

ความแตกต่าง 4 แบบ ในการดำเนินการวิจัยแบบทฤษฎีฐานรากในประเทศไทย:

การทบทวนวรรณกรรมแบบไม่ใช่ระบบ

Four Variations of A Grounded Theory Study In Thailand:

A Non-Systematic Literature Review

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บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้เป็นการศึกษาวิจัยโดยใช้ทฤษฎีฐานรากที่ดำเนินการวิจัยในประเทศไทย โดยเน้นที่ประเด็นสำคัญ 3 ประเด็นที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการดำเนินการตามวิธีวิจัยแบบทฤษฎีฐานราก ได้แก่ (1) การระบุความแปรผันของวิธีวิจัยแบบทฤษฎีฐานรากที่เลือกใช้สำหรับโครงการวิจัย (2) การระบุการใช้เอกสารอ้างอิงตามความแปรผันของวิธีวิจัยแบบทฤษฎีฐานรากที่เลือกใช้สำหรับโครงการวิจัย และ (3) การระบุกระบวนการเข้ารหัสตามความแปรผันของวิธีวิจัยแบบทฤษฎีฐานรากที่เลือกใช้สำหรับโครงการวิจัย โดยใช้การทบทวนวรรณกรรมแบบไม่เป็นระบบเพื่อแก้ไขปัญหาเหล่านี้ ดำเนินการสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบมีจุดประสงค์และแบบสะดวกเพื่อเลือกบทความวิจัยที่ใช้วิธีวิจัยแบบทฤษฎีฐานราก จำนวน 20 บทความที่ดีพิมพ์ในฐานข้อมูลศูนย์ดัชนีการอ้างอิงวารสารไทย (Thai Citation Index: TCI) จากการศึกษพบว่าโครงการวิจัยที่เลือกมาศึกษาจำนวน 20 โครงการนั้น ไม่มีโครงการใด

ใน 20 โครงการที่ปฏิบัติตามประเด็นทั้งสามได้อย่างเหมาะสม โดยโครงการที่ศึกษา 60 เปอร์เซ็นต์ไม่ได้ระบุประเด็นใด ๆ เลย โครงการที่ศึกษา 25 เปอร์เซ็นต์ระบุประเด็นที่ 1 ในขณะที่เพียง 5 เปอร์เซ็นต์ระบุประเด็นที่ 2 และ 40 เปอร์เซ็นต์ระบุประเด็นที่ 3 มีเพียง 15 เปอร์เซ็นต์ของโครงการที่ศึกษาเท่านั้นที่สามารถระบุกระบวนการเข้ารหัสที่ตรงตามข้อกำหนดของรูปแบบวิธีวิจัยแบบทฤษฎีฐานรากที่เลือก ผลการวิจัยดังกล่าวนำไปสู่ข้อแนะนำที่สำคัญสำหรับนักวิจัยในประเทศไทยที่วางแผนดำเนินการวิจัยแบบทฤษฎีฐานรากว่าควรศึกษาขั้นตอนการดำเนินการวิจัยอย่างละเอียดถี่ถ้วนก่อนดำเนินการวิจัยดังกล่าว

คำสำคัญ: การวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ, ทฤษฎีฐานราก, ความแตกต่างของทฤษฎีฐานราก, การทบทวนวรรณกรรม, กระบวนการเข้ารหัส

Abstract

This study examined Grounded Theory (GT) research projects conducted in Thailand. The study focused on three major issues related to the GT research method: (1) Specification of the variation of the GT method selected for application in the research project; (2) Specification of the use of literature according to the variation of GT method selected; and (3) Specification of the coding process according to the variation of GT method selected. A non-systematic literature review was employed to address these issues. Purposive and convenience sampling were used to select twenty GT research articles published in Thai Citation Index (TCI) journals. The study found that none of the twenty projects studied complied appropriately with all three issues. Sixty percent of the projects studied did not specify any of the issues. Twenty-five percent of the projects studied specified issue number 1, while only five percent specified issue number 2 and forty percent specified issue number 3. Only 15 percent of the projects studied were able to specify the coding process that matched the requirements of the GT variation selected. These findings led to the recommendation that Thai researchers planning to conduct GT research projects should thoroughly study the method before conducting such research.

