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Navigating the complexities of grounded theory research in advertising

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NAVIGATING THE COMPLEXITIES OF GROUNDED THEORY RESEARCH IN ADVERTISING

Grounded theory is a well established methodology within the social sciences and more recently within the field of advertising. This paper looks at how it has been used in advertising research and in particular two key areas - the consumption of advertising and the world of advertising creatives. The main focus of the paper concentrates on common mistakes found in grounded theory papers submitted for publication in leading journals. It offers ten important points for consideration that should help authors improve the quality of their research by avoiding such errors. The paper concludes by suggesting potential areas of advertising where grounded theory may be applied in future research.

'Marmite' is a brand of savory yeast and vegetable spread, designed to be eaten on bread or toast, that specifically markets itself as a 'love' it or 'hate' it food product. With Marmite there is no in-between. In this sense grounded theory might best be described as a 'Marmite' methodology - a love it or hate it approach to research that has attracted its devotees, as well as its sworn enemies. Moreover, these have come from within, as well as outside of the grounded theory camp. It is a methodology that has been applied to generate new and exciting theories and alternative lenses for viewing social phenomenon, but it has also been used as a piecemeal, pick and mix catch all overarching term to describe and label any form of qualitative research - from depth-interviews to projective techniques. In other words it has been put to great use by some, but muddled, misused and abused by others. It has been criticized for being pseudo positivistic and thus banished from the qualitative 'family' by purist interpretivists, while often viewed as non 'scientific' or verifiably robust by those who adhere to the positivist world view of objective reality (Goulding 1998). Yet, despite these impressions and misconceptions, grounded theory has spread from its original home discipline of sociology, to a multitude of disciplines including health studies, social psychology, advertising, management, marketing, and consumer behavior, amongst others.

Concurrently, the number of journal paper submissions claiming to be based on grounded theory have increased. Many of these have contributed significantly to theory development, but equally as many remain of dubious quality. The aim of this paper therefore is to highlight some of the most common *transgressions* found in papers claiming to be grounded theory studies. In response it offers a series of recommendations that authors should consider when crafting their work in order to avoid such errors and improve the quality of the submission. The paper is structured as follows. First, it examines the literature from advertising research to illustrate how, and in what contexts grounded theory has been used to build, reconsider, or extend advertising theory. It then proceeds to offer ten areas that authors

should think carefully about when writing grounded theory studies for publication in leading advertising journals. The paper concludes by suggesting areas of advertising research where grounded theory may be applied to broaden its application in the field.

GROUNDED THEORY STUDIES IN ADVERTISING

In 2014 Kim *et al* published a paper in this journal which systematically reviewed the main research trends as they appeared in seventeen top advertising, marketing and communication journals between the years 1980 and 2010. Fundamental to their findings were that advertising, as a relatively young discipline, leans heavily on other disciplines such as psychology, sociology and economics for its theoretical frameworks; that published advertising research is still predominantly practice rather than theory driven (although some journals such as *JA* are more theory orientated); and, that 'as a field, advertising has become increasingly empirical and quantitative in nature over time.' In line with this, over 'the past 30 years, journal editors appear to have not only desired more quantitative studies, but also displayed a more scientific conception of approved research' (p.309-310). One important implication of this is the acknowledgement of the continued prevalence of theory testing, or the borrowing of theories from other disciplines at the sake of *new* theory development from within the discipline. Having said this, there are few journals that would reject a paper purely because it is built on qualitative research. All leading journals accept and publish papers based on *good*GOOD qualitative research. The issue here then is not that qualitative research is harder to publish in advertising journals - the question is, what constitutes good qualitative research? and, what do reviewers look for when evaluating a paper based on approaches such as grounded theory? Suddaby (2006) points to the fact that frequently, authors submit manuscripts where the term grounded theory is used "as a rhetorical sleight of hand by

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authors who are unfamiliar with qualitative research and who wish to avoid close description or illumination of their methods" (p.633).

Whilst Suddaby refers specifically to papers published within the field of management, ~~and more precisely, *AMJ,*~~ his comments have as much relevance to papers published in any discipline, including advertising. Moreover, there are a number of exemplars from within the sphere of advertising that can inform future research, both methodologically and theoretically. Two areas in particular that stand out are; the consumption of advertising, and; the world of advertising creatives.

The consumption of advertising

The seminal advertising grounded theory paper is possibly Hirschman and Thompson's 'Why media matter: Toward a richer understanding of consumers' relationships with advertising and mass media', which was published in the *Journal of Advertising* in 1997. The paper still serves as an exemplar in terms if detailing the process of applying grounded theory and demonstrating the development of theory. The approach is predominantly one of building new theory or 'construct discovery' (p.47), and the justification for employing grounded theory is legitimized in this light. The logic of grounded theory is presented in a clear and concise manner as are the procedures for the collection and analysis of data. The developed constructs are well supported by data which is theorized and not merely described. The iterative oscillation between the raw data, theoretical insights, and the literature germane to the developing theory is further explicated. With grounded theory, it is imperative that the developed theory is traceable back through the data. Data should never simply stand alone, or remain at the descriptive level, and Hirschman and Thompson's paper provides a clear exposition of what can be a very difficult task.

