

**QUALITATIVE METHODS: TRIANGULATION TO
TACKLE ISSUES OF RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY IN
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND PROPAGANDA STUDIES**

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Abstract

This paper brings together major scholarly work in the qualitative methods and provides a resource of literature on the qualitative methods for the qualitative researchers. The research study describes and combines scholarly work on three qualitative methods: the historical and documents analysis method, qualitative interview method and qualitative content analysis method. The study describes the definitions, advantages and disadvantages, of the three qualitative methods. Furthermore, the paper touches upon the issue of reliability and validity in the qualitative research that various qualitative scholars of public diplomacy and propaganda have solved through triangulation of qualitative methods.

Key Words: Qualitative methods, public diplomacy, propaganda, triangulation.

Introduction

The issues of reliability and validity of qualitative data has been always been a bone of contention amongst the proponents and opponents of the qualitative approach. The opponents of qualitative research design have been critical of lack of robustness in establishing reliability and validity of data. There are scathing indictments by many positivist scholars in the field of communication about the utility of data gathered by employing qualitative methods. Albeit there are a great number of studies (Kirk & Miller, 1986; Mathison, 1988; Maxwell, 1992; Patton, 2002;

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Golafshani, 2003) positing and explicating the approaches to address the issues of validity and reliability, however, there are few efforts made to employ triangulation of data technique to analyze meta-data. This paper is an attempt to establish validity and reliability of data by employing triangulation technique on pieces published in the field of communication. The method employed for the paper is conceptual where the data is qualitatively triangulated for the purpose of analysis.

Historical/ Document Analysis

“The use of history is to rescue from oblivion the lost causes of the past” (Nelson, 1962). Lindlof and Taylor (2002) explained the documents are “critical” because they highlight how an organization functions. Darity (2008) explains document analysis and archival document analysis as two additional methods utilized in qualitative analysis. Document analysis entails the study of photographs, diaries and journals, newspapers, government documents, books, memorandums, and other written documents. Whereas in archival document analysis, researcher studies the historical documents including archival records, governmental reports, statutes and policy agendas and report, newspaper, press releases, program proposals, application forms, meeting memos, books, diaries, various public records and scripts in case of broadcasting research (Bowen, 2009; Darity, 2008). These types of documents are found in libraries, newspaper archives, historical society offices and organizational and institutional files.

Document analysis is a “systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic (computer based and Internet-transmitted) material (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis just like other qualitative methods requires data to be examined and interpreted in order to derive and draw meanings, gains, understanding, and to develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

This method allows the investigator to access the difficult study subjects that cannot be accessed otherwise, however the document study does not allow speaking to the person who has created the document. Furthermore, document analysis allows digging the history but the investigator has to rely either on the theoretical frameworks to draw

inferences from the documents or investigator has to ground a theory if the phenomena is not explained by any theory, based on his coding of the documents (Bowen, 2009).

Documents serve various functions; they provide data on the context within which research participant operates, bearing witness to past events, provides background information and historical insight. The information and insight helps the researcher to understand the historical roots of specific issues and can indicate the conditions that reflect the phenomena under investigation. Documents supplement information for other methods; the information gathered from documents can be used in generating questions for the interview (Goldstein, Kantrowitz, Mittal, & Carbonell, 1999).

Advantages and limitations

Like any other research method, document analysis has both its advantages and limitations as well. Document analysis is considered one of the efficient method and less time consuming as it involves data selection rather than data collection (Bowen, 2009). Moreover, documents analysis is an attractive option for the qualitative researchers as documents are in the public domain and can be utilized without authors' permission. Also, for research involving documents, there is always a possibility of some official documents availability regarding the issue (Merriam, 1998).

Document analysis is considered one of the best choices when new data is not available. Also it is less costly to reach and then to evaluate. As the data is already in the document, there is no need of data collection. The researcher only has to evaluate the content and quality of the document (Bowen, 2009; Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Documents are "unobtrusive" and "non-reactive" (Bowen, 2009), as they are unaffected by the research process. Furthermore, documents are suitable for repeated reviews as they are non-reactive and are stable. Merriam (1988) argues that they do not alter or change due to the presence of investigator.

