

# TOWARD A PRAGMATIC FRAMEWORK FOR MIXED-METHODS RESEARCH IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CRIMINOLOGY

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The divide between qualitative and quantitative research limits our ability to reach a cohesive understanding of crime and criminal justice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Mixed-methods research, which combines qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study, can circumvent this impasse. This paper outlines an easily accessible framework for conducting mixed-methods research. Different mixed-methods designs and the unique advantages of each are presented. The paper also provides a guide on how to carry out mixed-methods studies that involves using thematic analysis as the qualitative component of the research. Examples are provided from our own research which illustrates the techniques and advantages of this approach.

*Keywords:* mixed-methods, thematic analysis

The crime problem has grown increasingly complex over the past several decades. Lanier and Henry (2010) identified six interrelated factors that have contributed to this trend. They include: globalization, the communications revolution, privatization and individualization, the global spread of disease, changes in perceptions of conflict and national security, and the internationalization of terrorism. As law and criminal justice have changed to adapt to the new realities of crime in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the necessity of new ways for understanding crime and its control has become clear.

Approaches to the study of crime and criminal justice have changed in some important ways to adapt to these 21<sup>st</sup> century crime problems. Many of the boundaries and tenets that have historically governed criminology and criminal justice scholarship do not exert the same force they once did. For example, integrated theories of crime have emerged over the past several decades that combine theoretical concepts once believed to be mutually exclusive. Many of these theories draw on structural, group, and individual-level factors to create a more comprehensive account of crime. Applied research, such as procedural and distributive justice studies, have shown that criminal justice processes and outcomes can have varying effects on individuals' perceptions, which can then impact the ultimate success of crime control efforts. Such models reflect the reality that different "levels" of

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stimuli do not exert an independent influence on patterns of crime. Rather, these forces interact in complex ways to shape attitudes and behavior.<sup>1</sup>

There remains, however, one conspicuous limitation in our discipline's ability to deal with the modern crime milieu: our methodological frameworks are somewhat antiquated. That is, the large divide that exists between qualitative and quantitative research, and the knowledge produced by each, limits our ability to reach a cohesive understanding of crime in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many emerging research questions are not amenable to rigid qualitative or quantitative frameworks. Integrated theories and multifaceted criminal justice policies that incorporate both aggregate level variables and local socio-cultural factors require analytic strategies capable of accounting for each. Essentially, then, we have new models and hypotheses but lack methods with which to adequately evaluate them and generate new ones.

In an attempt to bridge this divide, an easily accessible framework for conducting mixed-methods research is outlined here. Different mixed-methods designs and the advantages of each are described below. The paper also provides a guide on how to carry out mixed-methods studies that involve using thematic analysis as the qualitative component of the research. In order to illustrate the techniques and advantages of this model, we provide examples from our ongoing research on capital jurors' impressions of attorneys and their relationship to sentencing outcomes (Stewart & Trahan, 2012; Trahan, 2011a, 2011b; Trahan & Stewart, 2011).

### WHY MIXED-METHODS?

Mixed-methods research represents an attempt to move beyond the ideological clashes between qualitative and quantitative purists and instead focuses on the pragmatic value of each approach. The pragmatic rule posits that the value of any given research methodology is based solely on its empirical and practical efficacy (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Under this framework, researchers should choose methods that offer the best opportunities for answering the research question(s) under investigation. Some research questions, of course, will continue to call for mono-method research designs. In these instances, using multiple methods may not add much to the overall value of the research beyond what is proffered by a single method. It is, however, inconceivable that some, if not many, research questions can be better answered by a combination of qualitative and quantitative strategies.

Mixed-methods research offers advantages for theoretical criminology. Brewer and Hunter (1989) posit that theoretical frameworks and methodological styles have historically been intertwined in two ways. First, most methodologies are more amenable to analyzing certain types of variables than others. The variables implicated in methodological styles can then imply certain theoretical frameworks that comprise those variables. Second, theoretical models may be based on concepts that seemingly require certain types of variables (or operationalizations), which can then lead researchers to adopt particular methods

1 For an excellent account of integrated criminological theory, see Barak (2009).

based on their apparent ability to analyze those variables. A result of the theory-method nexus is that research problems become excessively narrowed to specific classes of variables and concepts and isolated within certain levels of analysis and causality. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods allows researchers to address the diverse and often complex theoretical suppositions implicated in any given research topic.

