

Understanding research results

Lesson 18

- All of the data that have been gathered are not presented in the research report. Whether verbal or numerical, the data presented have gone through some form of selection and reduction.
- Verbal data commonly appear as selections of excerpts, narrative vignettes, and quotations from interviews, and so on, whereas numerical data are often condensed into tables of frequencies, averages, and so on.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF VERBAL DATA

- Presentation of verbal data and their analyses appear very much intertwined together in Results sections of research reports. That is, separating the data from the analysis is difficult. Numerical data, in contrast, are presented in some type of summarized form (i.e., descriptive statistics).

- Analysis of verbal data is initiated at the beginning of the data-collection process and continues throughout the study. This process involves the researcher interacting with the data in a symbiotic fashion.

Evaluating the Quality of Data

- As with numerical data, verbal data cannot be taken simply at face value. The researcher should provide evidence that the data s/he has used in his or her study are dependable enough to analyze.

- The researcher has at least five strategies to choose from to support the quality of the data. They are as follows:
 - Representativeness
 - Prolonged engagement and persistent observation
 - Clarifying researcher bias
 - Researcher effects
 - Weighting the evidence