



OHCO

Occupational Health Clinics
for Ontario Workers Inc.

Centres de santé des
travailleurs (ses) de l'Ontario Inc.

Best Practices for Analyzing Qualitative Comments in COPSQQ Surveys

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Introduction

- Overview of COPSOQ surveys open ended comments
- Importance of qualitative analysis of comments
- Challenges in analyzing qualitative comments and need for a structured and systematic approach
- Various ways you can analyze the data
- Programs and tools to aid in organization and analysis
- Examples

Importance of qualitative comments

- Provides in-depth insights into workers' **experiences** and **perspectives** to gain a potentially deeper understanding of the data.
- Helps understand **complex** issues, by helping understand the importance of the **context** to the participants, as well as the **process** by which events and actions have taken place.
- Can help to enhance the understanding of the organizational culture.
- Can help identify emerging themes that were not addressed in the survey.

Importance of qualitative comments

- Can help explore workplace specific concerns and suggestions that can lead to more actionable findings.
- Puts “flesh to the bone” to compliment the quantitative results. Provides a breadth of coverage, capturing the full range of possible responses at little additional costs.
- Helps to clarify both independent and dependent variables, and help with theoretical explanations.
- Open-ended questions may help with the power imbalance between researchers and respondents.
- *“Decision makers are using qualitative research evidence to better understand health systems, socioeconomic contexts, and communities.” (Langlois et al., 2018)*
- *“Qualitative studies have provided significant contributions to health services and policy research, specifically with conceptualizing health, illness, the dynamics of interprofessional teams and aspects of the delivery of care.” (Chafe, 2017)*

Limitations of Qualitative Analysis

- Challenges in communicating and ensuring confidentiality of specific worker opinions
- Common for workplaces to want to quantify and rank the qualitative findings, possibly cutting off important findings.

*Analysis does not take as long as it used to, especially with the help of programs.

Using qualitative research in workplaces

- Open-ended questions in surveys, focus groups, interviews, observations.
- May be important to have JHSC or members of workplace help in designing questions as they have an insiders perspective.
 - Could use interview template or guide such as the COPSOQ categories.
- Analysis can be done by committee that includes multiple levels of workers, or a third party (OHCOW does this for workplaces).
- Confidentiality is important when collecting data and sharing results. Should be a voluntary.
- Important to discuss results with workplace and brainstorm practical solutions

Quantifying qualitative research example

- Be careful not to place too much weight on quantifying qualitative research. In qualitative research the validity of the study does not rest on the researcher's ability to demonstrate representativeness with respect to the total population. Rather, it rests on transferability whereby the researcher offers detailed description of the setting in which the research was undertaken (O'Caithan and Thomas, 2004)
- Well known or assumed concerns may not be discussed by participants, especially if already covered in quantitative survey.
- Closed responses in surveys may constrain what is considered the legitimate agenda for the qualitative responses (Decorte et al., 2019).
 - *COVID-19 workplace concerns discussed by only 1 participant in comments.*
 - *30% on quantitative survey said they were considering looking for a new job, however only 5% of participants discussed this in the qualitative comments.*

Qualitative Data Analysis: Steps Involved

- Data preparation: cleaning and organizing data for analysis
- Coding: assigning labels or codes to segments of data based on their content
- Creating categories: Grouping similar codes
- Theme identification: identifying recurring patterns or themes in the coded data

Organization of coding

- Several options from basic to advanced
- Condensing word document
- Excel templates
- Programs – MAXQDA, NVivo, Atlas.ti, Dedoose, QDA Miner, Quirkos, ChatGPT, BingAI