Consider, for instance, Mertonian strain which underscores the distribution of legitimate means to acquire emphasized goals and is among the most widely investigated theoretical models in criminology. It generally is classified as a macro-level theory due to its focus on social structure and, consequently, is coupled with aggregate variables and quantitative methodologies (Williams & McShane, 2010). However, as Agnew (1992) first pointed out, structural strain can cause individual-level psychological strain. That is, people who are strained by their environment may develop feelings of frustration, anxiety, depression, or anger that ultimately influence their cognition and behavior. Agnew's psychological strain, which emphasizes divergent perceptions and emotional reactions, contains micro-level theoretical concepts that arguably call for qualitative analyses. Incorporating qualitative and quantitative methods, then, is necessary to generate an understanding of people's perceptions of and reactions to structural and environmental conditions and whether the interaction of these variables across multiple levels impact crime.

Although mixed-methods offer advantages to theoretical research, applied researchers have the most to gain from combining quantitative and qualitative methods (Caracelli & Greene, 1993; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2002). Specifically, mixed-methods offers five unique advantages to applied research: (a) triangulation – assessing the degree of convergence and corroboration between the results of different research designs; (b) complementarity – using the results of one method to elaborate and clarify the results of another; (c) initiation – using the results of one method to identify concepts and variables that would have gone unnoticed in a mono-method study; (d) development – using the results of one method to guide the creation of instruments, the selection of cases, and the analytic strategies of another, and (e) expansion – using multiple methods to answer different components of a singular research question (Brewer & Hunter, 1989; Fielding & Fielding, 1986; Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989).

Combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies in a single study results in what Johnson and Turner (2003) call the fundamental principle of mixed research – which means that the combination of both qualitative and quantitative research results in complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses. For example, quantitative methods can provide a broad account of the research topic and can describe heterogeneity on an aggregate level, whereas qualitative methods can identify and explain local socio-cultural information (Kelle, 2006). Combining qualitative and quantitative methods allows researchers to take advantage of the representativeness and generalizability of quantitative findings and the rich, contextual nature of qualitative findings (Green & Caracelli, 2003). Narratives, images, texts, and other forms of qualitative data can lend meaning to often unintelligible numerical data used in quantitative research. Conversely, quantitative findings can give precision to qualitative data (Hanson, Creswell, Plano-Clark, Petska, & Creswell,

2005). Mixed-methods research also provides the opportunity for generating and testing hypotheses within a single study.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the product of combined qualitative and quantitative research is generally superior to mono-method studies (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In addressing the efficacy of mixed-methods research, Greene and Caracelli (1997) argued that we have entered “an era of methodological pluralism in applied social science.” (p. 5).

Despite the conspicuous benefits that mixed-methods research has to offer, scholars seldom utilize such approaches. Hanson et al. (2005) identified three reasons why mixed-methods research has not yet been fully incorporated. They include “the historical precedent of favoring quantitative and experimental methods, the difficulty in learning and applying both types of methods, and the general lack of attention given to diverse methodological approaches in graduate education and training” (pp. 224-225). This paper presents an easily accessible framework for conducting mixed-method research that does not necessitate specialized training or experience. Different mixed-methods designs and the advantages of each are described below. The paper also provides a guide on how to carry out mixed-methods studies that involves using thematic analysis as the qualitative component of the research.

