

A Critical Review of Pertinent Qualitative Research Processes, Approaches, and Tools in Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT This paper is a review of pertinent qualitative research processes, approaches, and tools in social sciences. The purpose is to attempt to lay the groundwork and provide insight to both the theoretical and practical considerations behind qualitative research, especially as it is conducted in South African universities. The review adopted a purposive non-probability sample from the population of participating universities, namely, the so-called previously advantaged White universities, and the previously disadvantaged Black universities, to critically look at research challenges that the latter universities face. This review established amongst other thing that the research output of the previously advantageous White universities far surpasses and outclasses that of the previously Black university... and this gap in research output levels between the two types of institutions was remarkably unacceptable. It was on the basis of this outcomes that the review suggests and recommends the thematic model of qualitative research discourse that includes the following processes, approaches and tools: (a) selection and choice of a research paradigm/approach; (b) qualitative research design; (c) introduction of and background to the study; (d) problem formulation and statement of the problem and sub-problems; (e) formulation of the research questions; (f) identification key research aim and objectives; (g) qualitative data collection and gathering; (h) qualitative data analysis and interpretation; (I) the significance of the study; (j) the scope and/or limitations of the study; (k) discussion of the findings ; (l) recommendations; and (m) summary and conclusion of the study. It is believed that if this model can be effectively implemented, could lead to the performance of qualitative research processes, approaches, and tools in social sciences research, and further lead to the improvement of research outputs in the previously disadvantaged Black universities in the country.