Around the same time, work by O'Donohoe (1997) 'raided the pantry of postmodernism' to examine intertextuality from the perspective of young adults. Drawing upon a dual methodology involving audience ethnography and grounded theory, the inductively derived findings informed theoretical considerations of the blurred or leaky boundaries between advertising and other forms of communication. In a similar vein Kates and Shaw (1999) combined discursive textual analysis with grounded theory in their study of ideologies and discourses in advertisements targeted at women. The results extended models of advertising as communication, and advertising as meaning making, to propose a model which explicitly incorporated a historical perspective on advertising interpretation and sense making.

Other research into the consumption of advertising includes Andronikidis and Lambrianidou's (2010) examination of children's understanding of television advertising. The sample comprised of children aged between 6-11 years of age and used focus groups to illicit information on their comprehension of such things as advertising sponsorship and the persuasive intent of television adverts. Whilst grounded theory appears in the title, the methodology is most apparent in the analysis stage which draws heavily upon the complex coding strategies proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Similarly, Nelson et al's (2004) analysis of advertising and product placement in computer games employed a netnographic approach to data collection, but used grounded theory techniques to analyze data and generate a list of concepts, categories and instances to explain how game players interpret commercial practices in their mediated and real lives. On a different note Delorme and Huh (2009) utilized grounded theory as part of methodological triangulation to extend predominantly survey based knowledge of the effectiveness of direct to consumer prescription drug advertising on seniors. The inductively derived findings, based largely on the 'voice' of the consumers, directed theorization towards 'uncertainty management theory'

and its role in explaining consumer engagement with various forms of communication and information seeking in situations that evoke subjective uncertainly.

Grounded theory has also been used as a methodology to develop new theoretical insights, build alternative frameworks and challenge the doxa of established conventional wisdom. For example O'Donohoe's (1994) critique of 'uses and gratification theory' as a means of understanding the consumption of advertising draws upon findings derived from a grounded theory approach to broaden the framework to include a greater focus on consumers' ability and propensity for play, subversion and 'self conscious knowingness' (p.71), through reading and consuming advertising.

While the consumption of advertising has been a focus of grounded theory research by a number of scholars, the use of the methodology is not confined to this particular arena.

The world of advertising creatives

The second emerging field of grounded theory research derives from the world of advertising creatives; their personalities, practices, theories and beliefs. Blythe (2007) provides an example of using grounded theory in his analysis of advertising creatives and the various personality types and behaviors associated with the creative process. Nyilasy and Reid (2007; 2009; 2009a) and Nyilasy, Canniford and Keshel (2013) further illustrate the evolving and intensive nature of grounded theory research. Ground theory studies, by their nature and drive for saturation, usually generate a wealth of data along with a number of complex concepts which cannot be reduced and captured in one paper. Derived from a single study located within the 'reconsideration of theory' approach, the authors present a series of papers, each of which deals with a major concept; 'the academic-practitioner gap in advertising' (Nyilasy and Reid (2007); 'agency practitioners' meta-theories of advertising' (Nyilasy and Reid 2009a); 'agency practitioners' theories of how advertising works' (Nyilasy

and Reid 2009); and 'advertising agency professionals' mental models of advertising creativity' (Nyilasy et al 2013). In particular, Nyilasy and Reid (2009) provide a useful and interesting critique and discussion of some of the current debates surrounding classical grounded theory and its adaptation to current issues.

In keeping with the original principles of grounded theory as a methodology for exploring *new* areas in order to generate *new* theoretical insights, Drumwright and Kamal (2016) adopted a grounded theory approach in their investigation of advertising in emerging markets. Their work, centered on the ethical practices of advertising creatives in the Middle East and North Africa, both emerging markets with lower levels of advertising literacy, particularly amongst the youth - a group more open to persuasion and manipulation. As such it represented a 'cultural context that differs from the cultures where most advertising research is done' (p.199). Viewed as 'new research territory', it lacked a substantive body of literature on which to build, and was therefore largely data driven. The quest for theoretical sensitivity in the analysis of the data was ultimately informed by Bourdieu's work on habitus and doxa, its application to the realm of advertising in emerging markets and, the ethical (or more precisely, unethical) practices of advertising agencies in their role as cultural intermediaries and taste makers.