### MIXED-METHODS DESIGNS

Mixed-methods research can take a variety of forms depending upon which qualitative and quantitative techniques are combined and how the research is carried out. There are, however, three general mixed-methods designs – two sequential and one concurrent. In sequential designs, one of the studies is conducted and completed prior to initiating the second. Both the qualitative and quantitative studies are conducted during the same period of time in concurrent designs. It is important to note that there is nothing unique about sampling, data collection, and analysis in mixed-methods studies. The same rules that have long governed these processes in traditional mono-method research apply to mixed-methods designs. That is, the sampling, data collection, and analytic techniques of both the qualitative and quantitative components must be rigorous and be able to stand on their own merit. Each mixed-method design and the unique advantages of each are described in detail below.

#### *Sequential Explanatory*

The first step in this model is to gather and analyze quantitative data. The findings of the quantitative data are used to guide a subsequent qualitative study. This model primarily is used when research and theory regarding the research topic are available but incomplete (Hanson et al., 2005). The quantitative study typically is given priority and is implemented to identify research questions that can be explored in the qualitative study. This model overcomes certain disadvantages of mono-method designs and affords four specific advantages to the overall value of the research. First, this model is particularly useful for explaining quantitative findings that contradict existing theory and/or research.

2 Qualitative research can be used to generate theoretical concepts that can then be tested in a subsequent quantitative study.

The qualitative study can provide a context to such findings and identify the source of the discrepancy. Second, this model can explain incomprehensible statistical findings. It is often difficult to fully understand the meaning and implications of statistical findings without local socio-cultural knowledge, which is difficult to discern in quantitative research. Third, the results of the quantitative study can be used to guide the selection of cases for inclusion in the qualitative stage. The quantitative stage may increase the validity of the qualitative results by providing a sampling frame and criteria used to select cases for the qualitative study. Lastly, the relatively large sample size of the quantitative stage can identify whether and, if so, how heterogeneity might impact the results of the qualitative study. This helps to limit the scope of the qualitative study to a research question that is homogeneous enough for the typically small sample size of qualitative research (Kelle, 2006).

### ***Sequential Exploratory***

In this design, the qualitative study is conducted prior to initiating a quantitative analysis. The findings of the qualitative study are used to guide the subsequent quantitative study. The qualitative study typically is given priority and the quantitative analysis serves as a supplement.

The fundamental purpose of this model is to explore relationships where little to no research and theory already exist (Hanson et al., 2005). Sequential exploratory designs offer four unique advantages. First, the initial qualitative study can identify salient variables and explore potential relationships in order to develop theory. The theoretical concepts that emerge from the qualitative portion of the research can be tested in the quantitative analysis. Second, the qualitative study can be used to develop and refine assessment tools for application in the quantitative study. For example, the qualitative study will expose how subjects interpret certain terminology, which can be used to construct valid survey items. Third, the quantitative analysis can be used to determine whether the findings of the qualitative study can be generalized to specific populations. Lastly, the qualitative study can be used to obtain access to local socio-cultural knowledge that aids in the development of hypotheses best suited for the research topic (Kelle, 2006).

### ***Concurrent***

Both qualitative and quantitative data are collected and analyzed at the same time in concurrent mixed-methods research. It is important, however, to conduct the analyses separately. This model is used primarily for triangulation purposes. That is, neither the qualitative or quantitative studies are used to guide the other, but rather both are used in combination to provide a broader and deeper understanding of the research topic. This model is particularly useful for attempting to confirm, cross-validate, and corroborate findings (Hanson et al., 2005). Thus, this model allows researchers to establish convergent validity under one research project. If the findings do not converge, researchers will be in a better position to identify the sources of the discrepancy.<sup>3</sup> Concurrent designs also can tease out biases arising from social desirability (Kelle, 2006). If, for example, subjects are asked in an interview to explain or elaborate on their responses to a close-ended question, social desirability influences likely will emerge.

