



GROUNDING THEORY REVIEW

An international journal

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2014

Grounded Theory Review, Vol 13 (Issue #2), 1-2

The online version of this article can be found at:

<https://groundedtheoryreview.org>

Originally published by Sociology Press

<https://sociologypress.com/>

Archived by the Institute for Research and Theory Methodologies

<https://www.mentoringresearchers.org/>

The Strength of a Solution Seeking Approach

Editorial

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Why do PhD candidates choose grounded theory as their methodological approach? Many novice grounded theorists obviously grapple with this question while working on their dissertations. The Grounded Theory Review constantly receives papers from novice GT researchers that discuss and share experiences when following the tenets of the methodology.

In this issue, we are happy to present the first chapter of an upcoming reader by Barney G. Glaser on choosing GT for their dissertation work. As dr. Glaser points out, we know much about the many variables that influence a GT trajectory, but less about the initial drive to choose the GT method. Even though choosing a grounded theory approach may seem like an immediate firm decision, dr. Glaser emphasizes that its firmness varies with the learning curve of the researcher. Usually, the firmness increases with productive, conceptual GT training. This observation is surely supported by two short format papers in this issue.

A great advantage of the grounded theory approach is the fact that grounded theories are solution-oriented rather than problem-focused. I believe this solution-seeking speaks convincingly to a main concern of contemporary society, in which new forms of digital communication constantly change the ways that individuals and large groups of people relate to each other. Even if most of us are increasingly computerized in thinking and doing, our apparently rational clear cut goals are still coupled with values, affections, and traditions, as once pointed out by the influential sociologist Max Weber. Grounded theories are outstandingly good at conceptualizing main concerns of the few on behalf of the many, therein lies their explanatory strength and firm support of productive change.

Following Dr. Glaser's chapter of choosing grounded theory, we are happy to present two full format grounded theories:

Annabel-Mauve Adjognon's theory of political intelligentizing explains widespread strategies of political games in business administration. Her study, originating from France, provides new insights in ways that top-level corporate managers aim at becoming more politically successful. Political intelligentizing implies acquiring, developing, and combining six specific skills: time matching, rhetorical fitting, silence juggling, strategic forward thinking, strategic interacting, and relationing. Political intelligentizing is a good example of a substantive theory with great general explanatory power.

The next theory, safeguarding self-governance, explains older patients' patterns of behavior in relation to their relatives in a very special situation. Danish researchers Connie B. Berthelsen, Kirsten Frederiksen, and Tove Lindhardt propose that older patients turn to

safeguarding self-governance when faced with the challenge of recovering from total joint replacement in fast-track programs. Older patients' need for maintaining autonomy is resolved through strategies of embracing, shielding, distancing, and masking. This theory of heterogeneous patterns of behavior to maintain autonomy emphasizes the need for health care professionals to apply an individualized approach to the involvement of relatives of older patients.

A novice grounded theorist, Amy Russell from Texas, USA, presents a methodological article where she discusses the development of self-trust and self-pacing during the GT research process. In her short format comment on gerunds, Amy explains how questioning and testing her own conceptualizations ensured that she would follow the tenets of grounded theory data analysis. Amy explains how transposing stages of self-pacing onto researcher gerunds made her identify phases of questioning and doubting, waiting and trusting, and ruminating and obsessing. She also suggests that saturation is similar to reflexing and owning.

Another novice grounded theorist, Leslie Piko from Australia, contributes with two short format papers in this issue. Just like Amy Russell, Leslie is concerned with explaining her own delving into grounded theory, but from a different perspective. In her first paper, Leslie shares her ways of discovering her theory of optimizing professional life. The theory deals with the substantive area of general practitioners and their need for sustainment. In her second paper, Leslie explains how she applied the theory of optimizing life in a workshop for general practitioners. In the workshop, doctors were challenged to reinvent their careers by using her newly generated theory. The theory provided a useful framework that guided participants in analyzing their own long-term career issues and in identifying potential solutions while working individually and in small groups.

Lars-Johan Åge from Sweden contributes with a short format article on the double challenge in sales management. Lars-Johan suggests that a main concern of a sales manager is to reach the sales and economic goals of his organization. This concern is resolved through the process of goal-oriented balancing. Sales managers constantly seek to maximize individual performance. But individual development can only be enhanced if balanced with frame development. Thus, the parallel challenge facing sales managers is to establish effective organizational processes and structures that maximize individual performance support.

Finally, researchers Jan Green and Ben Binsardi from Wales, UK, have explored a common phenomenon in academia, namely researchers' tendency to undertake complex research tasks outside core working hours. Jan and Ben identify how personal effort and drive require the application of mental mustering and systematic procedures. Researchers' resolution to the reoccurring dilemma of working long hours is resolved through treating research work as a hobby. Thus, the concept of systematic advocating explains researchers' personal solution through immersion in the task.

Have a good read!