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A Methodological Blueprint for Social Sciences Research - The Social Sciences Research Methodology Framework Norbert E Haydam1, Pieter Steenkamp2 Abstract: Most research practice constructs in social sciences are predominantly well defined and constructed, yet many authors hold different interpretations of certain key terms and concepts
causing a degree of confusion, overlap and uncertainty. The term 'qualitative research' is such a case in point. Not only does this concept show different interpretations by many authors, but there is also uncertainty about how this concept relates to exploratory research or other contemporary social research practice concepts. It is also unclear
whether a longitudinal research approach can be applied to qualitative research or related concepts. In order to provide a clear perspective on the above-mentioned dilemma, the authors recommend the application of the so-called social sciences research methodology framework, which follows Saunders' (2009) research 'onion' approach. This
proposed framework provides an uncluttered and unambiguous guide to social sciences research methodologies and constructs clearly positioned in a structured and simplistic way. The research employed was fundamental in nature. Inductive rational philosophical reasoning was used, and a theoretical
analysis was applied through a systematic literature review of published text. In the end, the framework provides a unified understanding of most social sciences research constructs and at the same time acts as an aiding tool in the evaluation of all academic work, thereby enabling various examiners to provide clear and unambiguous guidance to
contributors and students alike. Keywords: Social sciences research practice; research framework; research framework; research practice, as well as its accompanying terms and constructs, has evolved over time. Although most terms
and concepts in social sciences are predominantly well defined and constructed, many authors hold different interpretations of the concept qualitative research as it relates to social sciences
research practice. Starting with the concept itself, a number of sampled authors hold different interpretations of the term 'qualitative research by including phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory and the case study method, as well as the common
research techniques of focus groups, in-depth interviews, and projective techniques. According to Welman et al. (2005, pp. 193-207) it comprises of phenomenology, depth interviews, focus groups, observation, in addition to historical and participatory research studies. In the third instance, the view held by de Vos et al. (2011, pp. :313-323) on
qualitative research is not restricted to phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory and the case study method alone, but also incorporates the biographical narrative method as an option. Taking a different stance, Wilson (2019, p. 122) regards qualitative research in its narrow sense comprising of focus groups, depth interviews, observation and the case study method alone, but also incorporates the biographical narrative method as an option. Taking a different stance, Wilson (2019, p. 122) regards qualitative research in its narrow sense comprising of focus groups, depth interviews, observation and the case study method alone, but also incorporates the biographical narrative method as an option.
projective techniques as data collection methods. Finally, a mixed engagement is posited by Cooper and Schindler (2006, pp. 198-209) who not only include individual depth interviews and group interviews, but also add the case study method and action research as additional methods in their view of the qualitative research engagement. To limit the
confusion in this regard, an all-inclusive definition of qualitative research is sought. Furthermore, the disagreement of what constitutes qualitative research has further implications of the concept qualitative research, various authors would
indirectly define the mixed methods approach as applying at least one qualitative component in a single research project or programme differently (De Vos, et al. 2011, pp. 434-439). For Cooper and Schindler (2006), for instance, it would be either, individual depth interviews or group interviews and a quantitative method.
whereas Babin and Zikmund (2010) would include phenomenology or even ethnography in the qualitative component. Consequently, this adds to the confusion, and a singular definition is called for. There is uncertainty what actually constitutes qualitative research; likewise, there is uncertainty among authors between qualitative and exploratory
research as two related concepts. In its application, exploratory research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 156-157); for another it is part of the qualitative research (Babin & Zikm
research flows (De Vos et al., 2012, pp. 95-96; pp. 312-323). A clear differentiation between qualitative and exploratory research will contextualise these approaches. In the fourth instance, other ambiguities arise with the limited application of defined concepts outside the term qualitative research. It is about how non-related concepts are defined
research, it disallows the inclusion of the qualitative Delphi technique method as a longitudinal true panel study. Hence, another more open definition or application for longitudinal research is sought in order to make the concept more inclusive. Finally, although most authors show a thorough understanding and grasp of all quantitative and/or
qualitative constructs, the groupings and arrangement of these seem to be vague at times. It begs the question for instance: how do pragmatically defined social research, cohort design, cross sectional and longitudinal designs, descriptive and experimental research
histography, exploratory research, meta-analysis, mix method research design, systematic review, inductive logic, etc. relate to qualitative research? Additionally, one would ask, how can these quantitative and/or qualitative constructs be grouped and structured
to ensure common and logical interpretations? In order to provide a clear perspective to the above-mentioned and other concerns, the paper recommends the application of the so-called social sciences research methodology framework. This proposed framework provides an uncluttered and unambiguous approach to social sciences research
methodology with relevant social sciences methodologies and constructs clearly positioned in a structured and simplistic way. This engagement will assist both academia and students in all of their research knowledge, if this proposed structure is offered as part of any postgraduate coursework
it will provide a unison understanding of most social sciences research constructs. Additionally, this proposed research framework can also act as an aiding tool in the evaluation of all academic work, which at the same time will enable various examiners to provide clear and unambiguous guidance to contributors and students alike. The paper,
nevertheless, does not provide definitions to all the terms and concepts used in the text, nor does it offer reasons why key concepts are constructed and grouped as they are, as this lies beyond the scope and context of this work. It does, however, align all mainstream social research practice terms in a systematic way using the research 'onion
approach of Saunders' et al. (2009). This approach makes it possible for academia to locate research text and phrases and position them into the bigger picture of social research methodology and literature review within which the social sciences research methodology
framework is proposed. Aim The aim of the paper is to put forward a social sciences research methodology framework which structurally and logically groups the social research designs, data collection techniques and methods, using the research 'onion' approach of Saunders et al
(2009, pp. 106-109). Research Methodology The research methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both the sociological and methodological and method