Yin (1999) presents the benefits of document analysis and argues that documents provide exact references, names, and details of events. Moreover, they provide broad coverage over a wide and long span of time, and cover many events and settings.

Although the method of document analysis provides a wide range of advantages, scholars have concerns related to the limitations of this method. Document analysis may provide insufficient details and may not answer the research question. As documents are created independent of research, they are produced for some purpose and not for research (Bowen, 2009).

As documents could be easily available, at the same time can be difficult to retrieve, or access to documents can be deliberately blocked. Documents selection can be biased, and thus can be incomplete collection of documents, which can further affect the results of the study (Bowen, 2009; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Yin, 1999).

Hakim (1990) explained the challenges of conducting document analysis. She believed that the volume of information provides extra demands on the researcher. To address this, she suggested understanding the basic qualities of the data that will be studied before undertaking a records-based qualitative project. Moreover, Start and Sloan (1989) explained: “The writing of history involves constant decisions about finding meaning in the record of the past and explaining that significant part of the total, available record to an audience” (p. 4).

Studies employing document analysis. As the purpose of document analysis illustrates that it brings historical insights and background information about the issue. Several studies related to propaganda efforts, policy agendas and media (Voice of America, British Broadcast, German and Russian broadcast) have been described, explored and examined by utilizing documents.

Pirsein (1979) provided a descriptive historical examination of the growth of VOA since its inception. He examined available literature on propaganda, VOA and US International relations, as well as consulted

the war reports by OWI, USIA, and reports detailing the start and expansion of VOA, its charter, funding and programming. The documents and reports consulted are explored for the facts and history.

Dizard (1961) studied USIA operations and provided details and descriptions of VOA programs. His aim was to help in improving the performance of VOA in influencing minds of public. Apart from his own experiences and his colleagues views, and the literature, he examined documents like 'A very useful handbook of information assembled by USIA, 1960', USIS operations, USIS press operations, US exchange of persons programs, USIS film production operation and many documents that describes the operations and programs of USIS and USIA. These documents were utilized to get facts and events with its details, which are cited and quoted by the author on many places in his study. Elder (1967) in his research titled 'the information machine', studied functions of USIA during the period of 1963 -1967 in support of the US foreign policy. His research examined the USIA operations from organizational point of view, discussed the USIA media services and described VOA's organization and how its broadcast policy guidance was made at various levels. Along with interviews of two hundred USIA personnel in Washington, the one third of the study was based on documents. The documents consulted included are the annual reports and policy guidelines, were examined to describe the functions, external and internal relationships of USIA, and related policy guidance and controls.

Various studies (Hoffman, 2002; Lindahl, 1983; Miller, 1941; Vaughan, 2002) examining the US public diplomacy and foreign policy relationship are descriptive and based on historical document and document analysis. However, these articles are essay based and are descriptive, have not explained the methodology but have referred to documents within text. Kennedy & Lucas (2005), argues that the emergent ideas and activities of public diplomacy as the soft power wing of American foreign policy have evident historical prefiguration in US international relations. In their essay, drawing information from historical documents they combined the cold War US public diplomacy paradigm into the broader psychological warfare in order to examine the overt and covert forms of information. Furthermore, by utilizing the current documents, they explored the US public diplomacy efforts

during post 9/11. Their study provides a historical and political inquiry of public diplomacy in US, that have been described by examining literature review, and also bureaucratic reports and foreign policy agendas have been pulled from the websites of US State Department, from the government websites of White House, also from major media outlets websites e.g. cbsnews.com.

Wang (2011) in her essay titled “Telling the American story to the world” provided a historical reflection on the central purpose of US public diplomacy through an examination of the manifest mandate of the three major agencies; Committee for Public Information (CPI), Office of War Information (OWI), and United States Information Agency (USIA) established under the international communication programs. The article based on historical document analysis provides rich description of these agencies missions and objectives in relation to the US policy and public diplomacy. The documents reviewed for this study includes the government documents like, ‘presidential executive orders with regard to CPI, OWI, the United States Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948. For historical accounts, the major work done by historical diplomats on U.S. public diplomacy. For journalistic accounts, a search in the New York Times Historical Database was conducted. The database provides coverage from 1851 through 2003, and the terms relevant to public diplomacy, CPI, USIA and OWI were searched and examined/ reviewed for facts and events, also for policies. Furthermore, PEW Research Center reports on Global Opinion and America’s image of 2005 and 2006 were pulled from the center website and were reviewed for opinions and figures.

