

**METHODOLOGY  
OF  
BASIC AND  
APPLIED RESEARCH**

**Proceedings of a Workshop**

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## Chapter 9

# Analysis of Qualitative Data

Oka Obono and Koblowe Obono

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### What are Qualitative Methods?

Qualitative methods are means of collecting and analyzing interpretive and subjective social reality in which the researcher is typically immersed. They are particularly good at answering the “why”, “how” and “what” questions.

### Background to Qualitative Methodology

- The anti-positivistic backlash.
- Post-War existentialism (a la Heidegger and Sartre) and disillusionment with bourgeois romanticism.
- The civil rights movement and the rise of the feminist movement, which sought a new methodology.
- Its alliance with Marxism perceptions and anthropology in the 1970s.
- The wholesale disenchantment with establishmentarian scientism, represented more currently by the post-modernist movement.

### Concepts of complementarity, unity and synthesis

- The dialectics of social reality
- Trends towards holism
- Ying and Yang

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### **Focus group discussions (FGDs)**

#### **Bad FGDs**

- Overly strict concern with scientific need to record proceedings.
- Negative Hawthorne Effects in evidence.
- Participants are usually self conscious.
- There is a tendency to play or speak to the gallery.
- Stiff, formal and fairly lifeless.

#### **Good FGDs**

- Refreshments are available.
- Obviously engaging and lasted till late.
- Occurring in conditions of high comfort level by participants.
- A cosy and circular sitting arrangement

### **Types of Qualitative Methods**

#### **1. Observation**

- Participant
- Non-participant
- Observation Checklists and Field Notes

#### **2. Interviews**

- In-depth interviews
- Key informant interview
- Case Histories
- Life Histories

#### **3. Content analysis**

- Document study
- Sculptural interpretation
- Photographic/Visual techniques

#### **4. Photographs as eloquent evidence**

#### **What does it mean to Analyze?**

- Etymologically, it means 'the process of breaking down';

- Socially, it is 'the process of simplifying complex phenomena to aid personal or collective decision making' and ;
- Scientifically, it is 'the complete process of processing data obtained previously, whether in a primary context or in a secondary manner, for the purpose of making sense of the data so collected'.

### **Quantitative Analysis**

This refers to the process of summarizing and describing the mass of numbers collected during a field investigation. On the other hand, qualitative analysis refers to the process of summarizing and describing the mass of words generated by interviews or observational data collected during a field investigation.

### **Types of Qualitative Data Analysis**

- Manual Methods
- Non-Manual (Computer-Assisted) Methods
- Manual Methods of Analysis
- Content Analysis

### **Ethnographic Summaries**

David Morgan (1988) lists this as one of the most familiar means of analyzing qualitative data. It involves the use of quoted (phenomenological or emic) statements to capture a more elaborate or comprehensive range of ideas.

### **Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDA)**

More than twenty CAQDA programmes are available for analyzing qualitative data. CAQDA programmes automate procedures of analysis that have been in use for generations by ethnographers while others use linked coding schemes, hypertext, and case-based hypothesis testing. CAQDA is associated with analysis of aggregate (quantitative) data according to the tenets of logical positivism and the constructed category of "quantitative research" rather than the constructed category of "qualitative research".

Thus, computer-assisted analysis carries the connotation of hard data, computation and objectivity. It feeds the tensions between positivists and non-positivists – in other words, it is the



## *Analysis of Qualitative Data*

quantification of data, which on their own, represent the quality (not quantity) of human social experience. It also provides a context for synthesis between quantitative and qualitative research methods and data.

### **Bledsoe's Contingency Framework**

Bledsoe's Contingency Framework treats survey numbers less as quantitative data than as cultural thought pieces, and this entailed her spending "enormous amounts of time attempting to find ways to make survey numbers 'talk' by sorting and scrutinizing them - 'trawling' or even 'crawling' through them". By 'wringing' insights from these numbers in this way, Bledsoe turns survey respondents into ethnographic informants and transforms ordinary statistics into persons located in real life situations (or so the argument goes).