Keywords: *Qualitative Research, Grounded Theory, GT Variations, Use of Literature Review, Coding Process*

Introduction

Grounded Theory (GT) is a qualitative research strategy that has gained popularity both internationally and in Thailand in recent years. The Grounded Theory Institute was established to promote the original GT, such as Glaserian, Classic, or Orthodox Grounded Theory (Grounded Theory Institute, 2023). Additionally, the Grounded Theory Review: An International Journal (Grounded Theory Review, 2022) was established to publish academic articles on original grounded theory research in all disciplines and there are many other academic journals that publish grounded theory research.

There are differences in the approach and methodology of GT research compared to other qualitative research strategies (Corbin & Strauss, 1990), and there are a number of variations or types of GT that differ from one another. Each variation has unique characteristics, particularly in the aspects of literature review prior to conducting the GT research and the specific coding process for data analysis of each variation. Thus, it is necessary to ensure proper application of the literature and coding process according to each GT variation in conducting the GT research, as follows: 1) identifying the variation of the GT used in the research project, 2) aligning the literature review with the chosen GT variation, and 3) defining and explaining the coding process for data analysis that aligns with the chosen GT variation. Therefore, researchers need to pay more attention to the specific deep details of the GT methodology before conducting the GT research.

In Thailand, there have been numerous studies that have utilized GT research, and have been published in Thai academic journals which are indexed in the Thai Journal Citation Index (TCI) database during the past decade. Since the treatment of these three issues in conducting a GT research project could impact upon the quality of the results of such study, it is interesting to study how Thai researchers handled these three specific issues in conducting their GT research projects.

Research objectives

The four objectives of this study are as follows: (1) To investigate the categorization of the GT variations; (2) To examine the literature review process prior to conducting research for each GT variation; (3) To study the coding process for data analysis for each GT variations; and (4) To investigate the process of conducting GT research in Thailand, specifically in the categorization of the GT variation, literature review in each GT variation, and coding process for data analysis, for each GT variation. This study will draw on the GT research projects conducted in Thailand over the past five years, from 2018 to 2022.

Literature review

Study of the Categorization of the GT Variations

The origin of GT can be traced back to the 1965 article entitled "The Awareness of Dying" by Glaser and Strauss (Tie, Birks & Francis, 2019). In 1967, they published a book titled "The Discovery of Grounded Theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which became widely popular (Glaser, 2022). Since then, there have been various categorizations of GT research, which differ in their name, literature use, and coding process for data analysis. A review of the literature found that there are four main types of GT research variations: Original GT, Glaserian GT, Straussian GT, and Constructivist GT (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990a,b; Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2000; 2006; Burden & Roodt, 2007; Hernandez, 2010; McCreddie & Payne, 2010; Hamid, Saman & Saud, 2012; Evans, 2013; Sebastian, 2019; McCall & Edwards, 2021; Cullen & Brennan, 2021; Stough & Lee, 2021; Mohajan & Mohajan, 2022a;). Additionally, there is a specific type of GT research called Feminist GT, which focuses on studying women (Alston, 2014; Freeman, 2019; Mohajan, 2022). In this study, we will examine the four variations of the GT research according to the approach described by Hamid, Saman and Saud (2012) in two parts: definition and emphasis, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Categorization of the Grounded Theory Variations

