

QRAM E-FORUM
CODING ISSUES AND STRATEGIES
12TH DECEMBER 2020



Categorised for FAQs

No	Question	Broad theme	Response
1	How do we collect ethnographic data during the lockdown period of Covid-19?	Data collection in new times	Dr Ng: Principally speaking, it's not supposed to be much different from the regular way of collecting. However, the critical issue perhaps is regarding the participants access to technology that enable authentic data to be collected by the researcher.
2	Do we need to ask experts to validate transcribed data and analysis?	Trustworthiness of analysis	<p>Dr Lateef: There are many strategies in addressing trustworthiness. Yes, doing the analysis alone, by yourself, is not advisable. You need people to review your work. For example, you need to engage members checking and expert reviews on interview questions. They act as a mirror and minimise the risk of manipulation in the process.</p> <p>Dr Tong: It is a progression of how comfortable you are. We engage experts because they have read more at their areas. They bring along their experience, theories and knowledge. They become your sounding board. Transcribed data checking by participants is a contentious issue. Members checking has its pro and cons.</p> <p>Dr Ng: This is about trustworthiness; we need to be very transparent. The reliability checking and audit trail have to be well presented. Then, the trust will be there.</p>
3	How many experts are needed then in the process of validation?		<p>Dr Tong: This is an issue of saturation. It is not the quantity issue but how much experts able to offer help in analytical depth, and able to challenge your thoughts and analysis to answer the research questions.</p> <p>Dr Lateef: Yes, external audience are also able to offer critiques in your interpretation and findings.</p>
4	How can we ensure the validity and reliability of our codes since it is based on the researcher's judgement	Trustworthiness of analysis	Dr Tong: In short, this can be done by sharing your rationale of judgement and choices of analytical lenses, and open to critiques. You also can train yourself to be the first to critique your own work, through self-reflection. The

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	and 'analytical lenses' as you called it?		concept of validity and reliability have to be built on the concept of reality (thus, the true nature of knowledge) and “correctness”. The concept itself has to be anchored to your stance on reality. This has to be shared so that audience can see where your come from and judge the validity of your codes.
5	In a research project, if there is a team of researchers to do coding and interpretation of meaning, and there are some conflicts of the coding and interpretation, how do we resolve such conflict of coding issues and come to a decision?	Trustworthiness of analysis (aka Inter-rater reliability)	<p>Dr Lateef: Actually, through a process of negotiations, justifying why it is coded this way and that way.</p> <p>Dr Tong: Yes, conflicts happened because of seeing things from different perspectives. From constructivist perspectives, this is completely okay. What we need to do is to lay down our underpinnings of why we coded it that way. Where do we come from and going back to research questions? We may, along the way and analysis, forget our original research questions and taken our own perspectives. That should help to reconcile</p> <p>Dr Ng: we have to put ourselves in others’ perspective. But we have to also put forward where we come from. It’s the basis of rationalisation. The onus is the researchers to explain their basis of coding and work toward producing a consensus on how codes should be decided.</p>
6	Is there a need to validate the coding of the data collected through a technique like inter-reliability rater e.g. Kappa analysis?	Trustworthiness of analysis (aka Inter-rater reliability)	<p>Dr Ng: Triangulation and proving trustworthiness need to be there. Some calculation may be needed. Important point is to get somebody to look at your data; it may not be the whole set and may be part of it is sufficient. There is no fix number of kappa, some say 0.6, it may be 0,7 or more. The crucial matter is still to explain in detail the process of how the inter-rater reliability index/reading is achieved.</p> <p>Dr. Tong: There are two side to the issues. At one end, if the kappa it very high, it may mean researchers are looking at the same perspective. As such, we may want to reflect, whether we have scrutinised the data sufficiently. One the other hand, if kappa is very poor, it may not necessarily mean poor reliability, but just a different perspective in the analysis. The methods ensuring reliability also depends on the methodologies, some use kappa and some do not, with their respective arguments. The used of kappa as a mean of reliability have to be consistent with the chosen methodology.</p>

