
EDITORIAL

**REFLECTIONS ON QUALITATIVE
RESEARCH ANALYSIS**Ana Lucia de Lourenzi BONILHA^a

Some practices in the analysis of data in qualitative research deserve consideration.

In our graduate program in nursing we adopt the term data when referring to the materials, information, images, sounds or any other element that acts as a basis for the intended objectives of the research. Although this practice may come to some as a surprise, it is the terminology used by Denzin and Lincoln, American authors on qualitative research internationally recognized.

Another point of note concerns the thematic analysis method often used for the content analyses of researches. It is worth to note that the data collected does not speak for themselves: they need a process called categorization, which aims to make sense of the messages contained in these data.

In our context, the most widely used thematic analyzes methods are those proposed by the authors Bardin and Minayo. Although similar in their processing there are differences in their theoretical assumptions: Minayo's is based on historical and dialectical materialism, while Bardin's is based on positivism, two opposite references. The research design, in all its moments, needs to be consistent with the references that support the research.

In the process of data analysis and organization, after the organization and thorough reading of the raw data, begins the data categorization that concludes with the obtainment of the themes, the final step of this process. When the Bardin method is adopted we have: first registration units, then intermediate categories, and finally the themes. With the Minayo method the steps are: meaning units, thematic categories and themes.

The use of software as a support tool for data analysis in qualitative research is advised. However, employing software does not substitute the gaze of the researcher in the analysis process. The participation of the researcher is crucial in defining the steps of the categorization of data by the software, since it only assists in the organization. Thus, the discovery of the themes, in the different methods, requires the watchful and careful eye of the researcher.

^a Qualitative Research Approaches Chair, PPGENF Professor, UFRGS' Nursing School., Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil.