Version	Original GT	Glaserian GT	Straussian GT	Constructivist GT
Definition	Glaser & Strauss define GT as the discovery of theory from data (Glaser & Strauss (1967). It is a methodological approach rather than a procedure of qualitative method (Hamid, Saman & Saud, 2012).	Glaser confirmed that GT is a specific methodology on how to get from systematically collecting data to producing a multivariate conceptual theory. It is a total methodological package (Glaser, 2022).	Strauss & Corbin explain that GT is a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, a, b)	Charmaz defines GT as a method of conducting qualitative research that focuses on creating conceptual frameworks or theories through building an inductive analysis from the data (Charmaz, 2006).
Emphasis	Importance of generating theory based on empirical data rather than a literature search (Hamid, Saman, & Saud, 2012).	Objectivity, external reality, neutral observers (Hamid, Saman & Saud, 2012).	Unbiased observers, technical procedures, participants' own voice (Hamid, Saman & Saud, 2012).	Focus more on the process and technique of research practice (Hamid, Saman & Saud, 2012).

Source: Adapted from Hamid, Saman, and Saud (2012)

As illustrated in Table 1, there are four major GT variations models in use. Each variation is significantly different in definition and emphasis. Therefore, researchers need to specify clearly which GT variation they choose to use in their research project (Hernandez, 2010).

Study of Literature Review for Each of the GT Variations

The use of literature in the GT research is significantly different from other types of qualitative research. Based on recent literature reviews (Hallberg, 2010; Dunne, 2011; Thornberg, 2012; Kenny & Fourie, 2015; Ramalho, Adams, Huggard & Hoare, 2015; El Hussein, Kennedy &

Oliver, 2017; Deering & Williams, 2020; Yu & Smith, 2021, and Nathaniel, 2022), it was found that there are two schools of thought of using literature in the GT research. The first two variations, Original GT and Glaserian GT, do not support the conduct of a literature review prior to conducting the GT research, while the other two variations; Straussian GT and Constructivist GT allow for the conduct of a literature review at a certain level prior to conducting these variations of the GT research. The literature is used in different ways by the four variations of the GT research. Hamid, Saman & Saud (2012) summarized the different ways of using literature in the GT research, as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2 Literature Review for Each Variation of the Grounded Theory

Version	Original GT	Glaserian GT	Straussian GT	Constructivist GT
Use of literature	Generally prohibits preliminary literature reviews, as they might affect the emergence of theory. If the researcher is aware of existent concepts, found in the literature, these might contaminate the theory, distorting its social reality (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Deering & Williams, 2020).	Glaser (1992) strongly disagrees with conducting a literature review before the emergent theory because he believes that pre-conceived knowledge from the literature will constrain grounded theory analysts and recommends a reserve literature review after GT appears (i.e., post data collection) (Glaser, 2001; von Alberti-Alhtaybat & Al-Htaybat, 2010).	Suggests a preliminary literature review to help contextualize the phenomenon that a study will investigate, aided by the researcher having some familiarity with what will be explored. It also enables researchers to generate a theory, as well as to analyze more critically ideas arising from the data using their background knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).	No need for an in-depth preliminary literature review to avoid the likelihood that they will force data into preconceived categories to existent theories. However, researchers might have rich experience of the study area and help them in analyzing and creating the theory (Charmaz, 2014; Deering & Williams, 2020; Ramalho, Adams, Huggard & Hoare, 2015).

Source: Adapted from Hamid, Saman, and Saud (2012)

As illustrated in Table 2, the GT research can be divided into four groups or variations, each with different ways of using literature. In the first variation, Original GT, it is proposed that researchers do not need to review the literature before conducting research, as this may hinder the creation of theories. In the second variation, Glaserian GT, researchers are advised to avoid reviewing the literature before conducting research. In the third variation, Straussian GT, it is recommended to conduct a moderate amount of literature review to guide the research questions and data analysis. In the fourth variation, Constructivist GT, it is proposed that researchers review the literature before conducting research to gain experience in creating theories with research participants. Therefore, researchers must specify and explain their use of literature in their GT research projects to be consistent with the chosen GT research variation.