Uttaro (1982) explored the propaganda efforts and the purpose of propaganda by VOA through document analysis, government reports and newspapers. What is the need of international broadcasting organ? And what is the driving force behind the massive expenditure of money and manpower? For the historical background and for facts and figures, documents reviewed are the United Nations annual reports, USIA reports from the archive in Washington and also two third of the information is pulled from the New York Times data base (Uttaro, 1982).

Kelly (2007) in his article, "US Public Diplomacy" has given a descriptive analysis of US public diplomacy during Cold War, and based on that has provided arguments and his opinion that using same strategies and dealing with the challenges of 9/11 could be useful in radio broadcast but the government needs to reorganize their public diplomacy efforts. In describing US soft power, Nye (2008), argued that public diplomacy has a long history as a means of promoting country's soft power and was essential in winning the Cold War. Furthermore, he argues that current war on terror cannot be won without soft power. To explore the US soft power, he has utilized historical documents. However, the author has not explained the methodology section in the study but has referred, cited and quoted documents and reports from the United States State Department, United States Defense Department, PEW research reports, Reports on the Independent Task Force by the US Public Diplomacy Department and most of all from the New York Times database. The study is exploratory and descriptive, thus has utilized documents for information and facts and to provide a history by describing facts chronologically.

Wiley (1935) in her research on the "Communication Agencies and The Volume of Propaganda" did a historical analysis from documents, newspapers and previous scholarly studies, and emphasized that the rise and prominence of propaganda in history cannot be dissociated from the history of modern mass communication and the agencies that have made it possible (Wiley, 1935).

Krugler (1999) examined the role of VOA during the Cold War in 1950-51. The study provides a historical analysis of VOA programs coverage of Republicans dissent at home and cold war propaganda abroad. However, the study analyzes the Congressional Republicans differences about the role of VOA, but has employed a document analysis method extensively. The study is a historical representation of facts and events, thus has not emphasized on the methodology but has referred and cited documents and reports and Acts of the government accessed through the National Archive and Government Departments Archival records, e.g. USIEE Act of 1948, Congressional Records, Memorandum of meeting 1947, Department of State Files, USIA files, VOA Content reports and

scripts from the National Archives and many more government reports and meeting memorandums during the years of 1950 and 1951 that are related to VOA (Krugler, 1999).

Biener (2003) in his exploratory study on Radio Farda, a VOA Persian service in Iran, examined the VOA Farda broadcast to Iran in relation to various international broadcasting to Iran including clandestine and religious stations. Though the study is descriptive and presents chronologically birth of different clandestine and International broadcasting in Iran. Thus the essay do not have a methodological explanation, but almost two third of the reference indicates the data retrieved from various websites of newspapers like New York Times, Washington Post, from other radio and TV broadcasts in Iran and America, and from the US government websites like State Department, USIA and VOA.

Interview Method

“The qualitative interview is an event in which one person (the interviewer) encourages others to freely articulate their interests and experiences” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 170) . Interviewing develops a view about the topic under discussion between “inter (people)” (Brenner, 2006). Interviewing involves direct interaction between the investigator and the research subject. The investigator asks questions related to specific topic, directly from the subject (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) .

Interviewing may take the form of structures or semi-structured interviews (Darity, 2008). Structured interviews allow the researcher to ask specific questions from the subject. This form of interviewing has a prepared list of questions that allows limited response from the subject, thus leave little room for variation among the answers. Semi-structured interviewing, by contrast allows more freedom of discussion with the subject and aims for a greater understanding of the subject. Questions are prepared in a way to prompt topical areas of dialogue. These kinds of interviews are designed to allow the subject to expand upon the question and reveal information that cannot be achieved with a structured interview (Fontana & James,) .

