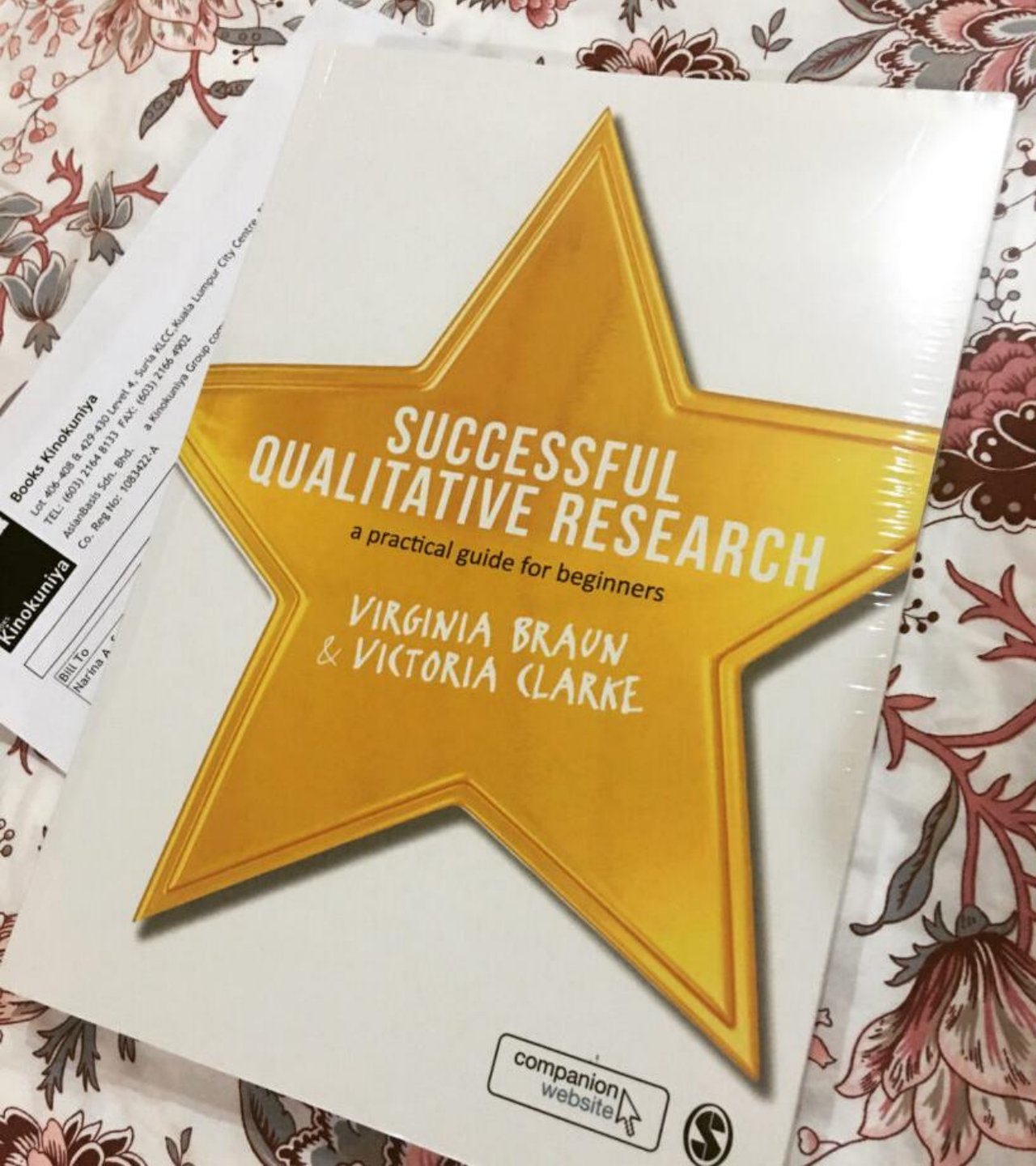




Writing up a qualitative report

Writing up a qualitative report

No single correct way to present qualitative interpretations

Researcher must choose which story to tell and how best to tell it

- subjective interpretation

What is the storyline?

- What is your research question?

The important ideas will not be in the data themselves

- The data are there to think about and **interpret** appropriate themes

Assessment pointers

How does the conversation between participant and researcher construct an account?

