

Analyzing data qualitatively

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ENT 636
Research Project

Lecture 9



Chapter

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Learning outcomes

By the end of this chapter you should:

- understand the diversity of qualitative data and the interactive nature of qualitative analysis;
- identify the key aspects to consider when choosing a qualitative analysis technique and the main issues when preparing your qualitative data for analysis including using computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS);
- transcribe a recorded interview or notes of an interview or observation and create a data file for analysis by computer;

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Learning outcomes

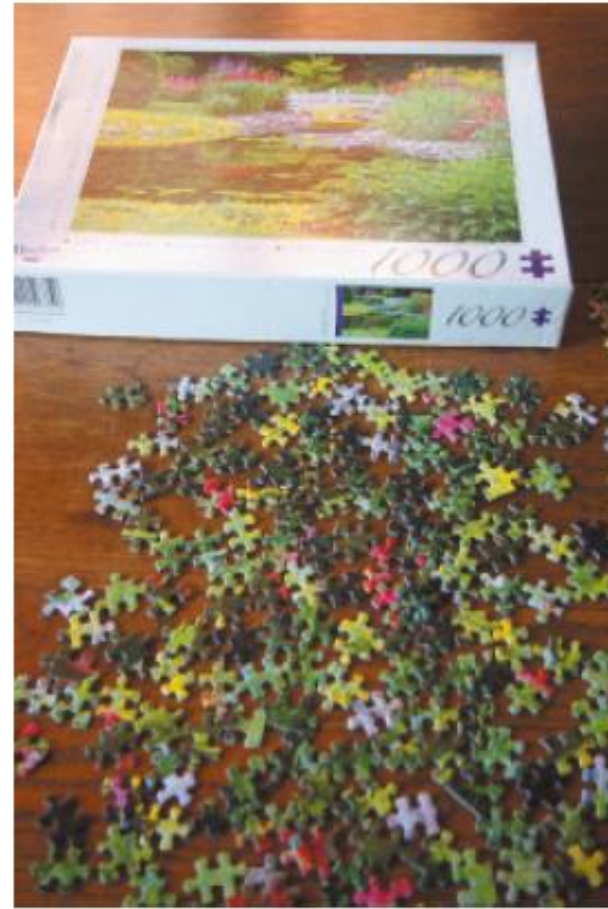
- choose from different analytical aids to help you to analyze your qualitative data, including keeping a reflective or reflexive journal;
- select an appropriate analytical technique or combination of techniques for your research project to undertake qualitative data analysis;
- identify the common functions of CAQDAS and describe the issues associated with its use.

Qualitative data analysis and completing a jigsaw puzzle

Nearly all of us have, at some time in our lives, completed a jigsaw puzzle. As children we may have played with jigsaw puzzles and, as we grew older, those we were able to complete became more complex. In some ways, qualitative data analysis can be likened to the process of completing a jigsaw puzzle in which the pieces represent data. These pieces of data and the relationships between them help us as researchers to create a picture of what we think the data are telling us!

When trying to complete a jigsaw puzzle, most of us begin by looking at the picture on the lid of our puzzle's box. A puzzle for which there is no picture is usually more challenging as we have no idea how the pieces fit together or what the picture will be! Similarly, we may not be clear about how, or even if, the data we have collected can form a clear picture.

Perhaps you haven't tried to complete a jigsaw puzzle for many years, but you might find the following useful as well as entertaining! Get a friend to give you the contents of a jigsaw in a bag without the box (since this normally shows the picture of what it is!). Turn all of the pieces picture side up. Think about how you will categorise these data that lie in front of you. What do they mean? You will be likely to group pieces with similar features such as those of a particular colour together. Normally you might then try to fit these similar pieces together to begin to reveal the picture



Source: © Mark Saunders 2018

that the fitted pieces are designed to show. Perhaps completing jigsaws reinforces a sense of there being an external reality 'out there', so all we need to do is reveal it! However, for many qualitative researchers, the picture that our pieces of data reveal will depend on the nature of our research question and the concepts we use to make sense of what we see!

The diversity of qualitative data, their implications for analysis and the interactive nature of this process

Diversity and analytical implications of qualitative data

Qualitative data are derived from spoken words (verbal data), written, typed or printed words (textual data) and still or moving visual images (visual data). **Verbal data** are collected in the form of extended speech, which are passages of spoken words.

These may be audio recorded or derived from existing audio or audio-visual sources. These data are likely to be transcribed and turned into text but may still be classified as verbal data if they maintain their structural integrity as a verbatim account.

The diversity of qualitative data, their implications for analysis and the interactive nature of this process

Textual data are collected as notes from interviews or observations, as written diaries and participant accounts, or derived from documents.

Visual data may be created or found in many forms including drawings, digital images and video.

The interactive nature of qualitative analysis

Data collection and data analysis are an interrelated and interactive set of processes in qualitative research. Analysis is undertaken during the collection of data as well as after it. This analysis helps to shape the direction of data collection, especially where you are following a more inductive or grounded approach.

Research propositions that emerge from your data in an inductive approach or those you commenced with at the start of your data collection in a deductive approach will be tested as you compare them with the data in your study. The key point here is the relative flexibility that this type of process permits you.

The interactive nature of qualitative analysis

The interactive nature of data collection and analysis allows you to recognize important themes, patterns and relationships during data collection: in other words, to allow these to emerge from the process of data collection and analysis.

As part of this you are likely to have to re-categorize and re-code your existing data to see whether emergent themes, patterns and relationships are present in the cases where you have already collected data.

You will also be able to adjust your future data collection to see whether related data exist in cases where you intend to conduct your research..

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Key aspects to consider when choosing a qualitative analysis technique

Choosing a qualitative analysis technique can be confusing. Choice in qualitative analysis is not necessarily between a 'right' and 'wrong' technique. Some forms of qualitative analysis are not exclusive; in other words, you may have to choose between alternative ways to analyze your qualitative data, making this choice uncertain and possibly confusing.

Choice in qualitative analysis may also mean choosing two or more complementary ways to analyze your qualitative data, so that you gain more insights from your data than you would from using a single analytical technique. To achieve this you need to understand the nature of different techniques to be able to choose those which offer the possibility of complementary insights.

Key aspects to consider when choosing a qualitative analysis technique

There are key aspects of different qualitative analysis techniques to help you to choose an appropriate technique, or combination of techniques that. These aspects relate to:

- the methodological and philosophical basis of the research;
- the approach to theory development used in the research;
- the analytical approach used in the technique.



Box 13.1 Checklist

To help you to choose a qualitative analysis technique, or combination of techniques

- ✓ Are you using or do you wish to use an analytical technique linked to a specific or prescriptive methodology? In this chapter Grounded Theory Method is linked to such a methodology; all other analytical techniques discussed are not.
- ✓ Will your choice of analytical technique be appropriate for the research strategy you use and the research philosophy underpinning it? Your research philosophy has implications for all stages of your research including your research strategy and choice of analytical technique(s).
- ✓ Will your choice of analytical technique be appropriate for your approach to theory development?

Some qualitative analysis techniques are specifically associated with either a deductive or inductive approach, while others may be used more flexibly and pragmatically.

- ✓ Will it be beneficial to fragment your data during analysis to rearrange them, or to maintain the integrity of your data items during analysis? Most qualitative analysis techniques involve the fragmentation and reorganisation of data and sometimes their reduction, while some analytical techniques maintain the original form of the data during analysis.
- ✓ What will be the most appropriate analytical focus for the analysis of your data, or foci where you use a combination of approaches? The focus of analysis varies between qualitative analysis techniques, with most focusing on analysing themes or topics in the data, some more specifically on analysing actions or processes, and others on analysing the use of language.

The methodological and philosophical basis of the research

Some qualitative research strategies are associated with a specific or prescriptive methodology.

Grounded Theory has a specific methodology. In order to use Grounded Theory Method you would need to follow each of the elements associated with this approach.

While the specific or prescriptive nature of this type of methodological approach may sometimes be portrayed as rigid, it provides you with a clear set of guidelines for your entire research project including the analytical technique.