Advantages and Limitations

Qualitative in-depth interviews characteristics results in the gathering of comprehensive information that might not be possible to gather by other qualitative methods (Jankowski, Jensen, & Jensen, 1991) .

Deep and Broad. Interviews are considered a preeminent method of data collection in the communication and social sciences because of its ability to “travel deeply and broadly into subjective realities” (Jankowski, Jensen, & Jensen, 1991; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) . The interviews questions are open ended, and interviewer generates and prompts further questions upon the initial response of interviewee. Thus, the interviewer excavates initial views or ideas of the interviewee, in order to get more elaboration and expansion of his thoughts that are deep down. This in-depth views on subjective realities or concepts that are not objective, helps in interpretation of the data.

Adaptability. The qualitative interview is famous for its adaptability method. They can be conducted in a lab, in a field, in a room; anywhere two people can talk and share their views on the issue in relative privacy (Brenner, 2006; Jankowski, Jensen, & Jensen, 1991; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) . Thus, does not confine interviews to a certain place, which can further create hindrances, e.g. if the interviewee does not feel comfortable in office, could be interviewed in coffee house or on lunch or vice versa.

Scope of the topics. Interviews can be conducted on various topics, ranging from personal matters to most public, politically charged issues. The primary strength of interviewing is its capacity to range over multiple perspectives on a given topic. Information can be increased to elaborate the point of view by employing multiple interviews (Jankowski, Jensen, & Jensen, 1991; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Patton, 1980) .

Heuristic device. Interviews have the capability of generating new information that further leads to new perspectives and generate new questions for later subjects (Jankowski, Jensen, & Jensen, 1991) .

Historical perspective. As document analysis supplements the interviews, data gathered from interviews further facilitate the historical perspective of the issue (Jankowski, Jensen, & Jensen, 1991; Patton, 1980) . As in the study by, Robert E. Elder (1967), ‘The information machine’, studied functions of USIA during the period of 1963 -1967 in support of the US foreign policy. His research examined the USIA operations from organizational point of view, discussed the USIA media services and described VOA’s organization and how its broadcast policy guidance was made at various levels. Along with interviews of two hundred USIA personnel in Washington, the one third of the study was based on documents. The documents consulted provided facts and events that further supplement the ideas and views of the interviewees.

Contribution of interviewee knowledge. The subjects involvement in various projects results in extra information for the researcher which becomes the source of enriching data (Brenner, 2006; Jankowski, Jensen, & Jensen, 1991; Van Maanen, 1983) .

Formal/ Informal. Interviews can be very formal e.g. with the officials or bureaucrats, but at the same time can be informal like a conversation that can occur spontaneously in a field study (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) . Some interviewees are our friends and colleagues, who do not feel comfortable to have formal talk with friends, also some of the interviewees are sports people, or a labor class, or even some interviews demand informal talk and while in the field, thus all these conditions can be fulfilled by interview method, as it gives advantage of both; formal and informal.

Duration. Interviews can be as short as few minutes and could go for hours even. Sometimes interviewee can complete it in few sessions of weeks or days (Jankowski, Jensen, & Jensen, 1991; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) . One of another advantage of interview is that if the discussion or talk took long, could be continued in another sitting. Furthermore, interview method is not time confine, thus if an interviewee is not expressive vocally, the interviewer can decide to finish the talk, also can be elongated if the interviewee is highly expressive.

Medium of interview: mostly interviews are face to face, but with the technological advancements, interviews are conducted on telephones, and by using Internet (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Van Maanen, 1983) .

Storytelling. Interviews allow us to listen to people's stories and experiences. Interviews are conducted to understand the "social actor's experience and perspective" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002p.171) . Interviews are conducted from the experts in the field or whose knowledge, skill and experience help the researcher in his study (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Van Maanen, 1983) .

Inquiry of the past. Interviews help to inquire about the past. Moreover, researchers conduct interviews to "gather information about things or process that cannot be observed effectively by other means" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) .

Limitations

Influence of Interviewee: Though researcher is in command of controlling the interview and is capable of driving the interview but a major role in providing information is played by the interviewee. The researchers have been concerned about the influence of interviewee. They can be effusive in their replies, or they can refuse to reply, can have a memory loss; can provide bias or wrong information (Jankowski, Jensen, & Jensen, 1991; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Patton, 1980) .

