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SUBMITTED TO

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Identifying Qualitative Research Articles Onion Layers

Research philosophy and Ontological position as the objectivist

- **A management exodus at ChemCo**

    John wanted to study the role of management in ChemCo and in particular the way in which managers liaised with external stakeholders. He decided to use the new managers in the marketing department as his research subjects.
    In his research proposal he outlined briefly his research philosophy. He defined his ontological position as that of the objectivist. His reasoning was that management in ChemCo had a reality that was separate from the managers who inhabit that reality. He pointed to the fact that the formal management structure at ChemCo was largely unchanged from that which was practised by the managers who had left the organisation. The process of management would continue in largely the same way in spite of the change in personnel.

Four paradigms for organisational analysis
Subjectivist, Objectivist, Radical change (Radical humanist, Radical structuralist) Regulation (Interpretive, Functionalist)

- **Critical Management Studies questioning management**

    CMS researched the challenge dominant organisational ideas and practices, including 'management itself. Martin Parker outlined
    (challenges the acceptance of management)
    Parker writes to question some aspects of management, or some of its effects, so that we can learn how to do management better. Just because management is everywhere, does not mean that management is necessary or good, or that it is not worth while being against it.
    Parker builds his radical critique by questioning three key assumptions typically made about management

    i.   Management is part of scientific thought that allows human beings increasing control over their environment.
    ii. Management increases control over people.
    iii. Management is the best way to control people.

    Questioning these assumptions might suggest that management is damaging to organisations and societies. does the environment benefit from being controlled by people? Alternatively, is controlling employees necessarily good for organisations?

The development of hypotheses

Brett was conducting a research for his project on the economic benefits of working from home for software developers.
Brett developed a number of theoretical propositions, each of which contained specific hypotheses. One of his propositions related to the potential increased costs associated with home working.

Theoretical Proposition Increased costs may negate the productivity gains from home working.

From this he developed four SPECIFIC HYPOTHESES

1. Increased costs for computer hardware, software and telecommunications equipment will negate the productivity gains from home working.

2. Home workers will require additional support from on-site employees, for example technicians, which will negate the productivity gains from home working.

3. Work displaced to other employees and/or increased supervisory requirements will negate the productivity gains from home working.

4. Reduced face-to-face access by home workers to colleagues will result in lost opportunities to increase efficiencies, which will negate the productivity gains from home working.

Pragmatism (ethnographic research)

- **Investigating the realities of how things work in organisations**

In an article in the Journal of Management Studies, Watson (2011) discusses the rationale for undertaking good ethnographic research when investigating the realities of how things work in organisations.
In his article Watson highlights how he has always believed that it is not possible to learn a great deal about what actually happens or how things work in organisations without undertaking intensive research that involves observation or the researcher participating, both of which are essential to ethnography. In developing this argument, Watson (2011: 204) emphasises the importance of the 'relevance to practice' principle of pragmatism, stating: 'I felt that there was no real alternative to this if I wanted to contribute in a worthwhile way to the social scientific

understanding of how managers manage, how organisational change comes about, how micro politics operate, and how employment relationships are shaped and maintained.

Induction (Qualitative data)

- Developing theory inductively

In their research paper titled 'Sustainable entrepreneurship, is entrepreneurial will enough?' Spence et al. (2011) analyse 44 cases from Canada, Tunisia and Cameroon to determine the fundamentals of sustainable entrepreneurship in small- and medium- sized enterprises (SMEs). The overall objective of their research was to analyse and explain SMEs' practices by comparing and contrasting levels of sustainable entrepreneurship in these three countries.

Data were collected using interviews, organisational documents provided by the owner-manager and by examining the SMEs' websites where available. Interviews lasted between one and two hours and were undertaken using a guide comprising of open questions designed to enable an understanding of each SME's level of sustainable entrepreneurship, as well as their business objectives. The questions allowed the interviewer to pursue topics such as the owner manager's knowledge of sustainability issues, their personal beliefs and a detailed account of their firm's involvement in sustainability.

These data were used subsequently to induce qualitative indicators and develop a typology of sustainable development.