3 For a guide on how to reconcile conflicting findings, see Fielding and Fielding (1986).

Our mixed-methods research on capital jurors' impressions of attorneys and sentencing outcomes has followed a concurrent design (Stewart & Trahan, 2012; Trahan, 2011a, 2011b; Trahan & Stewart, 2011). We analyzed data collected by the Capital Jury Project (CJP), which interviewed 1,198 former capital jurors who served on 353 capital trials in 14 states to tap their experiences during trial and their impressions of and reactions to various stimuli. One portion of this interview asked jurors about their impressions of the attorneys they came in contact with at trial. Twenty-eight, close-ended items were posed to the jurors that asked them to rate how well they felt various statements described the defense and prosecuting attorneys and their work. They were afforded opportunities to elaborate on their answers to the close-ended items and were also prompted with open-ended items that asked if there were any impressions they had formed of the attorneys that were not captured by the close-ended items. The narratives jurors provided were recorded and later transcribed. The quantitative component of our research involved using logistic regression to determine whether jurors' responses to the close-ended items were related to sentencing outcomes. The qualitative component involved a thematic analysis of the narratives contained in the interview transcripts to identify and describe in rich detail the jurors' impressions of the attorneys.

### THEMATIC ANALYSIS

One challenge in conducting mixed-methods research involves selecting the particular qualitative and quantitative techniques to combine. The first step in making this decision is to determine which methodologies fit the data and research question(s). This essentially involves identifying a pool of prospective qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The second step is for researchers to determine which of these methodologies are best suited for integration. Qualitative and quantitative techniques should be chosen based on their ability to, in combination, provide a cohesive and singular understanding of the problem under investigation (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The challenge this presents for social scientists is that most specialize in quantitative research and have relatively little training and experience with qualitative methodologies (Tewksbury, 2009). Thus, despite the promise that mixed-methods may hold for some criminological research, scholars will often find themselves without the knowledge required to properly select and implement qualitative methodologies. Scholars that find themselves in this predicament should consider using thematic analysis, which offers an immediate and pragmatic solution.

Thematic analysis is, at its core, a method for identifying and describing patterns in qualitative data. It is also a relatively uncomplicated and flexible technique. The flexibility inherent in thematic analysis allows researchers to construct a model that best suits their data and the scope of their research questions. It also can be applied to a wide variety of theoretical frameworks. Thematic analysis also presents a unique benefit to mixed-methods research. Because it can take a variety of forms, a thematic analysis can be shaped to complement virtually any quantitative method and is useful in both sequential and concurrent designs. The particular form taken by the thematic analysis depends on four decisions researchers must make in how to approach the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### *Shaping the Analysis*

The first decision involves determining what criteria will be used to determine what counts as a theme. A “theme” generally refers to a prevalent feature of the data set. Prevalence can be measured within each data item<sup>4</sup> or across the entire data set. Measuring prevalence within data items is a way of gauging how much “space” is allocated to any given concept by the subject of the analysis. For instance, our research on capital jurors’ impressions of attorneys could have measured how much time or how many sentences in each response is devoted to describing some perceptual construct regarding the attorneys. If jurors had spent a relatively large amount of space or time discussing a certain issue, it might then be counted as a theme because it represents a major focal point for at least some jurors. Instead, we measured prevalence across the entire data set by determining how many of the jurors cited certain constructs. We counted themes as the constructs that were shared by relatively large numbers of jurors. Doing so allowed us to analyze and explain perceptual topics that cut across individual jurors and, therefore, likely had a greater impact on case outcomes in the aggregate. For instance, over 20% of the jurors in our sample discussed their impressions of the attorneys’ personal characteristics during their interview. This was among the most prevalent of various topics jurors discussed, thus we included it in our list of constituent themes. However, not all the jurors discussed the attorneys’ personal characteristics or their impressions of the same at length. Many simply described the attorneys and their impressions in short statements. Consider the following comments from jurors regarding the defense attorneys:

Texas: He was a little unkempt looking.

California: He had a funky haircut.

Missouri: Good dresser.

Had we measured prevalence within each data item, these impressions may not have been counted as themes if jurors did not devote large amounts of time to discussing these characteristics.

