

A general perspective on role of theory in qualitative research

Abstract

There is a growing interest on qualitative methodology as evidence by an increasing number of qualitative research design employed in social science researches. In qualitative inquiry process, the role of theory in the field of social science and where it situates in the research framework has always created a challenge for the researchers. However, inconclusive and differing opinions have so far been documented about the role and position of theory in qualitative research. The purpose of this paper is to build a general perspective in terms of the position of theory in qualitative research methodology applicable to social science research. Review of literatures on these issues were presented and discussed. As a result, a deep comprehension of a phenomenon, event or experience in real-life cannot always or necessarily be based on theory, yet the significant role of theory in literature review is an undeniable fact.

Keyword: Qualitative; Social research; Role of theory; Phenomenology