



An overview of ethnographic research

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Abstract

Ethnography, often known as cultural anthropology or naturalistic inquiry, is one of the main methods used in qualitative research. It has an anthropological foundation. Ethnography focuses on identifying and describing a group's or individuals' culture. Considering the idea of culture is the primary focus of ethnographic research, hence the question that is posed from this perspective is that What are the cultural traits of a certain group of people? Here, "culture" refers to the set of rules and societal norms that emerge over the course of several generations. Ethnographic study aids in searching exceedingly difficult or intricate design problems. When a researcher is seeing, monitoring, or dealing with the target audience in their real-life setting, they must be exceptionally strong and effective. One of the most significant qualitative research methods involves ethnography, in which the researcher interacts or observes the target population. Population and researchers are crucial for obtaining accurate cultural data, which is why Cultural ethnography or cultural anthropology are other names for ethnographic study. Research of this nature is research in social science. We are aware that there are several types of ethnographic study. For instance, confessional Life history research and ethnography feminist ethnographic research realism ethnographic research, critical ethnography, etc. Realistic ethnography and critical ethnography are the two most prevalent and well-liked types of ethnography research among the several types available. The "Realistic Ethnography Research" is occasionally referred to as conventional Critical ethnography study, on the other hand, focuses on those groups or groups of people those who are excluded from society. The researcher is the most challenging aspect of ethnographic study should pretend to be a member of the target demographic and spend months or even years with the target population, populace or gathering. As a result, ethnographic research is both qualitative and quantitative Long-term researches.

Keywords: ethnography research, naturalistic inquiry, qualitative research

Introduction

The ideal method for conducting qualitative research is ethnography, sometimes referred to as cultural anthropology or naturalistic inquiry. It has an anthropological foundation. Ethnography focuses on identifying and describing a group's culture. Since the idea of culture is the main focus of ethnographic research. Because of this, the issue that arises from this point of view is: What are the cultural traits of a group of people? Here, "culture" refers to the set of rules and guidelines that over the span of several generations, society changes. As with humans, culture is a synthesis of many forms of knowledge, conviction, practise, morality, laws, customs, habits, attitudes, human behaviour patterns, literature, and the like Language, religion, and religious practise are passed down from generation to generation and from person to generation, which consists, all of our adjustments, and pleasant quality, ongoing process, accumulation, interconnection, evolution, and diversity from one culture to another society etc. Because of this, culture and society are inseparable. Ethnographic research aids in the investigation of extremely difficult or complex design problems. When a researcher is seeing, monitoring, or dealing with the target audience in their real-life setting, they must be exceptionally strong and effective. A type of ethnographic research is one of the most significant qualitative studies involves interaction or observation with the target population. Researcher plays a crucial role in gathering meaningful cultural data, which is why ethnography is referred to as cultural anthropology or cultural ethnography. Social science research includes this sort of study. We are aware that there are several types of ethnographic study. For instance, confessional Life history research and ethnography feminist ethnographic study and realism ethnographic research ethnographic study, research on critical ethnography, etc. The two most popular and widely used forms of ethnography research are Realistic ethnography and critical ethnography are common types of ethnographic study. Research". Traditional ethnographic research is another name for "Realistic Ethnography Research. "whereas "Critical Ethnography Research" focuses on those persons or groups who are disadvantaged in social life. The hardest part of doing an ethnographic study is having the researcher pretend to be a member of the target group or community and spend months or even years with them. Consequently, ethnographic research is both a qualitative and a longitudinal study.

An ethnographic study is often a methodical investigation into a particular community and its culture. These qualities explanations of "culture phenomena" using ethnographic research, where the ethnographic researcher accurately studies society from the perspective of the object of observation. Its objective is to witness a scene

that is distinct, novel, and natural. The names of some notable researchers who contributed to ethnography are E. B. Tylor, Franz Boas, Ruth Benedict, Bronislaw Malinowski, Lewis H. Morgan, Franz Boas, Bronislaw Malinowski, Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead etc.

Types of the ethnography research

There are several types of Ethnography research. Examples of ethnographic study include confessional ethnography, life history ethnography, feminist ethnography, realism ethnography, critical ethnography, and so on. The two most popular and widely used kinds of ethnographic research are First, realist ethnography; second, critical ethnography. Traditional ethnography research is another name for realist ethnography. Cultural anthropologists utilise it. It is Van Maamen's creation. This sort of study focuses mostly on individuals rather than groups, which is why it is referred to as objective cum traditional cultural research. In contrast, the focus of critical ethnographic study focuses on socially underprivileged groups or people. On the other hand, a critical ethnographer who is also politically active opposes the underprivileged segments of our society, particularly the schedule cast and tribe schedule. We are well aware that the timeline set forth in the National Policy on Education of 1986 Schedule tribes are regarded as one of India's most disadvantaged sections. Like the name implies When doing critical ethnographic research, the researcher encounters several challenging circumstances. collected vital information from the tribe and the tribal community. Here, the researcher should be flexible in the ability to create inductive hypotheses. It indicates that the inductive hypothesis is thinking about relating the observed circumstance to the actual situation. The researcher may adjust or change the inductive hypothesis during the research process depending on the circumstances or the researcher's own viewpoint. the hardest the researcher should pose as a member of the target population and spend time conducting ethnographic research a few months or maybe a few years with the intended audience or group. Ethnographic research is not therefore only qualitative in nature, but longitudinal in nature as well.

