
MY428 Week 10: Notes on Coding

General Questions

- Is coding an essential and mandatory part of undertaking qualitative data analysis?
(Answer: No).
- Can coding be undertaken without thematic analysis?
(Answer: Yes)
- Have the terms 'codes' and 'themes' become different terms for similar processes?
(Answer: Yes – in some cases)

What skills do you need to code?

- **A broad view** – the capacity to stay above your data to see it in the wider context rather than to become bogged down in every quotable quote or story.
- **Theoretical sensitivity** – the capacity to link your data to theory/your literature – for interpretation.
- **A love of ordering** – but the capacity to understand that not all the data will fit neatly into your coding system.
- **A good memory** – to recall where you have come across something similar in another part of the data (and not too many codes!!!!)

Coding Options

1. Code everything of relevance and then develop themes/categories/major codes (using computer management programs or not).
2. Develop broad themes and then code all your data using micro codes.
3. Query the data on the basis of your research question and then develop broad categories and themes/subcategories (= Summative approach).
4. Summarize your data, edit and present in narrative or case studies (minimal coding)

Coding terminology

- *In Vivo coding* (using words in the text to create the code)
- *Free coding/open coding* (assigning any code to a segment of data)
- *Axial Coding* (grouping data segments around a central concept or category)
- *Intensive coding* (using many codes in a small fragment of data)
- *Automatic coding* (develop a code, define the parameters and use the query function to locate other similar segments)
- *Memos* (additional notes added to coded segments)

See C. Grbich. *Qualitative Data Analysis* (2013) Chap 21. pp 260-267.

First and Second cycles of coding

A second Cycle of coding (if needed) is an advanced way of reorganizing and reanalysing data coded through a first cycle of coding. What happens through the process?

- More accurate words or phrases replace original codes
- Some codes will be merged together because they are conceptually similar
- Infrequent codes will be assessed for their utility in the overall coding scheme
- Some codes may be dropped because they are deemed 'marginal' or 'redundant'

More terminology

- *Attribute Coding* (coding of basic descriptive information: demographics, data format; time frame...)
- *Magnitude Coding* (supplemental alphanumeric or symbolic code to an existing code to indicate intensity)
- *Simultaneous Coding* = *Double Coding* = *Multiple Coding* = *Overlap Coding* = *Embedded Coding* = *Nested Coding* ... (applying two or more different codes to a single unit)

When is appropriate to use double coding?

- When the data's content suggests multiple meanings that necessitate and justify more than one code since 'complex social interactions do not occur in neat, isolated units' (Glesne, 2006:150)
- Be aware that some may attribute indecisiveness on the researcher's part if double coding is used excessively.
- This may also suggest that there is no clear or focused research purpose for analysing the data.

And...more terminology

- *Descriptive Coding* (summarizing in word or a short phrase the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data in themes or topics)
- *Process Coding* (using gerunds – 'ings' words – to code for actions/activities. i.e. Reading, Playing, drinking coffee)
- *Initial Coding* (= first cycle of coding)
- *Emotion Coding* (coding for emotions experienced by the participants or inferred by the researcher)
- *Value Coding* (coding for participant's values, attitudes and beliefs)
- *Versus Coding* (coding in binary terms individuals, groups, concepts in direct conflict with each other; i.e. *teachers versus technocrats*)
- *Evaluation Coding* (judging the merits of a program, policy... in the process of coding)
- *Narrative Coding* (Coding the structures of narratives/stories)
- *Verbal exchange Coding* (cf. Conversation analysis)

See J. Saldana. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (2009). Be careful, although Saldana presents an exhaustive list of coding strategies, the book does not clearly differentiate between the *process* of coding and the *content* of coding – which can be very confusing!

Bicquelet's Meta-Galactical Model of Coding Strategies (2014)

