QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS
FROM DESCRIPTION TO EXPLANATION

Ron Chenail
Nova Southeastern University

Penn State Hershey, College of Medicine
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Overview

- What is qualitative data analysis?

- How do I conduct qualitative data analysis and present results?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closest to Data</th>
<th>Degree of Transformation</th>
<th>Farthest from Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Findings</td>
<td>Topical Survey</td>
<td>Interpretable Explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topical Survey</td>
<td>Thematic Survey</td>
<td>Thematic Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Not</td>
<td>Exploratory Qualitative Research</td>
<td>Explanatory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Sandelowski and Barroso, 2003, p. 980
No Findings (Not Research)

- Presenting data as if they were the findings
- Reproducing interview data, case histories, or stories they had collected in a reduced form with minimal or no interpretation of those data
- Containing no analysis and no interpretation

(Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003, pp. 909-910)
Topical Survey (Not Qualitative Research)

- Emphasizing nominal or categorical data, or lists and inventories of topics covered by research participants in interviews and focus groups.
- Emphasizing inventories, frequencies, and percentages of participants stating a topic, or enumerations of the topics themselves.
- Investigators often introducing topics in their interview questions and/or derived from a manifest content analysis.

(Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003, pp. 910-912)
Thematic Survey (Exploratory Qualitative Research)

- Conveying an underlying or more latent pattern or repetition discerned in the data
- Containing the lowest level of abstraction
- Offering more penetrating or nuanced descriptions of experience, using either in vivo or everyday language, or themes or concepts from existing empirical or theoretical literature to label and/or organize their data

(Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003, pp. 912-913)
Presenting one or more concepts or themes either developed in situ from the data or imported from existing theories or literature outside the study

Moving towards interpretively integrating portions of data

Extending the theoretical or other intellectual tradition from which they were imported and/or illuminating an experience

(Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003, pp. 913-914)
Transforming data to produce grounded theories, ethnographies, or otherwise fully integrated explanations of some phenomenon, event, or case

Clarifying or elucidating conceptual or thematic linkages that re-present the target phenomenon in a new way

Attending to relevant variations in both sample and data (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003, p. 914)
Generic vs. Designer

- **Generic Design** is when researchers use generic or “eclectic” qualitative methods (e.g., open coding, axial coding, constant comparison) to produce conceptual categories and themes.
- **Designer Design** is when researchers follow designer or “name brand” methodologies to produce the most transformed results and findings (e.g., thick descriptions, grounded theories, essences of lived experience).
Generic vs. Designer

- Qualitative Data Analysis
- Qualitative Content Analysis
- Thematic Analysis
- Qualitative Interviewing
- Ethnographic
- Phenomenological
- Case Study

- Ethnography
- Grounded Theory
- Phenomenology
- Narrative Analysis
- Discourse Analysis
Philosophical origins

“The act of thinking about things, persons, or occurrences”

The essence of lived experiences: the How and the What

Distinguishing Features
  - Sensitivity and Literary
  - Long interviews
  - Horizons
  - Facticity and Meaning
Phenomenological Varieties

- European and American
- Classical (Husserl): Essence of consciousness
- Existential (Heidegger): Dasein or Being-in-the-world
- Hermeneutic (Gadamer): Interpretive structures of experience of texts
- Empirical Phenomenology (Giorgi): Descriptions of the co-researcher
- Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA: Smith): Double Hermeneutic
When to use phenomenology

- Studying people’s experiences
- Studying how people make meaning in their lives
- Study relationship between what happened and how people have come to understand these events
- Interested in people clarifying their essences
Select autobiographical topic
Select co-researchers
Inform co-researchers of topic and procedures
Develop question/topic guide
Conduct bracketed interview(s)
Prepare data for analysis

Moustakas, 1994, 103-119
Phenomenology Interviews

Facts + Meaning → Lived Experience
Phenomenological Analytical Processes

- Epoché
- Phenomenological Reduction
  - Bracketing
  - Horizontalization
  - Delimited Horizons
  - Invariant Qualities and Themes
  - Individual Textual Descriptions
  - Composite Textual Descriptions (Moustakas, 1994, p. 180)
Phenomenological Analytical Processes

- Imaginative Variation
  - Vary Possible Meanings
  - Develop Structural Themes
  - Individual Structural Descriptions
  - Composite Structural Descriptions

- Synthesis of Composite Textual and Composite Structural Descriptions

- Member Checking and Peer Debriefing  (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 180-181)
The Long Interview Factors

- Bracketing
- Open Questions
- Follow Up Questions

Long Interview
Invariant Horizons or Constituents
(Unique Qualities of an Experience)
Textual Descriptions

Theme
Constituent (Quotes)
Constituent (Quotes)

Theme
Constituent (Quotes)
Constituent (Quotes)

Theme
Constituent (Quotes)
Constituent (Quotes)
Structural Description

Textual Descriptions \times \text{Imaginative variation} = \text{Structural Description}
Synthesis to Essence

Essence

Textual

Structural

Essence
Key Resources

Key Resources


Grounded Theory

- Sociological origins
- “Creating theory from the ground up”
- Constructing or discovering theory from data
- Distinguishing Features
  - Inductive and Deductive Processes
  - Substantive and Formal Theory
Grounded Theory Varieties

- Glassarian or Classical (Barney Glasser and Anselm Strauss)
- Straussian (Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin)
- Constructivist (Kathy Charmaz)
- Situational Analysis (Post-modern; Adele Clark)
When to use grounded theory

- When you want to build/discover theory inductively
- When you want to build/discover substantive and/or formal theory
- When there is little or no prior information on an area or phenomenon
- When you want to study the microcosm of interaction
GT Analytical Tools

- Open, Axial, and Theoretical Coding
- In vivo Codes and Imported Codes
- Theoretical Coding and Sampling
- Constant Comparative Method
- Conceptualization and Open Coding
- Categorization and Axial Coding
- Explanatory Variables and Theoretical Coding
- Theoretical Memoing
Grounded Theory Coding

- Theoretical
- Axial
- Open
Codes and Products

Theoretical Coding

Axial Coding

Theory

Variables

Open Coding

Themes

Categories

Concepts
Generic Qualitative Research
- Utilizes Grounded Theory techniques to produce categories or themes
- Does not transform findings to produce theory
- Does not use theoretical sampling

Grounded Theory
- Utilizes Grounded Theory techniques to produce a theory
Over the last 20 years, there have been a significant number of published studies in which the experiences of clients in marriage and family therapy have been investigated to discover what works in therapy from their points of view.

