

QUALITATIVE META- SYNTHESIS

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WHAT IS META-SYNTHESIS?



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WHAT IS META-SYNTHESIS?

- Has many names:
 - Qualitative meta-synthesis
 - Qualitative meta-analysis
 - Meta-ethnography



WHAT IS META-SYNTHESIS?

- History:
 - Originated in nursing
 - Has since been applied extensively in health-related research
 - To date, few applications in business



WHAT IS META-SYNTHESIS?

- Interpretive analytical technique that uses the qualitative findings reported in previous studies as building blocks for gaining a deeper understanding of particular phenomena
- Types of findings that can be analysed include:
 - Interpreted data
 - Unanalysed quotes
 - Field notes
 - Documents
 - Etc.



WHAT IS META-SYNTHESIS?

- Three types of meta-synthesis (Finfgeld, 2003)
 - **Theory building**: Pushes the level of theorising beyond that which can be achieved in a single study
 - **Theory explication**: Reconceptualises abstract phenomena
 - **Descriptive**: Comprehensively analyses phenomena



THEORY BUILDING

Western Journal of Nursing Research, 2003, 25(2), 134-152

Identity Shifts as Turning Points in Health Behavior Change

Margaret H. Kearney
Joanne O'Sullivan



THEORY EXPLICATION

QUALITATIVE HEALTH RESEARCH, Vol. 9 No. 6, November 1999 803-814
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Courage as a Process of Pushing Beyond the Struggle

Deborah L. Finfgeld



DESCRIPTIVE

Newton *BMC Public Health* 2011, **11**:791
<http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/11/791>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Open Access

How does the general public view posthumous organ donation? A meta-synthesis of the qualitative literature

Joshua D Newton^{1,2}



BUSINESS EXAMPLES



1042-2587
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A Qualitative Approach to Evidence-Based Entrepreneurship: Theoretical Considerations and an Example Involving Business Clusters

Andreas Rauch
Robert van Doorn
Willem Hulsink



BUSINESS EXAMPLES

Success Factors for Destination Marketing Web Sites: A Qualitative Meta-Analysis

YOUNG A. PARK AND ULRIKE GRETZEL



BUSINESS EXAMPLES

Using qualitative research synthesis to build an actionable knowledge base

David Denyer and David Tranfield
*Centre for Management Knowledge and Strategic Change,
Cranfield School of Management, Cranfield University, Cranfield, UK*



HOW IS IT DONE?



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HOW IS IT DONE?

1. Framing
2. Searching
3. Rating
4. Synthesising
5. Reporting



1. FRAMING



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1. FRAMING

- Identify a research question
 - Meta-synthesis research questions are often broad
 - Broader research questions will often refined and reduced in scope over the course of undertaking the synthesis (Walsh & Downe, 2005)



2. SEARCHING

MANY META-ANALYSIS STUDIES INCLUDE THE PHRASE "WE SEARCHED MEDLINE, EMBASE, AND COCHRANE FOR STUDIES..."

THIS HAS LED TO META-META-ANALYSES COMPARING META-ANALYSIS METHODS.

e.g. M SAMPSON (2003), PL ROYLE (2005)
E LEE (2011), AR LEMESHOW (2005)

WE PERFORMED A META-META-META-ANALYSIS OF THESE META-META-ANALYSES.

METHODS: WE SEARCHED MEDLINE, EMBASE, AND COCHRANE FOR THE PHRASE "WE SEARCHED MEDLINE, EMBASE, AND COCHRANE FOR THE PHRASE "WE SEARCHED MEDLINE, EMBASE, AND

LIFE GOAL #28: GET A PAPER REJECTED WITH THE COMMENT "TOO META"

CC <https://xkcd.com/1447>

2. SEARCHING

- Three potential database search strategies (Shaw et al., 2004)
 - Using database thesaurus terms (e.g., MeSH terms)
 - Using free-text terms (e.g., “ethnograph*”, “grounded theory”)
 - Using broad terms (e.g., “qualitative”, “interview”)
- The Cochrane review handbook provides useful guidance on developing and refining search terms



2. SEARCHING

- Other methods for locating papers (Barroso et al., 2003)
 - Reference list checking
 - Citation searching
 - Hand searching through back issues of selected journals
 - Author searching



2. SEARCHING

- Some key issues
 - Published vs. unpublished findings
 - Inclusion of non-English works?
 - Developing a systematic process for selecting relevant studies
 - Should studies from different qualitative traditions be analysed together?