literature review of published text. The full explanation of the methodology followed is related to the social sciences research methodology framework (Table 1) and can be found in the conclusion section. Literature Review The paper is based on the research 'onion' approach of Saunders et al. (2009: 108) of structuring research practice. In order to
contextualise all contemporary research terms and constructs, and to group these concepts into a coherent flow, a revised research 'onion' is considered. The new nine-stepped research 'onion' approach is illustrated in Figure 1, which will act as a guide in the discussion to follow. The recommended and detailed social sciences research methodology
framework put forward for consideration using the 'onion' approach is depicted in Table 1. Ta
Social constructivism, (ii) interpretivism, (iii) positivism & post-positivism, (vi) rationalism, (vii) functionalism, (vii) functionalism, (viii) positivism, (vii) pragmatism and (vi) neoliberalism. For basic research, the sociological point of
departure and/or life orientation must be stated 4. Research logic: Exposition: Reporting study (^) Research argument: (i) inductive reasoning, (ii) deductive logic, and (iii) abductive reasoning 5. Research DESIGN OBSERVATIONAL
RESEARCH DESIGN CAUSAL RESEARCH DESIGN 6. Time horizon: Longitudinal Cross-sectional Cross-sectional Longitudinal Cross-sectional Longitudinal Cross-sectional Longitudinal Cross-sectional Longitudinal Cross-sectional Longitudinal Cross-sectional Longitudinal Cross-sectional Cross-sectional Cross-sectional Longitudinal Cross-sectional Cross-sectional Longitudinal Cross-sectional Longitudinal
Content analysis (Grounded theory) Qualitative research (Phenomenology) Case analysis Preliminary study Researcher-subject relationships Simulated studies Narrative biographies (Hermeneutics) Non-experimental research design Person-administrated interviews Telephone-administrated interviews Self-administrated questionnaires Human
observation Observation of physical objects (Process & flow analysis) Experimental research design (pre-experimental, true-experimental, true-experimental, quasi-experimental & statistical-experimental or market testing, applying both descriptive and observational research tactics 8. Data collection techniques and research methods: Systematic (literature) review,
meta-analysis and philosophical analysis Secondary data searches, market tracking, environmental scanning, and reporting study (^) Literature review Data mining, statistical modelling, forecasting studies, trade area analysis and market potential study (Sibliometrics) and searches, market tracking, environmental scanning, and reporting study (Sibliometrics) and market potential study (Sibliometrics) and searches, market tracking, environmental scanning, and reporting study (Sibliometrics) and searches, market tracking, environmental scanning, and reporting study (Sibliometrics) and searches, market tracking, environmental scanning, and reporting study (Sibliometrics) and searches, market tracking, environmental scanning, and reporting study (Sibliometrics) and searches, market tracking, environmental scanning, and reporting study (Sibliometrics) and searches, market tracking, environmental scanning, and reporting study (Sibliometrics) and searches, market tracking, environmental scanning, and reporting study (Sibliometrics) and searches, market tracking, environmental scanning, and reporting study (Sibliometrics) and searches, market tracking, environmental scanning, and reporting study (Sibliometrics) and searches, market tracking, environmental scanning, and reporting study (Sibliometrics) and searches (Sibliometrics) and sear
Grounded theory 2. Group discussions, Delphi method and individual interviews 3. Phenomenology 4. Ethnography (incl.netnography) and case study method 5. Pilot study and field experiment 6. Collaborative, action & participatory research, and participant-observer approach 7. Scenario research, game & role playing and futures research 8.
Narrative (biographical & auto-graphical analysis, life story & life history) account and storytelling 9. Hermeneutics and exegesis Electronic, fixed premises (CATI), text and multimedia based interviews and completely
automated telephone interviews (CATS) 3.1. Mail-administrated: Freepost, and direct mail surveys (postal & electronic) 3.2. Self-completion: paper and electronic (self-administrated) interviews, and mail panel surveys 1.1. Behavioural observation: media usage analysis, verbal & non-verbal communication and mystery shopper/visitor study 1.2.
Physiological reactions measurement 2. Audits (wholesale, retail, store & home audits) 3. Process and flow analysis See descriptive and observational data collection techniques and methods 9.1. Sample design Probability sampling design Non-probability sampling design Probability sampling design Non-probability sampling design Probability sampling design Probability sampling design Non-probability sampling Non-probability sampling design Non-p
Sample techniques: Sampled text (by topic x time x authors) 'Census design' (state time frame of literature collected) Convenience, quota, deviant case, theoretical, sequential, volunteer, experience, judgmental and snowball sampling Simple random, systematic (object & time based), stratified (proportionate/disproportionate/disproportionate), cluster (one & two
stage & area) and multi-stage sampling Census design Judgmental sampling Census design RR (units randomly assigned), RM (units matched), RRM (units matched), RRM (units both randomly matched and assigned), using descriptive and observational sample techniques. Census design 9.3. Measurement: Published text, governmental and official public records, data
depositories, internal records of public entities & organisations and internet sources Open-ended probing questions. Projective techniques Structured (Likert & rating scales) and semi-structured verbatim Observations and controlled structured questions 9.4. Data manipulation: Information,
content analysis and interpretation Category construction; deductively based (content analysis, analytical inductively based (content analysis).
Measuring structural relationships Measuring cause and effect relationships Source: Based on Iacobucci and Churchill (2010: 58-107), Hair, et al., (2008: 110-112), Haydam et al., (2011: 24-25), Dillon, et al., (2018: 115-164, 174-207), Merriam (2009: 21-76), Mouton (2006), Remenyi and Money (2004: 57-65, 69-79), Rooney et al., (2016: 147-156),
Salkin (1991:10-15), Saunders, et al., (2009,107-166), De Vos, et al., (2009,107-166), De Vos, et al., (2012:133-247, 297-396), Wilson (2019:102-113), and Babin and Zikmund (2010: 131-163, 189-279 Figure 1. The Research 'onion' as depicted in Table 1 and Figure 1, the
research process starts with the identification of the research knowledge base and ends with data collection and analysis at the central point. Knowledge Base The 'pursuit of knowledge' is a decision a research project from which all scientific engagements flow. In this regard, viewing scientific
knowledge as multidimensional, Mouton (2006, pp. 26-27; pp. 47-51) refers to four key elements or dimension), (ii) the methodical and systematic inquiry to obtain knowledge (methodological dimension), (iii) collecting knowledge as a social
practice (sociological dimension), and (iv) knowledge depicting the social world as 'reality' (the ontological dimension). For the latter engagement, researchers will define the 'unit of analysis' i.e. individuals, collectives, organisations (formal and informal), institutions, social actions and events, and cultural objects or interventions to guide the
ontological research process and designs in the social sciences. Guided by the problem at hand within the stated scientific dimension, the nature of scientific inquiry lies between the choice of basic and applied research with scholars conducting theoretical research process and designs in the social sciences. Guided by the problem at hand within the stated scientific dimension, the nature of scientific inquiry lies between the choice of basic and applied research with scholars conducting theoretical research process and designs in the social sciences.
p. 92). This choice between basic and applied research forms the basis of scientific inquiry on which the search forknowledge base has been defined, research philosophy and Argument Once the knowledge base has been defined, research philosophy.