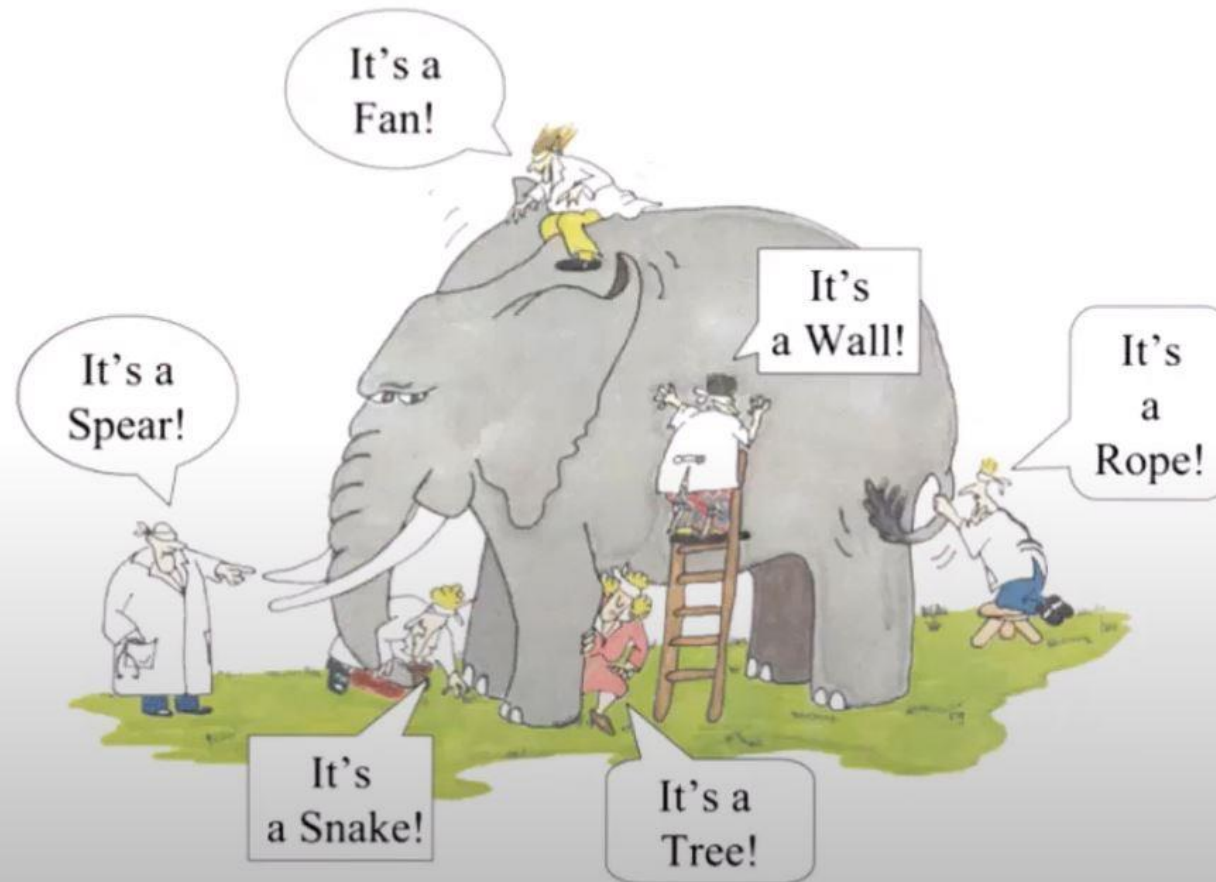
Comment Category	Concern Comments	Total +	Solution Comments	Total -	Personal notes
Thermal Comfort					
Toxic Workplace					
Bullying					
Driving Concerns					