3. RATING



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3. RATING

- Some studies are better than others
- However:
 - What criteria should be used to determine whether a study is ‘weak’?
 - Should ‘weak’ studies be included or excluded from review?



3. RATING

- Sample quality criteria (Atkins et al., 2008)

1. Study is qualitative
2. Research questions are clearly stated
3. Approach is appropriate for the research question
4. Qualitative approach is justified
5. Study context is described
6. Role of the researcher is described
7. Sampling method is described
8. Sampling method is appropriate to the research question
9. Data collection method is described
10. Data collection method is appropriate to the research question
11. Method of analysis is clearly described
12. Analysis is appropriate for the research question
13. Claims are supported by sufficient evidence



3. RATING

- Potential solution: sensitivity analyses (Thomas & Harden, 2008)



4. SYNTHESISING



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4. SYNTHESISING



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4. SYNTHESISING



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4. SYNTHESISING

- Many approaches for synthesising data (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009; Dixon-Woods et al., 2005)
 - Meta-ethnography
 - Grounded theory
 - Thematic synthesis
 - Textual narrative synthesis
 - Meta-study
 - Meta-narrative
 - Critical interpretative synthesis
 - Ecological triangulation
 - Framework synthesis
 - Content analysis
 - Meta-interpretation
 - Qualitative metasummary
 - Narrative summary
 - Realist synthesis
 - Cross-case techniques
 - Case survey



4. SYNTHESISING

- Thematic synthesis (Thomas & Harden, 2008)
 1. **Free coding** of the original findings
 2. Grouping of similar **free codes** into **descriptive themes**
 3. Generating **analytical themes** that emerge from and step beyond the **descriptive themes**



SYNTHESISING

- Meta-ethnography (Noblit & Hare, 1988)
 - **Reciprocal translational analysis**: identify the key themes/concepts in each study
 - **Refutational synthesis**: note and attempt to reconcile contradictions between identified themes/concepts
 - **Lines of argument synthesis**: develop a general interpretation of the phenomena of interest that is grounded in the themes/concepts of each study



5. REPORTING

superiority, by others. It sur-
etition, peaceful competition.
eign. So ~~subordinate~~ long as he
subordinate you. That was the
her consideration which is very

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5. REPORTING

- Maintain a clear audit trail so that key study information can be reported in the synthesis write-up
- Things to report include:
 - Search strategy
 - Number of studies at each stage of the search process
 - Summary of studies selected for synthesis



5. REPORTING

Table 1 Final CINAHL Search Strategy

1. Clinical Nurse Specialists/ or clinical nurse specialist\$.mp.
2. Nurse Practitioners/ or nurse practitioner\$.mp.
3. Advanced Nursing Practice/ or advanced nurse practitioner\$.mp.
4. Nurse Consultants/ or nurse consultant\$.mp.
5. consultant nurse\$.mp.
6. 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5
7. qualitative studies/ or qualitative.mp.
8. Interviews/ or interview\$.mp.
9. case stud\$.mp.
10. Case Studies/ or case study.mp.
11. 7 or 8 or 9 or 10
12. 6 and 11
13. Qualitative Studies/
14. Ethnographic Research/
15. Phenomenological Research/
16. Ethnonursing Research/
17. Grounded Theory/
18. exp qualitative validity/
19. Purposive Sample/
20. exp observational method/
21. content analysis/ or thematic analysis/
22. constant comparative method/
23. field studies/
24. theoretical sample/
25. discourse analysis/
26. focus groups/

27. phenomenology/ or ethnography/ or ethnological research.mp.
[mp = title, cinahl subject heading, abstract, instrumentation]
28. (qualitative or phenomenol\$ or ethnon\$).tw.
29. (grounded adj (theor\$ or study or studies or research)).tw.
30. (constant adj (comparative or comparison)).tw.
31. (purpos\$ adj sampl\$4).tw.
32. (focus adj group\$).tw.
33. (emic or etic or hermeneutic\$ or heuristic or semiotics).tw.
34. (data adj1 saturat\$).tw.
35. (participant adj observ\$).tw.
36. (heidegger\$ or colaizzi\$ or spiegelberg\$).tw.
37. (van adj manen\$).tw.
38. (van adj kaam\$).tw.
39. (merleau adj ponty\$).tw.
40. (Husserl\$ or giorgi\$).tw.
41. (field adj (study or studies or research)).tw.
42. (lived adj experience\$).tw.
43. narrative analysis.tw.
44. discourse\$3 analysis.tw.
45. human science.tw.
46. life experiences/
47. convenience sample/
48. exp cluster sample/
49. or/13-48
50. 6 and 49
51. 12 or 50