Whilst most of these examples are derived from either the consumption of advertising, or the world of advertising creatives, its application has not been confined to these domains. Grounded theory has also been used to investigate advertising planning (Grant et al 2012), perceptions of design and aesthetics (Venkatesh et al 2012), and the effect of advertising in leisure situations, as in Delorme and Reid's (1999) study of moviegoer's perception and interpretation of brands featured in films. More recently, and indeed importantly, the virtual world of the net has been the source of grounded theory

investigations (see for example, Kassaye and Hutto's 2016 study of on-line advertising), as has the ever growing and pervasive role of advertising and social media (Phillips et al 2014).

These studies offer useful guides to some of the research issues and questions raised by advertising researchers. Yet, there are many grounded theory papers that do not make it passed the editors desk. The next part of this paper focuses on the main areas that can make the difference between rejection of a grounded theory paper, and one that stands up to scrutiny as a genuine product of the methodology.

TEN THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN WRITING GROUNDED THEORY FOR PUBLICATION

Suddaby (2006), in his review of ~~AJM~~ grounded theory submissions, draws particular attention to six factors that are often the source of rejection of papers. These include the misconceptions that: a) grounded theory is an excuse to ignore the literature; b) that grounded theory is the presentation of raw data; c) that grounded theory is theory testing, content analysis or word counts; d) that grounded theory is simply routine application of formulaic techniques to data; e) that grounded theory is in some way perfect, and, f) that grounded theory is easy. These are all factors, in one way or another, that also emerged from this author's analysis of reviews of papers submitted to four leading marketing journals, some of which were advertising papers others were from general marketing disciplines. But, the one thing they had in common was the methodology. Grounded theory is a general methodology that can be used across the social sciences in areas that involve human, often social behavior. As such, and, regardless of discipline, it will be judged on a general set of criteria which transcends disciplinary boundaries. Therefore, there is no particular form of grounded theory that is tailored towards advertising, although there may be certain aspects of advertising, such as the highly visual nature of much advertising content, that require different forms of data which will need to be factored into the presentation of the methodology. However, generally,

grounded theory research is 'grounded theory research' and, regardless of context, it will be judged accordingly. What follows is a discussion of ten areas that authors should pay careful attention to when crafting manuscripts for publication. The main questions to keep in mind are - what will reviewers look for when judging the quality of the research design and execution? and, if the study is claiming to be the product of grounded theory, are these made explicit in the manuscript?

1) Take a methodological Stance:

To begin with, there is the question of which version of grounded theory was used in the study? These days it is becoming increasingly important for authors to explain their position as researchers, not only in terms of how data were collected and analyzed, but also in terms of which version of grounded theory was used. In virtually all of the papers discussed in the last section, grounded theory was cited as either the main methodology, or as part of a multi-methodological enquiry. Yet, with the exception of Nyilasy and Reid (2009), very few explicitly identified with a particular school of grounded theory. The most commonly cited version was Glaser and Strauss (Thompson and Hirschman 1997; O'Donohoe 1994, 1997; Kates et al 1999; Nelson et al 2004;), followed by Strauss and Corbin (Drumwright and Kamal 2016; Andronikidis and Lambrianidou 2010). Yet, since its inception, grounded theory has evolved, altered and fragmented into quite distinct schools of thought and practice.

Today it is generally accepted that there are at least three, and possibly up to five versions of grounded theory, each with its own distinct ontological foundations. As such it is expected, and indeed incumbent on the researcher to make clear which version of grounded theory was used, why it was –used, and how it was used. The three main versions most commonly adopted can broadly be identified as classic grounded theory associated with Barney Glaser; evolved grounded theory which is essentially the product of Strauss and

Corbin's (1990) revision of the original methodology; and Charmaz' (1983; 2005; 2008) constructivist grounded theory (Chamberlain-Salaun et al 2013). A more recent, but less established addition is 'transformational grounded theory' (Redman-MacLaren and Mills 2015).

Classic versus Evolved Grounded Theory: The most often cited forms of grounded theory are those associated with the original authors - Glaser's 'classic grounded theory' with its stress on emergence, and Strauss and Corbin's 'evolved grounded theory'. Essentially Strauss and Corbin (1990) introduced a new coding process with a strong emphasis on conditions, context, action/interaction strategies and consequences. Glaser's response was to deny that this constituted true grounded theory due to its stress on preconceived and forced discovery centering primarily on preordained categories at the expense of allowing the theory to emerge. Whilst both have similarities in terms of data collection and theory building, they are considered to be quite distinct versions of the methodology and should not be used interchangeably.

Constructivist Grounded Theory: Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) is a more recent addition to the grounded theory repertoire and to some degree offers a halfway house between classic and evolved grounded theory. CGT is rooted in pragmatism and relativist epistemologies and proposes that theories are not discovered, they are constructed (Charmaz 2008). Charmaz' criticism of both classic and evolved grounded theory stems from the fact that both of these generally ignore the role of the researcher in the process. Essentially, CGT is more open to external influences and should encourage innovation, and in particular examination of the researchers own ontological position, their perspectives and their practices within the research context. Accordingly, researcher reflexivity should be an integral part of

the process, as should work on the social construction of the world under study. CGT also views action, arising through socially constructed situations as central to the focus in order to encourage abstract conceptualization based on empirical phenomenon located within the specific context.