According to Saunders et al. (2009:106), any chosen philosophy additionally carries key assumptions about the way a researcher views the world. At the same time this allows the researcher within the selected paradigm to defend the key propositions under investigation in a structured way. The choice of a research philosophy used is rather personal
but according to Bryman et al. (2011, p. 12-21), can be dictated by the knowledge base the researcher would expect an epistemological position, objectivism and constructionism could be considered. It must
be noted that researchers can engage in multiple paradigms at a time, thereby displaying different paradigms side by side and providing competing versions of reality (Bryman et al., 2011, p. 21). Overall, research philosophies can be grouped in terms of their subjective and the objective orientation to scientific inquiry. This philosophical grouping
rests on the spectrum of social constructivism, interpretivism, and the positivistic approach, with the latter claiming to be the most objective orientation would be deductive by nature and in the case of a subjective engagement, its logic
of argument would be inductive (De Vos et al., 2011, pp. 48-55). Other philosophical interpretations from this orientation, as in the case of realism and post-positivism, or cross-sectionally through specialised orientations such as critical theory and modernism. Finally, social scientists are expected to be
value free and objective in their research engagement, but this premise of neutrality can only be seen as an ideal rather than a doable reality. An approach to handling personal values would be to recognise and acknowledge these values in the research process and to be self-reflective about the influence these factors may have in this regard. Hence,
researchers would additionally forewarn readers about their biases and assumptions (Bryman et al., 2014, pp. 21-23) by stating their sociological point of departure or life orientation in order to put the research analysis and critique into context. This engagement becomes a necessity when executing basic research or some forms of interpretive social
research studies such as participant-observer research or intensive interviewing (Remenyi & Money, 2004, p. 78; Bryman et al., 2014, p. 22). Alternately, the research through a chosen value-laden research paradigm such as feminism or critical theory, thereby accepting the entrenched disposition upfront and be guided by
the premises these philosophies uphold. Research Strategies In its simplest terms, a research end goes about answering the research end goes about
which the research is conducted. It comprises the full spectrum of scientific research, as well as research questions and objectives, existing knowledge on the subject area, research methods and techniques, and the philosophical underpinnings guidence that all philosophical underpinnings of the research questions and objectives, existing knowledge on the subject area, research methods and techniques, and the philosophical underpinnings guidence that all philosophical underpinnings of the research questions and objectives, existing knowledge on the subject area.
rather than dictate to research strategy, one could group the research designs, namely the (i) archival, (ii) exploratory, (iii) descriptive, (iv) observational, and (v) causal research design. A research design, according to Bhattacherjee (2012, p. 35), is a comprehensive plan for data collection and provides a blueprint for
research. The author mentions that any design must specify at least three interrelated processes, namely (i) the data collection process, (ii) the instrument development process, and (iii) the sampling process. However, viewing each research methodology framework extends
each research design into six processes. These processes include: (i) that time horizon, (ii) research tactics applied, (iii) data collection techniques and research methods used, (iv) sample design, which incorporates sample size establishment and techniques, (v) measurement and (vi) data manipulation (as reflected in Table 1). The notion of the
archival research design lies within the scientific premise of 'science as a body or product of scientific knowledge'. Hence, the archival research design is underpinned by the documented edifice of science and includes all information, whether stored on paper or electronically. The other four research designs, on the other hand, posit the premise of
 'science as an ongoing practice of data collection' and should be seen as separate research designs (Mouton, 2006, pp. 13-16). In this regard, the exploratory research design encompasses all data collection techniques which provide a deeper insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or individual. On the other hand, descriptive research
design, commonly known by the descriptor 'sample or census surveys', includes all research which aids in the presentation of specific details of a situation, social setting or relationship. It focusses on answers to who, what, when, where, and how and creates a general picture of the condition under investigation (De Vos et al., 2011, pp. 95-99). The
observational research design is part exploratory and part descriptive research. However, its qualitative engagement is limited to semi-structured assessments in which participants record their behaviours and experiences. Its main differentiator lies in the way the data is collected, in other words the absence of an interviewer. The causal research
design mimics the descriptive research design in virtually all aspects. However, it additionally measures cause-and-effect relationships through involved intricate experimental designs. Finally, in the context of research methodology, any reference to the concept of 'quantitative research' would include both descriptive and causal research designs.
Time Horizon In terms of the time frame at hand, the researcher has to decide between cross-sectional or longitudinal research studies across all five defined research extended between cross-sectional or longitudinal research studies across all five defined research extended between cross-sectional or longitudinal research extended between cross-section and longitudinal research exte
where different sample units and sample elements are selected and surveyed over a certain time period (Saunders et al., 2009, pp. 155-156). Additionally, for both true panels and periodic panels, depending on whether the measured variables have
changed over time or not. Hence, a longitudinal continuous (periodic or true) panel indicates a study in which the measuring instrument stayed unchanged over time. Also, in applying a cohort research design as a variant to longitudinal studies, researchers have to specify whether a true or periodic panel study was applied. Research Tactics and Data
Collection Techniques and Methods Once a strategy has been selected, an appropriate action plan (tactic) with accompanying research methods and techniques must be chosen. A silo approach is applied in this regard. In other words, if, say, an exploratory research design is chosen as a research strategy, then only grounded theory, qualitative
research, phenomenology, case analysis, preliminary study, participatory and action research tactic has an accompanying data collection technique(s) and method(s). In this regard, the social sciences research methodology
framework sees qualitative research as a research and defines it in its narrow sense by including only group discussions, Delphi method and individual interviews as research methods. Without going into much detail, certain data collection techniques can also have their own specific variants. Depth interviews, for
example, have additional options to choose from, including the critical incident method, verbal protocol approach (Bryman et al., pp. 221-223), structured interviews (De Vos et al., 2012, pp. 348-353), the conversational interview (Babin & Zikmund, 2016, p. 127), etcetera. These
other words, it has no variants. In Table 1 it can be seen that causal research designs for its data collection and Analysis From here, each research designs for its data collection techniques and methods. Data Collection and Analysis From here, each research designs for its data collection techniques and methods.