Essential features of ethnography research

There are a number of features of ethnographic research, some of which are significant and are detailed here.

- A year or longer is often spent studying the cultural aspects of a group or civilization by an ethnographer.
- Because it is a "completely immersed living and work approach," ethnographic research is seen as being popular.
- We often argue that if "immersive live and work" Ethnography research is held on require within the field of "User-Cantered Design" (UCD) or "User Driven Development" (UDD) in which researcher is given "intensive attention" at each stage of the design process.
- A quick ethnographic study may be beneficial for a "user-centered design initiative."
- Ethnography research uses a variety of techniques, including participant observation and descriptive surveys, interviews, and interactions.
- In a naturalistic setting, it describes a method of large and thorough data collecting on a wide range of observable variables over a lengthy period of time. The observable variables are researched where they naturally exist, when they occur, and without the researcher having any control over the environmental and experimental conditions.
- Participant observation is used as the primary data gathering method in ethnographic studies, in addition to interviews with community or group members. Depending on the severity of the issue, participant observation in this case may last anywhere between a month and a year.
- The Emic viewpoint refers to how ethnographers focus on how the people of the culture being studied see their own culture.
- The Etic perspective- The Ethnographer approaches certain outsiders to learn how they see various behaviours or events connected to the culture being studied and to analyse them.
- The symbols allude to any type of material, including works of art, architecture, technology, clothing, etc. These symbols are used by ethnographers to analyse cultural behaviour.
- Tacit knowledge: It is related to the in-depth and covert understanding of cultural advantages and presumptions. However, the Researcher infers this knowledge and uses it on their own; neither formally nor informally is it communicated with the informants.
- In ethnographic research, hypotheses are developed using qualitative data that the researcher has access to. They were not before thought of. If the hypothesis changes as the data are being collected, it can be abandoned at any time and new hypotheses can be formulated.
- Action and Interaction within the Organization: The researcher uses the behaviour, actions, and interactions of the original group members in ethnographic studies to gather and analyse data based on observations.

Steps in ethnographic research

- Since selecting or identifying a topic is the initial stage in doing research, the evaluation of pertinent literature aids the researcher in defining the problem.
- The researcher has selected a broad area of inquiry after studying the pertinent literature. for instance, the "Santhal" Tribes of West Bengal have unique art and culture.
- After deciding on a wide topic, the researcher should focus on a very particular study issue. The researcher should, for instance, choose a particular district, such as West Bengal's Bankura District.

- Another essential stage in doing ethnographic research is developing a hypothesis based on the study's goal. It should be mentioned that since ethnography research is entirely qualitative, the researcher creates "inductive" hypotheses that may change or adapt depending on environmental/situational requirements or conditions.
- The next crucial step is to choose the population. A population is a grouping of certain groups. It is always defined correctly. A block in the district of West Bengal houses the population of the researcher here.
- The researcher creates a sample frame using the population and its attributes after choosing a population and listing all the units. The particular Block in West Bengal's Bankura District shall serve as this example frame.
- The researcher in this instance employs participant observation to specifically gather information from the sample frame (cultural facets of the "Santhal" Tribe).
- In this case, the researcher conducts ethnography research using special instruments and methods. Examples include an interview, an open-ended questionnaire, an opinion survey, an audio or video recording, a schedule, a rating scale, etc.
- The researcher then does data analysis.
- generalisation and interpretation
- Results and conclusion

Ethnography research method and procedure

The researcher observes the target audiences in their natural surroundings. The information (which is mostly descriptive in nature) gathered by in-depth observation, free-form conversation, unstructured interviews, questionnaires, or opinion surveys. Typically, ethnographic studies include the use of qualitative information, such as elaborate descriptions and in-depth inquiries. These facts are based on the inductive method. Intensive observation assists the ethnographer in gathering "first-hand information." discusses a few cultural events in a thorough and thorough manner. Information gleaned via extensive and participatory observation often entails

- A thorough and compelling description.
- Increase empathy and comprehension.
- Being open and adaptable
- It alludes to the lengthy fieldwork where data is collected by direct interviewing, open-ended engagement, symbol and coadding, participant observation, etc.