Unexpectedness: The in-depth interviews are always open to unexpected and emergent conversation. Thus a bunch of knowledge is accumulated on each turn, and the conversation can turn to off the topic with each new unexpected turn. However, this can affect the results of the study either way; positively or negatively (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) . Sometimes, the interviewee if highly expressive goes so much in-depth of the topic and though gets off the topic but unconsciously provide new insights for the study or can provide secret information. However, getting off the track can be waste of time for the interviewer if the information is irrelevant, also if not related can affect the results of the study.

Interviewer and interviewee influences: In interview method, the influence of the investigator on responses given by a subject is an ongoing concern. Qualitative interviews are criticized for their tendency to mold the responses of the subjects. Interviewers can influence the responses through their body language, facial gestures or other responses. Also subjects can construct answers if they do not know about the topic, or may provide answer that they think the investigator prefers instead of providing their own unique response. Thus, the information gathered from interviews have been filtered and interpreted by both subject and the researcher thus brings the issue of validity and reliability of the data obtained (Darity, 2008; Jankowski, Jensen, & Jensen, 1991; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) .

Studies employing document analysis. DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree (2006) in their study of methodology studied the interview method. They argue that interviews are the most familiar strategies for collecting qualitative data. In their study the studies less structured interview strategies in which the person interviewed is more a participant in meaning making than a medium from which information is derived. Their study mostly applied the face to face in depth interview, which they argue, advance learning about individual experiences and perspectives on a given set of issues. Their study concluded that in-depth interviews can provide rich and in depth information about the experiences of individuals. However, they emphasized that in-depth interviews can bring some ethical issues like informing the interviewee about the purpose of the study, protecting interviewee's information, that can be exploited by the interviewer, e.g. in studies like health issues or in health care investigation, where the interviewee wants to be anonymous, but interviewer can exploit it, so sometimes people avoid talking about sensitive and personal issues and do not trust the interviewer and thus the study gets affected. Also in some investigations, to get complete information interviewer has to inform about the topic that can mold or influence the responses of interviewee and can affect the study results. To find out the VOA role in the political and democratic reforms of the country, Oscar (2008) studied VOA in the Zimbabwe Crises. He did 13 telephonic interviews from the citizens of Zimbabwe. The interview questions started from asking general questions about their thoughts on

the issues Zimbabwe faced as a nation; more specifically about the freedom of expression. Most of the questions were related to VOA programming and their role in democracy, and most importantly VOA radio was helping in the democracy of the country. The author argues that the method of open-ended questionnaire helped in going into broader conversation, which provided many insights but also increased the time of interview and sometimes drags the topic from the subject. Most of the answers of the previous interviewees helped generating questions for the upcoming interviews. However, few interviewees were not willing to talk also they found difficulty in answering the general questions. The author argues that though few of the interviewees provided more information that helped in results but the interviewee who were unwilling to provide information impact the study results and interpretation of the findings.

Similarly, in a study of finding out the postgraduate career intentions of medical students and recent graduates in Malawi, Bailey, Mandeville, Rhodes, Mipando, & Muula (2012) applied an approach of qualitative interview. The researchers conducted twelve semi-structured interviews with fourth year medical students and first year graduates that were recruited through purposive and snowballing sampling. Prior to interviews, key informants interviews with medical school faculty were also carried out. The interviewees filled the demographic data, and the main topic of the interviewee was guided by a literature review. The author argues that the small sample is true representation of the students, and also brought relevant information but at the same time the lead researcher was independent of the institute but participants may have given socially desirable responses that have influenced the study results (Bailey et al., 2012).

All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed, and were analyzed through framework analysis approach. This approach aims to produce policy-oriented findings and data is summarized within thematic framework. The transcripts are initially coded according to pre-coded themes in the literature, and then as the new codes emerge, sub codes were created. Finally all the codes were discussed amongst the research team until consensus was reached (Bailey et al., 2012).

