

Research analysis

Qualitative analysis is an active process with one's mind and body to find patterns in data and to articulate their Interrelationships.

Five of the most fundamental yet critical analytic skills qualitative researchers and data analysts employ are:

1. Condensing large amounts of data;
2. Noticing patterns in textual and visual materials;
3. Unifying seemingly different things;
4. Understanding social processes of human action, reaction, and interaction
5. Interpreting the routines, rituals, rules, roles, and relationships of social life

1. Condensing large amounts of data:

Qualitative researchers work with large collections of purposely collected narrative and visual data, sometimes labeled **empirical materials**. These need condensation as we aim to present selected facets of the inquiry that we determine to be the most important for others to know, and that provide sufficient evidence for the case.

You take a paragraph and assign it a one-word symbolic representation, or a code. For example: "You put two, sometimes four slices of bread in this thing and push the handle down to make the bread hot and crispy." The code for this is: "*toaster*".

Sometimes you need to consider multiple options before selecting the most appropriate one, and sometimes certain condensed forms of meaning are better or more precise than others.

There will be times when the symbol or code you create for a datum can employ a word or two from the datum itself. This is a method called **In Vivo Coding**.

Two or more researchers might work collaboratively on coding the data to better ensure consistency of interpretations -a form of intercoder agreement -. Sometimes you can go back to the person who originally supplied the data to offer your condensed interpretations for feedback and verification as a participant check but, more often than not, you take responsibility for your analytic coding assignments.

Nothing is set in stone-you can always revise the code later if new information suggests a reanalysis of your initial assignments in order.

You can label the content as an action-oriented "Process Code" or gerund (a gerund is an -ing" word/phrase such as reflecting, praising accomplishments, complaining about pain).

Qualitative inquiry relies on researcher creativity and heuristics (methods of discovery) to generate comparable findings. While solid quantitative reasoning relies on statistical accuracy, in qualitative research, precision rests with our word choices.

Condensed data do not always have to take the form of codes; other summative forms such as categories and sentence-length themes are possible.

2. Noticing patterns in textual and visual materials

Reliable or credible conclusions cannot be drawn from just one facet of knowledge. Thus, we need several observations and answers to construct a pattern. This is done using sophisticated mental operations (processes), three of these processes are:

1. **Induction:** open-ended exploration of a problem, going into an inquiry to learn as you go, formulating answers as more information is compiled. Much of qualitative research is inductive inquiry or analytic induction, because researchers generally begin with open-ended questions for investigation rather than fixed hypotheses to test. Think of induction as on-the-job training in which one learns more and gets better at the tasks each day.
2. **Abduction:** examines an array of possibilities in order to select the most likely, plausible, or best possibility. Qualitative inquiry considers a range of participants' perspectives and experiences, including the unexpected and anomalous. Researchers look at the totality of data to consider different possibilities for interpretation and, after careful analysis, put forth the one(s) that seem(s) most likely.
3. **Deduction:** is a culminating process and product, derived from inductive and/or abductive thinking. It is the conclusion drawn after considering all the evidence or data. Deductions come in various forms: some are summative statements like assertions, propositions, and theories.

3. Unifying seemingly different things

It goes beyond finding what different things *have* in common: it's also unifying them in some way through the analysis and description of their interrelationship or how they connect. Another way unity is achieved in research is finding a central or core category that functions as an umbrella for all of the study's constituent elements. For example: Kathy Charmaz explored how serious chronic illness affects the body and the identity of self. A core category she identified from her interviews with the physically impaired was *adapting (a core **Process code**)*.

Qualitative analysis requires that researchers know how to analyze people and their lives. Social life, in its broadest sense, is composed of action, reaction, and interaction.

4. Understanding social processes of human action, reaction, and interaction

Action is what a person does (e.g., thinking, speaking, and moving). Reaction is response to an action-to someone else's or one's own action or given circumstances. Interaction is the collective back-and-forth sequences of action and reaction. Researchers can examine and analyze these

three processes through interrelated components we label the five Rs: routines, rituals, rules, roles, and relationships.

Reactions suggest much about how people perceive and respond to others and the world around them and, like actions, offer a window into their values, attitudes, and beliefs. Even thoughts kept inside the mind (imagining, fantasizing, meditating) are considered actions and reactions because they are purposive.