The problem researchers will inevitably run into in determining what counts as themes involve the lack of a clear and universal point of demarcation. Exactly how prevalent must a concept be in data items or the entire set to be counted as a theme? Unlike quantitative methodologies that measure statistical significance, currently there is no universally accepted standard for establishing the relevance of a pattern in thematic analysis (Braun, Gavey, & McPhillips, 2003; Taylor & Usher 2001; Meehan, Vermeer, & Windsor, 2000). Braun and Clarke (2006), in fact, caution against setting rigid and arbitrary benchmarks. Researchers must use their own judgment in determining what features of the data to count as themes.<sup>5</sup> Two particular issues that should be considered are whether the concept captures something important in relation to the research question or provides an essential compliment to the quantitative analysis.

4 A “data item” refers to an individual piece of data, the sum of which constitutes the data set.

5 The prevalence of each theme should be included in the final report. Doing so will help readers interpret the results.

The second question to consider is whether the analysis will describe the data set as a whole or one (or a few) particular aspect(s) of it. This question essentially relates to the scope of the examination and whether and how to narrow the focus. Researchers may want to create a rich description of the entire data set that identifies and describes all its major features. In this approach, the themes should provide an accurate and representative portrait of the entire data set. One limitation of this approach is that it involves sacrificing a detailed explanation of specific themes in favor of an overall description of the data set. If, however, the researcher's interest is in providing a detailed and nuanced report of one or a few particular themes, these themes can be analyzed independently. Data that relate to the theme(s) of interest can be extracted from the data set and analyzed to convey a detailed description of a specific concept. The determination should be made based on whether the topic of the investigation is relatively under-researched, in which case a broader scope may be beneficial (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Our research was initially designed to describe the data set as a whole. The choice to shape the scope of the analysis in this way was based on the fact that there is very little extant research on capital jurors' impressions of attorneys; therefore, we sought to mine the data as a whole and create a comprehensive description of all the major focal concerns of capital jurors. Findings showed that jurors' impressions of attorneys were comprised of a wide variety of constructs, including their aggressiveness, competence, and theatrical courtroom behavior (see Trahan, 2011a). We also thought it was entirely plausible that jurors' formed impressions of the attorneys based entirely on extralegal, even personal factors that fell outside the conceptual boundaries of the close-ended items. Thus, in subsequent analyses we narrowed the scope to particular aspects of the data. These findings showed that jurors formed pervasive impressions of attorneys based on their personalities and physical appearance (Trahan & Stewart, 2011).

In mixed-methods research, the scope of thematic analysis should be guided primarily by the research model. A broad scope – one that describes the entire data set – is particularly amenable to a sequential exploratory model. The initial qualitative phase of the study can be used to identify concepts that can be further explored in the quantitative study. Conversely, a detailed analysis of one or a few themes lends well to a sequential explanatory model. One or few specific findings of the quantitative study can be elaborated upon by keying in on the relevant features of a qualitative data set. Each approach can be incorporated into concurrent designs. It is the researcher's interest in a particular topic and the research question that should determine the scope of the analysis in concurrent mixed-methods research.

The third decision involves determining whether the themes should be identified according to an inductive or deductive approach. Deductive methodologies can be described as a "top down" approach because the analysis is guided by the researcher's interest in a particular theoretical model. In this approach, researchers begin with a specific research question and then analyze data in order to describe and test the theoretical concepts therein. Researchers will typically design coding schemes prior to the analysis. The data are then coded as to which, if any, of the theoretical concept they reflect. This type of approach pro-

vides a less rich description of the data, but may be beneficial when exploring a specific aspect of some phenomenon (e.g., Boyatzis, 1998; Hayes, 1997). In contrast, inductive methodologies are “data driven” because the themes are derived from the data themselves, not for the purpose of testing a theoretical framework. This approach involves letting the data “speak for themselves” in that there is no attempt to fit data into preconceived typologies or theoretical constructs. Inductive analysis results in a rich description of the data set, and the findings will convey an accurate representation of the original data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Inductive approaches are not well suited to theory testing, but have the potential to generate theory. Our research took an inductive approach to identifying themes. We wanted to allow the jurors to speak for themselves instead of attempting to fit their narratives into pre-conceived conceptual or theoretical typologies.