The screenshot displays the Quirkos 1.1 interface. On the left, a word cloud visualizes terms from source text, including 'The Vow', 'First Referendum Ref', 'Devo Max', 'Edinburgh', 'Glasgow', 'Rest Other areas', 'Trust', 'Discussion', 'Yes', 'Messages', 'Information', 'No', 'Conserv', 'Labour', 'Parties', 'UKIP', 'SNP', 'Charisma', 'Politicians', 'Individuals', 'Changing opinions', 'Personal opinions', 'Other people', 'Policies', 'Cuts', 'Strategy', 'Business', 'Emotions', 'Future', 'Impact', 'Importance', 'Worries', 'TV', 'BBC', 'Social Media', 'Radio', 'Media', 'Bias', 'Newspaper', 'Age', 'Gender', 'Class', 'Key Quotes', 'Positive', and 'Negative'. On the right, a chat window shows a conversation with an AI assistant. The chat history includes:

- A: Well, I was already swayed, so I'm not sure. I'm not entirely convinced that we are still 'Better Together' because things have just gone from bad to worse. I didn't think they'd done the ground work to enable us to go independent and make a good job of it at the time.
- Q: It sounds like some of those messages about being independent from the south at least politically, are those kind of-?
- A: That's attractive?
- Q: Appealing, yes.
- A: More maybe in a federal way. I think Scotland gets quite a good deal, whether that continues is another thing that's possibly up in the air, but I also like the fact that it's being European. We're better, bigger than we are individually and I think that's the way to go, otherwise we'll have no say in world affairs at all.
- Q: Yes.
- A: It's a shame to knock back all the history that we have with England

At the bottom, the status bar shows 'Source Text Coverage: 28% (47% total)' and lists open documents: 'Adrian.docx', 'Paula.docx', and 'Jim.docx'.

Qualitative research



Philip Chircop

Coding for COPSOQ further comments

- What do the participants perceive to be as the problems and possible solutions/suggestions to their workplace?
- Focus - Concerns and suggestions, further comments about health and safety environment concerns.
- Use participant wording, limit interpretations and assumptions
- Counting, organizing and ranking.

Driving Hazards Concerns	Driving Hazards Suggestions
Required to drive in unsafe driving conditions, inclement weather, remote locations, tight deadlines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Flexibility to work from home. ● Staggered start and end times. ● Allow biking to work
Traffic congestion, everyone leaves at the same time leading to congestion, traffic delays.	
Long commutes, cost of gas, too expensive to live close	
Parking lot concerns – Security issues, dangerous people, designated lot usually full, hard to navigate.	
Further Comments and Concerns	Further Suggestions
Workload and unrealistic deadlines – caseloads unmanageable, hard to set boundaries with members, wasting time on file management, not enough support, turndowns time consuming, work not streamlined, lacking resources to do job.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need more staff - temps and support, hire someone for turndowns, backfill, floater positions. ● Many want more working from home options. ● Need team building
Toxic work environment – bullying from reps, verbal abuse, fear of retaliation for speaking up, only negative feedback, elected members bully/treat reps poorly, temps treated like lower class/disposable, lack of connection between staff and upper management.	
Role and job clarity issues, lack clear directions, changes randomly, no control, no mentoring or training of junior employees	
Not able to meet clients needs, inability to plan large assignments	
Problems with EAP system and counsellors.	

AI Tools

- ChatGPT
- BingAI

- Creates quick summaries of comments, can create themes about topics.
- Can count number of themes
- Some errors, assumptions, but rapidly evolving and getting better
- Limited characters

OpenAI ChatGPT analysis of comments (Mar 3/23):

Work-life balance: Many people mentioned the need for better work-life balance and reducing stress levels in the workplace. Some suggested solutions included having more flexible schedules, reducing workloads, or encouraging employees to take breaks and prioritize their mental health.

Pay and compensation: Several commenters expressed concerns about low pay and inadequate compensation that has not kept up with inflation. Some suggested solutions included increasing salaries, providing bonuses, or offering other forms of financial support such as assistance with debt repayment.

Bullying and discrimination: A few people reported experiencing or witnessing bullying and discrimination in the workplace. Suggestions for addressing these issues included better training and education for managers and employees, more thorough investigations and accountability measures, and creating a culture of respect and inclusion.

