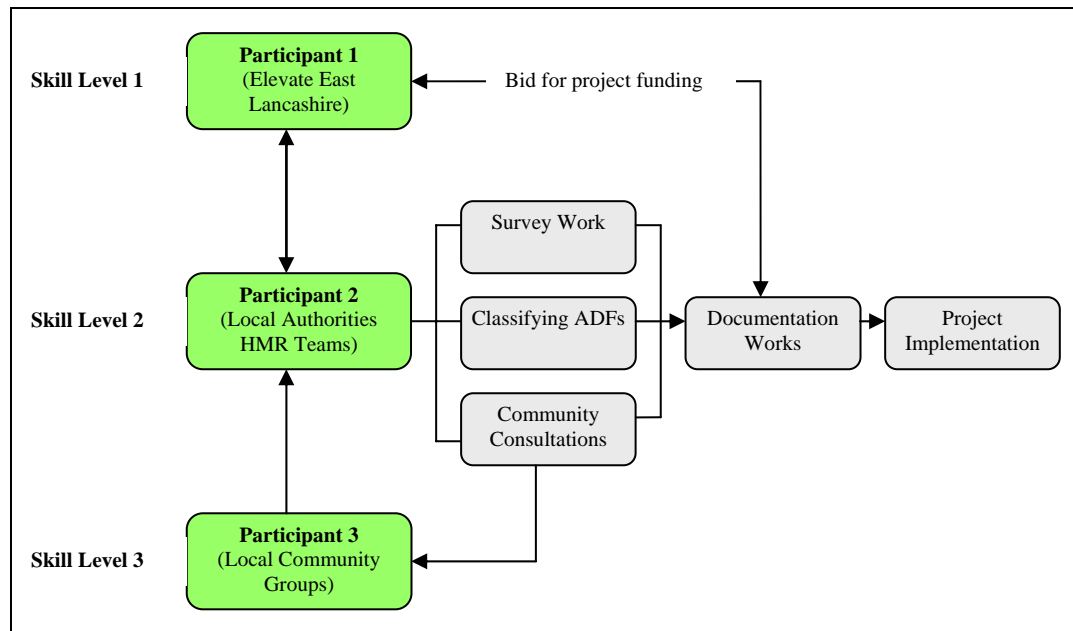


Figure1. The three major participants involved in the early process of delivering HMR in the East Lancashire Pathfinder

Findings from both literatures and exploratory pilot case study are necessary to formulate research questions (Booth, et al, 2003; Robson, 2002) for identifying necessary skills need to be acquired by those key participants involved in the process of delivering HMR. The main research focus that emerges from this work is centred on the following questions:

- *What are the additional skills and competencies that need to be acquired by the employees of Pathfinder organisations, relevant Local Authorities and Community groups necessary to deliver Housing Market Renewal?;*
- *Why do the employees of the Pathfinder organisations, relevant Local Authorities and Local Community groups need other skills and competencies in the process of delivering housing Market Renewal? and*
- *How significant are these additional skills and competencies in the process of delivering Housing Market Renewal?*

In answering these questions, the nature of research paradigm and methodology is defined to identify the appropriateness of the research strategy for this particular research work.

3. RESEARCH PARADIGM AND METHODOLOGY

Research methodology constitutes a process of how research questions are operationalised and measured to achieve the overall research aim and objectives (Brewerton and Milward, 2001). However, choosing the appropriate research methodology requires understanding of assumptions of each research paradigm and implications of the chosen methodology. This research work adopts a *nested methodology approach* (Kagioglou et. al., 1998) that is devised into three main interrelated themes: *research philosophy*; *research approach* and *research techniques*. However, this paper only discusses on the research philosophy and research approach as these themes provide theoretical background to justify the choice of the research strategy. This is taken to ensure that they are compatible to one another and suitable for the purpose of enquiry and the context of the study phenomenon. The themes will shape and

guide the direction of research paradigm, which in turn drive to the selection of the research strategy.

3.1 Research Philosophy

The word *philosophy* is derived from the word of Greek, *the love of wisdom* (Cavalier, 1990). The wisdom encapsulates the essence of philosophy. It involves thinking about questions, making interpretations, trying out ideas and thinking of possible arguments for and against them and wondering how concepts really work (Ruona, 2000). It also offers a framework of thinking, helps develop capacities of thinking and improves the alignment between what we think and what we do (Paul, 1993 and Honderich, 1995). At the heart of it, philosophy is a systematic examination of the assumptions and common wisdoms (Root, 1993) that underlies thought and action.