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The methodological and philosophical basis of the research

You need to choose an analytical technique that is appropriate for his research philosophy and strategy.

In doing this you will also be choosing an analytical technique that is appropriate for the nature of the data you collect. Where, for example, you use an interpretivist philosophy, it will be important to ensure that your choice of analytical technique(s) is compatible with this research philosophy.

In this example, you would need to allow the voices of your participants to emerge through your analysis, probably by including participant quotations.

The methodological and philosophical basis of the research

An analytical technique concentrating on condensing participants' data to display them in a highly reduced and summarized form would be unlikely to be suitable for interpretivist research.

You therefore need to ensure that your choice of analytical technique is suitable for and sympathetic to your research philosophy as well as your methodology.

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The approach to theory development used in the research

Theory is developed using either deductive, inductive or abductive reasoning.

Where you commence your research project using a deductive approach you will use existing theory to shape the qualitative research process and aspects of data analysis.

Where you commence your research project using an inductive approach you will seek to build a theory that is grounded in your data.

Subsequently if, based on a surprising fact, you collect additional data to revise or modify an existing theory you would be using an abductive approach.

The approach to theory development used in the research

Some qualitative analysis techniques that will be discussed later are specifically associated with either a deductive or inductive approach, while others may be used more flexibly and pragmatically so that they are suitable for either approach.

In this way, these theoretically flexible techniques work equally well regardless of your approach to theory development.

The analytical approach used in the technique

In this sub-section two aspects of qualitative analysis that distinguish analytical techniques are considered. These relate to:

- data fragmentation and reduction versus maintaining data integrity;
- analytical focus..

The analytical approach used in the technique

Data fragmentation and reduction versus maintaining data integrity

In qualitative data analysis, it is generally accepted that in order to analyze large amounts of non-standardized data it is necessary to fragment these data by coding and reorganizing them into analytical categories. This process often involves simplifying or reducing qualitative data by summarizing their meanings to be able to comprehend them and undertake further analysis.

Analytical techniques that fragment and sometimes reduce data to analyze them includes Thematic Analysis, Template Analysis, Grounded Theory Method and Data Display and Analysis.

The analytical approach used in the technique

Where it is considered important to maintain the integrity of the data by analyzing them without engaging in fragmentation and rearrangement other, alternative, approaches can be used.

This is the case in Narrative Analysis, where the sequential and chronological nature of storied data is essential to and maintained during analysis. It is also likely to be the case in relation to Discourse Analysis, where analysis relies on the wholeness of data.

Analytical focus

The focus of analysis varies between qualitative analysis techniques. While a number of techniques focus on analyzing themes or topics in the data, some focus more specifically on analyzing actions or processes, and others on analyzing the use of language.

This first analytical focus is referred to as thematic analysis. Some see thematic analysis as a generic approach rather than as a specific technique as it is used in various analytical approaches. In practice, there are a number of variants of thematic analysis, which can be used as standalone analytical techniques.

Analytical focus

Further standalone variants of thematic analysis include Template Analysis and Data Display and Analysis.

Thematic analysis is also used in some approaches to Grounded Theory Method, in Narrative Analysis, and may be used in Analytical Induction, Deductive Explanation Building and Visual Analysis.



Box 13.1 Checklist

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Preparing your data for analysis

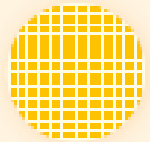
Transcribing qualitative data

In qualitative research interviews, the interview is often audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed , that is, reproduced verbatim as a word-processed account.

As an interviewer, you would be interested not only in what participants said, but in the way they said it as well. This means that the task of transcribing audio-recorded interviews is likely to be time-consuming as you will need not only to record exactly what was said and by whom, but also try to give an indication of the tone in which it was said and the participants' non-verbal communications.

Table 13.1 Alternative ways of reducing the time needed to transcribe audio-recordings

Alternative	Potential problems
Pay a touch-typist to transcribe your audio-recordings	• Expense of paying someone else • Important data such as pauses, coughs, sighs and the like may not be included • You will not be familiarising yourself with the data as you are not transcribing them yourself • The transcription will still require careful checking as errors can creep in
Borrow a transcription machine with a foot-operated play-pause-rewind-fast forward mechanism and software to control the audio speed	• Although this will allow you to control the audio-recorder more easily, the speed of transcription will still be dependent upon your typing ability • The transcription will still require careful checking • You may not be able to gain access to a transcription machine
'Dictate' your audio-recordings to your computer using voice-recognition software	• You will need to discover which voice-recognition software works best with your voice • You will also need to discover which voice-recognition software is suited to the needs of your research project • You will need to 'teach' the voice-recognition software to understand your voice • You will need to listen to and dictate the entire audio-recording • The transcription will still require careful checking as the software is not entirely accurate
Only transcribe those sections of each audio-recording that are pertinent to your research (data sampling)	• You will need to listen to the entire recording carefully first, at least twice • You may miss certain things, meaning you will have to go back to the audio-recording later • Those sections you transcribe will still require careful checking



Box 13.2 Focus on student research

Extract from an interview transcript

Michael had decided to use the code IV to represent himself in the transcripts of his in-depth interviews and 01FS to represent his first interviewee, a female student. By using capital letters to identify both himself and the interviewee Michael could identify clearly where questions and responses started. In addition, it reduced the chance of a mistype in the transcription as identifiers were always a combination of capital letters and numbers. Michael used transcription

symbols such as ‘(.)’ to represent a brief pause and ‘.hhh’ to represent an in-breath. He also included brief comments relating to a respondent's actions in the interview transcript. These he enclosed with double parentheses (()). A brief extract from a transcript follows:

IV: So tell me, why do you use the Student Union Bar?

01FS: Well,.hhh (.), a lot of my friends go there for the final drink of the evening (.) there is an atmosphere and the drinks are cheap. I don't feel embarrassed to walk in on my own and there's always someone to talk to and scrounge a fag off ((laughs))



Box 13.3 Checklist

Transcribing your interviews

- ✓ Have you thought about how you intend to analyse your data and made sure that your transcription will facilitate this?
- ✓ Have you chosen clear interviewer and respondent identifiers and used them consistently?
- ✓ Have you included the interview questions in full in your transcription?
- ✓ Have you saved your transcribed data using a separate file for each interview?
- ✓ Does your filename maintain confidentiality and preserve anonymity while still allowing you to recognise important information easily?
- ✓ Have you ensured your data files maintain confidentiality and preserve anonymity?
- ✓ Have you checked your transcript for accuracy and, where necessary, 'cleaned up' the data?
- ✓ (If you intend to use CAQDAS) Will the package you are going to use help you to manage and analyse your data effectively? In other words, will it do what you need it to do?
- ✓ (If you intend to use CAQDAS) Are your saved transcriptions compatible with the CAQDAS package you intend to use, so you will not lose any features from your word-processed document when you import the data?
- ✓ (If you intend to use CAQDAS) Have you checked your transcript for accuracy and 'cleaned up' the data *prior* to importing into your chosen CAQDAS package?
- ✓ Have you stored a separate backup or security copy of each data file on your USB mass storage device?

Preparing your data for analysis

Using electronic textual data including scanned documents

For some forms of textual data such as, for example, email interviews or electronic versions of documents, including organizational emails, blogs and web-based reports, your data may already be in electronic format.

Although these data have already been captured electronically, you are still likely to need to spend some time preparing them for analysis.

Preparing your data for analysis

This is likely to involve you in ensuring that, where necessary, the data are:

- suitably anonymized, such as by using separate codes for yourself and different participants;
- appropriately stored for analysis, for example one file for each interview, each meeting's minutes or each organizational policy;
- free of typographical errors that you may have introduced and, where these occurred, they have been 'cleaned up'.

Thematic Analysis

Introduction

Thematic Analysis is a ‘foundational method for qualitative analysis’. The process of thematic analysis is found in other approaches to qualitative analysis, albeit in more particularized ways.

The essential purpose of this approach is to search for themes, or patterns, that occur across a data set (such as a series of interviews, observations, documents, diaries or websites being analyzed).