Interestingly, this approach appears to be gaining popularity within the field of advertising (Nyilassy and Reid 2007; 2009; 2009a), as better suited to capture the complexities of the problematic and relativist nature of creative personalities. Moreover, Nyilasy and Reid (2009) specifically acknowledge the fact that grounded theory may be used for two different purposes; either to generate new theory, or, to reconsider and elaborate upon existing theory. They situate their work within the second, 'reconsideration' of theory tradition and acknowledge the 'interaction of theoretical and deductive thinking in grounded theory research', or, the 'inductive-deductive process closely affiliated with the 'reconstructionist' school of grounded theory' (p.83), largely influenced by the work of Kathy Charmaz (2005; 2008).

Transformative Grounded Theory: A further late comer to the grounded theory party is that of transformational or critical grounded theory. This has its roots in critical realism, participatory action research and decolonizing methodologies. The emphasis here is on co-participation between researcher and subjects and the recognition of power in the research process (Redman-MacLaren and Mills 2015). This perspective extends the focus from individual actions to broader social structures and calls for research that actively operates for positive social change (Redman-Maclaren and Mills 2015). The crux of this approach is that grounded theory has evolved and it is time to break free of the constraints that both Glaser and Strauss were working under at the time - namely the dominance of positivism and the need to adopt both a language, and a set of data collection techniques that made sense to the

academy of the time (Goulding 2009). Transformation grounded theory is one further step in this direction:

2) Adopting a visual focus in grounded theory advertising research

One further emerging version of grounded theory is that of 'visual grounded theory' which, given its potential for advertising research possibly deserves slightly more attention than the other versions. Of course advertising scholars may adopt any version of grounded theory that is commensurate with their ontological position and vision of the social world, as well as avenues for exploring it. Moreover, grounded theory is a methodology that allows for the use of multiple data sources, from interviews, focus groups, observations, documents and archive material, to quantitative data. Nonetheless, despite the flexibility of the methodology, there remain gaps in the types of data used, and in particular visual means of social representation (Konecki 2011), including advertisements photographs, and drawings.

Whilst advertising takes many forms, it still remains a highly visual medium and as such often requires visual forms of data to be incorporated into grounded theory studies that draw on imagery for illustration of the research problem. Indeed as far back as 1994, Scott was championing methods and paradigms for developing theories of visual rhetoric that were culturally embedded, attended to the conditions under which advertisements were created, the impact of personal agendas and the philosophies of the final image. Moving forward, Figueroa (2008) suggests the application of grounded theory principles such as theoretical sampling, coding, constant comparison, theoretical sensitivity and saturation to the analysis of such material as film, news reports, and in particular, audio-visual adverts. Whilst the general principles remain the same, the focus of the social world is shifted to the senses and cultural sense making. Accordingly, through a process of viewing, general deconstruction of the message(s)/content, and analysis of both implicit and suggested latent meanings, relationships can be identified that illuminate culture, content and reception. As Harper

(1994) argued, the postmodern critic appropriates images from culture, i.e., the mass media and advertising, and juxtaposes these against other forms of mass media communication, such as narratives, comments, strap-lines, language, and these days, increasingly, on-line images and messages such as consumer reviews (see for example Papathanassis and Knolle's (2011) use of grounded theory to compare the influence of tourism brochure images with and without consumer on-line feedback). Indeed visual representations may be used as the source of analysis, as well as during data collection itself where visual material ranging from adverts to diagramming may perform as graphic elicitation (Crilly et al 2006).

Despite the obvious need for data to fit the problem and context, grounded theory is not usually associated with the use of visual data. Yet there is no reason why materials such as advertisements, film, photographs, paintings, drawings diagrams, or indeed any visual representation, should not be used as legitimate sources within grounded theory studies. Konecki (2011), advocates what he calls 'visual grounded theory' and points in particular to the work of Adele Clarke (2005). Clarke, frustrated with the lack of attention to visual forms in grounded theory critical feminist studies, proposed an alternative to the traditional coding paradigm. This involves the use of visual imagery which can be described and analyzed through a process of progressive interrogation focusing on: 1) Location - which requires asking questions regarding; who produces the image? who are the intended audience? and what is the nature of their social world?; 2) The big picture - this focuses on deconstructing the image and breaking it down into small parts to dissect the details that contribute to the whole and; 3) Specification - or looking from outside of the frame for multiple interpretations so that all possibilities are considered before reaching a final interpretation. Whilst adopting a slightly different form of language, Clarke still adheres to many of the fundamental principles of grounded theory such as theoretical sampling (of visual data), coding that data, constant comparison and, fundamental to the process, extensive memo writing.