reporting as prescribed by the research community through its sociological dimension. In this regard, exploratory and observational research with probability sampling techniques (Shao, 2002, pp. 42-45). In its application of the causal research design methods, Dillon et al. (1994,
pp. 197-198) differentiate the assignment of respondents to groups to be either randomly assigned (RRM), or when respondents are merely matched and the treatment is randomly assigned to groups (RM), or when respondents are both matched and randomly assigned (RRM). These randomised and at times
across research designs. In its simplest form, a post-graduate student will conduct both a literature review (archival research design) as well as, say, a telephonic sample survey (descriptive research design). More advanced approaches would include the mixed methods and triangulation methods. For the former methods, the researcher would
conduct group discussions, or apply the Delphi method, or execute individual interviews as the qualitative engagement, and additionally execute quantitative research by applying any descriptive or causal data collection technique, say, face-to-face at home interviews. Triangulation, on the other hand, would apply any three data collection techniques
and methods across all five research designs, and/or within the same category of a design. It would, for example, execute a group discussion, individual interviews and conduct a biographical narrative life analysis. In the same way, many variants may be possible within a specific data collection technique. For example, the case study method can cover
all the required qualitative dimensions, but the researcher may want to supplement the collection dimension through a staff census survey. Each data collection dimensions, but the researcher may want to supplement the collected data by using a descriptive data collection dimension through a staff census survey. Each data collection dimensions, but the researcher may want to supplement the collected data by using a descriptive data collection dimension through a staff census survey.
approach both unilaterally and/or across designs applying multiple methods with the one building upon the previous one until enough data is gathered over an interval of time (Labaree, 2019). Conclusion Firstly, the proposed social sciences research methodology framework as depicted through the augmented nine stepped research 'onion' approach
is a structured and sequential research process with each stage feeding into the other to provide an all-inclusive framework, it forces research endeavours in a simple, clear and logical way
Secondly, the application of the social sciences research methodology framework allows for direct and unambiguous instruction of how any research methodology employed is fundamental by nature and draws on both
the sociological and methodological knowledge base by applying an inductive rational philosophical approach. In this regard, an archival research design was applied, using a theoretical analysis through a systematic literature review of published text.' Table 2. The Methodology Now becomes clear and certain and is as Follows Fundamental: No
empirical research was done or any questionnaires were used. Sociological knowledge base: The study aims to assist the social sciences research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with its institutionalised frameworks by enhancing the research community with the research community with the research community with the research community with the research community with
research data is collected by critically assessing the current research techniques and methods (Mouton, 2006, pp. 35-44). The intended outcome in this regard is to propose a new social sciences research conceptual framework of the topic under investigation (i.e. research methods) (Garbers, 1996, pp. 279). Inductive: It uses a qualitative research
approach and builds from facts and theory to a general truth. It hopes to engage in a new social sciences research conceptual framework or to obtain a systematic explanation of the topic under investigation (i.e. research methods) (Garbers, 1996, p. 279). Rational philosophical approach: The authors believe that human reason is superior to all other
forms of knowing and view empirical research as fallible and misleading. They furthermore acknowledge that knowledge obtained through basic research design: A research strategy, as defined in the social sciences research methodology framework.
Theoretical analysis: For this study, a theoretical argument was used in its engagement. Systematic literature review: The contributions of existing research, i.e. the body of completed and recorded work produced by research methods in social science) of investigation were
critically evaluated (Fink, 2005, p. 3, p. 17). Published text: This is the evidence collected for this research engagement. In the third instance, the five research designs provide valid options for any research engagement. In the third instance, the five research designs provide valid options for any research engagement. In the third instance, the five research designs provide valid options for any research engagement.
investigation. This is expressed by the stated research philosophy, which ultimately depends on the research topic at hand, as well as the social point of departure or life orientation of the investigator. Furthermore, the key and ambiguous terms as noted in the introduction are now fully clarified through this framework. Qualitative research as a key
concept is classified as a research tactic of exploratory research and includes only group discussions, Delphi method and individual interviews as data collection techniques. Quantitative research designs and their subsequent data collection techniques and methods.
Therefore, when applying mixed methods as a lateral approach in the social sciences, the researcher would include group discussions and/or causal research design method, for example, person administrated and self-administrated, or any
observational method. Also, triangulation as an alternate lateral approach within the framework applies to any three data collection techniques and method, on the other hand, is a consecutively staged approach, which also
employs multiple methods unilaterally or across research designs, until sufficient data has been collected for the problem at hand. Lastly, the concept of longitudinal studies is no longer limited to quantitative research, but cuts across all five defined research designs. In other words, the new definition allows for repeat observations using, say, group
discussions, case studies or even a narrative analysis over time. Its application extends to include any type of model building tactic (see archival research design), for example, data mining, statistical modelling, forecasting studies, trade area analysis and market potential study, as well as any observational research study. In the fifth instance, in
addition to all the benefits that a structured social sciences research model brings (see introduction), with a formal framework to work from for the first time, it allows additional research tactics and data collection techniques and methods, including new research designs in their entirety to slot into the proposed structure. This social sciences
research framework then will become a self-feeding system, which automatically updates itself. Finally, the authors acknowledge that within its scientific nature and through the everlasting quest for truthful knowledge, this social sciences research framework will remain incomplete, thereby encouraging further research into this topic. Nonetheless
with this proposed research framework, social sciences research inquiry is now significantly closer to having a fully structured social sciences research framework and the authors therefore call on academia and scholars to consider this framework when engaging in any aspect of social sciences research methodology. Table 3. Terms and Concepts
Knowledge Base and Reasoning. Abductive reasoning: 'thought experiment' Abduction refers to the logic associated with trying to explain a surprising or unexpected event and to determine what might have caused it. In this regard, abduction is a process in reverse: working back from an observed consequence to a probable antecedent or cause
(Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 89). Similar to inductive reasoning, abductive reasoning formulates hypotheses to explain symptoms as observable facts instead of goals (Finin & Morris, 1988, p. 2). It is characterised by the lack of completeness, either in the evidence, or in the explanation, or both. Typically beginning with an incomplete set of
observations or with some common well- known accepted facts, it proceeds to the most likely possible explanation for the set. Given the use of incomplete observations, the conclusion as the correct one (Shuttleworth, 2008)
Basic research Basic research is primarily undertaken to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena and observable facts, without any particular application or use in view. It analyses properties, structures and relationships with a view to formulate and test hypotheses, theories or laws. Basic research allows scientists some
freedom when setting their goals (Gulbrandsen & Kyvik, 2010, pp. 343-344). Cohort design A specific type of longitudinal study that samples a group of people of a population who are united by some commonality or similarity, i.e. they share the same pre-defined characteristics or common event in time, e.g. baby boomers. Rather than studying
statistical occurrence within the general population, a cohort study makes note of statistical occurrence within a specialised subgroup (Labaree, 2019). Continuous panel "A fixed sample of respondents who are measured repeatedly over time with respect to the same variable" (Churchill et al., 2010, p. 110). Deductive reasoning: (testing theory)
Knowledge proceeds from the general to the specific and is compatible with methodologies emphasizing experimental control, structured and replicable observation and measurement, quantification and generalisation of data given an outsider's objective perspective. Unlike induction, the researcher starts with a clear conceptual framework, e.g. a
theory which rigidly guides the research process, including conceptualisation, operationalisation, data collection and a detailed frame of reference for the analysis and interpretation of data. The emerging data is assessed through hypothesis testing and the theory will in the end be conclusively confirmed or rejected and represented as proof, i.e.