Management and leadership: Many commenters cited problems with management and leadership, including inadequate supervision and support, micromanagement, and lack of communication. Some suggested solutions included improving communication channels, providing more training and resources for managers, and creating more opportunities for feedback and collaboration.

Qualitative research techniques



Triangulation

Collecting data through multiple methods.

Checking your results with multiple raters, or (ideally) multiple measures
-Inter-rater reliability.



Member checking

Returning to your test group with your results, and asking if they seem applicable/correct



Reflexivity

Creating a journal in which the researcher records their thoughts, biases, and impressions throughout the study

Guards against unintentional experimenter bias (by making the researcher more aware of it)

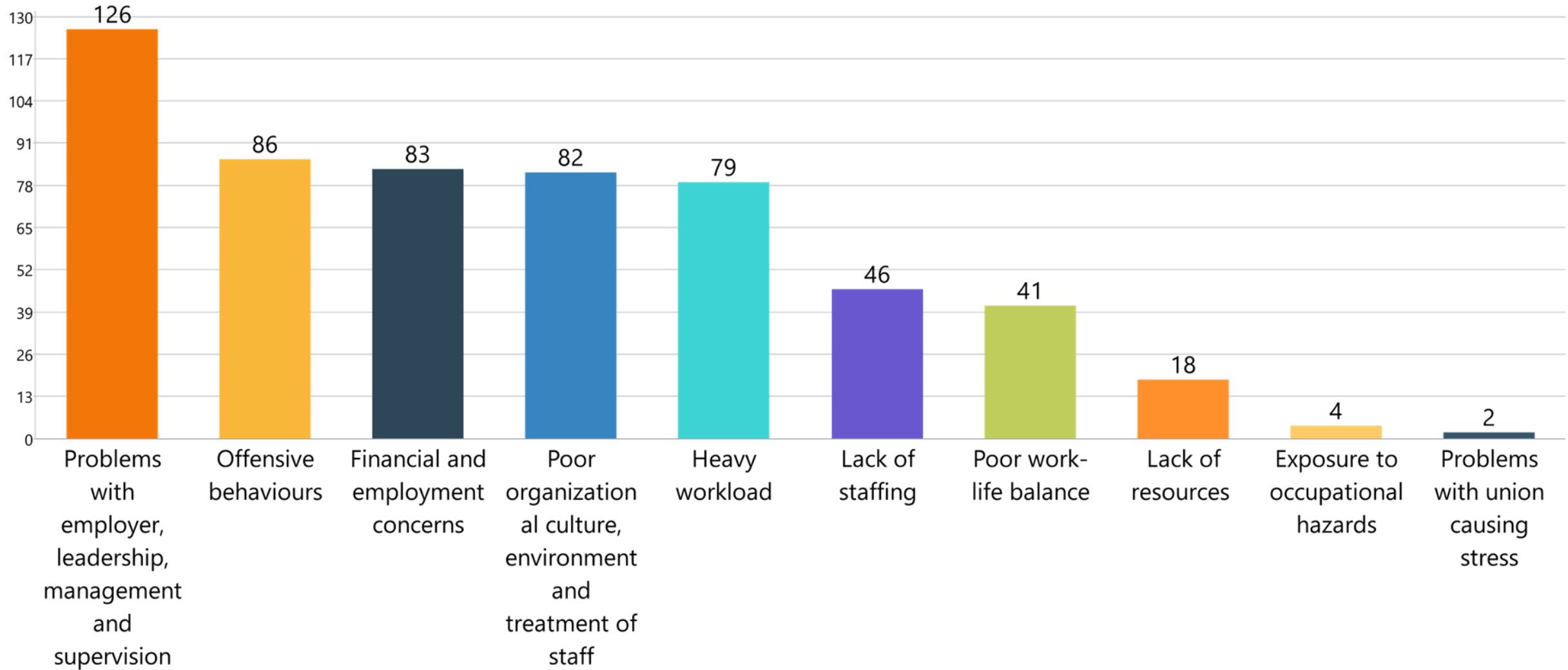
Give power to the voices

- Created themes can be supported by direct quotes that illustrate or speak to the theme.
- Quotes can provide powerful voices that resonate with the readers.
- Include quotes that can resonate with the participants