Qualitative Content Analysis

Content analysis describes a family of analytical approaches ranging from impressionistic, intuitive, interpretive analysis to systematic, strict textual analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). However, the specific type of content analysis depends on the theoretical and substantial interests of the researcher. Content analysis is usually limited to quantitative and qualitative research methods. However, qualitative content analysis varies with the researchers design of study (Morse, 2003).

Qualitative content analysis is one of the numerous research methods used to analyze text data. The studies using qualitative content analysis focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text. This method of analyzing content goes beyond merely counting words to examining language excessively for the purpose of classifying large amounts of texts into an efficient numbers of categories that represent similar meanings (Weber, 1990). These categories represent both explicit communication of indirect communication. The goal of content analysis is to “provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomena under study” (Downe- Wamboldt, 1992a).

Qualitative content analysis is utilized to bring certain themes, codes, and categories from a set of data that includes; a document, a transcript or even an open-ended interview response. The document, script or responses are read word by word to derive codes, by first highlighting the exact words from the text that appear to capture key thoughts or concepts. Next the researcher approaches the text by making notes of his or her first impressions, thoughts and initial analysis. The next step is labeling of codes, labels are reflective of more than one key thought. These usually come from the text and then become the initial coding scheme. Codes then are sorted into categories based on how different codes are related and linked, also known as Constant Comparison. These categories are further used to organize and group codes into meaningful clusters. Researchers can further categorize the subcategories based on their relationship to each other in order to develop a small set of categories. Then definitions for each category, subcategory are developed. In finding section, exemplars for each code and category are

identified from data. Researcher can further link the subcategories and categories depending on the study objectives (Altheide, 1996; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Downe- Wamboldt, 1992; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) .

Relevant theories and or research findings are addressed in the discussion section. Furthermore, the discussion includes summary of how findings contribute to knowledge in the area of interest and suggestions for practice, teaching and future research (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) .

This method is advantageous in gaining direct information from study participant or documents without imposing preconceived categories or theoretical perspectives. Also the method is useful in interpreting analysis, as the major themes that emerge from the data guides the discussion as well as controls the researcher bias. As in absence of major themes, the researcher can interpret data based on his own thoughts and thus the study could be biased (Bowen, 2009; Corbin & Strauss, 2008) .

Qualitative content analysis is an inductive process that generates major themes while the researchers review or read the data, thus is not confine to a set of premade codebook as in quantitative content analysis. This inductive approach though majorly used in the grounded theory studies where the themes help to develop or explain the concepts or phenomena that are not previously explained or defined, but also can bring new insights where the concepts or paradigm is already been defined and explained (Altheide, 1996; Corbin & Strauss, 2008) .

However, one challenge faced by researcher under this type of analysis is failing to develop a complete understanding of the context, which further fails to identify key categories. Lincoln and Guba (1994) have described it as a credibility issue, which can be controlled by using triangulation, peer debriefing, referential adequacy and number checks. Another challenge of the conventional approach to content analysis is that it can be confused with other qualitative methods, like grounded theory or phenomenology, thus scholars may be reluctant to apply it in the studies. However, these methods share a similar initial analytical

approach but go beyond content analysis to develop theory (Altheide, 1996) .

The study selected as an example defines qualitative content analysis as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Downe- Wamboldt, 1992b) . In this study the researchers have identified three approaches; conventional, directed and summative, to interpret text data from a naturalistic paradigm. This hypothetical study is carried out to explicate the issues of study design and analytical procedures for each approach. This study is also explained here for elaborating the types of content analysis in qualitative study (Downe- Wamboldt, 1992b) .

There are a number of studies in social sciences and health sciences that have conducted research by documents and interviews but have used qualitative content analysis to analyze those documents or interviews. In the following section the qualitative content analysis is further elaborated by the studies that used documents and interview methods.

In a study of relationship advice column in men’s magazine, a document analysis approach was used. The research question “what intimate relationship topics are embedded in the question and answer columns in five top magazines targeted to men?” was answered by choosing top five selling men’s magazines in the United States. The focus of the study was a close examination of the questions and answers columns of the magazines. The researchers applied a naturalistic inquiry approach to this data, which they explained as when there are no predetermined categories or variables used to describe themes or phenomena being observed (Patton, 1980; Spalding, 2010) .

