

## **Critique**

# **Constructions of survival and coping by women who have survived childhood sexual abuse (Morrow and Smith, 1995)**

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For this critique, I took the article by Morrow and Smith who produced a grounded theory model on constructions of survival and coping by women who have survived childhood sexual abuse. This article had large methodology and data collection section, and followed grounded theory guidelines as developed by Glaser and Strauss. To guide my critique on this article, I have decided to use the following evaluation standards that draw grounded theory literature (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). These are theoretical model, constant comparison and theoretical sampling. Morrow and Smith conducted 60-90 minutes in-depth open ended interview with eleven survivors of sexual abuse participated. Additionally, focused group discussions were conducted with seven of the eleven interviewees. Moreover; Morrow took a participant observer role, and saw documentary evidences (participants' journals) to complete the data set. When we see the procedure section, it showed us the authors had something in mind before the data. They made the recruitment intentionally. They also made participants introduced with the focus of the research using letter. From this perspective, I feel that the researchers had a defined phenomenon that they want to investigate, so it is this part of the work advances the argument of grounded theory. Moreover, informed consent was made to safeguard the participants from problems of confidentiality and the potential emotional consequence of participation. Doing this is the authors' strong side in line with the principle of grounded theory.

**Keywords:** Morrow and Smith, sexual abuse

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In this article, I found plainly recognized theoretical model aspects included; phenomenon (fundamental idea of the data) which the authors termed the major concerns as; "threatening and dangerous feelings, helplessness, powerlessness and lack of control" (p.293), conditions which the authors called causal condition like cultural norms, forms of sexual abuse, and intervening conditions as cultural values, family dynamics, resources, victim,

age and rewards. Regarding to strategies (specific actions that occur as the result of the phenomenon), which included keeping from being overwhelmed by threatening and dangerous feelings, and managing helplessness, powerlessness and lack of control are utilized. Morrow and Smith also set contexts to guide their research like sensitivity, frequency, intensity, duration and perpetrator characteristics. Furthermore, they forwarded possible consequences. These included paradoxes, surviving, coping, living, healing, wholeness,

empowerment and hope. Therefore I could view the model was a good match and selected ways to carry out grounded theory research. As for the development of an apparent theory, I consider this article offered a clear theory account on page 294, and was a strong point of the article. I found the model interesting and I look forward to gain an improved understanding of the conventional method.

In the data collection and analysis section, Morrow and Smith clearly stated they used the constant comparative process. The authors discussed completing the open coding. The authors reported data analysis process was achieved based on immersion in the data and repeated sorting, coding and comparisons that fit the essence of grounded theory. The language of the participants guided the development of the code and category labels are identified as in vivo codes for survival and coping strategies. The authors said they compared and contrast yielding increasingly complex and inclusive categories. In line with Glaserian model of grounded theory, Morrow added analytic memos and self reflective memos to document and enrich the analytic process as a whole. And regarding to saturation, they used open coding, and then they applied axial coding using relationships among the open codes. Based on the axial codes, the authors figured out the core variable that includes all of the data. This is the strength of Morrow and Smith.

The authors applied theoretical sampling to develop or to refine emerging theoretical categories, not to describe populations chosen before the research begins. Thus, theoretical sampling occurs after the grounded theorist has defined and analyzed core theoretical categories through focused coding and memo-writing, but needs more data to develop, refine, and check the properties, boundaries, causes, and consequences of these theoretical categories. It is important to understand that in qualitative research, 'size' does not mean 'significance'. Based on the information provided by Morrow and Smith, they made a clear attempt to complete theoretical sampling. The authors provide an example in the article

regarding a turning point that occurred after the first interview. They selected seven group members from the eleven survivors (page 289). This communication sensitized the authors to probable variation based on background which in turn directed to the previous hypotheses. The authors continuously involved theoretical sampling till they reached saturation. This means researchers collected data using various possibilities to achieve data satisfaction. It is when the researchers reach a point where no new information is obtained from further data. To do this, Morrow continued his best and became a participant observer, and he also added documentary evidence. As it is mentioned above the authors applied all the three coding variants (open coding, axial coding and selective coding)

In conclusion, using my limited experience of the Glaserian model for grounded research, I could say Morrow and Smith followed correct procedures as defined by Glaser and Strauss. The authors stated they had the purpose of constructing theory through the application of the thorough grounded theory procedures. The procedures used by the authors included: coding, constant comparison of data, theoretical sampling, core category generation, property saturation, memoing, sorting, and writing-up. Consequently, I can say the theoretical model that was developed was comprehensive and encompassing.

## REFERENCES

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