- Points / arguments?
- Dominant themes and/or similarities and differences

Also

- Specific ways in which the participants answer questions or tell their story
 - Similarities and differences in themes across participants/groups

You need to consider:

- Is there a consensus regarding a theme/sub-theme?
- Are some themes/subthemes present in some talk but absent from others?
- Are some present in more than one person's talk but spoken about differently?
 - Could be in different interviews or within a focus group interview

Analysis

Use the data selectively to exemplify, illustrate or illuminate what you are trying to tell us about the topic of your study

- This does not mean cherry-picking the most extreme or dramatic examples
- Sometimes, what appears to be mundane can tell us much about how people feel/think

You decide how best to present your themes

- Example...

Analysis

Themes	Sub-Themes	Supporting Quotes
Support	Relationship building and trust	“It can take a little bit of time to build up that sort of trust level. Obviously, emotional eating is a quite a personal thing, so it takes a lot for people to open up about it.” (Helen)
	Re-education in healthy eating	“And obviously, like when they're working off plan, I make sure that through each step they can regulate their weight and work out what calories like, suit them best, like re-educate them about food and what's of good things to eat.” (Karen)
	Developing a healthier lifestyle	“Like, encourage like exercise into their like weekly routine because some people can get like obsessive with like exercise and to overcompensate for the sort of binge, maybe. So, if it's like a natural thing that they do every day and they won't feel guilty about the little slip ups they do have.” (Karen)
Self-Awareness of eating behaviours	Self – Acceptance of emotional eating	“Signs that you become aware of, and things and a lot of people will with some probing open up and this can be a real turning point in their journey as it is sometimes almost like um, a secret they have been storing away and they feel free from it.” (Helen)
	Denial	“Instead of admitting like they've emotionally eaten; they'll almost point blame. Like for example blame the diet or the consultant instead” (Karen)
	Self-Sabotage	“Cheat an that, that they just kind of basically sabotage themselves out of guilt” (Karen)

Analysis

Always begin by indicating the primary aim of the research

- *‘The primary aim of this research was to...’*

Then introduce your themes and subthemes

Reflexivity

Acknowledge that your interpretations are just that; your own account of the data

e.g. “It is important at this point to recognise that the themes developed are only one possible account of the experience of siblinghood and do not incorporate all aspects of the participant’s full experience”

(Sarah Hocking-Rees, Psychology and Counselling graduate)

Be transparent regarding any prior knowledge, experience, research purpose etc.

- Anything that could influence your interpretations

Analysis: Themes

Theme 1 *(explain what this theme is about – why is this a theme?)*

e.g.

“That’s life”: the effects of life transitions on the sibling relationship

The first superordinate theme captures the sense that the sibling relationship experiences many transitions from childhood to the end of life, the sibling relationship has longevity and holds significance in relation to understanding how each transition impacts upon the sibling bond. Participants each spoke differently about types of life transition, such as divorce of parents, divorce as parent, parental death, sibling death, remarriages, geographical distances and the strength of the child connection in relation to the adult bond.

Analysis: Sub-themes

Loss of the relationship

The subject of 'loss' emerged as a distinct subtheme, as out of the total eight participants, six commented in the area related to the loss of a relationship. For example, in the case of participant three, the notion of loss is discussed in relation to offering sibling support as highlighted in the following transcript extract:

(Detailed explanation of how this became a sub-theme)

“Um, yeah, I think in particular, with my eldest sister, but brother passed away five years ago”

(Participant 3, female, 30s)

(Quote to support)

This loss has obviously made an impact upon the sibling relationships which have survived it, strengthening the connection further. Another area of loss was the loss of a parent as demonstrated in the succeeding transcript extract.

(Interpretation and link to next point/quote)

Deal with each theme/sub-theme in the order in which you have stated they will be presented
(in the preceding table)

Summarise at the end of each sub-theme/theme – tie up before moving on to the next

- e.g. ‘The responses regarding..... (strongly) suggest that/could be interpreted as.....’

Summarise at the end of the Results (Findings) section

- e.g. What threads were the stronger/most dominant throughout the interviews (or focus group interviews)?