As Altheide (1987) explains, this study allowed themes and patterns allowed to emerge from the data. A process of constant comparison starts once the themes began to develop. In constant comparison, researchers compare every emerging theme with the previously developed themes and start-grouping data segments with other similar data segments. In this study the authors read 659 articles and 122

possible codes were identified, and finally through further constant comparison these themes were sub divided into four main themes, and then were analyzed through interpretive analysis (Spalding, 2010) .

In a similar study, Gupta and et al (2008) did a content analysis of *Cosmopolitan* in the year 2004 to study the relationship advice in the women magazines. Researchers coded 100 articles from the love and lust sections of the magazine. This study also implied the same process of naturalistic method, where the first author makes notes of his thoughts and feelings about the articles while reading them. As the themes starting emerging he starts the constant comparison method and soon develops major segments of similar themes. In this study the author came up with forty-four possible codes on love and fifty-four on lust section. The researcher did further do the comparison of themes in order to merge, eliminate or remained same. This study established its credibility and addressed the issues of validity and trustworthiness through peer review and researcher bias. The three authors and their two colleagues met on regular basis to check and review the themes constantly (Gupta, 2008) .

In an exploratory study of news media reports examining language of incarceration shifts from “tough on crime” to “smart on crime” by Altheide & Coyle (2006), an approach of discourse tracking was applied, which is a qualitative document analysis technique. In this method new information bases are accessible through computer technology, for example NEXIS, which is used for this study. This qualitative approach focused on emerging themes and meanings in news reports, particularly new statements about crime and criminals by police officials and policy makers. Author argues that this process requires the researcher to become immersed in relevant reports, critical comparison of certain terms across reports, over time, and across news media and then theoretically sample and search for other articles that can be contrasted and compared with emerging findings. After this process researcher developed a research protocol that guided the data collection from relevant articles. In this study they examined selected newspapers, magazines and TV news transcripts for key terms and phrases that emerged relevant to research question. Those themes were copied and

were analyzed for appropriate themes and emphasis (Altheide et al., 2001).

In a study on Katrina and Anarchy by Stock (2007), a method of qualitative document analysis and content analysis has been applied. Researcher has used LexisNexis Academic during March 2006 and utilized the “Guided News Search” option. Searched the “General News” category and “Major Newspapers”, researcher searched for the headlines, lead paragraphs, term “Katrina and anarchy” with a time frame of “previous year”. The initial search brought eighty articles. The same terms were again searched by searching in “Full Text” category, on the anniversary of Katrina, which retrieved 359 articles. After eliminating duplicate articles, initial coding was done by applying an ethnographic content analysis that provides tools to organize and code articles. This approach allows researcher to note down his thoughts and feelings while reading the articles and then make sub segments of emerging themes by constant comparison. In this study 59 articles were coded that defines or are used for anarchy (Stock, 2007) .

In a study of exploring how equity has been conceptualized in promoting health equity researchers, a method of qualitative document analysis has been applied. The aim was to study was to find how equity is considered within documents that outline standards for public health. The study was conducted in the Ontario and British Columbia of Canada. The documents they analyze were the Ontario Public Health Standards, and British Columbia Framework for Core Functions in Public Health available in 2010. The research team applied the inductive content analysis, where the whole team discussed and talked about what they understand about equity while they read and coded documents. Also while coding the thoughts they also constantly recorded memos that capture ideas and questions about equity as understanding emerged and changed. All documents were entered into NVivo 8.0, which was used to code documents and organize notes (Pinto et al., 2012) .

Furthermore to have more concrete results, the documents were read, reread and coded in three stages. In first stage the codes were developed on basis of four preliminary questions that addressed to the terms “equity

and inequity” definitions and context. The answers to first set of questions generated seven secondary questions and coding of the documents. In this round the reading was focused on proxy terms used to discuss equity in relation to social justice, the social determinants of health and structural conditions that produce inequity. Finally the answers to these questions generated third set of questions that focused on third reading and coding. In this round the emphasis was to look for themes that address intersection between equity and related concepts that emerged from the analysis such as accessibility. Coding categories were developed that identifies equity used in the implicit and explicit way, how equity was measures, concepts like social justice, accessibility and accountability, and specified actions to reduce health inequities. Throughout coding, constant comparison process was also applied in order to look for the relationships among themes and to further categorize them in to sub segments. Finally, the findings from the documents of both provinces were compared and analyzed in order to examine the concept of equity (Pinto et al., 2012) .