It is a complex interplay of communication that observers attempt to understand through psychological, sociological, anthropological, and even dramaturgical (ie theatrical) lenses,

5. Interpreting the routines, rituals, rules, roles, and relationships of social life

Routines are actions that take care of the everyday business of living, symbolize our self-cultivated and socialized habits, and meet our human need to create a sense of order.

These particular patterns of social interaction can hold particular significance for a particular study. Humans do things over and over again for a reason, even if that reason could be perceived as irrational or self-destructive. And remember too that instability and inconsistency can be considered patterns of action.

Research gets enriched not only from examination of routines, but also from the breaches or conflicts that interrupt the flows of daily life, We learn much from how people handle, avoid, and prevent the glitches that come their way .

Rituals are nonroutine moments of action that seem to suggest meaningful importance, either to the participants or to the observer. This is a *subjective* interpretation: what is considered routine to one person could be deemed a ritual to another.

Lakoff and Johnson (2003) assert, "There can be no culture without ritual"

A ritual transcends the routines of everyday matters because of the pattern's significance it holds for the individual or group. Rituals are status-passages that demarcate transitions of some kind, usually through processes such as separation, reversal, changing, or celebration. for example: worship services, weddings, an exchange of gifts, or brisk morning runs through the neighborhood or dining out for some people as it doesn't happen frequently is considered a special event.

~ Though dining out can also be a *routine* for others because it might occur at predetermined, expected time.

If the overall action of dining out is a ritual, then the event is made up of smaller acts or micro-rituals- for example, the ritual of escorted seating to a table, the ritual of scanning the menu and selecting the food etc.

Rituals lend insight into the value, attitude, and belief systems of the individual, group, or culture, and bring us closer to comprehending that which is symbolic, significant, and meaningful.

Rules: Most routines and rituals can be influenced to some extent by the rules set in place. Each society creates expectations, codes, and regulations for daily conduct, a process called **socialization**.

Individuals also have their own rules for daily living, a personal code of ethics or a moral compass for action, reaction, and interaction with others. Those who do not conform to the socially established order of things might be perceived by the majority as deviant and stigmatized as outcasts.

Rules are culturally and socially specific: what is unacceptable conduct in one setting or context might be completely appropriate in another setting or context.

And they are based on traditions, morals, and value, attitude, and belief systems. Their origins stem from sources as diverse as religious writings to current legislative needs as a society evolves. Even digital tools are laden with rules.

Rules are an important part of the glue that holds a society together. But oppressive rules also exist, as does the abusive and discriminatory enforcement of such rules by those who overreach their authority. In addition, not everyone will agree with a particular law in place.

Authoritative mandates restraining human actions can come from social institutions such as national and local government agencies, to people such as parents and older siblings as well as one's own experiences.

Roles are the assumed or attributed actions, personas, and characteristics of individuals. Erving Goffman's proposed that humans perform in accordance with how we wish to be perceived by others. But others might perceive us in different ways according to how they interpret such factors as our physical appearance, speech, and personality.

Roles are realized and enacted through particular routines, rituals, and rules of conduct. Each *role* carries with it a socially constructed set of expectations, for example, expectations that the waiter will interact with customers in ways that will create a pleasant dining experience.

Organizations and institutions also play roles in social life. For example, The health-care system's primary role is to treat the ill and maintain people's wellness. Certainly, the health-care system provides essential support to patients in need, but the rules of its organizational structure can influence whether its role is charitable or profit driven.

Relationships vary in quality, depending on the attitude one holds toward another person, group, or institution. And relationships are dynamic, meaning they "are multiple, can be fluid, and change at different rates.

Robert V. Kozinets (2015) offers that digital technology has reconfigured both our live and online relationships into "networked individualism" in which we are connected rather than embedded in social groups.

As researchers observe human action as it naturally occurs around them (and this includes action online), or listen to people recounting their experiences and perceptions during an interview, they stay attuned to their collective interactions happening in the moment or as they recall them. Not only do field workers carefully document their back-and-forth exchanges, but they analyze those

exchanges for their explicit and implicit meanings. How one person relates with others reveals much about his own role identity and values, attitudes, and beliefs.

Qualitative data analysis

The analytic methods chosen depend on several factors, including the forms of data collected, the methodological genre employed and the types of research questions posed, the types of participants studied and the parameters for investigation, and a variety of other matters including the researcher's own comfort level with particular analytic approaches and the form a final presentation takes.

Analysis does not start after all the data have been collected, it is an ongoing process from beginning through end of an inquiry.

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