Enhancing the quality of qualitative research using software

Dr. Susanne Friese

Leibniz University of Hanover, Germany

Why paying attention to quality?

To evaluate whether a given methodology is scientific

- How do we adequately represent reality when we “do science”?
- How do we need to conceptualise terms, theoretical approaches and methods to discover the unknown?

Positions on reliability and validity in qualitative research

1. Those who wish qualitative research to be judged by traditional criteria
2. Those who believe that a different set if criteria is required
3. Those who question the appropriateness of any predetermined criteria for judging qualitative research

Evaluating quality

- Traditional criteria are:
  - Validity
  - Reliability
  - Representativeness / generalisability

Evaluating quality in qualitative research

- Criteria for qualitative research:
  - Trustworthiness
  - Credibility
  - Dependability

Reliability refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions (Hammersley, 1992:67).

What is quality?

"Quality" qualitative research is research that makes the reader, hearer, stand up and say things like: "Wow", " I am touched", "that has power".

It is research that resonates with readers' and participants life experiences.

It is research that is interesting, clear, is logical, makes the reader think and want to read more.

What is quality?

"It is research that has substance, gives insights, shows sensitivity, and is not just a repeat of the same old stuff or something that might be read in a newspaper.

It's research that blend conceptualisation with sufficient descriptive detail to allow the reader to reach his/her own conclusions about the data to judge credibility of the researcher's data and analysis.

Juliet Corbin, 2008

Quality throughout the research process

- Decisions about research questions and theoretical approach: Does the research question drive the method? / *methodological consistency*
- Selection of the field and the materials / *Clarity and purpose*
- Does the researcher explicitly describe underlying assumptions? / *has "feeling" and sensitivity for the topic, for the participants and for the research / having self-awareness*

Quality throughout the research process

- Accurate technical implementation of data collection and analysis / methodological awareness
- Methodological competencies of the researchers / should be trained in qualitative research / willingness to relax and get in touch with the creative self
- Presentation of the results, power and conviction: To what extend does the study contribute to the existing body of knowledge? Could the« so what » question be answered? / has to be willing to work hard
- Desire to do the research for its own sake

Context factors in evaluating quality

Quality can only be determine within a given context

- Self-determined or externally motivated
- Complexity of the research questions
- Possibility to narrow down the issue of interest
- Time perspective (limited, continuous)
- Availability of resources

Improving quality with the aid of software

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Recognizing bias

- No negative cases included
- Analysis was finished too early
- Missing data material
- Too much empathy

- Reasoned choice of methodology
- Are the results grounded in the data?
- Is the coding system transparent and comprehensible?
- Do the presented linkages and relations make logical sense?

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  - Theoretical sampling
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  - Systematic and comparative analysis
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