Thematic Analysis involves a researcher coding her or his qualitative data to identify themes or patterns for further analysis, related to his or her research question.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis can be used to analyze large qualitative data sets, as well as smaller ones, leading to rich descriptions, explanations and theorizing. Thematic Analysis can be used to help you:

- 1 comprehend often large and disparate amounts of qualitative data;
- 2 integrate related data drawn from different transcripts and notes;
- 3 identify key themes or patterns from a data set for further exploration;
- 4 produce a thematic description of these data; and/or
- 5 develop and test explanations and theories based on apparent thematic patterns or relationships;
- 6 draw and verify conclusions.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis is flexible as it is not tied to a particular research philosophy. You may use Thematic Analysis irrespective of whether you are adopting an objectivist or subjectivist position.

Your assumptions will, however, affect how you use it to interpret your data (which is why you should be explicit about your philosophical assumptions and remain reflexive through your research project). As a realist you may use Thematic Analysis to seek to understand factors underpinning human attitudes and actions.

Alternatively, as an interpretivist you may use it to explore different interpretations of a phenomenon. The reason why you may use Thematic Analysis irrespective of your philosophy relates to its development as a standalone analytical technique or process, rather than being part of a theoretically mounted methodological approach.

Thematic Analysis

Procedure

In practice, the procedure does not occur in a simple linear progression. Instead it is likely to occur in a concurrent and recursive fashion, involving you analyzing data as you collect them and going back over earlier data and analysis as you refine the way in which you code and categorize newly collected data and search for analytical themes.

The procedure outlined here involves four elements: becoming familiar with your data; coding your data; searching for themes and recognizing relationships; refining themes and testing propositions.

Thematic Analysis

Becoming familiar with your data

You will start to become familiar with your data as you produce transcripts of the interviews or observations you conduct, or as you read through documents or diaries or review visual images.

The act of transcribing a data item yourself, although laborious, allows you to develop familiarity. This should also prompt you to generate summaries, self-memos or entries in your notebook that aid your analysis.

Thematic Analysis

Familiarization with your data involves a process of immersion that continues throughout your research project. You will need to read and re-read your data during your analysis.

You will be interested to look for meanings, recurring themes and patterns in your data. Without familiarity, you will not be able to engage in the analytical procedures that follow. Producing transcripts and data familiarization are therefore important elements in analyzing data.

Thematic Analysis

Coding your data

Coding is used to categorize data with similar meanings. Coding involves labelling each unit of data within a data item (such as a transcript or document) with a code that symbolizes or summarizes that extract's meaning.

Your purpose in undertaking this process is to make each piece of data in which you are interested accessible for further analysis. Qualitative data sets are frequently large and their content complex. A qualitative data set may include references to actions, behaviors, beliefs, conditions, events, ideas, interactions, outcomes, policies, relationships, strategies, etc.

Thematic Analysis

Without coding these data you may struggle to comprehend all of the meanings in your data in which you are interested. Coding is therefore an important means to manage your data so that you can rearrange and retrieve them under relevant codes.

This process effectively involves fragmenting your original data items and regrouping units of data with similar meanings together to be able to examine them in relation to other groups of similar units of data.

The act of coding your data is therefore a vital element in data analysis, as you will see.

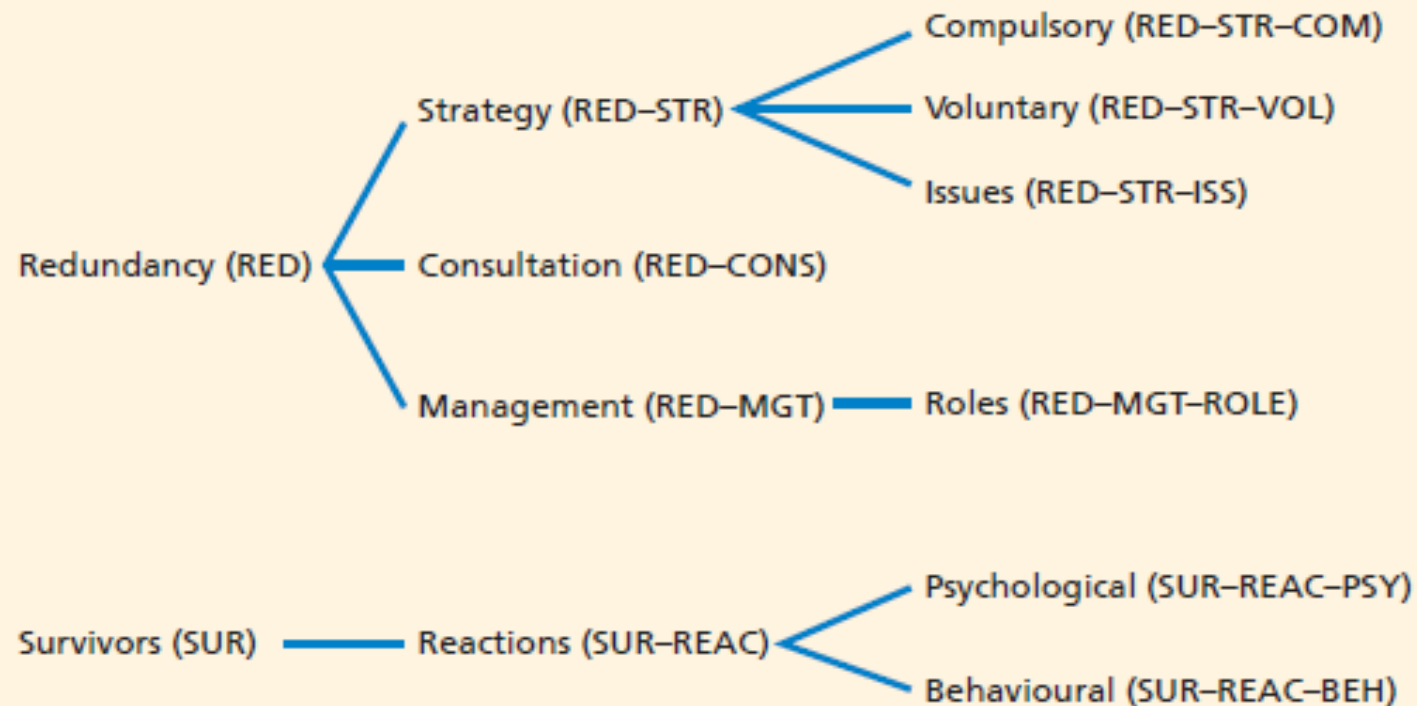


Box 13.5 Focus on student research

Interview extract with categories attached

Adrian's research project was concerned with how human resource management professionals managed

a downsizing process in their own organisations. He derived initial codes from existing theory in the academic literature and attached them to appropriate units of data in each transcript. His initial categories were hierarchical; the codes he used being shown in brackets:



These were then attached to the interview transcript, using sentences as units of data. Like our jigsaw example at the start of this chapter, those units

of data that were coded with more than one category suggested interrelationships:

RED-CONS	27MM The first stage is to find out what particular employees	1
	want for themselves and how they want this to happen. Staff are	2
	seen by their line manager and/or a member of personnel.	3
RED-MGT-ROLE	Employees might want to talk to someone from personnel rather	4
	than talk with their line manager – well, you know, for obvious	5
	reasons, at least as they see it – and this would be acceptable to the	6
RED-STR-VOL	organisation. This meeting provides them with the opportunity to	7
	opt for voluntary redundancy. We do not categorise employees	8
RED-STR-ISS	into anything like core or non-core, although we will tell a group	9
RED-CONS	of employees something like ‘there are four of you in this	10
	particular function and we only need two of you, so you think	1
RED-CONS	about what should happen’. Sometimes when we attempt to give	2
	employees a choice about who might leave, they actually ask us to	3
	make the choice. This is one such situation where a compulsory	4
RED-STR-COM	selection will occur. We prefer to avoid this compulsory selection	5
SUR-REAC-PSY	because of the impact on those who survive – negative feelings,	6
	guilt and so on.	7

Thematic Analysis

A **code** is a single word or a short phrase, which may also be abbreviated in use. A coded extract of data is referred to as a unit of data. A unit of data may be a number of words, a line of a transcript, a sentence, a number of sentences, a complete paragraph, other chunk of textual data, or visual image that is summed up by a particular code.

