Enhancing the impact of qualitative evidence synthesis:

development of evidence-based reporting guidance for meta-ethnography

Nicola Ring, 3rd September 2019

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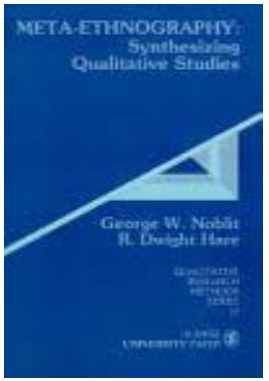
Background

Qualitative evidence synthesis (QES):

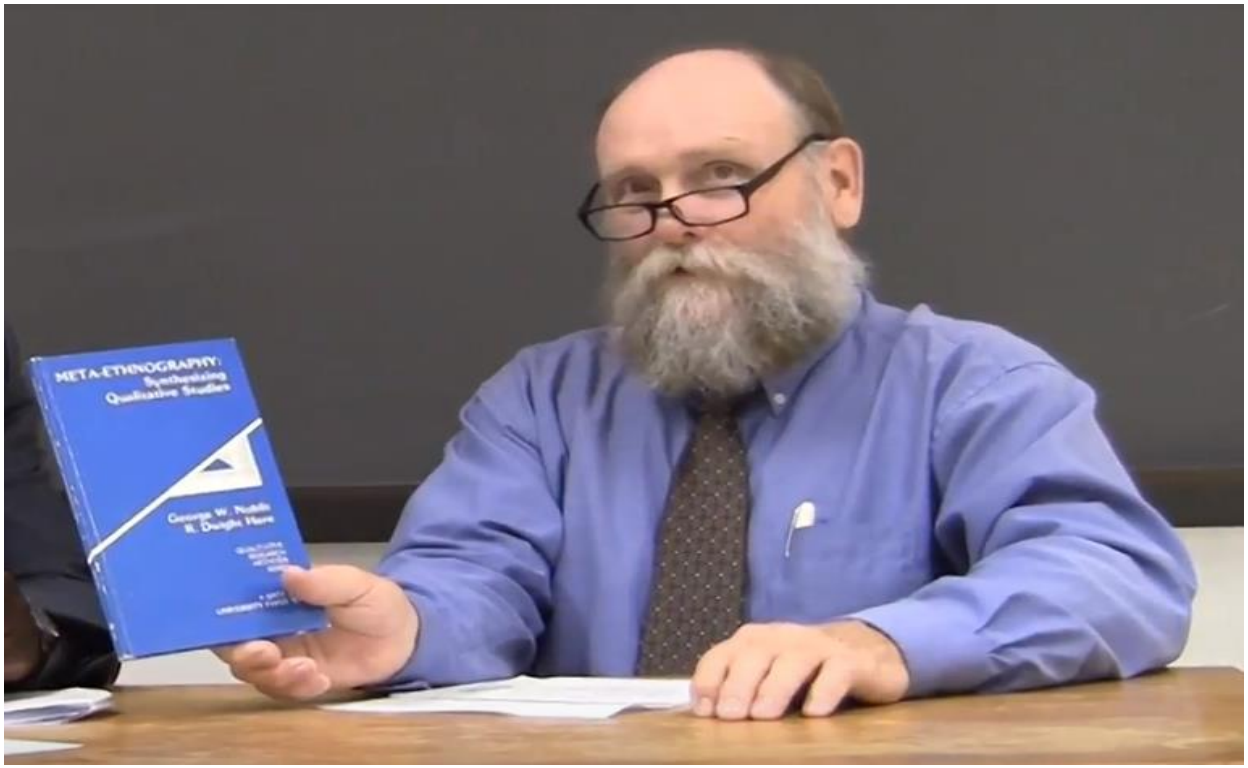
- Increasingly popular
- Several approaches.



Meta-ethnography (ME) (Noblit & Hare 1988) most cited approach but:

- Often poorly reported reducing potential impact of ME findings on practice and policy.

eMERGe
Meta-ethnography
Reporting Guidance



George W. Noblit

Noblit & Hare (1988). *Meta-ethnography: synthesizing qualitative studies.* Beverly Hills: SAGE Publications.

7 phases of meta-ethnography

Phase 1: Getting started

Phase 2: Deciding what is relevant to the initial interest

Phase 3: Reading the studies

Phase 4: Determining how studies are related

Phase 5: Translating the studies into one another

Phase 6: Synthesizing translations

Phase 7: Expressing the synthesis

Noblit & Hare 1988

THE eMERGe PROJECT – Developing Evidence-based reporting guidance for Meta-ethnography (ME)

(2015-2017)

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Guidance development process

Meta-ethnography Reporting Guidance

Stages	Outputs
Stage 1. Review of guidance on meta-ethnography conduct & reporting	Guidance and recommendations for conduct & reporting
Stage 2. Review & audit of published meta-ethnographies, interviews with users	Draft good practice principles& reporting items
Stage 3. Agree guidance content & standards	Agree ME reporting items
Stage 4. Develop & disseminate the guidance & project findings	

Stage 1: Review of good practice

Meta-ethnography Reporting Guidance

Aim & Methods: Systematic methodological review to identify good practice in ME.

