Qualitative Data Analysis: Common Phases, Strategic Differences

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Abstract

This paper lays out an analytic framework to help rookie qualitative researchers recognize and appreciate common features of qualitative data analysis (QDA) while giving due consideration to strategic differences resulting from differences in expertise, context, and philosophy. The paper does not identify or illustrate specific QDA strategies. Rather, it raises questions the responsible analyst might consider at each phase of the process. I argue that all QDA (regardless of methodological or disciplinary orientation) comprise four interrelated phases: defining the analysis, classifying data, making connections between data, and conveying the message(s). This paper discusses the first three phases.

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Qualitative data analysis can be conducted through the following three steps: Step 1: Developing and Applying Codes. Coding can be explained as categorization of data. A ‘code’ can. Qualitative data analysis can be divided into the following five categories: 1. Content analysis. This refers to the process of categorizing verbal or behavioural data to classify, summarize and tabulate the data. 2. Narrative analysis. A ‘code’ can be a word or a short phrase that represents a theme or an idea. All codes need to be assigned meaningful titles. A wide range of non-quantifiable elements such as events, behaviours, activities, meanings etc. can be coded.