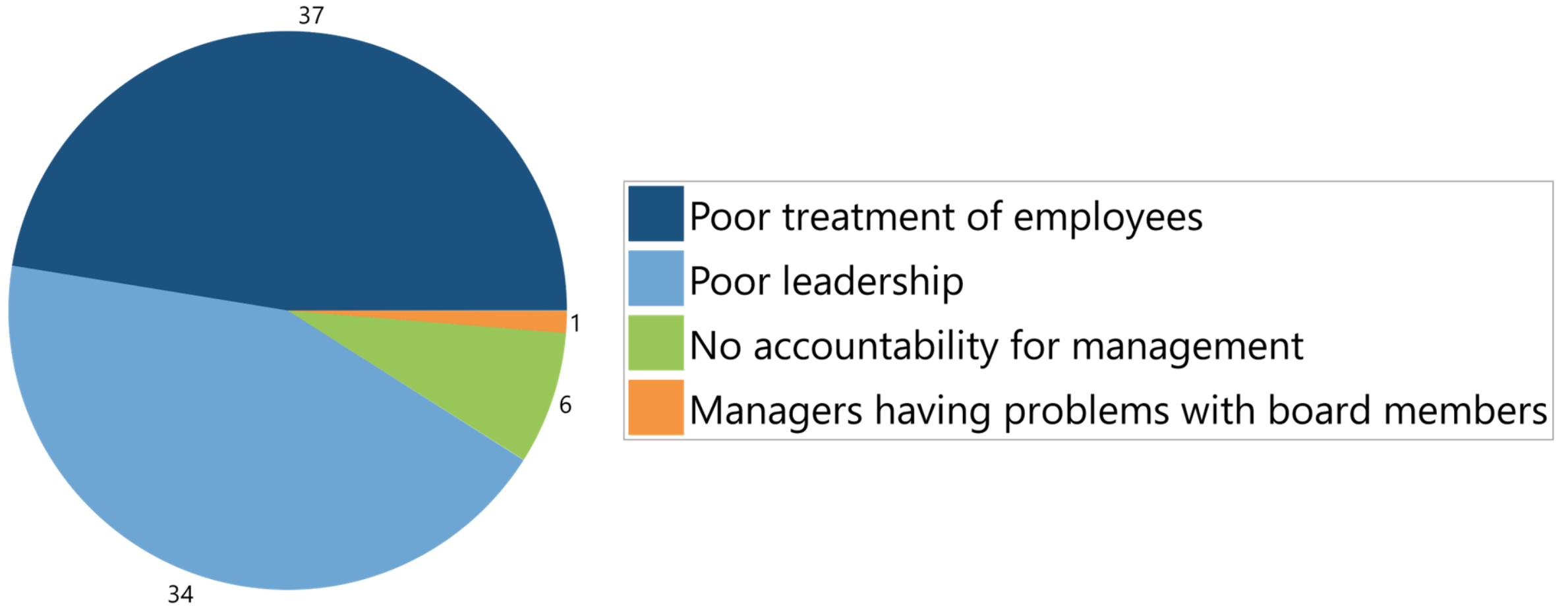
- Pandemic Survey Quote

“I have had my elderly parents self-isolate with me and providing care to a parent who is physically disabled and also has dementia without access to homecare has placed an increased burden on me and has fractured my workday into chunks of time between caregiving. Senior care is a huge burden that is not being addressed well during the pandemic”