In realising the potential utility of philosophy, a system of thought and action needs to be considered (Bohm, 1994). These philosophical knowledge claims represent a set of fundamental assumptions in relation to the world, the individual's place in it and the relationships between the world and the researcher. The assumptions that is relevant to the research philosophy: *being (ontology)*; *knowing (epistemology)* and *acting (axiology)* (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Philosophically, Creswell (1994) identifies five sets of assumptions that are related to *what is real/knowledge?* (a question of ontology); *how to know it is true?* (a question of epistemology); *what values go into it?* (a question of axiology); *how to write about it?* (a question of rhetoric) and *the process of studying it* (methodology) (Creswell, 1994; Gioia and Pitre, 1990 and Kuhn, 1970). It is important for researchers to recognise and understand the ontological and epistemological orientation within the research paradigm as it is able to determine the entire course of the researchers' project (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). Four schools of thought about knowledge claims are also discussed. They are *Idealism*; *Realism*; *Positivism* and *Interpretivism*.

The two main research paradigms propounded in the literature are the positivist/quantitative and interpretivist/qualitative paradigms (Cook and Reichardt, 1979; Easterby-Smith, 1991; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000 and Creswell; 1994). Even though, the term of interpretivism has been referred interchangeably with the concept of phenomenological as a paradigm in the literature, the researchers opt to stick to the concept of interpretivism for this research work. It is also important to note that although positivism is associated with deductive reasoning and phenomenology with inductive reasoning, scientific and social inquiry, in practice these paradigms involve an *alternation between deduction and induction* (Babbie, 1998 and Creswell, 1994). During the deductive phase, one tends to reason towards observations. However, during the inductive phase, one tends to reasons from observations.

3.1.1 Strengths and weaknesses of the positivism paradigm

The term positivism was first introduced by the sociologist, Auguste Comte (Gliddens, 1974). Although quantitative investigation of the world has existed since people first began to record events or objects that had been counted, the modern idea of quantitative processes have their roots in Auguste Comte's Positivist framework. It is depicted as the traditional scientific approach to research for the philosophical paradigm for human inquiry. It is based on the numerical representation of observations for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena. Methodology approaches that avail themselves to this paradigm include cross-sectional studies, experimental studies, longitudinal studies and surveys.

The positivist paradigm that guides the quantitative mode of inquiry is based on the assumption that social reality has an objective ontological structure and that individuals are responding agents to this objective environment (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). Quantitative research involves counting and measuring of events and performing the statistical analysis of

a body of numerical data (Smith, 1988). The assumption behind the positivist paradigm is that there is an objective truth existing in the world that can be measured and explained scientifically. The main concerns of the quantitative paradigm are that measurement is reliable, valid, and generalizable in its clear prediction of cause and effect (Cassell & Symon, 1994).

Being deductive and particularistic, quantitative research is based upon formulating the research hypotheses and verifying them empirically on a specific set of data (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992). Scientific hypotheses are value-free. The researchers' own values, biases, and subjective preferences have no place in the quantitative approach. Researchers can view the communication process as concrete and tangible and can analyze it without contacting actual people involved in communication (Ting-Toomey, 1984).

The importance of positivism, particularly logical positivist explanation, is recognised as one of the most viable approach to explain a phenomenon. In the more recent evaluation research, logical positivism clearly forms the basis of *realistic evaluation* or *scientific realism* where programmes and policies demand realistic evaluation results (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). Babbie (1998) argues that place for positivism in social research and points out that the interacting links between positivism and phenomenology by noting that *ever observation is qualitative at the outset*. The author further argues that in social science, paradigms cannot be true or false; they can only be more or less useful.

However, there are weaknesses that undermine its usefulness to the subject matter of this research work: Community-based action skills in the process of delivering HMR. The positivist ontological position of reality exists independently therefore, it is not useful for this exploratory research as this research focuses to seek and understanding the participants' varying perception and meaning of the HMR delivery process. Objects, people, situations and events do not, in themselves, possess meaning; meaning is conferred on these elements by and via human interaction (Berg, 2001). Similarly, the positivist position on the epistemological question of *how do we obtain knowledge of reality?* is inappropriate because it postulates that the act of investigating such as reality would have no effect on that reality. It is also impossible to treat people as being separate from the social contexts and they cannot be understood without capturing their perceptions of their own activities. This approach is strictly structured design that imposes certain constraints on the results and may ignore the relevant findings. It cannot be objective as the researchers also bring their values and interests to this research work and be part of what they observe.