being valid and true. In this regard, deductive logic is also at times referred to as hypothesis-testing research and is typical of descriptive studies which follow a quantitative approach (Garbers, 1996, pp. 278-279). Discontinuous panel "A fixed sample of respondents who are measured repeatedly over time but on variables that change from
measurement to measurement" (Churchill et al., 2010, pp. 110). Epistemological dimension engages in the acquisition of knowledge in a discipline. Accepting this notion as being an elusive ideal, it uses the construct 'goodness of fit' as a research engagement to approximate reality (Mouton
2006:46-51; Bryman et al., 2011, pp. 12-13). Inductive reasoning: (building theory) The reasoning that proceeds from facts to theory or from experiences to general truths is regarded as induction. It is a research engagement which is typified by
a qualitative research approach where the researcher initiates a research project without any initial conceptual framework to work from. As the framework is less structured, the researcher looks for links and patterns within the exploratory data, which is loosely guided by conjectures. The intended outcome in this regard is to engage in a new
conceptual framework, or to obtain a systematic explanation of the topic under investigation (Garbers, 1996, p. 279). The methodological features of such an engagement can be summarised as: (i) unstructured observation and interviewing, (ii) ideographic descriptions, (iii) qualitative analysis and the (iv) intersubjective predisposition of objectivity
(Garbers, 1996, p. 279). Methodological dimension This dimension is concerned with the 'knowledge of how'. It includes the critical assessment of research techniques and methodological dimension This dimension This dimension This dimension This dimension This dimension is concerned with the 'knowledge of how'. It includes the critical assessment of research techniques and methodological dimension This dimension This dimension This dimension This dimension This dimension is concerned with the 'knowledge of how'. It includes the critical assessment of research techniques and methodological dimension This dimension T
with the nature of social phenomena. Drawing knowledge from the social world, it studies individuals, collectives, formal and informal organisations, institutions, social actions and events, cultural objects and interventions as units of investigation (Mouton, 2006, pp. 46-51; Bryman et al., 2011, pp. 16-17). Panel (true/periodic) The sample elements of a continuous and informal organisations, institutions, social actions and events, cultural objects and interventions as units of investigation (Mouton, 2006, pp. 46-51; Bryman et al., 2011, pp. 16-17).
true panel (in the case of respondents) have agreed in advance to be interviewed, or (in the case of objects) are compelled to be observed over a certain period of time (Iacobucci and Churchill, 2010:89). Periodic panels, on the other hand, are also conducted at regular intervals as per longitudinal time dimension, but unlike true panels, new samples
researchers follow implicit and explicit rules within institutionalised frameworks which impose constructs as to what is scientifically acceptable. Social control is institutionalised in this regard through review systems, rules of promotion within research organisations and membership as well as recognition of cited authors (Mouton, 2006, pp. 41-45).
Table 4. Terms and Concepts: Mainstream Research Philosophies. Behaviourism According to behaviourism, human and animal behavior can both be explained in terms of external stimuli, responses, learned histories and reinforcements through a cause and effect analysis. It argues that positive and negative reinforcements can change desired
to observation) are only discernable through their effects. Concerning itself with social phenomena, it sees the social world as mediated and transformed in daily life and researchers are tasked to construct hypotheses about mechanisms capable of producing patterns of events
(Bryman et al., 2011, p. 12, pp. 57-58). Critical theory Accepting that bias is present in all actions of human beings, critical theory aims to understand the conduct of societies and to establish the various forms of bias. It is concerned with how injustices and subjugation shape people's experiences and understanding of the world. It also critiques and
advocates issues relating to the inequalities of gender, race, class and other forms of oppression within a culture by challenging the nature of societies through scientific reasoning (De Vos et al., 2011, pp. 5-10; Maree (ed.), 2007, p. 21). Feminism Feminism attempts to give a voice to women and to correct the male dominated perspectives in the
social sciences. It is concerned with the under-representation of women and women's experiences within the social sciences both as subjects of research producers. It analyses how women were discriminated against and how the social structures in society influenced women negatively, thereby giving men an unfair advantage over them
In this regard, it aims to acquire knowledge about women that will contribute to women's liberation and emancipation (De Vos et al., 2011, pp. 5-10). Functionalism Just as biological organisms have systems that perform various specialist and survival functions, the same principles can be applied when the functions of social institutions are analysed.
The aim of functionalism is to ensure the ultimate survival and optimal functioning of selected institutions which over time evolve and adjust to the demands of societies. It thereby analyses role differentiations and social solidarities to ultimately ensure the continued smooth and integrated functioning of any organisation or society (Maree (ed), 2007).
p. 21). Interpretivism This engagement aims to comprehend human actions through 'erklrung' (abstract explanation) and 'verstehen' (empathetic understanding) of everyday lived experiences in specific historical settings. It assumes that any research approach needs to respect the differences between people and objects of the natural sciences. This
approach therefore requires the understanding of the subjective meaning of social action (De Vos et al., 2011, pp. 5-10; Bryman et al., 2011, pp. 5-10; Bry
of how the world is to be understood through certainty, order, organisation, prediction, rationality, linearity and progress. It celebrates the world of science, the scientific method and the authority of the expert (Maree (ed.), 2007, p. 21). Neoliberalism This theory is mainly applied in political and economic theory highlighting the globalised world. It
emphasises the positive role of the state to create optimal conditions for capitalist expansion. In this regard, it seeks an efficient and effective public sector which elevates the market as the primary instrument for determining the distribution of social goods (Maree (ed.), 2007, p. 21). Objectivism of social goods (Maree (ed.), 2007, p. 21).