Poor working conditions



Problems with employer, leadership, management and supervision



Educators during the COVID-19 pandemic in Ontario

- Abbreviated version of the COPSOQ including six dimensions items: quantitative demands, work pace, predictability, role conflicts, and social support from supervisors and co-workers
- Education Workers (N=5774). Second wave of the pandemic (Sept-Dec 2020)
- Further comments (N=1513 = 26%)
- Comments analysis (NVivo software) --> TEN themes

Educators during the COVID-19 pandemic in Ontario

Structural themes	Emergent themes
quantitative demands	recognition
work pace	control over working time
predictability	job insecurity
role conflicts	organizational justice
social support from supervisors	work life conflict
social support from co-workers	job satisfaction
	insecurity over working conditions
	quality of work
	insufficient resources
	cognitive demands
	+ professional concerns
	+ children's education and health

Educators during the COVID-19 pandemic in Ontario

- Quantitative and cognitive demands derived from the COVID-instigated re-organization of work, with insufficient support and no adjustment of the expectations and targets in the educational programs, are said to generate feelings of frustration and failure that undermine the teachers' professional commitment.

"I am exhausted. I have spent just about every waking moment and 5 all nights so far, planning prepping, writing reports and communications. I am not getting ahead more than half a day at a time. I am unable to assess and properly monitor growth Constant feeling of failure."

Educators during the COVID-19 pandemic in Ontario

- The qualitative analysis confirmed and added detail to the quantitative results about important differences in the psychosocial work environment between respondents engaged in in-person learning versus online learning. For example, in terms of support:

"I feel fortunate to be teaching in-person, despite all the challenges (not knowing the curriculum, pivoting from being a teacher-librarian to a Grade 5-6 teacher) and risks (25 students in my class), because I have a wonderful and supportive in-person group of staff members who help me emotionally and pedagogically"

Educators during the COVID-19 pandemic in Ontario

- Along with the *unaccomplished professional performance and perspectives of early retirement*, **emergent** themes also related to *worries about children's education and health*
- Teachers expressed their preferred role during this exceptional period not only according to their own personal situation but also to their beliefs and commitments to students learning needs.

--> These findings support the discussion of the barriers and facilitators for providing the best possible education with the best protections for workers and the school community in times of an emergency, as it is the sudden expansion of a public health hazard or other natural or technological phenomena.

Home Import Codes Memos Variables Analysis Mixed Methods Visual Tools Reports

New Project Open Project Document System Code System Document Browser Retrieved Segments Logbook Teamwork Merge Projects Save Project As Save Anonymized Project As Project from Activated Documents External Files Archive Data

Document System

Documents	28450
0.00	0
ACC	28450
+ 114,262,921,815.00	4
+ 114,262,922,383.00	5
+ 114,262,921,904.00	6
+ 114,262,921,545.00	15
+ 114,262,921,813.00	4
+ 114,262,923,406.00	7
+ 114,262,923,789.00	5
+ 114,262,922,967.00	7
+ 114,262,925,382.00	8
+ 114,262,925,188.00	4
+ 114,262,921,806.00	8
+ 114,262,923,923.00	4
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+ 114,262,929,697.00	4
+ 114,262,931,971.00	6
+ 114,262,926,824.00	11
+ 114,262,926,566.00	7
+ 114,262,927,411.00	7
+ 114,262,922,941.00	3
+ 114,262,925,308.00	6
+ 114,262,929,500.00	9
+ 114,262,929,064.00	8
+ 114,262,924,800.00	4
+ 114,262,929,510.00	10
+ 114,262,932,233.00	

Code System

respect	72
pay	530
schedules	112
passengers	418
Company 2 conditions	85
quality of work and leadership	1
stress	1
unpaid duties	2
harassment	1
Discrimination	1
improvements	1
resources	3
understaffed	6
unfairness	0
under appreciation	3
financial inequity	1
unfair treatment	3
rights inequity	1
need of training	3
toxic workplace	2
vulnerability vs passengers	2
untrust	1
unsafe conditions	1
unrealistic expectations	3
Financial	6
about EAP	5
conditions for resting	3
Sets	0