Study of the Coding Process for Each Variation of the GT Research.

One major distinction of the GT research is that each variation has its own coding process for data analysis. From the literature review on the coding process (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006; Goldkuhl & Cronholm, 2010; Chametzky, 2016; Lewinson, McSherry & Kevern, 2018; Cepellos & Tonelli, 2020; Qureshi & Unlu, 2020, and Mohajan & Mohajan, 2022b), it was found that the coding process for GT research varies according to each variation. This process is summarized in the guidelines provided by Hamid, Saman, & Saud (2012) and shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Coding Process of Each Variation of the GT Research

Version	Original GT	Glaserian GT	Straussian GT	Constructivist GT
Coding process	Open coding and emphasis the constant comparative method	Substantive coding, open coding, selective coding and theoretical coding	Open coding, axial coding, selective coding	Initial coding, focused coding, theoretical coding

Source: Adapted from Hamid, Saman, and Saud (2012)

Table 3 specifies that the coding process applying in each variation differs. For example, Original GT emphasizes the process of open coding, with a focus on constant comparative method. Glaserian GT uses Substantive coding, Open coding, Selective coding, and Theoretical coding. Straussian GT uses Open coding, Axial coding, and Selective coding. In Constructivist GT, Initial coding, Focused coding, and Theoretical coding are used. Therefore, researchers need to specify the coding process to be consistent with the chosen GT variation.

Research methods

This study used a non-systematic literature review method (Green, Johnson & Adams, 2006; Ferrari, 2015; Huelin, Iheanacho, Payne. & Sandman, 2015: online; Rahman, Zulkifle, Aslam & Khan, 2019; Dhillon, 2022) by reviewing literature related to the GT research. The reason to conduct a non-systematic literature review method is because it is meant to be an informative, rather than all-encompassing, review of the literature on a topic. It takes an in-depth but not systematic approach to a specific research question. The study based on a knowledgeable selection of current, high-quality articles on the topic of interest (Huelin et al., 2015). Data were extracted, organized, and presented as an academic paper in the form of a review paper, a process which differs significantly from a systematic literature review and meta-analysis (Kitchenham, et al., 2009; Snyder, 2019; Xiao & Watson, 2019; Mengista, Soromessa, & Legese, 2020; Page, et al., 2021), which is a research method that can be used for both qualitative and quantitative research. Twenty GT research articles published in the Thai Journal Citation Index (TCI) journals were selected as a sample group for this study. Purposive and convenience sampling methods (Creswell, 2013) were used to select the twenty sample articles. The researcher used twenty articles because its reached data saturation where no new information emerged. In presenting the study results, the authors will not disclose the names of the authors of the article, but will use codes to refer to the case studies, labeled as Case Study 1-20 instead. This practice is carried out to adhere to research ethics guidelines concerning privacy protection and confidentiality of data providers (Folkman, 2000). Furthermore, the sample articles used for the 20 case studies will be stored in the research project's Audit Trail, following the established principles of trustworthiness in qualitative research (Shenton, 2004).

Research results

In this study, the researchers examined the GT research projects conducted in Thailand and published as research articles in Thai academic journals indexed in the Thai Journal Citation Index (TCI) database during the period of 2018-2022. The study focused on three issues: (1) Identifying and describing the GT variation chosen to apply in the project, (2) Explaining the literature review process of the GT variation chosen to apply in the project, and (3) Identifying and describing the coding process used in analyzing the data of the GT variation chosen to be applied in the project. To select the research articles for analysis, a combination of purposive sampling and convenience sampling methods was employed, as outlined by Creswell (2013). A total of 20 research articles was chosen as a targeted sample for this study. The samples will be referred as Case Study 1-20. The results of the study are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 GT Research Conducted in Thailand and Published in 2018-2022