3.1.2 Strengths and weaknesses of the interpretivism paradigm

Qualitative research shares the theoretical assumptions of the interpretative paradigm, which is based on the notion that social reality is created and sustained through the subjective experience of people involved in communication (Morgan, 1980). Qualitative researchers are concerned in their research with attempting to accurately describe, decode, and interpret the meanings of phenomena occurring in their normal social contexts (Fryer, 1991). The researchers operating within the framework of the interpretative paradigm are focused on investigating the complexity, authenticity, contextualization, shared subjectivity of the researcher and the thing being researched and minimising of illusion (Fryer, 1991).

Qualitative research in general is more likely to take place in a natural setting (Denzin, 1971; Lincoln & Guba, 1985 and Marshall & Rossman, 1989). This means that topics for study focus on everyday activity are *defined, enacted, smoothed, and made problematic by persons going about their normal routines* (Van Maanen, 1983). Qualitative research is less likely to impose restrictive a priori classification on the collection of data. It is less driven by very specific hypotheses and categorical frameworks and more concerned with emergent themes and idiographic descriptions (Cassell & Symon, 1994). It is most useful for inductive

and exploratory research as it can lead researchers to build hypothesis and explanation (Ghauri & Kjell, 2005).

Within the fundamental beliefs of the interpretative paradigm, there are three characteristics of qualitative inquiry (Ting-Toomey, 1984). *First*, qualitative research is the study of symbolic discourse that consists of the study of texts and conversations. *Second*, qualitative research is the study of the interpretive principles that people use to make sense of their symbolic activities. *Third*, qualitative research is the study of contextual principles such as the roles of the participants, the physical setting and a set of situational events that guide the interpretation of discourse.

The interpretivist paradigm is the social sciences that deal with action and behaviour (Giddens, 1974). There is a clear interrelationship between the investigator and what is being researched. Verifying what actually exists in the social and human world depends on the researcher's interpretation. Any interpretative analysis of subjective meanings depends upon *empirical rules* hence the development of the methodological tools, notably the typology of *rational action* and *ideal type* (Giddens, 1974). Methodology approaches most appropriate include action research, case studies, ethnography, grounded theory and participatory enquiry.

Interpretivism is the most relevant paradigm for this research work as it seeks to solve the research questions as stated in section two. The researchers seek to ascertain what the general trend is in term of the necessary skills that need to be required by the three participants involved in the process of delivering HMR. The process of delivering HMR involves three participants in three different levels of community-based actions skills. Seeking an understanding of the three different participants' perception levels in the process of delivering HMR undoubtedly have to be within the interpretive paradigm. The nature of the research focus that is a dynamic process and lived experience rather than a static reality. This further supported by the Strauss and Corbin (1990) that qualitative paradigm is useful for understanding what lies behind any phenomenon. It is useful for understanding meaning for participants in a study, the context within which the participants act, generating new theories and understanding the process by which the events and actions take place.

In addition, phenomenology is closely aligned to the interpretivism paradigm as it revolves around the meaning of the lived experiences for participants in the study about a phenomenon. This approach explores the structures of consciousness in human experiences (Creswell, 1998 and Patton, 1990). Phenomenology is important for this research as its method of approach is rooted in the notion of the lived-world. The researchers act in the social and human world rather than observe it as a disinterested scientist. The researchers deal not with the reality of the world but rather with human relationships within the world.

However, there are number of weaknesses in this paradigm. There are difficulties associated with time required and costs involved to undertake qualitative research. Problems may also emerge in the analysis and interpretation of data: there is often difficulty in achieving validity and reliability; there are ethical issues arising from the researchers' intrusion into the *personal sphere* of those being researched (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1991).