phenomena such as cultures and organisations as external facts that are beyond one's reach or influence. In other words, social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of its social actors (including staff). An organisation, for instance, has a reality that is external to the individuals who inhabit it. It is the organisation
which exerts pressure on individuals to conform to the procedural requirements and rules and regulations, thereby constraining and limiting the actions of its members (Bryman et al., 2011, p. 17). Positivism believes that the same research methods and procedure of the natural sciences are appropriate to the social sciences. Knowledge is
seen as the accumulation of facts which provides the basis for universal propositions and theories through induction. It views the world as an objective reality which exists outside of personal experiences. In conducting value free research, research and non-interactive position towards their research
endeavour (De Vos et al., 2011, pp. 5-10; Bryman et al., 2011, pp. 12-13). Postmodernism Rejecting modernism, this philosophy is mainly applied to the artistic and social sciences. This approach gives a voice to the individual and communities rather than prescribing predetermined rules for action. Subscribing to uncertainty, disorder, indeterminacy
and regression, it values multiple subjective meanings opposed to a single authoritative voice of the scientist or expert. It questions the capacity of science to generate the truth because of its limiting way of doing so, which is the use of language as socially constructed, which in itself distorts reality. It mainly uses qualitative research
in this regard by interpreting behavioural patterns through respondent narratives (De Vos et al., 2011, pp. 5-10; Bryman et al., 2011, pp. 5-10; Bryman et al., 2011, pp. 154-156). Postpositivism argues that reality can never be fully appreciated, only approximated. It emphasises the discovery and verification of theories. It accepts that any cause and effect
relationship in social research is difficult to attain, due to the variables in different settings. Hence, this philosophy relies on multiple methods as ways of capturing reality. It thereby allows researchers the freedom to use subjective measures of gathering information, including structured, qualitative procedures and analyses
(De Vos et al., 2011, pp. 5-10). Post-structuralism This concept argues in contrast to structuralism; it views that structures are not easily discovered and in some cases not discoverable at all. As text is a human construction, it is therefore fallible. Hence, the original meaning of the authors cannot be determined. Consequently, the task of science is, to
continually 'deconstruct' text and its various interpretations over time (Maree (ed.), 2007, p. 21). This philosophical interpretation which views human reason as superior to all other forms of knowing. It regards evidence through the senses, i.e. empirical
research, as fallible and misleading. Rational knowledge (through basic research), is seen as objective, true and eternal across time and space (Maree (ed.), 2007, p. 21). Social constructivism Antithetical to objectivism, social constructivism Antithetical to objective and in a constant state of flux, thereby allowing multiple realities to co-exist. Social
phenomena and their meanings are continually being produced by social actors through individual or collective social interactions (Bryman et al., 2011, p. 12). It argues that just as researchers, participants also seek an understanding of the world in which they live and work. Hence, this approach allows participants to become active and involved in
all the phases of the research process. This approach encourages an open and democratic relationship between researcher and participant (De Vos et al., 2011, pp. 5-10). Structuralism It argues that underlying structures or organisations determine
the social (and economic) beliefs and behaviour. Similarly, the hidden structures of the unconscious mind control human behaviour (Maree (ed), 2007, p. 21). Table 5. Terms and Concepts: Archival Data Collection Techniques and Methods Bibliometrics Bibliometrics is a type of research method, using quantitative and statistical analysis of scientific
communication within a given field of body of literature utilised. The fundamental processes in bibliometric analysis involve the measuring of activity, impact, and linkages of a specific area of study. It describes patterns of publication and co-word analysis, scientific 'mapping' as
well as citations in patents. As a meta-analytical and longitudinal form of research, bibliometrics aims to unveil the most authoritative and effective articles, scholars, topics, and prevailing schools of thought in a field of study (Thanuskodi, 2010, pp. 77-78; Seyedghorban et al., 2015, pp. 2664-2665). Big data analytics This is an advanced analytic
technique that combines and manipulates high volume multiple data sets (numerical, textual, sensor data, audio and video data) of Big Data into a single source through programming languages such as Structured Query Language (SQL). It is mainly used for both in theunderstanding and prediction of research (Wilson, 2019, pp. 87-88). Content
analysis Content analysis is the analysis of any form of communication, including advertisements, newspaper articles, television programmes, web pages and taped conversations (Wilson, 2019, p. 113). Data mining This method applies mathematical models to extract meaningful data from integrated databases (Cooper & Schindler, 2006, p. 260)
Document studies Document studies review existing documents, aiming to understand the content of text and to clarify the deeper textual meanings of style and coverage. A whole range of documents (e.g. minutes of meetings
and memos), mass media text (i.e. all open forum mass media communications, social media and the Web inclusive), official (government sourced) documents as well as archival materials (De Vos et al., 2011, pp. 377-379). Environmental scanning entails information gathering in order to detect
environmental changes in their initial stages of development. Using push technology, researchers would specify their fields of investigation and through filtering, sorting and prioritising, the information is then stored and actioned at a later stage (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 168-169). Forecasting studies This is a quantitative approach associated
with mathematical and statistical techniques of regression and time series analysis. The technique attempts to understand why these relationships exist. It is also classified under mathematical simulation (Remenyi & Money, 2004, p. 75)
Historiography The historical studies collect, verify, and synthesise evidence from the past to establish facts that defend or refute a pre-determined hypothesis. As documentary evidence it uses diaries, official records, reports, archives, and non-textual information, i.e. maps, pictures, audio and visual recordings (Labaree, 2019; Bryman et al., 2011, p
12). Literature review Three types of literature reviews can be distinguished. Firstly, a theoretical background is the section of a research question, and assists in bringing the research question into focus. Literature review, on the other hand, is a
 is to review the literature in a field, without any primary data collected or analysed. When a stand-alone literature review (Okoli & Schabram, 2010, pp. 2-3). Market potential studies This is an estimation of the market potential of a product or service.