Case Study / Year of Publication	Issues			Remarks
	1	2	3	
1. Nantarojpong and Siriwigong (2018)	0	0	0	-
2. Saitong (2018)	1	0	1	1 used Constructionist GT and 3 used Straussian GT
3. Klangrahad, Thonglor, Promma, and Praneetponkrang (2019)	0	0	0	-
4. Junpong and Udtaisuk (2019)	0	0	0	-
5. Chumnor Lek, Silabut, Tongpanchang, and Srikrachang (2020)	0	0	1	3 used Straussian GT
6. Dhiratanuttdilok and Siriwigong (2020)	0	0	0	States that Open Coding was used in data analysis
7. Pongsuwan, Ruangroengkulrit, and Balthip (2020)	1	0	1	1 used Constructionist GT and 3 used Straussian GT
8. Sangnin, Pooripakdee, and Siriwigong (2021)	0	0	0	Used van Manen method (Phenomenological Study) in 3
9. Supathong, Pothivat, and Duangchathom (2021)	0	0	0	Used Phenomenological Grounded Theory in 1 and Straussian GT in 3

Case Study / Year of Publication	Issues			Remarks
	1	2	3	
10. Laovanich (2021)	0	0	0	-
11. Chunthasiri (2021)	1	0	1	1 and 3 used Constructivist GT
12. Metasuk and Silksuk (2021)	0	0	0	Used Thematic Analysis Across the Case in 3
13. Daoudom, Netawong, Thongchalaem, Daodard, and Chuchuisuwan (2021)	0	0	0	Used Open Coding and Axial Coding in 3
14. Yamklin (2021)	0	0	1	3 used Straussian GT
15. Chonlasuksanee and Sritanyarat (2022)	1	0	1	1 and 3 used Straussian GT
16. Tanoamchard and Kotcha (2022)	0	1	1	2 and 3 used Straussian GT
17. Phuanpoh and Chaemchamrus (2022)	0	0	0	-
18. Kitpetch, Makmee, Ruengtip, and Panthong (2022)	0	0	0	Reference to Charmaz (2014) without explanation
19. Sroysing, Naiyapatana, and Charoensuk, (2022)	0	0	0	Used Open Coding in data analysis
20. Pongsuwan (2022)	1	0	1	1 and 3 used Straussian GT
Total	5	1	8	-

Source: The Authors (2023)

From Table 4, it can be observed that none of the 20 GT research projects fully addressed all three issues. In terms of the first issue, the identification and description of GT variation used, only five projects specified the chosen GT variation. Regarding the second issue, the explanation of the literature review process of GT variation, only one project accurately described the use of literature. As for the third issue, the identification and description of the coding process for data analysis according to the selected GT variation, only eight projects specified the coding process and only three out of these eight projects properly specified the coding process that is consistent with the chosen GT variation. Notably, one project mentioned conducting a Phenomenological GT study without a clear explanation of this GT variation, and another project mentioned using GT, but employed Van Manen's (1990) method for data analysis, which is a qualitative research method used in Phenomenological Studies. Additionally, several projects identified the coding processes that did

not align with the chosen GT variation. For example, some projects identified themselves as Constructivist GT, but utilized coding processes associated with Straussian GT. Furthermore, several projects did not specify the chosen GT variation, but mentioned coding processes, such as Straussian GT. There was also one project that employed Thematic Analysis as the data analysis method, and several projects did not specify the chosen GT variation, but mentioned partial descriptions of the coding processes, such as Open Coding and Axial Coding without providing further details.

Discussion of results

In accordance with the first objective of the study, it was found that the GT research can be classified into 2-5 different GT variations. The most used GT variations were the following four: (1) Original GT, (2) Glaserian GT, (3) Straussian GT, and (4) Constructivist GT. Each GT variation has distinct names and different approaches to literature usage and coding processes for data analysis. To ensure clarity and consistency in research endeavors, researchers need to specify and explain the chosen GT variation, aligning it with the literature usage and coding processes in their research projects. In this study, it was found that only five out of the 20 research projects specified and described the chosen GT variation (i.e., Case Studies 2, 7, 11, 15 and 20). Notably, one project (Case Study 9) mentioned utilizing Phenomenological Grounded Theory as the research strategy, but did not provide an explanation or reference source for this GT variation.