Key to abbreviations, as used in Medline:

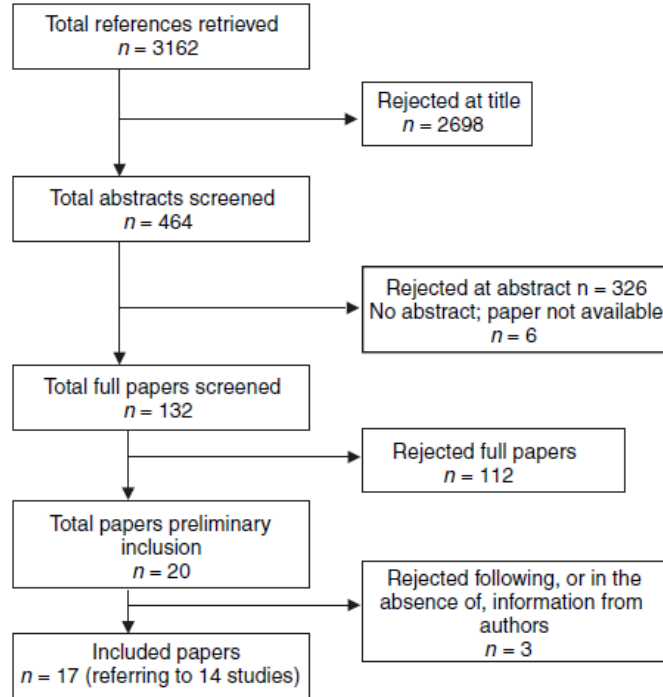
\$. truncation; mp, searches the title, abstract, name of substance and subject headings; exp, explode; tw, text word; adj, adjective.

Jones (2004)



5. REPORTING

Jones (2004)



5. REPORTING

Newton (2011)

Table 1 Characteristics of the Studies Reviewed in the Meta-synthesis

Study	Reference	Country	Participants	Recruitment	Data collection
1	Albright et al., 2005 [13]	USA	57 Filipino adolescents & adults	Purposive sampling	Focus groups
2	AlKhawari et al., 2005 [14]	UK	141 Indo-Asian adults	Convenience sampling through Islamic centers	Semi-structured interviews & focus groups
3	Arriola et al., 2005 [15]; Arriola et al., 2007 [16]	USA	68 African-American adults	Convenience sampling through Churches	Focus groups
4	Bhengu & Uys, 2004 [17]	South Africa	1 non-Zulu speaking & 47 Zulu speaking adults	Purposive & snowball sampling	Semi-structured interviews
5	Braun & Nichols, 1997 [18]	USA	7 Chinese American adults, 8 Japanese American adults, 10 Vietnamese American adults, & 11 Filipino American adults	Purposive & snowball sampling	Semi-structured interviews & focus groups
6	Davis & Randhawa, 2004 [19]; Davis & Randhawa, 2006 [20]	UK	120 African & Caribbean adults	Purposive sampling	Focus groups



5. REPORTING

Newton (2011)

Table 2 Beliefs Identified in the Reviewed Studies

Beliefs	Study [†]																								n	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24		
<i>Religion</i>																										
Religious opposition to organ donation	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	23
Need to maintain bodily integrity	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+			+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	22
Interferes with funeral or burial rituals			+	+	+			+		+			+	+	+	+		+		+	+					12
Fatalism			+		+					+				+		+						+			+	8
Haunt surviving family members					+		+																			2
Religious support for organ donation	+		+	+	+		+				+					+	+		+		+					10
Uncertain of religion's position		+	+	+	+		+			+	+					+	+		+	+	+			+		13
<i>Death</i>																										
Don't like to think/talk about death or organ donation	+	+		+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+		+	+	+		+					+	+	+	17
Talking about death or organ donation tempts fate				+		+			+		+					+			+					+	+	8
Organ donation transforms the concept of death		+							+				+						+					+	+	6



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QUESTIONS



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