Konecki (2011) suggests that visual materials can be equally, if not more revealing of social phenomenon than narrative data. However, decisions have to be made about whether visual data are to be used as auxiliary data, the main source of data, or the sole source of data. Consideration also needs to be given to how visual materials are to be used. For instance, visual processes can be used to track actions and behaviors through historical collections of adverts; comparison of various media forms of advertising messages, and through image related/photographic blogs. Moreover, in order to comply with grounded theory principles of theoretical sampling, which encourages multiple sources of data to fully explore the multitude of possible explanations, Konecki advocates 'multi-slicing'. This compares data derived from different sources which are related to the same phenomenon. These should be based on the assumption that visual data are multi-layered, and that each layer carries meanings. In turn, the researcher needs to make explicit the process of abstraction and conceptual development through these various layers.

Visual grounded theory is in effect an adaption of the grounded theory method which has possibly lagged behind in terms of focusing attention on the significance of the mass media, the role of advertising, and the ever increasing presence in our lives of the internet and social media. This variation, while still complying with the basic tenets of grounded theory, is possibly better suited to the visual world, the world of the media, advertising and the image. As such it has potential to broaden the scope of research within the field of advertising possibly more so than the more orthodox forms described earlier.

3) Ask yourself, is your study really grounded theory?

Whilst supportive of more progressive forms of grounded theory, their principles and procedures still need to be made explicit when constructing the final research product. This applies to all grounded theory studies, regardless of which version is used. It may seem a

rather obvious observation, but there are instances of papers submitted for review that ignore most, and in some cases, all of the basic principles of the methodology. This instantly raises methodological alarm bells and is a vital consideration if authors are claiming their study is grounded theory. A few unstructured or semi structured interviews do not make a grounded theory study, just as a couple of hours of observation do not make an ethnography. One of the main criticisms of many papers, and a theme that occurs frequently, is the overly generic use of the label grounded theory. It appears that a growing number of researchers who use qualitative *methods* feel justified in labeling the work grounded theory. The flexibility of the methodology in terms of the wide range of data that can be collected and used to theory build sometimes leads to the temptation to attach the grounded theory label to observational research or interviews. Possibly the most common however, is where data collection procedures are detailed and described using standard qualitative methods, and only at the end, does the researcher claim that the data were analyzed using grounded theory coding techniques. Grounded theory relies on a process of theory building from data as it is collected, compared and analyzed simultaneously. The coding process is part of this inductive, iterative process and cannot be divorced from it. It is a methodology that is supposed to be a total package and not a 'pick'n'mix' approach to theory building. Theory should be grounded in the data and it is only through gradual analytical abstraction, and data and theoretical saturation, that the theory stands as a product of the methodology.

Avoid methodological ambiguity: If the study claims to be grounded theory, there is a need to describe and explain the methodological approach and why it was the most appropriate to answer the research questions. While some use the label grounded theory as a 'catch all' for qualitative research, at the other extreme there is the temptation to throw in numerous methodologies as part of the same study (Goulding 1998; 2009). Multi-method or

mixed method studies are fine and indeed often ensure credibility of the findings. Multi-methodology studies, on the other hand, are much harder to defend. A number of the works cited in this paper have used mixed methodologies (i.e., O'Donohoe 1997 - audience ethnography and grounded theory), (Kates and Shaw-Garlock 1999, discursive textual analysis and grounded theory), (Nelson et al 2004, netnography and grounded theory), (Delorme and Huh 2009, methodological triangulation), but the 'how and why' for these combinations were discussed, explained and the process of applying the various techniques was explicated in the methodology section. Nonetheless, papers claiming to be ethnography, and grounded theory, and discourse analysis (for example), with no justification or explanation as to the various strengths of each, and how these strengths were exploited and the inherent tensions resolved, are not uncommon. This creates a difficult position to defend. All methodologies have their own ontological and epistemological underpinnings, their codes of etiquette regarding the type of data that can be used, how it can be used, the role of the researcher in the process and procedures for analyzing the data. Often, these can be fundamentally different, but will still be judged according to their own criteria.

4) Be clear that grounded theory is theory building not theory testing.

Following on from the last point, is the use of grounded theory in ways that are not always congruent with its intent. This is often the result of using interpretivist methods to analyze 'realist' assumptions. Such manuscripts may start off with hypotheses and then proceed to report how these were tested through interviews or word counts. Whilst there is nothing wrong with combining multiple methods, or quantitative and qualitative techniques, and indeed there are cases where this should be encouraged (Suddaby, 2006), there has to be some congruence between the research question, the basic ontology, and the methods used. With grounded theory this is the important factor, not the nature of the data itself as "any kind

of data can be constantly compared" (Glaser1999, p842). Indeed Glaser and Strauss's original 1967 text has a section on how and when to use quantitative data. Whilst not necessarily standard, grounded theory does not exclude the use of surveys towards the end of the research, although it might be argued that testing and verification of the theory comes through saturation of the data and not necessarily as a result of quantitative measurement. The main problem lies in methodological transgression. Such transgressions refer to "the frank violation of the grounded theory philosophy and methodology" (Skodal-Wilson and Ambler-Hutchinson 1996, p224). These methodological transgressions or methodological muddling (Baker *et al* 1992) may pertain to cases where the canons of quantitative method are modified and applied to interview or textual data, and where the outcome is a study described in positivist terms such as random sampling, reliability, validity statistics, independent and dependent variables and so on. Suddaby (2006) argues that grounded theorists do engage in a system of theory testing, only not in the Popperian sense of falsification. Rather, theory testing is conducted through the rigorous application of the constant comparison method.