The exact size of a unit of data will be determined by its meaning. Some units of data will overlap and some will be coded using more than one code

Chapter

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Thematic Analysis

If you think that a new piece of data has a similar meaning to a previously coded unit of data, it should be labelled with the same code. If you think that a new piece of data does not have a similar meaning to a previously coded unit of data, you will need to devise a new code for it.

Throughout the process of coding it will be important to keep a list of codes you are using and a working definition for each, to ensure consistency. At this point you may be asking two questions.

How much of my data should I code – all or only some of it?

Where should my codes come from? Both of these questions are related to your research approach and also to your research question – whether you are setting out to use an inductive or deductive approach and how well you have defined your research question.

Thematic Analysis

Where you use a purely inductive approach you will be likely to code all of it, as you explore all possible meanings in your data to guide the direction of your research. This search for meanings may also lead to finely detailed coding, where you find yourself coding smaller segments or units of data to capture every possible nuance.

Where you use a purely deductive approach, you will commence with a framework of codes derived from prior conceptual or theoretical work. In this case you will commence coding by applying these prior codes to your data.

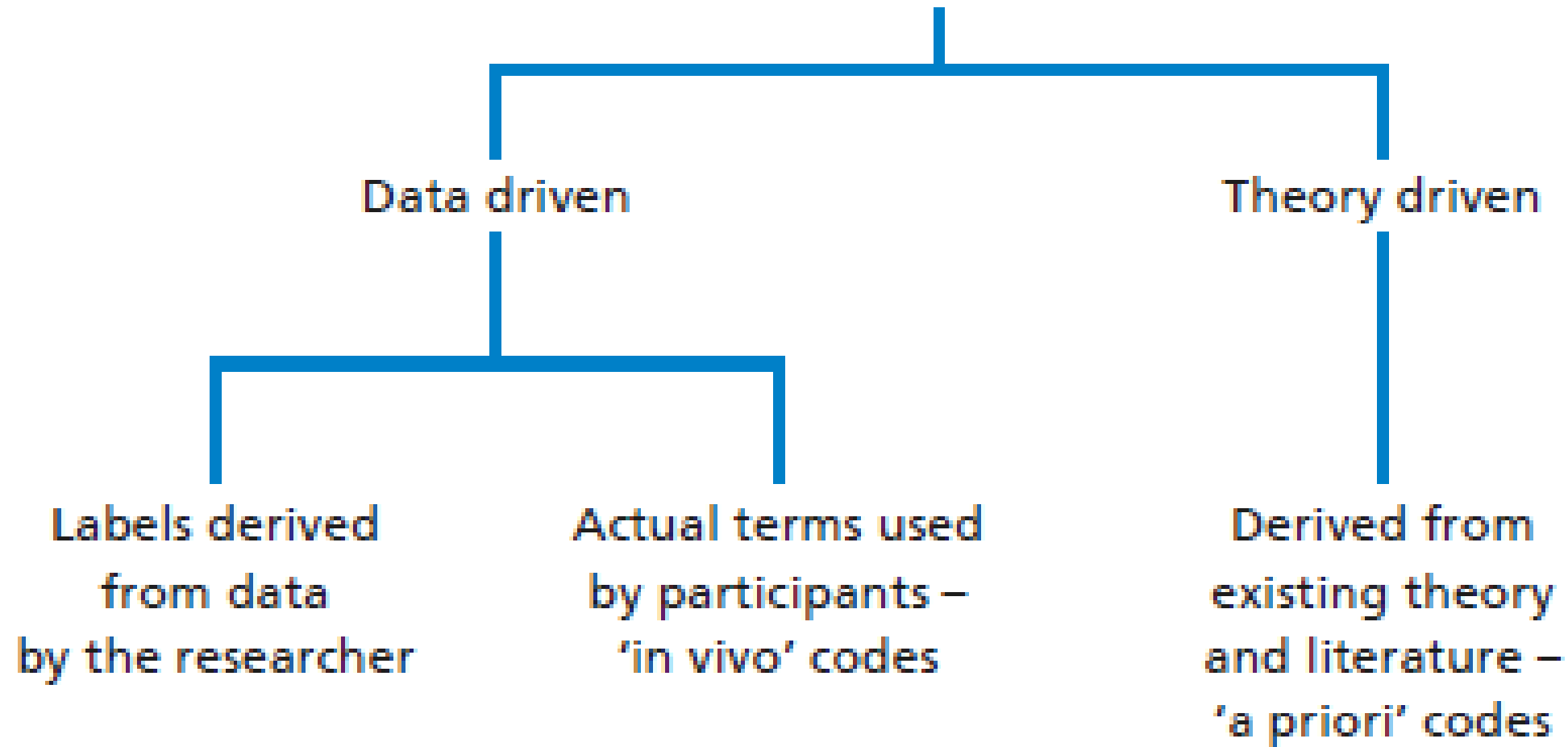
Thematic Analysis

There are three main sources of codes which, dependent on your approach to theory development can be used on their own or in combination.

Codes may be:

- actual terms used by your participants, recorded in your data. These are often referred to as ‘in vivo’ codes;
- labels you develop from your data;
- derived from existing theory and the literature. These are often referred to as ‘a priori’ codes.

Sources of codes



Sources and types of code

Thematic Analysis

Coding is a simple but versatile and valuable tool. The process of coding allows you to link units of data that refer to the same aspect or meaning, or to link aspects or meanings that you want to compare and contrast. It allows you to rearrange your original data into groupings for the next stage of analysis.

Any unit of data may be coded with as many different codes as you think is appropriate, creating a web of connections to aid your analysis. It is often important to understand the context of the data you are analyzing.

Thematic Analysis

Where it is important to include some contextual background, you can code larger units of data such as whole paragraphs, as opposed to smaller units such as a few words or single sentences.

You should also note that codes may be referred to as categories: these terms are sometimes used interchangeably and sometimes to refer to different aspects of the analytical process – see the next sub-section.

Thematic Analysis

Searching for themes and recognizing relationships

The search for themes fully begins when you have coded all of your data set. At this point you will have a long list of codes that you have created to make sense of and draw meaning from your data.

Advice about the number of codes you might be working with at this point varies considerably. Some advice refers to working with up to 30 codes. Other advice refers to creating as many codes as you require to interpret every relevant meaning in your data. This may mean creating up to a couple of hundred codes, or possibly more.

Thematic Analysis

Our view is that data should not be forced into a particular number of codes. The number of codes you create will be related to the meanings you wish to explore in your data set, the nature of your research approach and the focus of your research question.

However, where you find yourself creating very large numbers of codes you will need to evaluate whether your coding is too detailed or whether you are trying to analyze too much data for your project.

Always refer back to your research question, research aim and research objectives to focus your approach to data analysis.

Thematic Analysis

This stage of analysis involves you searching for patterns and relationships in your long list of codes to create a short list of themes that relate to your research question. A **theme** is a broad category incorporating several codes that appear to be related to one another and which indicates an idea that is important to your research question.

A theme may also be a single code which indicates an idea that assumes general importance to your research question and is therefore elevated to become a theme. Searching for themes is part of the overall process of condensing your raw data, firstly by coding them and then grouping these coded data into analytic categories.

Thematic Analysis

Searching for themes involves you making judgements about your data and immersing yourself in them. You will be looking to see how the codes you have created might fit together to allow you to further your analysis. As you search these codes, some initial questions you may ask include:

- What are the key concepts in these codes?
- What, if anything, seems to be recurring in these codes?
- What seems to be important, whether it recurs often or not?
- What patterns and/or trends are evident in the coded data?
- Which codes appear to be related?
- How do a particular set of codes appear to be related?

Thematic Analysis

As you start to decide on themes to analyze your data further, some additional questions you may ask include:

- What is the essence of each apparent theme?
- How might themes be related to each other?
- Which themes appear to be main themes and which appear to be sub-themes (related to a main theme)? There may also be third level themes evident in your analysis.
- How may the relationship between themes be represented (as a hierarchy or a network) to produce a thematic map?
- Is there an overarching theme (or more than one) that unites your analysis?