Document Browser: 114,294,550,161.00 (6 Paragraphs)

Further comments(passengers)

hours per month paid t	1	80
how many extra hours i	2	30
minorities	3	SUM(Y4390:AE4390)
Race	4	SUM(AG4390:AN4390)
discrimination type ..against women	5	Because I am a woman.
..money ..unpaid ..pay Further comments ..stress and men ..per diem	6	Money is a daily concern. I feel like I have to list myself for overtime often to earn a bit more, and after accomplishing 100hrs you feel completely drain because of all the hours on the workplace [unpaid]. With the cost of living growing and a financial crisis at our door, it's hard to not worry about paying the bills. Plus, when willing to work often I don't get called or I'm being told that I'm not legal by couple minutes even tho I'm willing to work and available! I get stressed out about not getting called on voluntarily extension since that small extra is often needed to pay the bills. The per diem are often not covering enough especially LHR which is so expensive. I often try to eat my own food so I don't spend more than my allowance, It can often go easily above with just a regular meal.

Retrieved Segments

ACC > 114,262,924,563.00

All this non paid work is putting huge stress on me and my colleagues. Despite this, we are all smiling and being there for our passenger. I feel this is modern slavery. Don't get me wrong I love my job and being with nice passengers and be able to make them feel safe on the plane. But there is a huge pressure on us.

114,262,924,563.00, Pos. 6 Further comments > passengers (0)

ACC > 114,262,928,437.00

Fear of discipline when booking off or needing personal time to manage health and emergencies at home. Fear of discipline when offering extras or repositioning passengers based on a medical or customer service need. Example, moving an elderly passenger to a bulkhead to help with leg pain/circulation. Offering an amenity kit or other upgraded product to a passenger in economy to help de-escalate a customer service concern. Moving a disabled passenger from y to py or py to business based on mobility and comfort/health concerns. Here is a big one.

114,262,928,437.00, Pos. 6 Further comments > passengers (0)

ACC > 114,262,945,122.00

Constant OTP pressures really impact working environment at the beginning of each flight. More time is needed prior to passenger boarding. This time needs to be added and recognized.

114,262,945,122.00, Pos. 7 Further comments > passengers (0)

ACC > 114,262,945,122.00

This task should be removed from inflight responsibilities. We have enough ground duty responsibilities when passengers board.

114,262,945,122.00, Pos. 7 Further comments > passengers (0)

ACC > 114,262,958,540.00

Female discrimination by male passengers

Stress and worry of the company coming to get us for no reason Passengers are meaner than ever and we don't have the tools to defend ourselves without worrying management will take their sides

114,262,958,540.00, Pos. 5-6 Further comments > passengers (0)

ACC > 114,262,963,024.00

Not given enough resources to do the job that we are asked to do. Having to over compensate and apologize with passengers when we are missing stuff/resources

114,262,963,024.00, Pos. 5 Further comments > passengers (0)

ACC > 114,262,972,187.00

We are made to feel like second class citizens within our own company. There should also be room/s available in the secure area that flight attendants can go to get away from the passengers. They have such a room in Toronto the US side but nothing like that in Montreal. When flights are delayed, having to sit in front of passengers can be very stressful. We need quiet places to sleep, eat and gear down that are away from the public.

114,262,972,187.00, Pos. 10 Further comments > passengers (0)

This needs to be prioritized. The passengers go to the lounge before a flight and we should have our space to decompress or even before a flight. The Comm Centre is inconvenient as it is not near

VI. Conclusion

- Importance of qualitative analysis in providing insights into psychosocial working conditions
- Need for a structured and systematic approach to qualitative analysis
- COPSOQ provides the conceptual framework for the qualitative analysis of the psychosocial working conditions and could also be enriched with the feedback of the participants and users' experiences
- Takeaways for attendees: further considering qualitative analysis and its use in workplace assessments for interventions to improve working conditions