in which existing secondary data sources are used, or in which multi secondary sources are transformed and projected onto the area of interest (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 169-170). Meta-analysis Meta-analysis Meta-analysis is a statistical procedure used primarily in evidence-based research and is seen by Haidich (2010, pp. 29-30) as a follow-on to or
advancement of the systematic (literature) review design. As an analytical methodology, it uses quantitative measures to systematically evaluate and assess previous research studies for the purpose of integrating the results of numerous individual studies using the total methodology, it uses quantitative measures to systematically evaluate and assess previous research studies for the purpose of integrating the results of numerous individual studies using the total methodology, it uses quantitative measures to systematically evaluate and assess previous research studies for the purpose of integrating the results of numerous individual studies using the total methodology, it uses a contract the purpose of integrating the results of numerous individual studies and assess previous research studies for the purpose of integrating the results of numerous individual studies are not as a second studies and assess previous research studies are not as a second studies are not a 
research problem through synoptic reasoning. To make the results more accurately reflect the strength of the relationship identified, meta-analysis is usually applied across all study results – both to those with and those without statistical significance (Glass, 1976:3; Labaree, 2019; Shelby & Vaske, 2008, p. 97; p. 107). Philosophical analysis and
argument As a broad approach examining a research problem, philosophical analysis and argumentation challenges deeply embedded, often intractable, assumptions underpinning an area of study. This approach uses the tools of argumentation derived from philosophical traditions, concepts, models and theories to critically explore and challenge
contemporary research views. The philosophical analytical design encapsulates both the epistemological and methodological models of scientific enquiry. Its analysis is also framed in ontology (the study that describes the nature of reality, e.g. What is real? What is not real?) and axiology (i.e. the study of values) (Labaree, 2019). Reporting studies
Reporting studies provide an account or summation of data, including descriptive statistics, on a particular topic of interest. These reports typically do not draw any conclusions or apply any inference of data (Cooper & Schindler, 2006, p. 19, p. 762). Secondary data searches Data that has been previously collected for some purpose other than the one
at hand which may be available within the organisation (referred to as internal secondary data) or available externally through published and electronic sources (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, p. 165; Wilson, 2019, p. 64). Social media analytics assesses and monitors social media channels for brands, products and competitors or
social media platforms and cyber community in a given time period or space (Wilson, 2019, pp. 115-116). Statistical modelling is a technique representing variability through probability distributions, which form the building-blocks from which modelling is a technique representing variability through probability distributions. In
this regard, systematic patterns are generated by structure in the model. Different models and analyses may be applied to the same data set (Davison, 2008, p. 1). Systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 3; p. 17), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 18), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 18), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 18), a systematic literature review According to Fink (2005, p. 18), a systematic litera
evaluating, and synthesizing the existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars, and practitioners." As theoretical methodological design it involves selecting and critically evaluating the contributions of existing research about a well-defined topic of investigation. It must be noted that a systematic review is not a
traditional literature review, but should be seen as a self-contained research project that explores a clearly defined research problem. Using existing studies, it analyses and carefully synthesises the data and reports the evidence in a way that facilitates clear conclusions about what is not known (Labaree, 2019; Vogt et al., 2012:90; Okoli
& Schabram, 2010, pp. 2-3). Trade area analysis This involves applying site analysis techniques to select the most preferred locations for retail and wholesale operations (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 168-169). Market tracking The observation and analysis of trends in industry or market volume or market share over time (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, pp. 168-169).
168). Table 6.Terms and Concepts: Lateral Approaches, i.e. cutting Across Designs and Methods Comparative research studies extraneous variables (Terre Blance et al., 2009, pp. 172-174). Explanatory research studies extraneous variables (Terre Blance et al., 2009, pp. 172-174).
(Terre Blanch et al., 2009, p. 44). Mixed method This method is the combination of at least one qualitative and at least one qualitative and qualitative and qualitative and procedures are combined or mixed to
provide a completely different picture of reality. Both qualitative and quantitative research engagements can be executed concurrently, i.e. at the same time or sequentially (one followed by another) and by different priorities (i.e. degrees of dominance) for a particular method (De Vos et al., 2011, p. 434, pp. 439-444). Sequential approach Sequential
research is that which is carried out in a deliberate, staged approach (i.e. serially), where one stage will build upon the previous one until enough data is gathered over an interval of time to test the researcher's hypothesis. The sample size is not
predetermined. After each sample has been analysed, the researcher can accept the null hypothesis, or select another pool of subjects and conduct the study once again. This means the researcher can obtain a limitless number of subjects before making a final decision whether to accept the null or alternative
hypothesis. Employing a quantitative framework, a sequential study generally utilises sampling techniques to gather data and then applies statistical methods to analise the data. Using a qualitative methods, such as interviews
or observations, to gather information from each sample (Labaree, 2019). Triangulation is a multi-methods approach of data collection, which aims to compare and biases inherent in a single methodology
(De Vos et al., 2011, p. 434, pp. 442-443). Table 7. Terms and Conceptualised and particularised and several interventions are executed to form a final interventionary strategy. In this regard, both the
researcher and participants are equally involved in the process. On the one hand, the research and action repeats itself, until a sufficient understanding of, or a valid
implementable solution is found. The collective term for all action research engagements is referred to as the 'participatory action research model' (De Vos et al., 2011, pp. 491; Labaree, 2019). See also participatory research model' or simply 'the PAR model' (De Vos et al., 2011, pp. 491; Labaree, 2019).
narrow down a very broad field of research into one or a few easily researchable examples and to assess whether a specific theory and model actually applies to real world phenomena (Labaree, 2019). These phenomena can include a single organisation, a particular community or group, an individual, a decision taken or event (Henn et al., 2009:65).
This method is particularly useful when not much is known about an issue or phenomenon under investigation (Labaree, 2019). Collaborative research treats participants more democratically as active rather than passive agents over all the
processes and outcomes of research (Bryman et al., 2011, pp. 48-50). Conversational interview This is an informal data-gathering approach whereby the researcher engages in a completely unstructured manner through dialogue about the respondent's lived
experiences (Babin & Zikmund, 2016, p. 127). Critical incident method Respondents are asked to describe a critical element where the consequences or potential outcomes thereof are clear. It aims to provide an understanding of the sequences or potential outcomes thereof are clear. It aims to provide an understanding of the sequences or potential outcomes thereof are clear. It aims to provide an understanding of the sequences or potential outcomes thereof are clear. It aims to provide an understanding of the sequences or potential outcomes thereof are clear. It aims to provide an understanding of the sequences or potential outcomes thereof are clear. It aims to provide an understanding of the sequences or potential outcomes thereof are clear. It aims to provide an understanding of the sequences or potential outcomes thereof are clear. It aims to provide an understanding of the sequences or potential outcomes thereof are clear. It aims to provide an understanding of the sequences of each event (Bryman et al., 2011, pp. 221-223). Delphi method The Delphi technique is
a multi-stage exercise where the researcher designs a questionnaire which is sent to a larger targeted audience for completion. Once the individual questionnaire for the researcher then summarises the results for the panel and, based upon the results, develops a new questionnaire for the target group. This process is repeated until a
relatively narrow spread of opinions has been achieved. Although commonly associated with forecasting procedures, this method is applied to a wide range of problem solving initiatives (Linstone & Turoff, 2004, p. 76). Ethnography Ethn
cultural or social group. In this regard, a researcher spends a prolonged period of time in the field amongst a community with the ultimate goal to generate a holistic cultural portrait (De Vos et al., 2011, p. 314). Variations include netnography (also called webnography) which can be interpreted as the Ethnography of cyberspace communities.