In relation to the second objective of the study, it was found that Original GT and Glaserian GT did not involve a literature review prior to the research process. This was because it was perceived that conducting a literature review before the study would bias the researchers' thinking in theory generation. A literature review was instead conducted when the data analysis reached the point of theory emergence to facilitate comparison and ongoing analysis. On the other hand, it was suggested that Straussian GT and Constructivist GT may include a literature review before the research process. It was recognized that conducting a literature review would help researchers design their studies more clearly and enhance their theoretical sensitivity, leading to better theory development. However, among the 20 projects surveyed, only one project (i.e., Case Study 16) accurately described and referenced the use of literature in their research. The remaining 19 projects did not mention or discuss the use of a literature review in their research process.

Regarding the third objective of the study, it was found that Original GT emphasized the use of extensive coding to generate many codes, which were then grouped into categories. The analysis approach focused on continuous and constant comparison. On the other hand, Glaserian GT involved Substantive coding, Open coding, Selective coding and Theoretical coding. Straussian GT utilized Open coding, Axial coding and Selective coding, and Constructivist GT employed Initial coding, Focused coding and Theoretical coding. From this study, it was observed that out of the 20 projects examined, only 8 projects accurately described and applied the coding processes aligned with the selected GT variation (Case Studies 2, 5, 7, 11, 14, 15, 16 and 20). However, only 3 projects explicitly mentioned the coding process that was consistent with the selected GT variation (Case Studies 11, 15 and 20). It is interesting to note that one case (i.e., Case Study 8) states that the researchers employed a data analysis method based on van Manen's phenomenological study (van Manen, 1990), rather than the coding process of GT research. In addition, it is observed that there is one case (i.e., Case Study 9) where the researchers used Phenomenological GT and applied a Straussian GT coding process.

In relation to the fourth objective of the study, it was observed that none of the research projects utilizing the GT research fully addressed all three issues as specified in the objective of this study and as discussed in sections 6.1-6.3. Regarding the first objective, only 5 projects (Case Study 2, 7, 11, 15 and 20) out of the 20 studied projects specified the chosen GT variation as required. For the literature review issue, only one project (Case Study 16) out of the 20 projects described the utilization of the literature. In terms of identifying and explaining the chosen coding process for data analysis, there were only 8 projects (Case Study 2, 5, 7, 11, 14, 15, 16 and 20) out of the 20 studied projects that identified the coding process for data analysis. However, only 3 projects (Case Study 11, 15 and 20;) explicitly mentioned a coding process that was consistent with the chosen GT variation.

Recommendations

Recommendations from research

1. Researchers intending to conduct the GT research should comply with the three requirements of the GT research of: a) Specifying the GT variation to be applied in the research project; b) Specifying and explaining the use of literature according to the GT variation to be applied in the research project, and c) Specifying and explaining the coding process in data analysis according to the GT variation to be applied in the research project.

2. Academic journals, including editors and peer reviewers, should pay close attention and ensure that all three issues have been thoroughly addressed before approving the publication of the article.

Recommendations for further research

1. It is recommended that a Systematic Literature Review of the GT research be conducted in Thailand. This review will broaden the scope of the present study, providing in-depth information that can be used as guidance for improving various aspects related to the implementation of the GT research strategy in Thailand and leading to higher quality of the GT research outcomes.

2. It is important to conduct similar studies, including Systematic Literature Reviews, on other qualitative research strategies, particularly Phenomenological Studies, which have been found to be confused with the GT research strategy in some projects. This strategy will promote and support researchers and stakeholders in effectively and efficiently fulfilling their roles and responsibilities in the research process and utilization of their results.

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