Although there have been a number of systematic reviews of the effectiveness literature in marriage and family therapy and of clients’ experiences in individual counseling, there has not been a comparable review of the research literature presenting clients’ experiences of their conjoint clinical treatment as couples or families.

To address this gap, the investigators conducted a systematic review of published qualitative research studies in which data were collected from clients to learn about their experiences within couple and family therapy and with their therapists.

Specifically, the investigators conducted a qualitative metasynthesis on studies published from 1990 to 2010 in which the researchers attempted to discover the experiences of clients participating in conjoint couple and family therapy. Our goal was to inductively construct a coherent grounded formal theory of client experiences of couple and family therapy. (Chenail et al., 2012)
Table 1: Categories and Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category: Therapist Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Factors:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Therapist style (e.g., calm, friendly, and understanding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Collaborating their strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fair and balanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Neutral or unbiased</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Compliments</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Good job of listening</td>
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<td>- Not turning to them</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Not having an agenda for them</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asking questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Working collaboratively</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Respected their perceptions and experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Validated</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Treated as experts on their own family experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Positive feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Coming up with new ideas about what to do</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Not blamed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dedicated and professional practitioners (e.g., “very informed about their role and very able to perform in that role”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Factors:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Covert to overt (e.g., Covert hope for a miracle)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Reflecting teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Separating the person from the problem (e.g., othering)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Psycho-educational sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Providing useful and up-to-date information in an easy-to-understand format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhelpful Factors:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Unequal treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Therapist talking when client wanted to talk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category: Therapy Factors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time and Place</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Safe place</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Useful time to think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Helpful and comfortable feelings</td>
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<tr>
<td>- &quot;Flexibility of having the sessions at the 'care' or service user home at a time to suit him&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Advances:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Confirmation</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Personal insights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Improving their relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Gain clarity on their situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Homework assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhelpful Advances:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Techniques perceived as irrelevant or confusing (e.g., &quot;Miracle question&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Expectations of a directive expert not realized</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The use of teams, mirrors, and recording</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Therapy process was artificial and slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- &quot;Complexity of ensuring FFT sessions to suit all members of a family&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- &quot;Parenting and pedagogical styles&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Category: Client and Family Factors |
| Process                        |
| - Balanced                     |
| - Fair                         |
| - Fair the family was treated as a whole and not just the service user |
| - Equal treatment              |
| - Everyone heard and acknowledged |
| Change                         |
| - Learning new things about family members |
| - Seeing family members' efforts |
| - Noticing family members' change |
| - New understanding of relationship |
| - Seeing each other in a different light |
| - Learning more about each other |
| - Understanding underlying issues |
| - Understandings - communication and interaction |
Data Analysis Map

6. Theory: Clients participating in conjoint marriage and family therapy perceived (a) Helpful and Unhelpful factors they attributed to their therapists (e.g., validating, confirming, supporting, non-judging, caring, transparent, facilitative, focusing, and expertise), (b) Helpful and Unhelpful factors they attribute to the therapy process (e.g., time to think, equal treatment, fair treatment, feeling comfortable, feeling safe, and non-blaming), (c) Helpful factors they attribute to themselves and their family members (e.g., gaining clarity, focusing on solutions, acceptance of issues outside of their control, self-agency, and choices made), and (d) Factors they attribute to therapy-life connections (e.g., homework assignments, improved relationships, reduced target behaviors, and change between sessions) as being critically important to their experiences of successful therapy. Different clients can perceive the same factors as being helpful or not helpful in determining their overall perception of therapy. Also, the conjoint aspect of their therapy experience seemed to result in clients being sensitive whether they perceived their treatment as being balanced and fair or not.

5. Interrelating explanations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Therapist Factors</th>
<th>Therapy Factors</th>
<th>Client and Family Factors</th>
<th>Therapy / Life Connections</th>
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| Positive and Negative Factors | Perception of Balance and Fairness in Therapy |

4. Testing themes (interviews, observations, documents):

3. Themes / Categories:

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2. Subcategories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Factors</th>
<th>Time and Place</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Changing the Knowing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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1. Open Codes: Based on initial interviews.

FIGURE 1. Data Analysis Map. The numbers at the far left represent the six levels of analysis, moving upward from the bottom of the figure. Two-directional arrows indicate nonlinear connections among items. One-directional arrows represent the linear timetable of unfolding experiences. From Harris, Storrs, and Kibinger, 2003.
Key Resources

Key Resources


Online QDA: http://onlineqda.hud.ac.uk/index.php

The Qualitative Report: http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/

Graduate Certificate in Qualitative Research http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/

Email me: ron@nova.edu
Ronald J. Chenail, PhD, is Professor of Family Therapy in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. From 2005 to 2011, he was the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, the flagship research journal of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. Since 1990, he is also the founding Editor-in-Chief of The Qualitative Report, the world's first online, open access, transdisciplinary journal dedicated to qualitative research. He may be contacted at ron@nova.edu