

Document analysis, 30 August 2017

Edu-Lead

Education Leadership

ACADEMICAL DISCUSSIONS: ELAD

Prof Edmore Mutekwe; Jan Heystek; Kobus Mentz; Lloyd Conley; Dr Aaron Nhlapo; Arrie Van Wyk; CP Van der Vyver; Deon Vos; Herman Van Vuuren; Jan Khumalo; Leentjie Van Jaarsveld; Sipho Kwatubana; Mr Tshepo Tapala

The morning started off with a big bite out of literature from Dr Vos and Prof Mutekwe, questions were posed and feedback from the literature was given and then discussed thoroughly.

Definitions for what a document analysis is contracted from two sources stated that a document analysis can be seen as a systematic procedure for reviewing printed and electronic documents. It is a qualitative research method and it requires the examination and interpretation of data in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge. Followed by this clarity a discussion followed on what the analytic procedure entails? Where Dr Vos explained that an analytic procedure entails findings, selecting, appraising (making sense of) and synthesizing data contained in documents. He also stated that documents analysis yields data-experts, quotations, and passages that are organized into major themes, categories and case examples through content analysis.

Thereafter it was thought best to go further into the topic of what the reason for triangulation is. It was answered by the given sources as: to ensure creditability by using multiple sources of evidence. These sources can be interviews, critical readers (experts) or any other form of relevant sources. Examples are: state publications, newspapers, minutes of meetings, letters, accredited articles and other literature, websites, census data, maps, court documents, wills, company and government policy documents, manuals, handbooks, photographers, magazines, books, brochures, advertisements, flyers, and even television and radio broadcasts.

Dr Vos also added the explanation of: primary documents, this kind is being created, quality: created by people close to the topic we are studying and then: secondary documents, created by people not immediately related to the topic but a later stage.

This opened the floor for other researchers to pose questions and elaborate on this topic. Dr Kwatubana asked about other documents that could possibly be used such as public records and personal documents and stated that these are also some categories to know where the focus will be on which according to Dr Vos will fall under primary documents.

These thoughts led Prof Conley to ask how the eligibility of social media and news articles can be measured. Where does it fit in? The ethical consideration thereof will form an important part. Some of the issues that must be considered are: the original purpose of the document, the reason why it is compiled, the target audience and who was the author, was it written from first-hand experience or from secondary sources and also the representativeness of the documents. And only after taking this into consideration reflecting back of Prof Conley's question, Dr VD Vyver pointed out that we have to look at who is the author and who is the target audience.

Dr de Beer enlightened the fact that if you analyze the tendency of this "social media/newspapers" it is applicable but if you want to go into content it would not be wise. You can look at natural settings, strong validities. Prof Conley referred to a recent event of the Gupta publicly contents, FNB situation and social media. When it is out there it becomes public. On company account it becomes property of the company. Emails, Social media etc. If a researcher want to make use of document analysis, you have to state clearly what TYPE of sources you are going to use and explain why.

Prof Heystek also shared about the Canadian policy about leadership. What is the role and authority of a leader? A very good example of a good and interesting document analysis. Is there a problem about using a secondary sources? Interpretation. Use secondary sources, a good quality to triangulate.

Dr Vos posed the next question posed: Can document analysis be used as a "stand-alone" method? In other words, you do not have to go do interviews in other words, what do you think? This triggered a big discussion between the researchers and

moved Dr De Beer to the thoughts that the moment you look at a lived experience, it is not looked as a cold document, you will also see the people behind it, quoted the personal experience. However a literature document cannot be taken as lived experience seeing that it will be linked to a paradigm and not a design.

Then the last question was posed: By looking at the functions of document analysis, what are the advantages and disadvantages of a document analysis?

According to the literature taken from the given sources< the advantages stated is that document analyzing is not time consuming, available without the permission of the authors, cost-effective, documents are not affected by the research process, documents can be repeatedly reviewed, exactness, broad coverage (long time, many events). Prof Mutekwe adding one more: providing data, details that can no longer be observed. And not reactant like people are towards certain aspects. Dr Vos also adding that another good thing will be that documents provide background. Verification also of findings through triangulations.

The disadvantages were that they have insufficient detail, low retrievability (deliberately blocked), biased selective. Example: doctoral student that is looking at documents of university of minutes/ disciplinary use. Maybe blocked to ethical reasons but then also deliberately blocked. Bias sensitivity. With this literature leading to a discussion by Dr VD Vyver and Dr Kwatubana: the same advantages and disadvantages for document analysis will be there as for qualitative data. Sampling methods in qualitative research. If you put any of the sources aside, you have to say why you have taken out. Because it is qualitative and thus objective, you have to be selective towards your argument but specify why.

This the lastly led to a discussion by Dr Kwatubana that researchers who are keen on making use of mixed methods will make use of document analysis with other data as well along with their quantitative data analysis. At the end of the day it is clearly mixed methods. They say they are doing a document analysis but they mean they are doing a literature review.

From this discussion it became clear that a good topic to consider for the future will be "what the role and authority of a leader is". A very good example of a good and interesting document analysis. Another thing noted by the researchers are that students get confused between what a literate review is and what a document analysis

is and that they are two separate things. Overall, it was a very productive and insightful morning to the Edu-Lead researchers.

Sources used:

Bowen, G.A., 2009. Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative research journal*, 9(2), pp.27-40. And Mills, A.J., Durepos, G. and Wiebe, E. eds., 2010. *Encyclopedia of case study research: L-z; index (Vol. 1)*. Sage