Thematic Analysis Guide

A Practical Step-by-Step Learning Resource for Qualitative Analysis

Introduction

This guide provides a clear, structured framework for conducting thematic analysis in qualitative research. It is designed for DBA, PhD, and applied research students who need a systematic approach to coding themes and analysing qualitative data rigorously and confidently.

The 6 Phases of Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke Framework)

- 1. Familiarisation with the Data – Read transcripts multiple times, take notes, and identify initial patterns.
- 2. Generating Initial Codes – Label meaningful segments of text that relate to your research question.
- 3. Searching for Themes – Group related codes into broader conceptual categories.
- 4. Reviewing Themes – Refine and ensure themes accurately reflect the dataset.
- 5. Defining and Naming Themes – Clearly articulate what each theme represents and its boundaries.
- 6. Producing the Report – Integrate themes with quotes, analysis, and relevant literature.

Coding Example

Sample Transcript Excerpt: 'I feel more productive at home, but I struggle to disconnect from work in the evenings.' Possible Codes: • Increased productivity • Difficulty disconnecting • Blurred work-life boundaries Theme Development: Codes such as 'Difficulty disconnecting' and 'Blurred work-life boundaries' may combine into the theme: 'Boundary Erosion in Remote Work Contexts'

Quality Checklist for Rigorous Qualitative Analysis

- Ensure alignment between research question and themes.
- Maintain a clear audit trail of coding decisions.
- Use multiple supporting quotes per theme.
- Avoid overlapping themes.
- Reflect on researcher bias and positionality.

Recommended Tools

NVivo and similar qualitative software can support systematic coding, theme organization, and audit trail documentation. However, thematic analysis can also be conducted manually using structured coding tables in Word or Excel.

Need Expert Support?

If you need help with coding themes, NVivo analysis, or writing your findings chapter, DBA Coach provides expert qualitative data support globally.