Moreover, one of the debate about the qualitative research is of reliability of data as some investigators believe that qualitative research target the meanings and interpretations of experience by the subject and may involve investigator bias (Stenbacka, 2001). However (Davis & Hagedorn, 1954; King, 1944; Kirk & Miller, 1985) , argue that a form of reliability is achievable in qualitative research. Jerome Kirk argues that in qualitative research identifies the presence or absence of something in contrast to quantitative which involves the measurement of degree to which the feature is present (Kirk & Miller, 1985) .

Analysis and Conclusions

Validity in Qualitative Research

Validity in qualitative research has been a big concern among the scholars. Validity is defined in qualitative study as “how accurately the account represents participants’ realities of the social phenomena and is credible to them (Schwandt, 1997). However, the strategies used by researcher to establish the credibility of their study is refer to the procedures for measuring validity. It is been argued that validity can be measured by researcher own lens, by returning to data over and over to

see if the constructs, categories, explanations and interpretations make sense (Patton, 1980). Furthermore, qualitative researchers employ member checking, triangulation, thick description, peer review and external audits for the validity check.

The study by Bowen (2009) involves triangulation method to address the issues of reliability and validity in the qualitative methods. Triangulation is a validity procedure, where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study (Creswell & Miller, 2000) . Triangulation is commonly use strategy by qualitative inquirers to provide corroborating evidence collected by employing multiple methods such as observation, interviews and documents to locate major and minor themes. This allows systematic sorting to find common themes or categories by eliminating overlapping areas (Creswell & Miller, 2000) .

Furthermore, multiple methods of research will supplement the findings of each other. The researcher can use data drawn from documents, for example, to contextualize data collected during interviews (Bowen, 2009). Moreover, information drawn from documents can suggest some questions that need to be asked. Goldstein and Reiboldt (2004) in their ethnographic study conducted document analysis to generate new interview questions. Their research demonstrates how one method contributes in another method in an interactive way (Bowen, 2009). Similarly, documents can be source of supplementary data. The information and insights derived from document analysis could be further used to supplement data collected from interviews (Bowen, 2009). Hansen (1995) analyzed journal entries and memos written by participants as a supplement to interview data (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

Moreover, studies utilized multiple sources of data provides rich description of data analysis. Heil (2003) and Pirsein (1979) in their books on VOA has explored VOA history from its origins, its mission and charter, examined the US foreign policies and related VOA controversies, moreover provided a detailed account of VOA role in the WWII and Cold War, Vietnam war, middle east, and eastern European wars. In their studies they have applied the triangulation methods, for all

the historical and policy related information and for VOA transcripts has approached document analysis. Moreover they conducted many personal interviews of the bureaucrats, policy makers, foreign affairs officials, employees working currently in VOA and also the retired officials. Both writers have also included their own experiences as they served VOA, and USIA that further supplements in his analysis of the study.

A study conducted on the United States Information Agency (USIA) in utilizing the VOA as a public diplomacy initiative in Brazil. The study examines the US public diplomacy in Brazil, the relationship of USIA and Brazil and how this technology is affecting society. To examine this relationship personal interviews and observations with support of literature review has been analyzed. This study used document analysis to analyze the history of radio and TV in Brazil, and the internal and external influences on broadcasting in Brazil. This analysis is provided to support the claim that in Brazil the content of programs and ownership of the media has been controlled by the elites. Furthermore, the history of USIA is analyzed from documents and literature to illustrate the role of VOA and USIA in war and in international broadcasting, and most of all its relationship with propaganda and public diplomacy. Moreover, has surveyed the audience for the analyzing the perception of people about VOA role in transmitting straight news and US public diplomacy (Massey, 1990). The study utilizes the multiple sources of data collection and analysis in order to address the reliability and validity issue of the qualitative data, and also to supplement data collected from one method to the other method, in order to provide credible analysis.

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