Thematic Analysis

You should not expect this process to be unproblematic. In attempting to achieve a thorough understanding of your data set, some further questions you may ask include:

- How well does this initial thematic map represent the relationships between themes?
- Which themes, if any, do not fit within this thematic representation?
- Does the way the data have been coded need to be revised; if so which data and how?
- Which themes need to be refined, discarded or newly introduced?
- How may the thematic representation be modified to represent my data better?

Thematic Analysis

Refining themes and testing propositions

Refining themes and the relationships between them is likely to be an important part of your analytical process. The themes that you devise need to be part of a coherent set so that they provide you with a well-structured analytical framework to pursue your analysis.

As you develop themes you should reorganize your coded data extracts under the relevant theme or sub-theme. This will help you to evaluate whether these coded data are meaningful to one another within their theme and whether (and how) themes are meaningful in relation to one another and in relation to your data set.

Thematic Analysis

This is likely to be a developmental process, as you re-read and reorganize your data. As you continue to examine your data set, the codes you have used and the themes you devise to organize your coded data to answer your research question, you will be likely to refine these themes.

You may decide that some of your initial themes should be combined to make a new theme while others should be separated into different themes. You may also decide that some of your initial themes should be discarded.

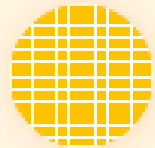
Your decisions to make these changes will be based on re-reading the coded data that you have reorganized under each relevant theme.

Thematic Analysis

As you seek to reveal patterns within your data and to recognize relationships between themes, you will be able to develop testable propositions.

The appearance of an apparent relationship or connection between themes will need to be tested if you are to be able to conclude that there is an actual relationship.

However, while this is sometimes referred to as ‘testing a hypothesis’, it is not the same as the statistical hypothesis or significance testing.



Box 13.7

Focus on student research

Research propositions

During the process of qualitative data analysis, a student evaluating the use of online retailing formulated the following proposition:

Customers' willingness to trust specific online retailers depends on their previous customers' reviews.

A student exploring mortgage borrowers' decision making drew up this proposition:

Potential mortgage borrowers' choice of lending institution is strongly affected by the level of customer service that they receive during the initial inquiry stage.

Another student investigating cause-related marketing formulated the following proposition:

Companies engaging in cause-related marketing are motivated principally by altruism.

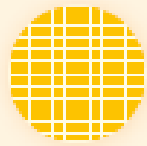
A relationship is evident in each of these propositions. Each was tested using the data that had been collected.

Thematic Analysis

It is important to test the propositions that emerge inductively from the data by seeking alternative explanations and negative examples that do not conform to the pattern or relationship being tested.

Alternative explanations frequently exist, and only by testing the propositions that you identify will you be able to move towards formulating valid conclusions and an explanatory theory, even a simple one.

‘the association of one variable with another is not sufficient ground for inferring a causal or any other connection between them’. The existence of an intervening variable may offer a more valid explanation of an association that is apparent in your data.



Box 13.8

Focus on student research

The impact of an intervening variable

Kevin's research project involved looking at the use of subcontractors by an organisation. A relationship appeared to emerge between the total value of contracts a particular subcontractor had been awarded and the size of that contractor in terms of number of employees; in particular, those contractors with larger numbers of employees had a larger total value of contracts. This could have led Kevin to conclude that the value of work undertaken by a particular subcontractor was related to that organisation's size

and that, in particular, the organisation tended to use subcontractors with large numbers of employees.

Reality was not so simple. The organisation had originally used over 2,500 subcontractors but had found this exceedingly difficult to manage. To address this issue the organisation had introduced a system of preferred contractors. All 2,500 subcontractors had been graded according to the quality of their work, with those whose work had been consistently of high quality being awarded preferred contractor status. This meant that they were invited by the organisation Kevin was researching to tender for all relevant contracts. The intervening variable was therefore the introduction of preferred contractor status dependent upon the quality of work previously undertaken. The fact that the majority of these subcontractors also had relatively large numbers of employees was not the reason why the organisation had awarded them contracts.

Thematic Analysis

It is important to test the propositions that emerge inductively from the data by seeking alternative explanations and negative examples that do not conform to the pattern or relationship being tested.

Alternative explanations frequently exist, and only by testing the propositions that you identify will you be able to move towards formulating valid conclusions and an explanatory theory, even a simple one.

‘the association of one variable with another is not sufficient ground for inferring a causal or any other connection between them’. The existence of an intervening variable may offer a more valid explanation of an association that is apparent in your data.

Grounded Theory Method

Introduction

Grounded Theory Method is part of a wider methodological approach recognizing this as an emergent and systematic research strategy. It avoids using a priori codes derived from existing theory and commences inductively, by developing codes from the data collected.

Data collection and analysis are interrelated, with the concepts emerging from previously collected and analyzed data being used to direct future data collection. Grounded Theory is seen as systematic, or even prescriptive, because it sets out a number of research practices that should be followed. Its use in practice is criticized when researchers only implement some of these elements, not all.

Grounded Theory Method

As discussed earlier, the elements of Grounded Theory as a research strategy include the early commencement of data collection, concurrent collection and analysis of data, development of codes from the data, and the use of constant comparison, self-memos, theoretical sampling, theoretical saturation and theoretical sensitivity, leading to the development of a theory that is grounded in the data.

In the Grounded Theory Method of Strauss and Corbin (1998) the disaggregation of data into units is called **open coding**, the process of recognizing relationships between categories is referred to as **axial coding**, and the integration of categories around a core category to develop a grounded theory is labelled **selective coding**.