5) Explain the methodology and the process of data collection.

A further problem arises when authors fail to provide sufficient detail on their methodological journey and the techniques used along the way. Suddaby (2006) discusses the growing rift between academic purists who seek to develop and improve the methodology and pragmatists who are more actively engaged in applying it. He warns of the need to bear in mind that grounded theory was developed as a practical methodology for providing understanding of complex social phenomenon, and as a way of occupying a middle ground between "slippery epistemological boundaries" (p638). As such its techniques are inherently messy and require a tacit understanding, of, for example, when saturation is reached, which

only comes with experience. Another feature of grounded theory that has been challenged, is the over emphasis on induction (method, data, findings, theory), as a position that stands in direct opposition to deduction (theory, method, data, findings). Informally most researchers readily admit that research is a function of both inductive and deductive analysis (Nyilasy and Reid 2009). Accordingly there is scope for the development and explication of a more 'iterative' as averse to purely 'inductive' approach to theory development (Orton, 1997).

Nevertheless, it is still incumbent on the researcher to provide sufficient detail of the process, and, where necessary, the interaction of induction and deduction in the research. Kaufman and Denk (2011) suggest that in detailing the study, the following should be included as a measure of rigor: A definition of the research questions; information on instrument development; information on data gathering and on analysis of that data; how data were fragmented; an indication of early theoretical insights and how these were developed into explanatory categories; how and when theoretical saturation was reached; details of categories derived from the data and the literature; the emergent theory and the identification and explication of the core category(ies). These should essentially serve as checklist for the draft paper.

6) Provide analytical detail:

Just as some papers lack detail on the overall process, other papers include a great deal of detail on the collection of data, the sites, people and places, but then stop short at discussing the techniques used for analyzing this data. Time and again, statements appear such as; 'grounded theory procedures for coding data were used', with very little information about what these techniques were and how the author moved through the various levels of abstraction. However, the key question is, of course, how much of this detail can be shown in the final manuscript? Inherently, the method requires that the researcher move through a

succession of stages starting with in vivo codes, or open codes, through to more abstract or second level categorical codes, and finally to the last stage of conceptual and theoretical codes which are the building blocks of theory (Skodol-Wilson and Ambler-Hutchinson, 1996). At each of these levels the theory should become more refined, integrating abstract concepts that cover behavioral variation.

Ultimately, the author has to find a way of describing the analytical process and show how ideas and data were integrated into a set of meaningful concepts that indicate a relationship to each other. Reviewers will not expect to see lists of early open codes. However, a brief description of how the data were coded and integrated helps to build a picture. On the other hand there is general acknowledgement of the risk of placing too much emphasis on identifying codes as the exclusive feature (Glaser, 1978; Strauss, 1991; Glaser, 1992). Coding is an essential part of grounded theory analysis, but grounded theory is much more than a coding technique. Coding strategies include taking data apart and asking what is happening in small segments of data and which theoretical category each segment indicates (Charmaz 1983). Ultimately, it is down to the researcher to attach meaning and provide insight and exposition in order to move beyond thick description.

Manual or software analysis?: This raises the question of whether coding should be done manually, by the researcher as he/she progresses through the study, or, if software programs should be used as part of the analytical process. This is a matter for the individual researcher to decide as there is some disagreement between those of a purist persuasion who argue that only through working with the data, mentally wrestling with the various meanings and interpretations, discarding and refining codes and ultimately identifying and justifying sets of relationships, can the researcher truly claim to have engaged in theoretical emersion. Moreover, CAQDAS (computer assisted qualitative data analysis software) can allow the user to perform complex analysis without fully understanding the theoretical principles

behind the analysis (Bringer et al 206). On the other hand, there is the argument that while software programs cannot produce a developed theory, they can be useful in the organization and retrieval of data. As Suddaby, (2006 p.368) suggests, 'qualitative software programs can be useful in organizing and coding data, but they are no substitute for the interpretation of data".