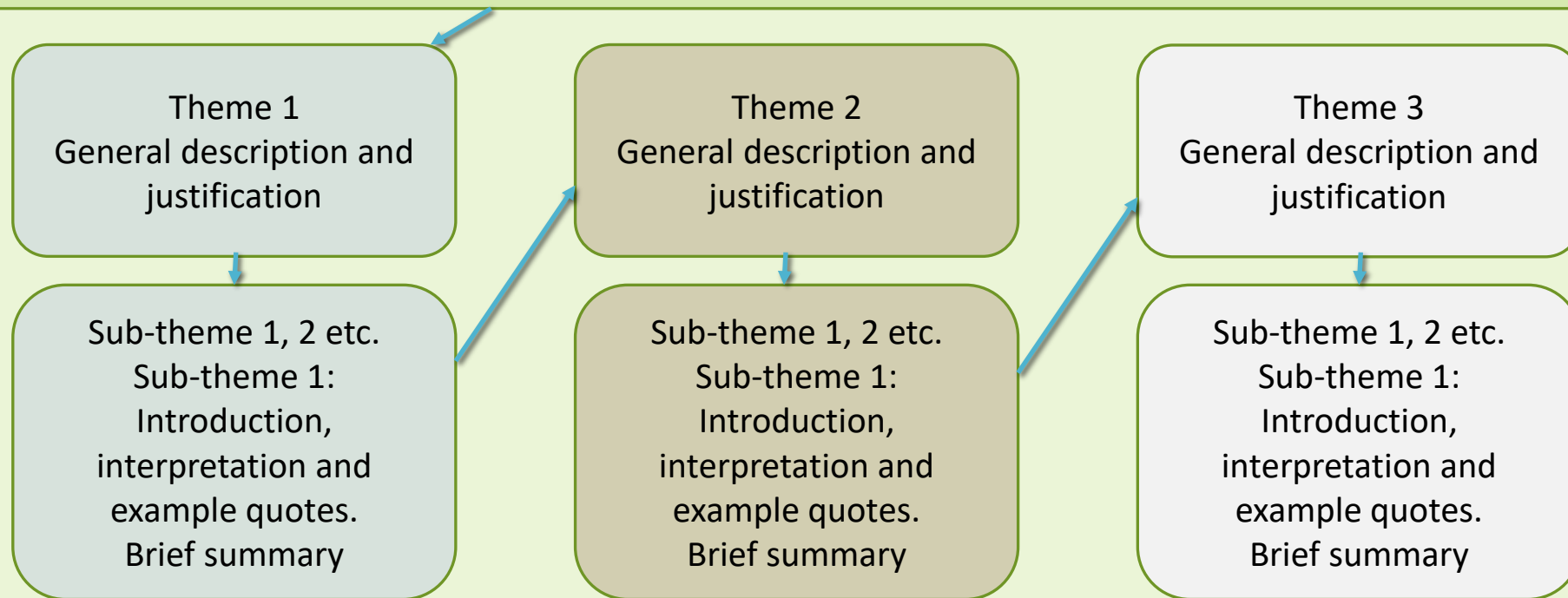
e.g.

‘The accounts of the participants show how the presence of siblings provided the resources with which to form and maintain a sense of identity. The design of the study involved asking men and women to discuss their memories of different aspects of sibling relationships. The analysis demonstrated that the participants...’

Introduction of the main aims of the study

- a) Introduction of Themes (Theme 1, 2...)
- b) Introduction of sub-themes (sub-theme 1, 2...)
Within each table with brief detail.

May use lists, tables or diagram format , as long as the content is clear to the reader



Overall summary of themes at end of Results section

Discussion

You can discuss the themes in the order you think **tells the 'story'** you have interpreted in the most effective way

Explain **how your findings contribute to the literature** by linking your findings to the prior empirical evidence included in your introduction/literature review

Consider **strengths and limitations**, along with **potential further research** in this area

Provide an **overall conclusion**

Tips

Do not leave writing up to the end of the process

Begin with notes, memos and mind maps

- Cutting and pasting of quotes to build your themes/sub-themes

What is your research question?

Theory and empirical research – what does the literature suggest you should look for (to answer your question?)

Make notes as you gather and transcribe your data – you will begin to notice potential themes or sub-themes, as you listen to your interviewees talk

Tips

Read journal papers that report on qualitative thematic analysis studies

Don't forget to include an introduction to your results section – don't begin with the table of themes.

Begin by stating the main aims of the study and how many themes were interpreted

The narrative is your data! You **must** include quotes to support your interpretations (analysis)

- Quotes should include participant's name/number, age or gender if appropriate **and** the page and line number from the transcription

A table of themes **must** be in the report – preferably in the Results section for clarity and ease of reading. However, it could be in the appendices if very long

Useful reading

Howitt, D. (2010). *Introduction of Qualitative Methods in Psychology*. Harlow: Pearson.

- (Chapter 7; Thematic Analysis)

Braun, V., Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful Qualitative Research: a practical guide for beginners*. London: Sage.

- (Chapter 13: Writing and Communicating Qualitative Analysis)