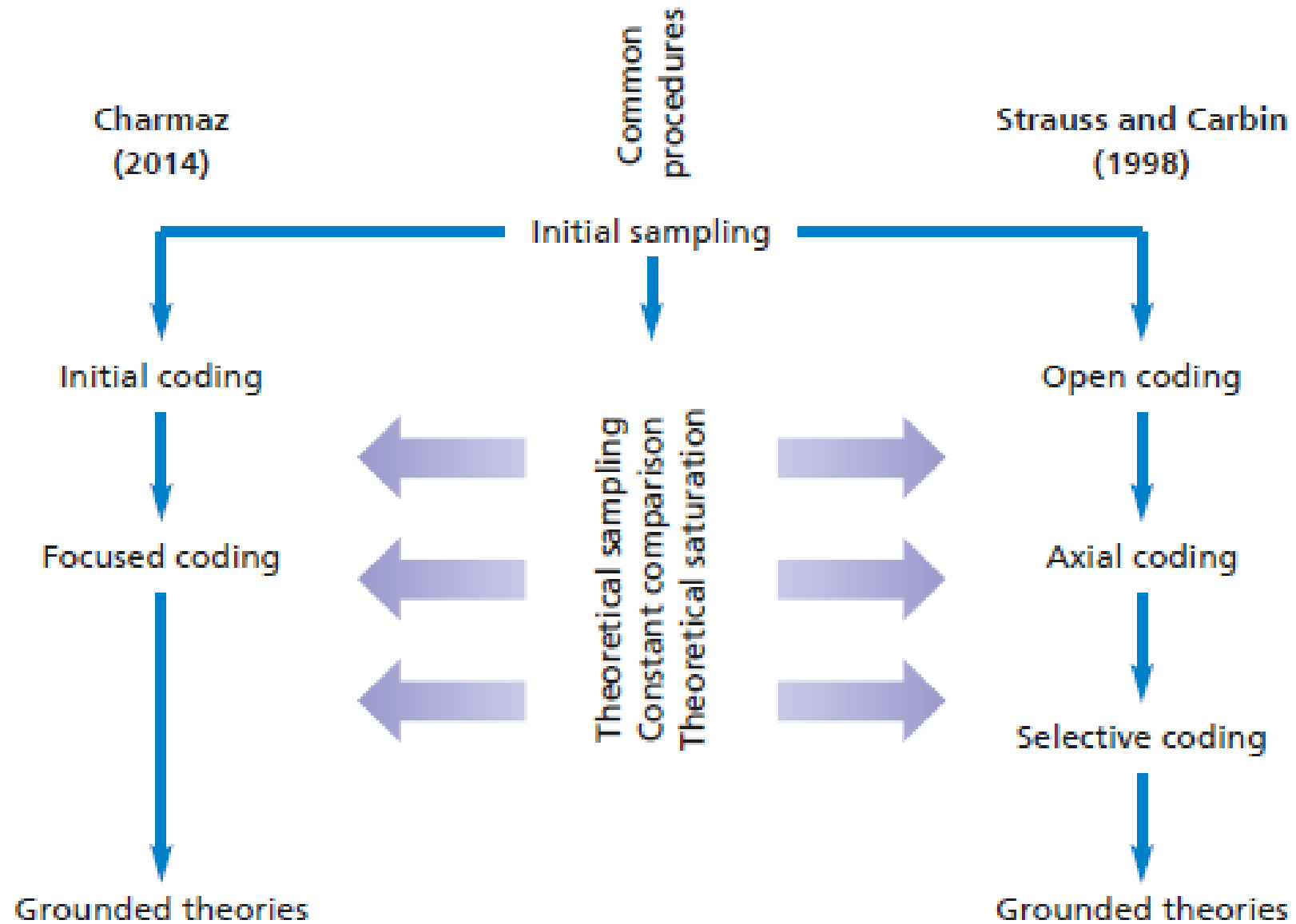


Figure 13.2 Alternative approaches to Grounded Theory Method

Grounded Theory Method

Procedure

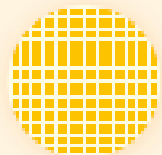
Theoretical sampling is used to choose pertinent cases at each phase of data collection and analysis. An initial sample will be chosen that relates to your research question or topic.

Each further case will be selected to explore analytical ideas and categories emerging from coding data in the previous case or cases. The purpose of this will be to further the development of your codes and analytical categories to be able to explore relationships between these to develop a grounded theory.

Grounded Theory Method

This is the process of constantly comparing the data being collected with the codes and categories being used, so as to aid the process of developing an emerging theory that will be thoroughly grounded in these data.

Memo writing throughout your Grounded Theory study allows you to sum up, clarify and develop ideas that relate to the codes you develop, the categories you derive, the relationships between these, the emergence of theory and other aspects related to the conduct of your study. Theoretical sampling continues until theoretical saturation is reached. This will occur when data collection ceases to reveal new data that are relevant to a category, where the properties or dimensions of categories have become well developed and understood, and relationships between categories have been verified.



Box 13.12

Focus on student research

Using open coding

Jemma's research was concerned with Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) and their use of social media. She was particularly interested in how they used social media to communicate with

potential clients and customers. At the start of her research she undertook a series of two focus groups with owner managers of SMEs. The audio-recordings of each focus group were subsequently transcribed in Microsoft Word and saved as a docx file. Within the file, Jemma labelled herself, the focus group moderator, as 'FGM'; the male participants as 'M1', 'M2' and so on; and the female participants as 'F1', 'F2' and so on. Each file was then imported into the CAQDAS software NVivo™. Open codes relating to different

communication media such 'LinkedIn', 'Facebook', 'Twitter', 'Email', 'Letter' and 'Company website' were attached to the transcript, each participant's response being a separate unit of data. Codes were also attached regarding whether the participant felt the social media was 'Useful' or 'Not useful' and the frequency with which it was used.

Based upon analysis using these and other codes Jemma noticed that these SMEs were using social media sites such as LinkedIn widely and frequently

to showcase their businesses and to build relationships with customers. However, she noted that clear links between the use of LinkedIn and increased revenues were difficult to establish. Facebook was used less widely in a business context than LinkedIn, being seen predominantly for personal friendships. Twitter was found to be most effective when used in conjunction with other social media such as the business' website. Jemma decided to follow up her initial findings using in-depth interviews.

NVivo transcript2

FILE HOME CREATE DATA ANALYZE QUERY EXPLORE LAYOUT VIEW

Navigation View Find Quick Coding Workspace Detail View Close All Dock All Undock All Close All Docked Bookmarks Close Zoom Layout List View List View Coding Links Detail Reference Color Scheme Visualiz

FGM OK, um, in terms of Twitter (.)

M1 post maybe once every couple of weeks only purely based on stuff that's (.)

FGM right (.)

M1 and so for example today I did a post about the courts about thinking about filming the inside of court proceedings, um, and then sort of (.) there's always a sly comment which says something like for example, 'Well I'm waiting to see the first superstar lawyers and the reality programmes that follow' with a link to the actual (...) item.

FGM So do you have any evidence that social media have been valuable to you?

M1 Oh yes (.) very much so, especially with LinkedIn, LinkedIn is, is the main thing that we draw on to people to meet probably much more than our website (...) you can be active, you can be seen, I log in to LinkedIn every single day, when I log on that's one of the first things that I do, I log on, I check my messages, um, and then I, I pull up a screen that's got LinkedIn and Twitter there so that's one of the first things I do so um, it, it's very important to me because I think what it does, it validates what you do and in terms of debt recovery, I don't know about anybody else's in this group but in terms of that can mean I need that validation because a lot of people involved in debt recovery are very shady people so I have to then come out with that and say well I'm different, I'm an ethical debt recovery person, this is how I act and you can find me, you can ask me a question.

FGM Thank you, that's very clear. Anybody else?

M2 LinkedIn primarily looking at and communicating within groups (...)

FGM Can you tell us a bit more about that?

M2 I mean you, you, you've got a whole series of special interest groups where

Coding Density

Email

Letter

Facebook

Twitter

Company website

daily

LinkedIn

Useful

Not us

Grounded Theory Method

Coding your data should lead you to identify analytical concepts and categories and help you to consider where data collection should be focused in the future (theoretical sampling). It may also help you to develop the focus of your research question.

Using a Grounded Theory strategy may mean that your initial research question is broadly focused, although still within manageable exploratory confines. As you develop a narrower focus through this process, you will be able to refine and limit the scope of your research question.

Grounded Theory Method

Focused coding

Focused coding involves deciding which of your initial codes to use to develop the analytic and explanatory focus of your coded data. This results in a smaller number of codes being attached to larger units of data and may be seen as serving the same purpose as searching for themes in Thematic Analysis.

Data from various initial codes are re-coded to a smaller number of more focused codes. During initial coding some of the codes you develop may appear to have greater analytic potential, to help you to explain your data and to develop a grounded theory related to your research question.

Grounded Theory Method

Selecting these codes will lead you to work through all of your coded data again to see if they are suitable to begin to develop a more explanatory focus.

That codes with the capability to become focused codes, and to able to categorize larger units of your data, are likely to be those that proved to be the most important or frequently used during initial coding.

It is worth noting that codes which are frequently used during initial coding may not necessarily prove to have the greatest analytical potential, just as codes that become important may not have initially attracted large amounts of data.

Grounded Theory Method

Axial coding

Axial coding refers to the process of looking for relationships between the categories of data that have emerged from open coding. It indicates a process of theoretical development.

As relationships between categories are recognized, they are rearranged into a hierarchical form, with the emergence of subcategories. The essence of this approach is to explore and explain a phenomenon (a subject of your research) by identifying what is happening and why, the environmental factors that affect this (such as economic, technological, political, legal, social and cultural), how it is being managed within the context being examined, and the outcomes of action that has been taken.

Grounded Theory Method

Clearly, there will be a relationship between these aspects, or categories, and the purpose of your analysis will be to explain this.

Once these relationships have been recognized, you will then seek to verify them against actual data that you have collected. Strauss and Corbin (1998) recommend that you undertake this by formulating questions or statements, which can then be phrased as hypotheses, to test these apparent relationships.

As you undertake this process you will be testing these hypotheses by looking for both supporting evidence and negative cases that demonstrate variations from these relationships.

Grounded Theory Method

Selective coding

After a lengthy period of data collection, which may take several months, you will have developed a number of principal categories and related subcategories. The stage that follows is called selective coding.

This is intended to identify one of these principal categories, which becomes known as the central or core category, in order to relate the other categories to this with the intention of integrating the research and developing a grounded theory.