Her analysis contains a paradoxical package of methodologies, the highpoint of which is an attempt to combine two separate traditions and genres in social research by treating survey results as qualitative responses and vice versa. In doing this, it blurs the distinction between anthropology and demography in unprecedented ways. From the viewpoint of demography - a discipline that has taken massive strides to free itself of its association with quantification and manipulation of numbers (Greenhalgh, 1990: 100) - if a researcher 'crawled' and 'trawled' through numbers long enough, they would certainly say something.

### **Procedures for Qualitative Data Analysis**

There are no 'quick fix' techniques in qualitative analysis because "there are probably as many different ways of analysing qualitative data as there are qualitative researchers doing it!" (Lacey and Luff, 2001: 3).

### **Broad Levels of Analysis**

Simple counting of the frequency with which certain words or phrases occur (sometimes called content analysis, although this

term refers more accurately to Beverly Hancock's use of it as 'thematic analysis') (Lacey and Luff, 2001: 4).

### Thematic analysis

Beyond words, we move to sentences or paragraphs dealing with particular words or concepts. Deeper questions are asked and deeper enquiries made.

### Theoretical analysis

Tests researcher's framework of expected relationships among variables.

### Comparison of COQDA methods

	NUD*IST	NVivo	AtlasTi
Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Australian, developed in the early 1990s</li><li>- Various versions available, up to N5</li></ul>	<p>Australian, developed in 1999 by the same company as produced NUD*IST</p>	<p>German, developed in 1993 for a range of disciplines including anthropology, linguistics, theoretical sociology and theology.</p>
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Widely used package</li><li>- Well developed</li><li>- Ideal for coding and sorting narrative data</li><li>- Interface with SPSS</li></ul>	<p>Combines best of NUD*IST with much flexibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- user friendly</li><li>- good modelling facility</li><li>- can include 'hyperlinks' to the Internet</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- very flexible for inductive theoretical development</li><li>- Split screen allows coding to be viewed alongside documents</li></ul>

## Analysis of Qualitative Data

Weaknesses	-No graphical facility -limited modeling capabilities - limited to hierarchical structure of analysis	Remains essentially hierarchical but more flexible than NUD*IST	Opaque terminology (projects are called 'hermeneutical units') -Limited user friendliness
Ideal Applications to projects	Large projects needing narrative analysis, sorting, coding and organizing	Projects using visual as well as web based and narrative material	Grounded theory and other in-depth analyses
Approximate Price	£320	££420	£450

### Basic Steps, Stages or Procedures

These levels of analysis proceed from the simple to the complex but they are undergirded by the following steps, stages or procedures.

- **Familiarisation** with data (review, listening, reading).
  - **Transcription** of tape recorded material.
  - **Organization and Indexing** of data for easy retrieval and identification.
  - **Anonymising** of sensitive data coding (including, indexing).
  - **Thematisation** (identification of themes).
  - **Recoding**
  - **Development** of provisional categories.
  - **Exploration** of relationships among categories.
  - **Illustration** of relationships in domain analysis.
  - **Refinement** of hypotheses and categories.
  - **Development of theory** and incorporation of pre-existing knowledge.
  - **Testing of theory** against data.
  - **Report writing**, including quotes where appropriate.
- It is important to note that these steps are not strait-jackets.

The analysis of qualitative data should proceed from the same vital openness and flexibility with which the data had been collected in the first place. Reporting the findings should also attempt to capture or retain some of this vitality.

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Phase 5	Phase 6	Phase 7	Phase 8
Phase 9	Phase 10	Phase 11	Phase 12

Phase 13	Phase 14	Phase 15	Phase 16
Phase 17	Phase 18	Phase 19	Phase 20
Phase 21	Phase 22	Phase 23	Phase 24
Phase 25	Phase 26	Phase 27	Phase 28
Phase 29	Phase 30	Phase 31	Phase 32
Phase 33	Phase 34	Phase 35	Phase 36
Phase 37	Phase 38	Phase 39	Phase 40
Phase 41	Phase 42	Phase 43	Phase 44
Phase 45	Phase 46	Phase 47	Phase 48
Phase 49	Phase 50	Phase 51	Phase 52
Phase 53	Phase 54	Phase 55	Phase 56
Phase 57	Phase 58	Phase 59	Phase 60