Figure 2 shows graphically positioning of this research paradigm in terms of three components of philosophical assumptions interact in a dynamic, multi-virtuous and systematic way, together forming a guiding framework for a congruent and coherent system of thought and action. These become a framework model that helps the researcher to make sense of it and outlines the philosophical basis for the chosen research paradigm and research strategy. Figure 2 illustrates the interactive and dynamic relationship among the key components integral to *philosophical framework*. It elucidates the connections: demonstrating on how one *sees and* views the world and reality (ontology) and how one *thinks* about the

world (epistemology); that how one *thinks* about the world and directs how one *acts* in the world (axiology). This reflects and influences how one *thinks* about and consequently *sees* the world that helps one to *act* in inquiry and practice within the ontological and epistemological orientations. In other words, axiology urges congruence between ontological and epistemological assumptions. It plays an important role in putting the standards and requirements of acceptable research approach and research techniques for the research in community-based action skill in HMR. Making the axiology explicit helps to set and clarify the guiding tone and rigour for action in the researchers' research work.

The position of research paradigm for this research work as illustrated in Figure 2 is summarised as follows:

- *Ontologically*, this study favours more towards idealism. The nature of this research is to seek understanding the participants' varying perceptions and meaning via human interactions. This means, this research does not treat phenomenon under study as an independent and single reality. Rather, it accepts the knowledge claims by understanding the participants' interpretations given to the reality.
- *Epistemologically*, this research favours more towards interpretivism. The nature of this research is rooted in the notion of lived-word experience. The researchers also acknowledge that the knowledge is socially constructed through interpretations of the major participants in the process of delivering HMR. This study intends to explore the explanations of the perceptions and actions of the major participants involved in the process of delivering HMR by understanding the way in which they comprehend their world.
- *Axiologically*, this research favours more towards value-laden and subjective nature of research. The phenomenon under study is interpreted within a context through direct interactions within organisational members. The appropriate research approach is chosen from the various alternatives of the research purpose and the questions it intends to answer (Yin, 2003). The research questions that being posed in this study are not only exploratory (*what* question) but also explanatory (*why* and *how* questions). It requires in depth insights of the interrelationships of the variables. A case study approach is appropriate to answering the research questions in this research (Yin, 2003).

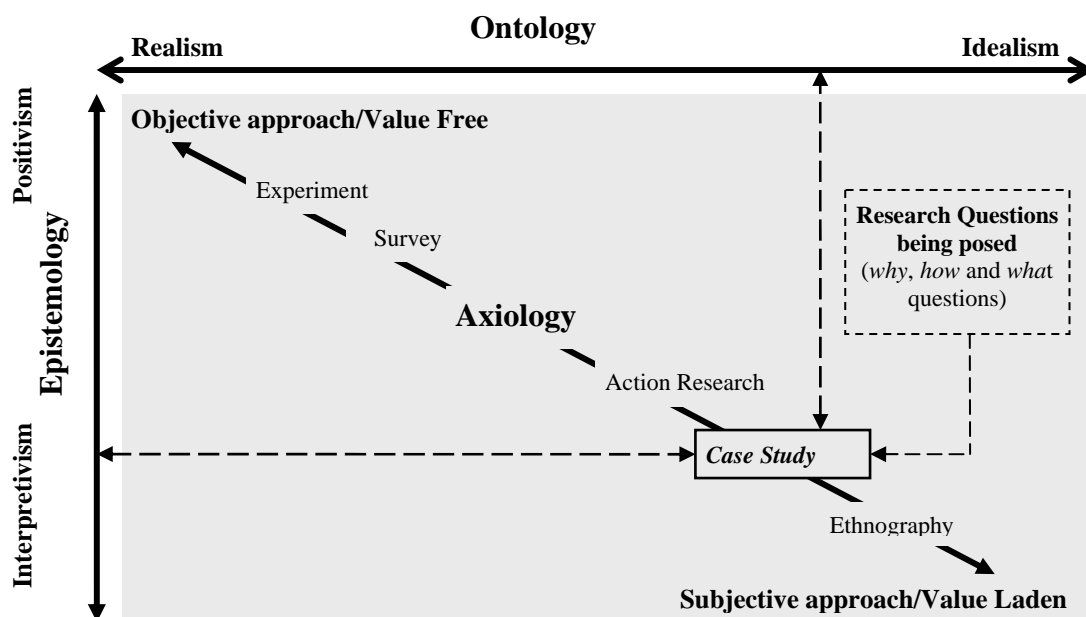


Figure 2. Positioning Research Paradigm (Source: Adapted from Sexton, 2003; Yin, 2003)

3.2 Research Approach

The justifications for choosing the case study approach for this research work derive from the interpretive paradigm, the broad phenomenological nature and its realistic underpinnings, the exploratory and explanatory nature of research questions formulated from the literature review and exploratory pilot case study (section two). The case study approach can be defined as a methodology in terms of process of actually carrying out the investigation, the unit of analysis (the case) or the end product. Yin (2003) defines case study approach as:

“an empirical inquiry that; Investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin 2003).