Grounded Theory Method

In the previous stage the emphasis was placed on recognizing the relationships between categories and their subcategories. In this stage the emphasis is placed on recognizing and developing the relationships between the principal categories that have emerged from this grounded approach in order to develop an explanatory

Chapter

09

Narrative Analysis

Introduction

Narrative Analysis is not a specific analytical technique, such as Thematic Analysis or Template Analysis (discussed earlier). Nor is Narrative Analysis part of a wider methodological approach, as with Grounded Theory Method. Instead Narrative Analysis is a collection of analytical approaches to analyze different aspects of narrative.

These may be combined in practice, depending on your research question and purpose, and the nature of your data. What these analytical approaches have in common is the preservation of the data's narrative form. Unlike Thematic Analysis, Template Analysis or Grounded Theory Method, where original data are fragmented by coding and then assigned to analytical categories,

Narrative Analysis

Narrative data are preserved and analyzed as a whole unit or narrative sequence. Categories, themes and facets of content may still be identified and coded but this occurs from within a narrative. In Narrative Analysis it is important to preserve data within their narrated context to maintain the sequential and structural elements of each case.

While a narrative tends to be analyzed as a whole, the nature of what constitutes a narrative varies considerably. Textual narratives may vary from a segment of text or speech to a whole life story provided by a narrator.

Chapter

09

Narrative Analysis

Within this range of possibilities, analysis may focus on extracts from interview transcripts, which each provide a short narrative about a related topic or incident in which the researcher is interested.

These extracts will tend to be short stories that have a clear purpose, encompassing a situation, an action and an outcome, expressed in a structure containing a beginning, middle and end. Analysis may also focus on passages of speech or dialogue, where the purpose is to analyze how the narrative is constructed.

In terms of extended narratives, analysis may focus on narrated accounts of life stories or organizational events, where emphasis is likely to be placed on sequential and structural elements.

Narrative Analysis

Analysis may also involve a researcher constructing a narrative from fragments of data collected from multiple sources, such as different documents or research interviews. A narrative may also be constructed from other narratives to provide a unified account to further analysis, sometimes referred to as re-storying.

Because Narrative Analysis is a collection of analytical approaches, with variations evident in each approach in terms of the way they have been used in practice by researchers, it is not sensible to describe a procedural outline as we have done in earlier sections.

Visual Analysis

Introduction

Visual research makes use of existing visual images, known as ‘found’ images, or images created by the researcher or research participants. Visual images may also be categorized as static, such as photographs and drawings; or moving, such as video, film and television.

The scope for visual research is evident through the absolute prevalence of visual objects and practices in social life, including in the business and organizational environment.

Visual Analysis

In our consideration of visual research, we recognize the potentially powerful nature of visual images: as a ‘way of seeing’ or means to gain new insights or perspectives; as an effective way to record data including contextual data whose breadth and depth might otherwise be difficult to encapsulate and describe in a time constrained research situation; and as a representational form in their own right that may both complement and enhance textual description and analysis. However, the analysis of visual data is associated with particular analytical implications that make this a problematic research method.

Visual Analysis

While ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’, visual images are not capable of speaking for themselves. All images need to be interpreted, with implications at different levels.

At the practical level, interpretation involves using words to describe and analyze an image, with the consequence in many cases that the image is displaced, leaving us solely with and entirely reliant on the interpretation offered in the textual description.

At the explanatory level, this interpretation will only be one of many possible. The interpretation of an image will depend on the subjectivity of the interpreter and that any interpretation is likely to be contextual and time specific. Other people in different situations and at other times may offer different interpretations.

Visual Analysis

At the philosophical level, we may also question what the image represents. While visual images may be viewed superficially as just a way of making things visible, images are generally constructed or created by someone for an intended purpose or from a particular perspective, whether this is explicitly understood or not.

The use of images, especially digital or photographic ones, as a way to capture or reveal an underlying reality is therefore contested. From this perspective, images may be constructed to justify the assumptions and practices of those who commission their creation. These images will be carefully composed or constructed to achieve this desired effect. For others, images may spontaneously capture attributes of a situation, suggesting a view into a situated reality. However, even where an image is apparently taken spontaneously in a natural setting, it will still be affected by its framing, depth of focus and point of view, with the consequence that different images may create different effects.

Visual Analysis

Where you use found images or those created by others, you will find yourself in the situation of making a subjective interpretation of another person's subjective representation. In doing this you will also be creating a word-based interpretation of a visual representation.

Without sufficient cultural or contextual understanding this will be problematic.

To undertake this task less problematically, you will need to understand:

- who took or created the image or images that you wish to analyze;
- how these images were taken or created;
- the purpose for which these images were taken or created;
- how these images have been used previously;
- any intended audience for these images, and;
- the intended effect(s) of the image maker and those who commissioned these images.

Visual Analysis

Overview

There are several ways to analyze visual images, related to different analytical aims.

These aims relate to analyzing visual images during interviews as a means to elicit further data,

analyzing images as visual data in their own right,

and using images as visual representations.

Visual Analysis

Analyzing visual images as a means to elicit further data

This technique involves a researcher finding or creating images, or asking a participant to create images, with the intention of asking the participant to interpret what she or he sees in each image.

In this way the participant is asked to analyze each image during the interview, based on his or her subjective interpretation and contextual knowledge of the setting shown.

This quasi-analytical process involves visual images being used as an intermediary means to elicit further data rather than being analyzed as visual data in their own right.

Visual Analysis

Analyzing images as visual data in their own right

Where images are analyzed as visual data in their own right a number of analytical techniques may be used, drawn from a diverse range of disciplinary domains.

Some of these techniques to analyze visual images are data based and inductive, while others use an existing theoretical perspective through which to focus analysis. In this sub-section we briefly outline two approaches to analyze visual images.

These are **Content Analysis** and **Semiotic Analysis**.

Visual Analysis

Content analysis

Content analysis is used to analyze large numbers of images and involves quantification of the visual data you derive from the images you analyze. This approach involves identifying categories of visual data in which you are interested in order to develop a systematic coding scheme, coding your visual images using this scheme and subsequently undertaking quantitative analysis.

If you decide to use Content Analysis you will need to be aware of its precise analytical rules and procedure, to which you will need to adhere. We outline this earlier.

Visual Analysis

Subsequent quantitative analysis ranges from calculating the frequency of different categories for a variable to examining relationships between variables created.

Four stages of Content Analysis when applied to the analysis of visual images.
These are finding or creating the images you wish to analyze;
Developing categories in order to be able to code your data;
Coding your data; and analyzing them.

Visual Analysis

Semiotic analysis

Semiotics is the study of signs. A sign is ‘something’ (a word, phrase, sound, cultural artefact or visual image) that stands for (represents) something other than itself. The inclusion of ‘something’ twice in this definition is intentional and important, as it indicates that a sign consists of two parts.

These are the **signifier** and the **signified**. The signifier is the word, phrase or sound used, or image or artefact shown and the signified is the concept or meaning suggested or implied in the sign. A simple and relatively straightforward example here might be the way in which images of some animals, birds and mythological creatures have been used in branding and advertisements as signs to indicate or represent objects such as power, strength, dependability or wisdom

Visual Analysis

Approaches to semiotics propose different ways to analyze signs. These approaches are based on the work of two foundational semioticians, the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce, whose work on pragmatism.

One typology from the work of Peirce differentiates between iconic, indexical and symbolic signs.

An iconic sign is one where the signifier resembles the object being signified. Using the example of road signs for tourist attractions. For example, the location of a historic house is signified by the image of a large house, the location of a castle by an icon that clearly resembles a castle, and so on!



Visual Analysis

An indexical sign inherently indicates the object being signified and we can also use the example of UK road signs for tourist attractions to illustrate this. The sign for a farm trail does not attempt to use an iconic representation (this would be too complex or confusing) but instead shows the image of a heavy horse to signify a farm.

Likewise, the location of a zoo is signified by the image of an elephant and the location of a football ground by a football. Signs are often multimodal and roadside tourist signs are also a good example of this.

Visual Analysis

In the UK roadside tourist signs have a brown background and often include text. The use of color helps to signify the purpose of the sign and the use of text helps to anchor what is being signified.