In mixed-methods research, the particular model often will dictate whether the researcher takes an inductive or deductive approach. Sequential explanatory models are often best served by a deductive approach. The quantitative antecedent can be used to identify the most salient concepts and test relationships between them. The subsequent qualitative study can then be used to identify these concepts in the qualitative data and elaborate on their interactions. In contrast, an inductive approach is most amenable to a sequential exploratory model. Under this framework, a researcher will conduct an initial qualitative analysis in order to identify important variables and relationships for which there may be little extant theory and research. The findings of this analysis are used to construct a theoretical model that can be tested in a subsequent quantitative study. The qualitative findings also can be used to guide the construction of instruments for the quantitative analysis to follow.

The last important decision that must be made prior to examining the data is to identify the “level” of analysis. There are two possible levels of thematic analysis: semantic or latent (Boyatzis, 1998). The former refers to identifying and classifying themes according to their explicit or surface level meanings. In this approach, the researcher does not attempt to go beyond the statements made by the subject to identify some hidden meaning. Instead, the analysis focuses on the manifest content of the data. The later – latent analysis – looks beyond the overt content of the data in an attempt to interpret their essential suppositions and conceptualizations. Latent analyses are particularly useful for research attempting to uncover and understand the ideologies, cultural beliefs, and/or assumptions underlying the data. Semantic analysis is particularly well suited to describing people’s experiences and their broader meaning (Patton, 1990).

Whether to employ a semantic or latent analysis in the different mixed-methods models is not such a clear cut choice. Both levels of analysis can be applied in each mixed-method design. What should guide this decision is the researcher’s interest in a particular topic as expressed in the research question(s). If a researcher’s interest is in the forces that shape the content of some body of qualitative data, a latent analysis should be chosen. If, instead, a researcher is interested in creating an organized description of a qualitative data set and its explicit content, then a semantic analysis is most important.

Our research was conducted on the semantic level. We wanted to describe the jurors' impressions as they themselves expressed them and provide a comprehensive account of their expressions. For instance, one juror from South Carolina, when asked whether the defense attorney was someone he did not like personally, responded, "I don't like him...but I have to say, right now I have this thing about criminals' attorneys." This extract was classified and coded as "personal" and "negative" because the manifest content of the remark conveyed a negative impression of the defense attorney based on a personal characteristic (i.e, his status as a defense attorney), not any job performance criterion. If, however, a researcher was conducting a latent analysis of the ideological suppositions underlying jurors' impressions, this extract might be classified and coded as "crime control" due to the fact that the juror expressed a general disdain for defense attorneys.

Making these four decisions basically involves establishing a framework for the subsequent analysis. Following these precepts throughout should promote consistency and increase the reliability of the results. The next step in conducting a thematic analysis involves following a six phase analytic procedure. These six phases ensure that the analysis is careful and rigorous (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### *The Six Phases of Thematic Analysis*

Phase one requires researchers to familiarize themselves with the data. This often occurs during a period of data collection. Researchers who interact with the data during collection (e.g., conducting and/or transcribing interviews) will gain an intimate knowledge of the data. Researchers engaged in an analysis of secondary data or archival materials will have to conduct a more thorough familiarization process. First, researchers should create a "master" list of all the data. Whether the data are interview transcripts, excerpts from texts, or official reports, all the data to be included in the analysis should be compiled together in one file, which will serve as the "data set." For instance, we read through the interview transcripts and extracted every instance in which the jurors discussed the attorneys. We then collated these narratives and the questions to which they responded<sup>6</sup> into a text file, which served as the data set for the subsequent phases of the analysis. Researchers should then immerse themselves in the data by reading through the data set several times. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that it is essential to engage in an "active" reading of the data by searching for patterns and meaning.