Findings: 57 items included in review.

Identified where:

- Methodological clarity needed.
- Reporting guidance needed.

Stage 2: Review of current practice & information needs of ME users

Aim: Define good practice principles & standards in ME reporting.

Methods:

- Documentary analysis of sampled ME reports (Part 1)
- Interviewee analysis of these reports by potential end users (Part 1)
- Audit of published ME reports (Part 2).

Stage 2: Part 1

Documentary & interviewee analysis: 29 ME reports and 14 potential end users.

Overall findings include:

- End users & academics can value different reporting aspects.
- Difficult to identify clear boundaries between the ME Phases.

Stage 2: Part 2

Audit of published MEs against 109 potential draft reporting standards.

Purposive sample (n=40) of ME reports.

Data descriptively analysed.

Qualitative auditor feedback e.g. ambiguous standards.

Meta-ethnography Reporting Guidance

Stage 2: Part 2

Findings:

- Some sampled reports not recognisably ME.
- Provided systematic in-depth insight into:
  - Where reporting needed improved in practice.
  - How ME was evolving.

Stage 3: Agree guidance

Aim: Gain consensus on key reporting ME standards

Methods:

- Online expert & stakeholder workshop (n=31) (Part 1)
- eDelphi consensus studies (Part 2).

Stage 3: Agree guidance

E-Delphi (Part 2):

- Used platform previously designed for online use
- Two identical studies – experts & stakeholders
- 62 participants completed 3 rounds
- Reached consensus on:

62/69 items!!!

Image by ijmaki from Pixabay

eMERGe Reporting Guidance

eMERGe
Meta-ethnography Reporting Guidance

19 Reporting criteria | Explanatory notes | Extensions

- Phase 1
- Phase 2
- Phase 3
- Phase 4
- Phase 5
- Phase 6
- Phase 7

No.	Criteria Headings	Reporting Criteria
Phase 1 – Selecting meta-ethnography and getting started		
Introduction		
1	Rationale and context for the meta-ethnography	Describe the gap in research or knowledge to be filled by the meta-ethnography, and the wider context of the meta-ethnography
2	Aim(s) of the meta-ethnography	Describe the meta-ethnography aim(s)
3	Focus of the meta-ethnography	Describe the meta-ethnography review question(s) (or objectives)
4	Rationale for using meta-ethnography	Explain why meta-ethnography was considered the most appropriate qualitative synthesis methodology

Co-publication of guidance

- Journal of Advanced Nursing
- Review of Education
- Psycho-oncology
- BMC Medical Research Methodology

France EF et al. Improving reporting of Meta-Ethnography: The eMERGe Reporting Guidance, *Journal of Advanced Nursing* , 2019. DOI: 10.1111/jan.13809

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:
EMPIRICAL RESEARCH - METHODOLOGY

WILEY JAN

Improving reporting of meta-ethnography: The eMERGe reporting guidance

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Abstract

Aims: The aim of this study was to provide guidance to improve the completeness and clarity of meta-ethnography reporting.

Background: Evidence-based policy and practice require robust evidence syntheses which can further understanding of people's experiences and associated social processes. Meta-ethnography is a rigorous seven-phase qualitative evidence synthesis methodology, developed by Noblit and Hare. Meta-ethnography is used widely in health research, but reporting is often poor quality and this discourages trust in and use of its findings. Meta-ethnography reporting guidance is needed to improve reporting quality.

Design: The eMERGe study used a rigorous mixed-methods design and evidence-based methods to develop the novel reporting guidance and explanatory notes.

Conclusions

- 1st bespoke evidence-based meta-ethnography reporting guidance
- Should improve reporting, possibly conduct
- Advanced the methodology

Next steps:

- monitor reporting
- record feedback on guidance
- revise guidance.

Other materials

France E, Ring N, Noyes J, Maxwell M, Jepson R, Duncan E, Turley R, Jones D, Uny I. Protocol-developing meta-ethnography reporting guidelines (eMERGe) *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 2015: **15**:103 https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-015-0068-0

France E.F., Uny, I., et al. (2019). A methodological systematic review of meta-ethnography conduct to articulate the complex analytical phases. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, **19**:35 https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-019-0670-7

Cunningham et al (2019) Developing meta-ethnography reporting guidance for research and practice. *Health Services and Delivery Research,* 7(4), https://doi.org/10.3310/hsdr07040

Training materials

- 4 short films on YouTube.com by George Noblit, Emma France, Jane Noyes & Nicola Ring - available via www.emergeproject.org/resources/

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