While none of the examples used so far include text, some others combine signs and text on a brown background to anchor meaning. A symbolic sign is more abstract while still being capable of signifying meaning to those who see it through conventional understanding. For example, some other road signs use red, which is widely accepted as signifying danger or acting as a warning. Traffic signals in many countries are based on the use of three colors, red, amber and green, indicating symbolic signs which are widely understood by convention.

Visual Analysis

Signs may also be classified as **denotative** and **connotative**. In a denotative sign the meaning being suggested or implied will be reasonably obvious or visible. For example, an image of a hotel bedroom on a hotel chain website will signify the quality of the furnishings and the amount of space in the room.

A connotative sign is either a substitute for or a part of the thing it stands for: for example, in many people's minds an image of a sunlit seashore and perfectly blue sky is associated with being on holiday and such an image may be shown on a holiday company's website to stand for a relaxing holiday, while an image of a table laid for dinner with a white cloth, silver cutlery, wine glasses, candles and flowers may be used to represent a high quality dining experience. An individual sign may also signify both denotative and connotative qualities.

Visual Analysis

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Visual Analysis

A further typology relates to the ways that signs work with one another. In this respect, semiotic analysis may be **syntagmatic** or **paradigmatic**.

Syntagmatic analysis explores relations between signs and the ways in which meanings are signified as different signs are combined into structures or sequences. This approach is used in the analysis of visual images. In a static image such as a printed advertisement signs become meaningful in relation to other signs that surround them in the advert.

The intention of an advertisement will be to transfer the signified meanings from one or more signs to other signs related to the product, so that, for example, signs associated with health and well-being may be projected in an advertisement for a food product that wishes to be seen as healthy and good for you.

Visual Analysis

Alternatively, participant produced images can be used to explore the meanings they give to a specified activity, in this example entrepreneurship. In moving images such as video and film, signs occur sequentially and become meaningful in relation to those that occur before and after them.

In a similar way to the example we have just described, filmed advertisements such as television adverts may be analyzed to explore how signs are used to signify meanings in relation to the product being promoted.

Visual Analysis

Rather than focusing on structural or sequential relations between signs, **paradigmatic** analysis explores relations between signs by examining how the substitution of alternative signs for one sign will alter that sign's signified meaning in relation to other signs.

Using our example of the advertisement for a healthy food product, if those who commissioned this advert wanted to project the idea of fitness and bodybuilding in relation to consuming this food instead of health and well-being, the signs used to signify this intended meaning would alter and consequently affect the market for this product.



Box 13.15 Focus on management research

Semiotic analysis of entrepreneurs' images of identity

In a paper published in the *Journal of Business Venturing* Clarke and Holt (2017) report on research to better understand entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial identity. Data were collected from 20 entrepreneurs involved in potentially high growth businesses during a training initiative. Each was asked to imagine an image or symbol that captured or expressed what their business meant to them and given an hour draw it on an A3 sheet of paper. Subsequently they were interviewed on their drawing and how it related to their experiences thereby illuminating their entrepreneurial identities.

Images were analysed using semiotic analysis. This examined the choices the entrepreneurs made about what to represent visually as salient in their drawings and how they achieved this. To do this, three inter-related components of visual grammar were examined within the images. These comprised (1) representational meaning, that is what was actually depicted of the entrepreneurial world in the image; (2) interactive

meaning, that is how the image attracted the viewer's attention, and where the viewer's gaze was directed within the image; and (3) compositional meaning, that is the techniques and tools used to represent the meaning such as shading and use of jagged and dark lines. Clarke and Holt (2017: 482) explain these components in relation to an entrepreneur's drawing of: "... an individual/people in a fishing boat on a sea full of creatures (representational meaning) [where] the images that most capture the viewer's attention are the larger, more detailed sea creatures at the bottom of the page which dominate the image (interactional meaning), the effect [being] created by the use of charcoal, shading and contrast (compositional meaning)."

Data from each interview were analysed inductively, coding the metaphors each entrepreneur used in their discussion of their image. Early codes were used to provide signposts until the researchers noted patterns were emerging, codes being gradually reduced by re-reading the coded data and looking for links between codes and removing redundant codes. In the final stage of analysis, data from the two datasets were brought together and compared. These data revealed that entrepreneurial identity was different from the ideal of a heroic individual. Rather they emphasised continuous and sometimes precarious movement, nurturing and caregiving and transformation and growth; their identities being neither singular nor fixed.

Visual Analysis

Attempting to comprehend and analyze signified meanings and their relations to other signs is likely to be difficult. This will be due to the complex or abstract nature of some signs and the complexity involved when such signs are used in relation to one another.

Complexity leads to the likelihood of multiple meanings as signs are interpreted. Semioticians use a term for this: **polysemy**, or **multiple meanings**, and a sign with more than one meaning is **polysemic**.

Visual Analysis

However, while many signs and complex ones in particular are polysemic, their use and interpretation will be influenced by wider cultural and social conventions, such as the convention that red indicates danger).

These conventions refer to wider systems of meaning that reflect shared understandings and expectations. For example, identifiable groups such as accountants, entrepreneurs, human resource practitioners, marketing professionals and public relations practitioners will each share a set of conventionalized understandings that are referred to as a code , affecting the way members of that group understand their professional world and how to interpret signs and behave within it.

Visual Analysis

More broadly, codes of conventionalized understandings will operate at the societal level, affecting the ways in which signs are used and interpreted. Such codes will be influenced by prevailing ideologies or ways of thinking, known as **dominant codes**.

However, while dominant codes will underpin the way in which many signs are used with the intention of producing an intended or preferred meaning, other interpretations will still exist and some of these will encompass a critical perspective about the use of signs to promote ideological interests.

Visual Analysis

Using images as visual representations

Visual images may also be used to represent analytical aspects and evoke meanings that would otherwise be difficult to convey in a research project. In this approach, selected images and text are combined in a research report, in order to enhance one another's ability to represent perspectives that would be difficult to describe using words alone.

Where photographic images and text are combined in this way this is referred to as a **photo essay**. In a video format, voice-over narration may be used to achieve a similar effect, referred to as a **video essay**. A digital document or multimedia website may also be created that will allow both static and moving images to be integrated with text.



Box 13.17 Focus on student research

Images from the English Riviera

Lottie's tourism research project focused on symbolism and investment in seaside tourist destinations. As part of this project she undertook visual research, visiting a number of seaside tourist destinations to create images of these locations. At the end of this research activity, she selected a number of the images she had created from each tourist destination to produce a photo-essay, which she subsequently incorporated in her project report. This photo-essay combined text with the digital images that she had created.

As her research focused on symbolism and investment in seaside tourist destinations, the images she created sought to encapsulate the relationship between these in each location she visited. One of these locations was the 'English Riviera', a tourist destination in the southwest of the UK. A selection of the images and associated text in her photo-essay for this location are reproduced here.



Seafront

I took this image from the promenade to capture the blend of traditional and modern visible in this location. Beyond the railings lies the sea and beyond this is a sandy beach, a traditional symbol of a seaside town. There are only mid-rise buildings evident at either side of the image and these are coloured white which makes them appear as though they are situated somewhere around the Mediterranean. Beyond the beach in between these buildings the predominant sign is that of trees and vegetation. This image

signifies careful planning and while the resources required to create this scene combine public and private investments, the overall effect appears intentional and symbolises an up-market tourist destination.



Lines and palms

This image was taken to combine the lines of the modern apartment block with fantastic views over the sea and the tropical sign of the feathered leaves of the palm trees. I deliberately took this image looking towards the sky so that by ignoring ground level, we may make inferences about the image and ask, where is this? We may conclude that the combination of these signs is intentional, perhaps to suggest somewhere beyond its actual location, somewhere continental.



Exotic park

This image shows exotic planting combined with defined lines and manicured spaces, and is framed by trees beyond which appear to take it out of its location in an urban area close to the sea. It appears to symbolise somewhere other than where it is and yet it also offers a safe and relaxing space. The investment to create and maintain this space and others nearby is clearly considerable and adds to the overall impression of this tourist destination.

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