At the conclusion of phase one, the researcher should possess a unique knowledge of the data and be able to traverse them with relative ease. Phase two begins after reading through the data and involves the production of preliminary codes. These codes, as described by Boyatzis (1998,), identify "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon." (p. 63) The data items should be reread to identify the key issues raised in each. Researchers should then compare the key issues identified in the data items and develop codes for the entire data set. Once the coding scheme has been created, each data item should be coded according to the key issue it contains. In our study of capital jurors' impressions of attor-

6 Including the question, or prompt, is critical because it illustrates the context of the jurors' remarks.

neys, we first coded each data item according to whether it cited the prosecutor, defense attorney, or both. We then coded each data item according to the basic feature(s), or focal point(s), of its semantic content.<sup>7</sup> For instance, one juror, in describing the attorney, stated, “[I] thought he was a young lawyer who needed some experience.” This extract was coded for “age” and “experience.”

Phase three begins when the data have been initially coded and involves beginning to identify sweeping patterns, or themes. The researcher should review all the codes established in phase two and create general thematic categories. Doing so requires taking an overview of the specific codes to identify more general patterns that are taking shape. Once these themes have been identified, data items can be collated into themes. This essentially involves dividing the data set into several subsets of themes. Table 1 illustrates the thematic categories identified in our research of capital jurors’ impressions of the defense and prosecuting attorneys.

Table 1  
*Jurors and Extracts within Themes.*

Theme	Jurors		Extracts	
	(#)	(#)	(#)	(%)
<b>Defense</b>				
1. Theatrics	50	54	54	9.7
2. Personal Characteristics	69	74	74	13.2
3. Aggressiveness	92	105	105	18.8
4. Competence	62	67	67	11.9
5. Defendants’ Testimony	56	63	63	11.3
6. Defense Arguments	60	72	72	12.9
7. Forfeiting Guilt?	57	66	66	11.8
8. Relationship with Defendant	55	58	58	10.4
Total	501	559	559	100
<b>Prosecution</b>				
1. Theatrics	29	29	29	9.2
2. Personal Characteristics	72	80	80	25.2
3. Aggressiveness	86	99	99	31.2
4. Competence	48	48	48	15.1
5. Presentation Style	53	61	61	19.2
Total	288	317	317	99.9

7 Some data items may cite more than one feature. In these instances, the items should be coded at this phase for each feature raised therein.

Phase four involves examining the accuracy and the reliability of the themes identified in phase three. Patton (1990) specified two criteria for establishing that apparent patterns are indeed themes – internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity. The former refers to the fact that the data collated within each theme should adhere together in a meaningful way. External heterogeneity requires there to be clear and identifiable differences across individual themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) offer specific guidelines on how to confirm that the candidate themes are internally consistent and externally distinct. First, the data included in each theme should be read and re-read until it is clear that they form a coherent pattern. If the data in any given theme lack consistency, it is necessary to determine whether the theme itself is producing the problem or some of the resident data items simply do not belong here. In other words, is the theme not conceptually sound or have some data been misclassified? Depending upon the source of the inconsistency, the theme may need to be reworked, discarded, or the data items reclassified. A similar process is involved in examining the external heterogeneity of the themes. The entire data set should be re-read several times to consider the validity of each theme in relation to the data as a whole. The themes are considered heterogeneous if, without intersecting, they precisely reflect the content of the data without missing any important concepts. Researchers also have the option of conducting an additional measure of reliability. Although some qualitative techniques do not lend particularly well to traditional reliability measures, it is relatively easy to use inter-rater reliability in thematic analysis (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003; Elliot & Woodward, 2007).

Phase five begins once a set of reliable themes have been established. This phase involves analyzing the data within each theme in order to create a definition that captures its fundamental meaning. This task is similar to labeling factors in statistical analysis. The first step here is to read through the data items collated in each theme now that their validity and consistency has been confirmed. These should be “active” readings, similar to phase one, in order to determine exactly what feature of the data set each theme captures. If the analysis has been done correctly, researchers should be able to describe the content of each theme and its implications in no more than a couple of sentences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The definitions of the themes identified in our research are shown in Table 2.

