

think that Merriam and Tisdell have done a really good job detailing the research process and still hold by the fact that this class/book should have been the very first introduction to research that we had in the program. I am still having a hard time setting in on a problem of practice and thus that makes the "concrete" plan I am looking into hard to follow:

I am going to do research on the restaurant business. Restaurants spend a lot of money, time, energy and resources on hiring and training employees. Nothing is more frustrating than hiring an employee and having them quit during training or after the first week when they have completed their training. We are still required to pay them for the time spent in training while receiving very little back in return on top of wasting everyone's time (the manager, HR, the trainer, etc).

I would focus on conducting a purposeful sampling of employees who quit their job within the first 3 weeks of their job from both the Front of House and Back of House Positions. The criteria here is that these people were chosen to get a feel for why they quit and what changes the restaurant could make or implement to ensure that we are not wasting time and resources hiring and training these employees to lose them quickly. I work for a franchisee owner who owns 58 restaurants throughout TN, KY, GA, and AL. My goal is to utilize the information to figure out "why" people leave the workforce after the first 1-3 weeks on the job. Per Honigmann as quoted by Merriam and Tisdell, "non probability sampling methods 'are logical as long as the fieldworker expects mainly to use his data not to answer questions like 'how much' and 'how often' but to solve qualitative problems, such as discovering what occurs, the implications of what occurs, and the relationships linking occurrences" (2016, p. 96).

I would like to conduct a mixed-methods evaluation. An evaluation/survey would first sample the participants and ask them questions around why they left their position. I would use two-tier sampling to conduct interviews with some of these employees after they have completed the survey. I am choosing the employees who leave the position within the 1st 3 weeks after starting as the primary basis because I want to know what causes them to depart from the company and what the company can do to better retain these employees after utilizing the resources to train them. Merriam and Tisdell quote Patton saying, "Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (2016, p. 96).

I would analyze the results from the survey and place the reasons that employees left into categories. I would imagine that some of these categories involve:

Corporate/Restaurant Policies

Training Curriculum/Design

Corporate/Restaurant Environment

Personal - Time Commitment/Not good at the Job, Don't like it

Other

I believe in everyone having a story to tell. And through the use of interview or "conversation with a purpose" (quoted by Dexter in Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 108), I would try to capture the story of the employee being interviewed. The goal is to filter out the reason as to why the employee did not persist in the job. Was it the training program? Did the employee not feel prepared or competent to do the job after training? Was it the restaurant environment? Did the employee not feel connected to the team? etc. With all of this, I would use a semistructured format to ensure that I was getting the specific information I am looking forward to from the interview. The goal is to truly gain an understanding as to why an employee did not persist with the job and so per Merriam and Tisdell, "Less-structured formats assume that individual respondents define the world in unique ways," and so truly getting to the bottom of these "unique ways" is important to gain a better understanding of what the company can do to capture these employees. After reading McClure and McNaughtan's article on Proximity to Power, though I would wield more influence than that people I am interviewing, most of them would not even know who I am because I would be interviewing various employees from across the company (58 stores). My positionality as an insider to the company and the organization gives me unique insight into the training program and what employees go through for training yet my ability as action researcher will give me insight to the invisible curriculum or tribulations that the employee faces while going through the training process and transition to the team.

Restaurants could save a lot of time, energy and money in creating a training program that adequately trains the employee for the ins and outs of the job, how to navigate the restaurant environment with many competing personalities, etc and finding out why these employees leave could be helpful to creating better transitions for future employees.

---

Merriam S., and Tisdell, E. (2016). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. 4th Edition. Jossey-Bass.

McClure, K., & McNaughtan, J. L. (2021). Proximity to Power: The Challenges and Strategies of Interviewing Elites in Higher Education Research. *The Qualitative Report*, 26(3), 874-992. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2021.4615>