One of the most popular software programs is NVIVO, a program that has been specifically designed to allow data to be coded and analyzed as it is collected. The benefits of this program are that it allows for open and axial coding. It can also act as an audit trail and, important for the grounded theory process, memos can be attached to documents and coding categories. NVIVO can be used for frequency counts, although frequency does not necessarily indicate importance, but the program also has design features that help to recognize gaps in the coding which may help give voice to less mentioned, but salient ideas (Bringer et al 2006). Additionally, the researcher can incorporate links to hyperlinks featuring non textual data such as photographs, newspaper reports, and other visual forms of data which may be more relevant to advertising research, and particularly research that has a strong visual element. Indeed memo writing and journal keeping are important features of any grounded theory, and here too, NVIVO offers some valuable assistance. For example, memos can be written into NVIVO which allows thoughts to be coded and links made to images, documents and media reports (Bringer et al 2006). In the final product however, it is essential that the author shows how all the various techniques and processes link together to form the provisional analysis (Hutchinson et al 2010).

Bringer et al (2006), while enthusiastic about the program (and offer an illustration of using it), do however point out some of the potential pitfalls of using software programs. These include the degree of computer literacy on the part of the researcher and the time needed to become proficient with the program. There is also the danger that the researcher

may rely too much on the program to do the analysis which may lead to a lack of familiarity with the data and a lack of theoretical sensitivity. This in turn may result in failure to move to a more abstract level of analysis and theory development, which is ultimately the responsibility of the researcher.

7) Fully analyze data:

Whilst dilemmas exist over coding and the amount of detail to include, or whether data should be analyzed manually or using software, even more important is the quality of the analysis itself in terms of offering a coherent theory. It is imperative that raw data is not simply left as 'raw' data. It is the job of the author/researcher to interpret it theoretically. It requires a fine dance between description, abstraction and theorization which shows due process and avoids either straight description or a high jump from verbatim accounts to high level abstract theory. Most researchers, when looking to publish in a particular journal will look to exemplars of papers published in that journal. It is often the case that the methodology chapter gets reduced as a result of the peer review process and word limits of the journal. Whilst looking to exemplars for guidance in laying out the methodological orientation for the work is always useful, it can sometimes be a little misleading. Frequently the published paper does not reflect the full extent of the process. Word limits and space for theoretical revisions often mean that the final product is a condensed version of the original. It is therefore advisable, at least in the first submission, to include a full description of the methodology including how concepts and categories were derived. Reviewers may well ask you to reduce the methodology in later revisions in order to focus on other aspects of the paper, but at least they are able to judge the rigor of the study if these details are included to begin with.

8) Do not use grounded theory as an excuse to ignore the literature:

One of the biggest misconceptions of grounded theory is the idea that the researcher has to enter the field devoid of any preconceptions or theoretical understanding in order to avoid theoretical contamination (Suddaby 2006; Goulding 2009; Nyilasy and Reid 2009). This of course begs the question - as academics, how can we divorce ourselves from our intellectual baggage accumulated over the years and start with a clean slate? Today, it is widely accepted that although grounded theory is primarily inductive and data driven, it is impossible to wipe the slate clean of all prior knowledge, theories and conceptual positions. Charmaz (1983) points to the fact that unlike deductive research, grounded theorists do not rely directly on the literature to shape their ideas, since it is expected that the theory will emerge independent of the analysis. This however, should not be misinterpreted as commencing from a position of total ignorance. Rather the researcher should read in related areas from the start and allow the data to direct the researcher to the literature that can inform and sensitize the emerging theory and vice versa (Nyilasy and Reid 2009). At the very least, a general reading of the literature should be carried out in order to gain a feel for the issues in question and identify the gaps to be filled (Cutcliffe 2000). But, it is also important that the researcher does not become too immersed in the literature and guided by it. Glaser (1978) discusses the role of theory and its importance in sensitizing the researcher to the conceptual significance of emerging concepts and categories, observing that knowledge and theory are used as if they were another informant. This is vital, for without this grounding in extant knowledge, pattern recognition would be limited to the obvious and the superficial, depriving the analyst of the conceptual leverage from which to develop theory (Glaser 1978). Therefore, contrary to popular belief, grounded theory research is not a-theoretical but requires an understanding of related theory and empirical work in order to enhance theoretical sensitivity. Indeed the quality of the final product arising from the application of

grounded theory is directly dependent upon the quality of the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon under study (Turner 1983). The challenge, is how to make the familiar new and to be aware of the possibilities of existing theory and its influence upon the work being undertaken (Suddaby 2006).

9) Writing the theory:

A question that comes up time and time again is the issue of writing and presenting grounded theory research for publication. One general belief is that it should be written as it were conducted - that is, as a process of presenting the research questions, a discussion of data collection and codes, followed by findings, theory and re-contextualization in the literature. However, in reality this does not work. The end result of such endeavors tends to be a confusing array of method mixed with early theory, mixed with literature. Moreover, some become so obsessed with writing the study 'as it happened' that they lose sight of the fact that grounded theory is not a theory in itself, it is a methodology, and a means to an end. In reality, grounded theory is usually written up in a conventional manner. That is, context, literature, problems, methodology, interpretation and theoretical findings.