Yin (2003) further believes that the reason for selecting one particular research strategy over another is determined by three conditions consisting of:

- *the type of research question being posed,*
- *the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural event and*
- *the degree of focus on contemporary as apposed to historical event.*

Although the research strategies are not mutually exclusive, it is possible to identify situations where particular strategy is of particular usefulness. Yin (2003) suggests that case study approach is especially useful when a *how or why question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control*, which the researchers feel is relevant to the research work under investigations. Others focus on defining the unit of study, an entity around which there are boundaries that delimit what will be studied from what will not. Stake (1994) calls the case study an integrated systems, Smith (1978) uses the term bounded system and Miles and Huberman (1994) refer to the case as *a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context*. The last focus of definition is on the product of the investigation. Wolcott (1992) describes case study as an *end-product of field-oriented research* and Merriam (1998) defines characteristic is the delimitation of the unit study. If there is no actual or theoretical limit, the phenomenon is not bounded enough to be a case.

The strength of case study approach for this research work is its ability to deal with a full range of evidence: documentation, interviews and observations. A list of questions are set out to assist the researchers determine whether or not the case study approach is appropriate to identify necessary skill for community-based action in the process of delivering HMR.

- Can the phenomenon of interest be studied outside its natural setting?
No, necessaryl skills that are needed for the participants involved in the process of delivering HMR can only be identified from within the organisations in question.
- Must the study focus on contemporary events?
Yes, HMR is the new programme, at this time, only 3 years old.
- Is control or manipulation of subjects or events necessary?
No, observation and recording will provide the clearest evidence of current events.
- Does the phenomenon of interest enjoy an established theoretical base?
No, there is a very limited theoretical basis for the study in the HMR and community engagement in particular.

Case study approach has also been viewed as a useful tool for the *preliminary, exploratory stage* of research project as a basis for the development of the more structured tool that necessary in surveys and experiments (Rowley, 2002). Eisenhardt (1989) says that case study is: *Particularly well suited to new research areas or research areas for which existing theory seems inadequate. This type of work is highly complementary to incremental*

theory building from normal science research. The former is useful in early stages of research on a topic or when a fresh perspective is needed, whilst the latter is useful in later stages of knowledge. This research work seeks to find out what is happening, to seek new insights, to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light, perhaps the most purely theory building form of case study. And consequently, an exploratory study normally focuses on current events and concerns and seeks to answer questions of *how* and *why* (Robson, 2002). A particular application of the exploratory case study is a diagnostic tool to develop a range of objective possibilities that could occur. However, Yin (2003) only favours exploratory case study when the available literature or existing knowledge base is poor, that is, when there is some uncertainty about a major aspect of a *real* study. Once the uncertainty has been investigated and resolved, the exploratory phase is complete and the real study should be taken place.

A case study approach may either focus on a single case or use a number of cases (Yin, 2003). The differentiation between single case study approach and multiple case study approach needs to be clearly made for this particular research work. A single case study approach is akin to a single experiment and appropriate when the case provides a critical test to a well-established theory or where the case is extreme, unique, typical, critical or has something special to reveal. Single case study approach is also used as a preliminary or pilot in multiple case studies. Multiple case studies approach is also equivalent to multiple experiments, is used to achieve replication of a single type of incident in different settings or to compare and contrast different cases. Multiple case studies approach is useful if topics are too complex or involve too many actors to be addressed in a simple interview survey. The more cases that can be marshalled to establish or refute a theory, the more robust are the research outcomes.

Yin (2003) further distinguishes the design of single and multiple case studies approach as holistic or embedded, resulting in four possible combinations (*Figure 3*): holistic or embedded studies. Cases with a single source of information as *holistic* cases while, cases with multiple sources of information as *embedded* cases (Yin, 2003). Embedded studies identify a number of sub units such as meetings, roles or locations, each of which is explored individually. Result from these units are drawn together to yield an overall picture. However, the biggest challenge with embedded studies lies in achieving a holistic perspective from the analysis of the sub-units.

