

Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, Johnny Saldaña **Qualitative Data Analysis. A Methods Sourcebook**

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It is astonishing how many qualitative investigations are published without matching standards of qualitative research methods (Piekkari et al. 2009). While in quantitative research rigorous methods have to be demonstrated within the articles (or in the appendix), in qualitative research it is often unclear as to which precise methods lead authors to constructs and relationships. This is the case, although there are numerous excellent textbooks on how to conduct qualitative research, e.g. Silverman (2006), Patton (2002), Mason (2002), Flick (2014), Marshall and Rossman (2011).

One of the most cited books in this realm is undoubtedly the second edition of Miles and Huberman's (1994) sourcebook of qualitative data analysis. This second edition was one of the most cited sourcebooks as, in contrast to the aforementioned textbooks, the sourcebook put its emphasis on the practical guidance of data organization, display, and analysis. There is an unbelievable richness of displays and matrices based on the broad experience of the authors. Researchers working with qualitative research methods benefitted from the practical tactics of the data analysis. All of these displays and matrices are timeless as they demonstrate that qualitative research can reach high quality of theory generation and development by consequent rigor in data analysis.

Well, it needed exactly 20 years to provide a third edition of this important classic of qualitative research methods. J. Saldaña, as a third author, revised the original text.

It explicitly addresses graduates in degree programs, established scholars, and practitioners aiming to develop their qualitative research methods.

The third edition is well streamlined and consists of three parts. Part 1 concerns the "Substantive Start" and contains research design and management, ethical issues, and fundamentals of qualitative data analysis. This part can be treated as guide to the entire book and provides essentials and a good introduction on how to use the book, either as a student or as an experienced researcher. In the overview, readers receive the necessary components of qualitative research: developing a research question and framework, sampling, instrumentation, data collection, and analysis, esp. by considering CAQDAS –methods. In addition, Saldaña has specifically reworked and refined the coding chapter according to the richness of coding methods meanwhile advanced (Saldaña, 2013).

"Displaying the data" is the content of Part 2, which is organized into 6 chapters. The second part starts with an introduction into the art of building matrices and networks. Saldaña has not relativized the strong focus of the second edition on visualization of aggregated data, but instead added new possibilities from CAQDAS software. The next chapters follow the order of methods of exploring, describing, ordering the data, explaining, and predicting. The internal order of the chapters is very similar. There is a brief introduction into the methods, followed by numerous examples from

the research experience mostly provided by Miles and Huberman. The sheer amount of figures, tables, matrices, and networks within the chapters is, at first glance, overwhelming. However, in studying the details, the richness of possibilities to approach systematically good explanations, based on empirical research, is tremendous.

When I used the book in a graduate course, students found it helpful in reaching higher precision in partitioning variables and in differentiating systematically into partially ordered matrices and explanatory matrices, which to my experience is often confused. Additionally, the prediction of outcomes and the building of propositions are demonstrated in the sourcebook by several methods, which enhance the quality of explanations.

While Part 2 is the main part of the sourcebook utilizing displays and matrices, Part 3 deals with making “good sense”. Although the advantage of qualitative research can be seen in the creation and development of theories (Ridder, Hoon, & McCandless, 2014), many textbooks are not very thorough with regard to theory contribution. The book by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña engages in theory contribution with regard to the possible techniques. It is of interest that the authors go far beyond the usual “pattern matching”, but recommend to enrich conclusions by several tactics for the generation of meaning, tactics for testing or confirming findings, and standards for the quality of conclusions. Again, the number of techniques is, at first glance, overwhelming, but provides more precise possibilities and alternatives to give meaning to the data analysis.

The final chapter about “Writing” did not entirely fulfill my expectations and seems to be a candidate for refinement in the next edition by considering the recommendations of leading journals on how to craft a scientific text.

All in all, the third edition was a risk. Researchers who are familiar with the second edition and appreciate the richness will have a careful eye on the revisions. In my opinion, this revision has been successful for several reasons. The book has been streamlined, reorganized, in a way that it now better serves the education of graduates. After using the third edition for the first time in a course, I noticed a higher degree of acceptance for this edition among the graduate students esp. with regard to the cutbacks and careful reorganization of the book. Still, a lot of redundancies and back couplings were noticed. The rate of simple suggestions could be diminished (“Know when to stop pressing the metaphor for its juice” (282)). A very helpful feature is the inclusion of the software support in data organizing, display and analysis. This is added at several parts in the book. We missed, comparable to the detailed introduction into matrices and networks, a systematic introduction into the art of one the advanced software products (MaxQData; NVivo).

For established researchers, who are familiar with the second edition of the sourcebook, it hurts that several displays and figures have been omitted. It is like missing good friends, and this is one of the reasons why the third edition will not totally replace the second edition. A second reason is that the knee jerking differentiation of within case and cross case analysis was too much of an investment that inspired case study work of many researchers. On the other hand, the third edition

benefits from the excellent implementation of coding methods and refinements of the third author.

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