The norm that has evolved is to present grounded theory in the same sequence as quantitative and indeed most qualitative research. But, it is important for the author to make clear the emergent nature of the research, the means of data collection and analysis, and the sequence of these. These should be made apparent along with examples of coding and illustrative representations of conceptual developments through diagrams or tables (Strauss and Corbin 1990; Goulding 2009). Importantly, it is down to the researcher to state that although they are presenting their study in a traditional manner, the concepts did, in fact emerge from the data (Suddaby 2006; Goulding 2009).

10) Premature closure:

With grounded theory, the main source of validity checking is through theoretical saturation. This means that the researcher stays in the field, searching for new people, places and experiences that will flesh out the emerging theory. As such theoretical sampling only ceases when no new insights are seen in freshly gathered data (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Anything less runs the risk of premature closure. However, this brings with it its own problems, particularly when working to a deadline, as time limits cannot be applied. Saturation can take years to reach in some cases while in others, it may be reached quickly. Nevertheless, the author needs to be aware of this and describe when and why they stopped collecting data and why they felt saturation was achieved (or not). Moreover, contrary to common belief, saturation does not only mean exhaustion of the data, but also relates to how ideas and concepts from that data are abstracted and ‑theorized. Here problems may arise from a lack of conceptualization or theoretical abstraction. This may be down to an inability to lift the analysis above the descriptive level, or possibly the fact that the researcher either stopped collecting data too early, or stopped interrogating the data too early. This issue of premature closure is a well debated area although it is often simply taken to mean leaving the field too early. It is not. It may also include the under analysis of visual, textual, observational, or narrative data. Premature closure can occur in situations where the researcher has collected a wealth of data if the analyst does not move beyond describing what is in the data. As such the grounded theory is based solely on participant's descriptions, and not on developed concepts. It is important therefore that the researcher lifts ideas from the data and explains them theoretically in order to give meaning to descriptions of the behavior under study.

Grounded theory, as the name implies, strives for the development of new theory. Yet one of the most common problems with papers, is that the 'theory is not a theory'. That is,

papers that claim to offer a new theory, are found, on closer inspection, to be an application of an existing theory or concept. Or, the theory is simply not supported by the data, or there are too many things going on and no solid category upon which to build a contribution. Therefore it is important to define the key concept or overarching category; state the contribution the research makes to the field of knowledge; fully interrogate the literature on related concepts and theories especially after the theory has emerged; show extension or 'new' theoretical contribution, and ensure that the emergent theory is supported throughout the data, discussion and conclusion.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper was to highlight some of the errors that emerge as problematic when grounded theorists tackle the not inconsiderable problem of trying to condense, what are usually complex, often longitudinal, and data intensive studies, into a paper that is both illuminating of a new problem and, stands the test of leading journal's methodological standards. By considering the suggestions proposed here, it is hoped that the complete process can be demonstrated, errors avoided, and the credibility and robustness of the study established. Ultimately the goal of most researchers working within advertising is publication in a top flight journal, but, as this paper demonstrates, reviewers are becoming increasingly fastidious in how they judge grounded theory manuscripts.

Grounded theory is a methodology with a long pedigree across a number of disciplines in the social sciences, and its use has grown over the years in advertising scholarship. Given the constantly evolving nature of advertising and its many fields of enquiry, it is not hard to understand why. Moreover, with increasing attention turning towards the image, the visual, and methods for incorporating such forms of data, the flexibility of the method is potentially opening up exciting avenues of enquiry. Additionally, there remain

many opportunities for theory building, regardless of which version of grounded theory is used. For example, Nyilasy et al (2013) argue that the sphere of creativity, or what might be termed 'creative genius' in advertising practitioners is highly complex and will 'never be modeled by any simplistic formula' (p.1706). As such it is an area that deserves further and ongoing attention, or 'reconsideration' (Nyilasy and Reid 2009).

One area that is ripe for theory building is the relatively virgin area of advertising and ethics in non western contexts, as Drumwright and Kabal (2016) illustrate in their work on the Middle East and North Africa. In this they raise numerous questions about advertising practitioners as taste makers, vulnerable and susceptible consumers, issues of advertising related to cultural damage, and advertising understanding and meaning making in these markets. These areas are worthy of further enquiry and would benefit from the kind of systematic, in-depth, layered analysis required by grounded theory. Moreover, emerging markets such as China and India, with their drive towards rapid consumerism, would offer ideal contexts to develop theory on such issues as advertising literacy and vulnerability, the 'new' creatives in such markets, advertising assimilation, as well as the key questions of ethics and accountability in the advertising industries in these contexts. The use of theory building approaches also has great potential, particularly given the evolution of new technologies and social and digital media which are transforming advertising at an unprecedented rate, and, which call for new theoretical explanations that challenge orthodox frameworks, offer fresh insights and new theories that fit the digital age.

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