Exegesis Exegesis means 'lead out of' as well as to explain, interpret, tell, report or describe by means of articulation or discovery of a text's meaning based on the understanding of the original author's intentions and goals. This method is predominantly applied to biblical text (Porter & Clarke, 1997, pp. 4-5). Field experiment Commonly applied in
business and management research, these field studies typically test the launch of new product or service prototypes before committing to a full roll-out of a business programme. It is also applied in typical confined area studies (Remenyi & Money, 2004, p. 74). Futures research Futures research involves the summation of divergent opinions of
experts to provide a way of considering and predicting the future through scenario projections and Delphi studies (Remenyi & Money, 2004, p. 76). Game and role playing out a specific role. It is regarded as a high-level simulation
game of interpersonal reactions and group decision-making (Remenyi & Money, 2004, p. 76). Grounded theory generates an abstract analytical schema of a specific phenomenon, i.e. a theory that explains some action, interaction or process. Based on the study of social situations, it simultaneously
employs induction (the construction of concepts), deduction (theoretical sampling) and verification (constant comparison) techniques until a theoretical saturation point is reached (De Vos et al., 2011, p. 318). Group discussions Group discussions Group discussions Group discussions are unstructured and free flowing discussions by a selected group of individuals (varying between two to
twelve respondents) who follow a dynamic process of interaction and respond to questions relating to a particular theme under investigation (Saunders et al., 2003, p. 175). Hermeneutics Hermeneutics is the theory and philosophy of the understanding and interpretation of texts, art, culture, and social phenomena (incl. organisations) through the
medium of language. Hermeneutics constructs knowledge through an open dialogue between text and the inquirer. It is a repeated circular process where the researcher finds an increased understanding and
a more complete interpretive account emerging each time (Paterson & Higgs, 2005, p. 342-344). Individual interviews are open-ended, free flowing interviews with one respondent conducted by one or more moderators (Welman et al., 2011:211). The person recruited for the study and the topic under investigation dictate the
variant of this engagement, e.g. expert, participatory or experience interviews, etc. (Babin & Zikmund, 2010, p. 147). Narrative accounts Narrativ
approach The researcher joins a team of individuals who are part of the phenomenon under investigation. In this regard, the researcher takes part in the phenomenon in the same way as the other group participants but at the same time acts as an independent observer assessing the group interactions (Remenyi & Money, 2004, p. 78). Participatory
research Participatory research is a variant of action research is mainly concerned with specifically organisational and business related problem solving, participatory research is a variant of action research is mainly concerned with specifically organisational and business related problem solving, participatory research is a variant of action research is mainly concerned with specifically organisational and business related problem solving, participatory research is a variant of action research is a var
pp. 48-50). Phenomenology Phenomenology Uses naturalistic methods to describe the concepts and structures of conscious experience and actions that give form and meaning to the life world of subjects without any preconceptions or judgments, by providing a description of human experience as it is experienced by the subjects (De Vos, et al., 2011,
p. 316). Pilot study A procedure used for testing and validating a research and employed to the study of literature, experience of experts, the feasibility of the study, and the testing of the
measurement instrument (De Vos et al., 2011, p. 237). Research ersearch approach which "enables research approach which "enables research approach which "enables research and influencing the outcomes of the process". (Bryman et al., 2011, pp. 48-50). See also action research, collaborative and participatory research. Scenario
research A group of suitably qualified experts is asked to discuss the implications of a particular hypothetical situation occurring. Not only is key information obtained from the group of experts in this regard but evolving opinions over time are also assessed and monitored (Remenyi & Money, 2004, p. 78). This technique applies group discussions or
Delphi studies. Semi-structured interview An interview An interview and guided picture of a particular topic, using a list of predetermined questions (Maree (ed), 2012, pp. 87-88; De Vos et al., 2012, pp. 348-353). This interview schedule of listed questions merely acts as a guide rather than a
dictate. However, in a limited way, participants dictate the direction of the interview. Storytelling is a methodological approach that provides a framework through which one can investigate experience and gain access to the complexity of human affairs and human activity. It seeks to explore consumer issues that reside within
the human psyche, thereby trying to discover the meaning of human existence filtered down to the researcher's own individual purpose within it (Rooney et.al., 2016, pp. 147-148). Structured interview Investigative questions are detailed upfront before the start of the fieldwork. In order to provide structure, this technique is usually applied to larger
samples of depth interviews (Maree (ed), 2012, pp. 87-88). Unstructured interview This method is also referred to as an open-ended interview (De Vos et al., 2012, p. 347). It is a one-to-one formalised and extended conversation which explores the understanding of experiences of other people, their
perceptions and opinions (De Vos et al., 2012, pp. 348-353). Verbal protocol approach A technique which asks respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to 'think aloud' while they are performing a task. The idea is to elicit respondents to elicit respondents to elicit respondents to elicit r
Observational Data Collection Techniques and Methods Audits An examination and verification of the movement and sale of a product or product range (Wilson, 2019, p. 102). Commonly applied to homes, retailers (including shelf impact testing), stores and wholesalers. Behavioural observation Behavioural observation includes the following
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observations (Cooper & Schindler, 2006, pp. 245-259): Linguistic: human verbal behaviour during conversations of participants Extralinguistic: recording of vocal, temporal interaction and verbal stylistic behaviours of human participants Spatial: recording how

humans physically relate to one another These combinations are commonly applied to media usage (TV and listening) analysis and mystery shopper/visitor studies. Physiological reactions to a number of external stimuli. The mechanical devices used in this regard are (i) the eye tracking monitor (observing eye movements), (ii) pupilometer (observing and recording changes in the electric resistance of the skin) and (iv) voice pitch analysis (recording of abnormal frequencies in the voice to reflect emotional reactions to various stimuli) (Babin & Zikmund, 2010:258-259). Process and flow analysis This is the observation by a time study of stages in a process, which is evaluated on both effectiveness and efficiency. These stages could include traffic flows, paperwork flows, sales transaction processes etc. (Cooper & Schindler, 2006, pp. 258-259). References Babin, B. J. & Zikmund, W. G. (2010). Essentials of Marketing Research. Principles, Methods, and Practices. Textbooks Collection. 3. 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