

## This or That? Two Approaches to Qualitative Methodology and Analysis

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Researchers evaluating datasets consider strategies that align with their research goals. There are multiple methodologies available for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within qualitative data. The purpose of this commentary is to increase the awareness of two descriptive analytic frameworks that may be utilized within various theoretical models. Braun and Clarke's [1] Theoretical Thematic Analysis, and Polio et al.'s [2] Interpretive Framework are commonly applied in qualitative inquiry. Although both require meticulous data assessment and analysis, they yield notable advantages.

Braun and Clarke's [1] perspective is flexible and may be adapted to various types of data and research questions. Furthermore, it has a well-defined process that helps ensure transparency and rigor. Steps include identifying consistencies in the data by multiple readings to discover and code themes based on patterns.

Polio et al.'s [2] perspective provides an emphasis on the context in which data is produced by helping researchers understand how broader social issues shape individual experiences. It focuses on how language and situational factors interact to create meaning by placing more importance on the circumstances of data and participant interpretation. The process involves being immersed in the material, developing initial codes, identifying patterns, and reflecting on broader implications in relation to lived experiences.

Braun and Clarke's [1] approach has been updated in 2019 with more explicit guidance on using thematic analysis with reflexive

means to acknowledge the researcher's role in terms of subjectivity in the data interpretation. Whereas Polio et al.'s [2] approach lacks a specific update, it continues to build on evolving analysis theories thus highlighting its continued relevance [3,4].

Both identified approaches require careful and intensive analysis [1,2]. Researchers should choose based on their theoretical orientation and data.

Alternatively, to increase qualitative rigor, they may opt for a dual strategy, applying both techniques within their empirical work. Ultimately, the choice is not merely technical but rather philosophical. The decision to combine or select a research framework should be based on the strengths of each approach and their implications for the validity of the study. As qualitative research evolves, the integration of diverse perspectives may present opportunities for deeper understanding of phenomena and continue to shape qualitative inquiry.

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