Analysing Interview Data (1)

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Show of hands...
Aims of the week 4 and 5 sessions

- To reflect on the nature and purpose of interviews, etc. as a form of qualitative data
- To introduce different processes, techniques and theories for analysing and synthesising data
- To explore different techniques for analysing and coding data
What is data analysis?

- Making sense of and representing data
- Preparing data for analysis
- Conducting different analysis
- Moving deeper and deeper into understanding data – finding patterns and themes
- Making an interpretation of the bigger picture
- Help improve your next interviews
Qualitative analysis process

- Data collection and management
- Organising and preparing data
- Coding and describing data
- Conceptualisation, classifying, categorising, identifying themes
- Connecting and interrelating data
- Interpretation, creating explanatory accounts, providing meaning
Process of analysis

- Approaches to analysis vary in terms of basic epistemological assumptions about the nature of the enquiry
- Approaches also differ in terms of analytic approaches – inductive and deductive methods
- Ongoing process of continual reflection
Aim of interviews as qualitative data

- What do you want out of the analysis?
  - Exploring propositions or constructs (following a more deductive approach)
  - An explanation in the form of substantive or formal theory (following a more inductive approach)
  - A description (of events, behaviour, etc.)
  - In practice, when analysing interviews, often move between these aims
The place of ‘analysing interview data’ within the research process

- Topic of research
  - Research questions
    - Data collection strategies
    - Data analysis strategies
    - Tools & techniques
    - Tools & techniques
The use of literature in data analysis

- Use of literature varies considered
- Widely debated
- Literature can be used to inform analysis, such as identification of themes in thematic analysis
- Not used in grounded theory (?)
Tools & techniques

- Data analysis techniques:
  - Content analysis
  - Grounded analysis / Thematic analysis
  - Discourse Analysis
  - Conversational Analysis
  - Documentary Analysis

- Possible tools include:
  - Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software
  - Use of matrices
Ensuring robustness in analysis of interviews

- Internal validity – follow logic of cause and effect within a study
- External validity – generalisable beyond your study
- Reliable – replicable/repeatable in other studies
- Objective or subjective
Example

TRACKING STUDENT MOTHERS’ HIGHER EDUCATION PARTICIPATION AND EARLY CAREER OUTCOMES OVER TIME

Research question: Do student mothers experience HE differently to non-mothers, and do they benefit differently from higher education?

Data analysis strategy: Use of theoretical propositions arising from literature review and quantitative data analysis

Tools & techniques: Thematic analysis, use of matrices to compare data on common themes, no need to use qualitative data analysis software
Brief exercise

1. Thinking about your own research, reflect on:
   - The topic of research
   - The research question(s)
   - Possible data collection and analysis strategy
   - Data analysis tools & techniques

2. Discuss this with people sitting next or around you

3. Share with the rest of the group
Analytical process

- Know your data
- Be reflective and recognise that analysis is a continuous process
- Focus your analysis:
  - Topic, time period or event
  - Individual, case (one organisation or one family) or group (a group of older men)
Possible data analysis strategies

- **Description** (e.g. summary, timeline of events, characteristics and behaviour of the sample)
- A **deductive** approach relying on predefined ideas of the themes you want to investigate
- An **inductive** approach in which themes are generated in the process of studying a transcript
- A combination of these...
Data analysis: description and conceptualisation

- Description – providing an account of the case or cases considered
- Conceptualisation – the generation of general, abstract categories from the data and establishing how they help to explain the phenomenon under study
- Both valuable and necessary but...
### Table 1: Attitudes towards young people in the social care sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>Demand</th>
<th>Supply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer 1</td>
<td>Have no work ethic, lazy, unreliable, late</td>
<td>Live at home and don’t want to work, get more on benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer 2</td>
<td>Unreliable, don’t turn up, not interested in working. Under 18s not allowed to work without supervision</td>
<td>Not interested in working, not passionate, no transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer 3</td>
<td>Turn up on the first day and never come back</td>
<td>Not interested in working in social care - hard work, no money, unglamorous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer 4</td>
<td>Come dressed for a nightclub, inappropriate attitude</td>
<td>Use template CVs from the Job Centre so are all the same</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Description of Table 1