Phase six begins once the analysis is complete. Here the results need to be organized and reported. The report should convey the results in a way that is clear and concise, and should convince the reader of the value of the study and its contribution to the extant literature. In order to achieve these objectives, it is important to include data items, or quotes, in the text of the report to illustrate the contentions being offered. Including quotes also provides evidence of the themes, i.e., that the concepts they capture are prevalent throughout the data set. The most vivid and least complex data items within each theme should be included in the report. Lastly, the report should not simply summarize and describe the data. It is important to make an argument as to how the results answer the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Table 2  
*Names and Definitions of Themes*

<b>Theme<sup>8</sup></b>	<b>Definition</b>
1. Theatrics	Exhibitions of and appeals to emotion and dramatization of evidence and other case-related factors.
2. Personal Characteristics	Individual attributes of the attorneys, primarily physical characteristics and conceit.
3. Aggressiveness	The forcefulness and hostility with which the attorneys promoted their cases.
4. Competence	Attorneys' aptitude as a function of intelligence and experience.
5. Defendants' Testimony	Whether the defendant testified during trial and how it reflected upon the attorney.
6. Defense Arguments	Arguments presented by defense attorneys during trial.
7. Forfeiting Guilt?	Whether the defense attorneys essentially forfeited the guilt-stage of the trial in order to focus on avoiding a death sentence.
8. Relationship with Defendant	How the attorneys treated their clients in court.
9. Presentation Style	The manner with which the prosecuting attorney presented evidence.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of mixed-methods research is not to replace qualitative or quantitative methodologies but to offer a third choice to scholars and graduate students soon to enter academe. One of the greatest obstacles that criminologist will face in conducting mixed-methods research is that many of us are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with qualitative methods. Thus, selecting and implementing an appropriate qualitative methodology will present

8 Themes one through four emerged from the jurors' talk of both the defense and prosecuting attorneys. Themes five through eight refer only to the defense attorneys. Theme nine refers only to the prosecutors. Themes 10 and 11 emerged from the extracts that directly compared the two attorneys.

a challenge for most. It has been argued here that thematic analysis is a viable solution to this problem. Thematic analysis is a widely used yet uncomplicated technique. To conduct it properly does not require extensive training or experience. The greatest benefit of thematic analysis in the context of mixed-methods research is its flexibility. Thematic analysis can take a variety of forms depending upon the decisions researchers make in how to approach the data. This flexibility allows for researchers to shape their analysis to fit any of the mixed-methods designs and to complement virtually any quantitative technique and theoretical model.

The findings of our research illustrate the advantages of mixed-methods research generally and the use of thematic analysis as its qualitative constituent in particular. Consider, for example, the results of a recent focused analysis of the jurors' impressions of the defense and prosecuting attorneys' hostility (Stewart & Trahan, 2012). The results of the regression analysis showed that, controlling for the effects of sex, age, race, and education, hostility was counterproductive for both attorneys. That is, jurors who rated prosecutors high on hostility were less likely to sentence defendants to death. Conversely, jurors who rated defense attorneys high on hostility were less likely to administer life sentences. These findings are, however, admittedly vague. What does "hostility" mean to jurors? What types of arguments and/or courtroom behavior lead jurors to form the impression that the attorneys are hostile? The results of the thematic analysis that pertained to "aggressiveness" provided some answers to these questions. The narratives that comprise this theme indicate that jurors form positive impressions of forceful attorneys. The data show that jurors expect both prosecuting and defense to be assertive in promoting their cases. However, the jurors' impressions crossed over into "hostility" when the attorneys engaged in personal attacks on opposing counsel and their witnesses. Essentially, then, the jurors expected the attorneys to aggressively assail the testimony of opposing witnesses and the cases of opposing attorneys, but not the witnesses and attorneys themselves. The findings of the regression analysis and thematic analysis in combination provide the following: personal attacks by the attorneys create negative impressions among the jurors who are then more likely to reject those attorneys' sentencing recommendations. The results in combination provide a much richer and comprehensive understanding of jurors' perceptions of attorneys and their function. Without the qualitative component, we would have been unable to identify what hostility means to jurors and what generates these impressions. Conversely, the quantitative component was essential to understanding what, if any, effects such impressions have on sentencing outcomes.

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