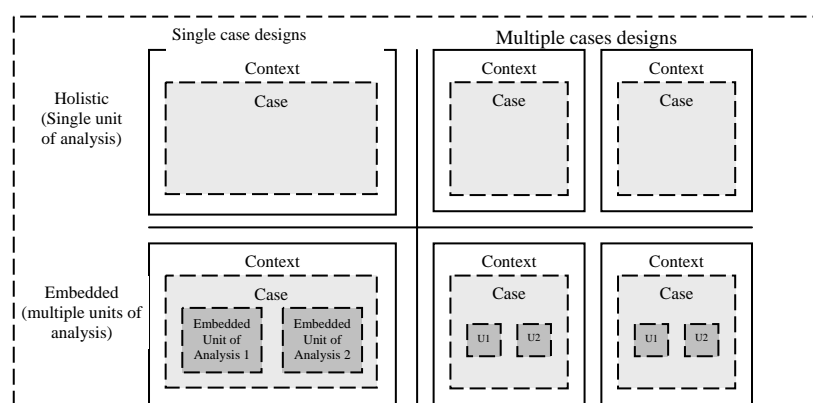


Figure 3. Basic types of design for case study designs (Source: Yin, 2003)

However, one of the frequently cited limitations of the case study approach is the difficulty in generalising the findings. The counter-argument is that generalising of case study findings is a legitimate outcome, based on an understanding of nature of that generalising. Yin (2003) strongly argues that case study approach involve only analytical generalising.

Stake (1978) describes the generalisability of case study approach as *naturalistic* that is in context-specific and in harmony with a reader's experience and thus *a natural basis for generalisation*. It is considered legitimate to generalise based on the degree to which a case is representative of some larger population. It is not a question of how many units but rather what kind of unit is under study.

A benefit of multiple case studies approach is that they are generally considered to strengthen or broaden the analytic generalisations. This can be done through literal replication, in which cases are designed to replicate each other and produce corroborating evidence or through theoretical replication in which cases are designed to cover different theoretical conditions and produce contrasting results for predictable, theoretical reasons (Yin, 2003). The number of cases to be included in the positivist multiple case studies approach becomes a matter of the number of replications desired in turn depends on the certainty desired for the result. Greater certainty comes from larger numbers but if the rival theories are grossly different and the purpose of the study does not require excessive certainty, two or three cases are sufficient (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

In contrast, at least one interpretative researcher finds multiple case studies approach to be a drawback. Wolcott (1992) argues in practical terms that the study of multiple cases reduces the attention the researcher is able to give to any one of them and serves to weaken rather than strengthen the case study. The author prefers for single case designs especially when the researcher is inexperienced. Another criticism of the case study approach has to do with the *skills limitations* and *bias* on the part of the researcher. Case study approach is dependent on the sensitivity and integrity of the investigator. The researcher is the primary data-gathering instrument and not all researchers are equally skilled in observation and interviewing.

Based on the nature of the researchers' research work and the review of the relevant literature, the single and embedded case study approach has been chosen as an appropriate research strategy. This research approach is the most useful for the study of the necessary skills that need to be acquired by the three major participants involved in the process of HMR in the Bank Top, one of the Pathfinder ADFs in the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, East Lancashire Pathfinder area. Identifying three separate ad different skill level for three participants involved in the process of delivering HMR constitute multiple unit of analysis embedded within a single case in the context of East Lancashire Pathfinder area. In addition, it is ontological and epistemological justifications that based upon idealism and interpretivism research paradigms has strongly supported the choice of case study approach as a research strategy for this research work.

4. CONCLUSION

Case study approach is chosen as a research approach for this research work as it is responsive to research questions of why and how, and it offers researchers a flexible yet integrated framework for embedded examination of a phenomenon in its natural stage of exploring the necessary skills that need to be required by the three participants involved in the process of delivering HMR in the East Lancashire Pathfinder area. Because case study approach is exceptionally useful for exploratory research and theory generation, it is particularly appropriate for the nature the researchers' research work that related to contemporary issues of people in the real world and when there is little theoretical knowledge or evidences on the research under study. The single case study approach is also appropriate for this research work as it is considered as a critical, unique and extreme case where the investigations on the necessary skills that are needed to delivery HMR are considered valuable and a revelatory case.

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