“The social care sector was shown to face both supply and demand issues in relation to young people. Due to the nature of the work and the prevalence of low pay, the sector was not very attractive to young people, but there were also issues in how young people presented themselves when looking for employment. Some of these issues relate to a particular lack of understanding of how to apply for work and others to how to act and dress in interview. It is also the case that employers in the care sector make certain a priori assumptions about the suitability of young people for work. Negative views about the attitude and work ethic of young people as a group dissuaded employers from employing particular young people, and this, coupled with fears that elderly people, in particular, would react negatively to young people who were so different to themselves, resulted in a high level of exclusion of young people from social care.”
Tentative hypothesis arising from description

“Attitudes of employers towards young people exacerbate existing supply and demand problems in the social care sector…”

...to test and compare against further data.
Thematic analysis

- An approach to identifying, analysing and reporting patterns across the data
- Different techniques for identifying themes
- Widely used approach as supports the organisation and description of data

- **Advantages** – “theoretically flexible”, provides a rich interpretation of study, both inductive and deductive

- **Disadvantages** – concerns that analysis may be weak or superficial
Process of thematic analysis

1. Familiarise yourself with the data
2. Generate initial ideas – use codes to identify a feature of the data, be inclusive
3. Search for and generate themes
4. Review themes
5. Refining and defining themes – interpretation
6. Write up
Outlining the conceptual structure of a piece of research: Categories, properties and definitions

- A **category** (theme) captures underlining patterns in the data – the big issue
- **Properties** define or explain a category – the explanations
Properties explain categories, they may represent:

- Hierarchies
- Conditions
- Causes
- Consequences
- A continuum
- Opposites
- A typology
- Mediating factors
- Strategies
- Qualities
- Contexts
- Contingencies
- Covariances
- Etc.
Activity: Conceptual structure

1. Working in small teams, read “The Social Loss of Dying Patients”. (Start with the first two sections and move on to the rest if you have time.)
2. Try to identify some conceptual categories
3. Try to identify some properties
4. Think about how the properties relate to the categories
5. Discuss within your team and be prepared to share your ideas with the rest of the group...
## Example analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PROPERTIES</th>
<th>RELATIONSHIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calculating social loss</td>
<td><strong>Hierarchy:</strong></td>
<td>Social loss is calculated over time. Factors such as age mediate whether the potential social loss will be high or low.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High social loss</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Low social loss</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Mediating factors:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Dying children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Aged people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Patients in the middle years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Deductive approaches

- Use of a structure or predetermined framework
- Researcher imposes own structure or theories on the data for the analytic process

**Advantages** – relatively quick and easy, informed by literature, useful where probable participant responses are known

**Disadvantages** – inflexible, possibility of biases, limits in-depth exploration of data, can limit theme and theory development
Reflection (2)
Inductive approaches

- Little or no predetermined theory, structure or framework is used
- Data is used to derive the structure of analysis
- **Advantages** – comprehensive, in-depth, useful where little or nothing is known about the study phenomenon
- **Disadvantages** – time-consuming
Thematic analysis activity

1. Choose a transcript to read

These transcripts are from a project on Changing Organisational Forms and the Re-shaping of Work: Case Study Interviews (1999-2002)

• Focus on changing organisational forms and implications for future work
Activity 2: Choose one approach for your analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deductive</th>
<th>Inductive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Use your understanding to develop a framework of possible themes</td>
<td>1. Read interview summaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Read interview summaries</td>
<td>2. Code interesting or pertinent data in summaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Code using your framework</td>
<td>3. Review codes and develop themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reflect on themes</td>
<td>4. Reflect on themes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example analysis

- **Future of work**
  - Recruitment and retention
  - Progression opportunities (retirements, restructuring etc.)

- **HR policy**
  - Identification of skills shortages
  - Identification of requirements and location
  - Targeted recruitment
  - Training schemes
  - Graduate recruitment programme

- **Organisation culture and structure**
  - New roles
  - Cultural change
  - Line management changes

- **Relationships (internal and external)**

- **Organisational level policy**
  - Finances
  - Contractual requirements
  - Implementation of new work processes
Conclusion

- Interviews a key qualitative research method.
- The ‘method’ though is important.
- There are different approaches to analysing qualitative data.
- Ultimately form of analysis has to be explicit, robust and so defendable with others – examiners and scientific community.
- Don’t be afraid of messiness, so long as you articulate it.
- Questions to ask yourself:
  - Does a particular technique suit the type of data I am collecting?
  - Does a particular technique suit me and how I prefer to do things?
  - Are there disciplinary conventions that it would be wise to conform to?
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References