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			<p>Dr Lateef: Reliability depends on the theoretical lens, and perspective of researchers. We are not trying to conform to a standard view of reality. Differences in coding may not necessarily means invalid coding. What I prefer is, a group of researchers coming from a similar background and theoretical perspective can identify with each other's coding. If everyone codes the same way, it does not necessarily mean the analysis is done well. Inter-rater reliability is a concept borrowed from quantitative works, a more positivist perspective. I am not against the use of it, but there are different schools of thoughts.</p>
7	Is it valid to code artifacts with different languages (English and Malay)? Can we translate the artifacts, first in Malay language then into English language? Is it possible to do coding after the translation process?	Coding in different contexts	<p>Dr Ng: Coding a translated piece of text is possible, however the researcher should ensure that the accuracy of the translation is intact.</p>
8	Are there any differences of coding strategy, theory and process when dealing with visuals such as images and videos?	Coding in different contexts	<p>Dr Ng: The coding process is the same as text. Similar to how text is coded, software allows you to execute the coding process for images and videos, thus similar principles of coding should also be observed.</p> <p>Dr Tong: Exactly. We need to embrace the concept of text, visual and videos as symbols representing some meanings. If we treat them as such, they are just data and hence the coding and analysis are the same.</p> <p>Dr Lateef: Yes, along the same line, we need to learn how to capture fieldnotes. Converting pictures into descriptive text. Do good descriptive notes. The process is, then, much the same and analysing text.</p>
9	Will the use of qualitative data analysis software threaten the inductive approach in qualitative analysis?	Software in research	<p>Dr Tong: It is probably not the CAQDAS that threatened the inductive process, but too early engagement of focal, and micro theories does. These theories will shape your perspective and act like horse blinders, threatening inductive process.</p>

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			<p>Dr Lateef: Too much engagement of CAQDAS may “appear” to do a lot of analysis, but many may have forgotten about theorising, an inductive process. Software is to facilitate the process. The tool is the researchers themselves. The researchers should be asking what is new and not just confirming a theory. Thus, it is not so much of an issue of the software.</p> <p>Dr Ng: It is not supposed to threaten the inductive process, as long as the researchers are aware of what is being revealed by the coding process and be able to critically and logically infer what the data is “showing”.</p>
10	What is your personal position in giving advice to budding researchers if they would like to consider using CAQDAS as a primary tool?	Software in research	Dr NG: Do the homework of finding out what the CAQDAS you are interested in can do for you. If possible, learn about the functions of the CAQDAS via online self-directed learning approach (e.g. Youtube videos, blogs, forums etc.), or if financially viable, attend a workshop that expose you to the various functions of the CAQDAS that you are considering.
11	Which one is better Atlas.ti or NVivo?	Software in research	Dr Ng: This not a fair question as this is more of a personal choice. You would want to ask yourself: how much you can afford, how comfortable you are with a particular software and what your long-term plan of using CAQDAS is, etc. It is too expensive to learn a software just for one project. Best to make an informed decision. The important thing is the skill involved in using a particular software. Choose one and be skilful with that particular one.
12	Some researchers use MsWord to do coding. May I know if there is any issue if we just use MsWord instead of CAQDAS?	Software in research	Dr Ng: It is more on how you use the functions found in MsWord to achieve your goals in coding. Therefore, it is more important that researchers are clear about their purpose of coding the data in relation to the focus of the research, and which functions will enable them to achieve that purpose.
13	Is there a correlation between a sampling technique and data analysis technique?	Participant selection (numbers)	Dr Tong: There are two perspectives to it. 1) Sampling technique is to do with saturation. For example, with maximum variations, you will saturate the phenomena you are studying and help with width of analysis, while, 2) analysis helps saturation, it may suggest what sampling you would further need. It complements each other. In grounded theory for example, initial

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			<p>sampling and analysis lead to postulations and hypothesis, i.e. the theory. These postulations need confirmation by thinking about what further samples needed to saturate our theory, a process of theoretical saturation.</p> <p>Dr Lateef: Yes, it has to be in alignment between research question, sampling technique, and analysis.</p>
14	I am doing a qualitative research on single mothers in Kedah and Perlis. How many respondents should we interview? Should we do interview the same numbers of respondents in each state?	Participant selection (numbers)	Dr. Ng: Perhaps you should always ensure that you adhere to the principles of interviewing individuals who fit the selection criteria, and not be too concern on having equal number of interviewees for both states. It would be a shame if you “drop” or “forcefully add” certain interviewees because you wanted to achieve a certain number in counting.
15	What is the best way of presenting the coded data in a research paper? With the advancement of modern software for qualitative data analysis such as Atlas.Ti, researchers use figures to present findings, but others still use the traditional tabular method.	Writing and disseminating findings	Dr Ng: The issue is about what facilitate people understand findings better. If you have something more visual for people to internalise the finding, it will be good. CAGQAS allow data visualisation, and help people make sense of data.
16	How do we identify the type of perspective used to code?	Epistemological lenses	Dr NG: If all relevant details are provided, we can identify the researchers’ perspective in coding, via going through the explanation they offered when detailing the steps involved when establishing how coding are carried out.

For further information, please contact:

qramalaysia@gmail.com | +6013 431 0043