The ethnographer then utilises the purposeful sampling approach, in which all samples are consciously chosen, on the premise that every situation, such as persons in the community or group of people being studied, is exceptional and unique. This kind of study is often informative and enlightening.

The following stage will incorporate data analysis techniques that take cultural aspects, cultural behaviour, and the meaning of human action into account. Although verbal expressiveness is the major focus of this research, statistical tests and aptitude for math are also important. Data collection, processing, and interpretation are crucial processes analysis of ethnographic research. Research in ethnography focuses on characterising a group's or individual's culture bunch of people in a highly precise and intricate manner. The ethnographer makes an observation mental exercises, education, reading, tradition, matrimony, dressing, and other cultural pursuits. This researcher is exposed to cultural characteristics in their everyday lives. In Ethnography research the researcher wants to gather available information, normal and abnormal information, what they say and how they work. Cultural ethnographer or ethnographer today gets a high value on doing Ethnography study.

Type of data involved and ethnography techniques & tools

The data analysis strategy utilised in ethnographic research strives to provide a comprehensive description of the cultural traits of a population. The primary method for gathering information about cultural traits including language, marriage, family life, child rearing practises, social relationships, and rules of conduct is observation. In these studies, conduct, religious beliefs, and behaviours. Typically, ethnographic research focuses on empirical information about a group of people and their culture. It is a significant area in both humanities and social science. This type of research typically necessitates a "long term commitment" from the researcher, who is willing to engage with over a long length of time, people. The prolonged amount of time might range from a few weeks to more than a year. To provide a healthy connection that allows for more detailed and intimate information about the group or community, "several techniques of data gathering" may be used. Research on ethnography may include field description, open-ended questionnaire, interview, and observation, particularly participant observation descriptive analysis To "find logical pattern and social structure in non-western civilization," kinship charts are frequently employed. Ethnographic studies can be conducted top-down or bottom-up, depending on the researcher investigating cultural issues via experience, involvement, and engagement.

A few ethnography research associated with educational topics

Today's ethnographic research is not only extensive, but it may also be referred to as a "user centric design project" in its early phases. This is so that the "design process" may be developed and understood, which is a major emphasis of ethnographic study. Consequently, this form of study begins a project with a focus on cultural

studies to aid in "future design decision." For instance: Ethnography studies have been used in educational contexts to being employed in the USA to look at issues like: student leadership positions in urban, racialized high schools student-teacher relationships at a suburban high school, and social interactions in an emotionally disturbed class kids that are acting out, etc. the disparities in the physical processes of teenage growth between tribal and non-tribal females, the student culture in an IIT, staff-parent interactions in non-formal education centres, changes in attitudes and behaviour in drug misuse recovery clinics; multilingual instruction at a CBSE school, for example, might be implemented utilising ethnographic methods in the Indian culture

Advantages of ethnography research

- One of the main benefits of ethnographic research is that it may be used to find and examine unforeseen problems.
- An ethnographer needs to be mentally capable of creating a speculative and risky coding research.
- A thorough and ethical description, a naturalistic investigation, a primary data collection method, external and internal criticism, an in-depth data collection technique, an objective and subjective pole on intentionality, participant observation, theory development rather than theory testing, and a description of cultural context phenomena in a naturalistic investigation, etc., involve and are interdependent and connected to the study of ethnographic study.
- The strength of ethnography research, according to Best and Khan (2002, p. 197), is the ability to observe Natural behaviour in real-world contexts without being constrained by more traditional research procedures.
- Unlike other types of study, ethnographic research is dependent on the researcher's level of expertise.
- Thinking, feeling, sensation, perception and intuition, understanding, analysis, organization, comparison, classification, verification and generalization involves with Ethnography research.
- The topic of ethnography is very important. Research into tribal groups and ape tribes that are excluded from our elite social civilisation is called ethnography.

Disadvantage of Ethnography Research

- Time consumption is one of the key drawbacks or complaints of ethnographic research.
- Ethnographic research is quite individualised.
- To perform an ethnography study, a thorough, knowledgeable, and skilled researcher is required.
- To study the Ethnography research, the researcher must have sensitivity.
- Ethnography study requires extensive fieldwork over a long period of time. It might not always be feasible.
- Ethnography study takes a lot of time and money, in addition to being time-consuming.
- Because this form of study is very subjective, there may be subjective bias in doing it. ethnographic study.
- It uses a descriptive method, which is to say that it relies on "story telling" and significant incident.
- Less concern with causal relationships
- Less interaction with formulation and testing hypothesis.

Conclusion

From the analysis and description above, it is clear that ethnographic research is qualitative. It calls for a superior research design. Its primary goal is to accurately and uniformly characterise cultural occurrences. Its main focus is the community, tribe, or group and its culture. However, ethnography is another option Because it might be exceedingly difficult to generalise the fact, studies may be less trustworthy. Its design is unique, making it less repeatable not just difficult but also vital.

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