

## **CODING**

### **WHAT IS CODING?**

Coding is the categorizing, limiting, and aggregation of a data set from a quantitative or qualitative study.

Aggregation is another word for taking different things and collecting them together. For example, if you look at different research subjects, you want to look for things that seem similar among them.

More specifically, one of the main aspects of Coding is to find “commonalities” or “patterns” which are made evident in the data either through similarities, trends, or statistical “peaks.”

Another aspect of coding is “limiting” or reducing the amount of information by finding only the things that matter the most.

### **In Qualitative Study**

When looking at a case study or data from other qualitative study, one of the things that might emerge is a “theme” or a “tendency.” Also, repeated behaviors or patterns may emerge. When coding, the first thing to do is to identify this thing.

For example, let’s say you are looking at a group of six Spanish Flamenco Dancers. You interview them (or do a focus group), and you ask them: What is the most common problem affecting your performance? When 4 of the 6 respond with “my shoes are often too tight.” You have just located a “trend” or “commonality.” When you ask them how old they are, and the “mean” or “average” shows 21 years of age, then you have just located another “commonality.”

These commonalities or trends help us to identify more common aspects among the target group, which may provide insight into a number of concerns, issues, practices, and other nuances which represent or help us to understand the “culture” or the “community” that we study.

### **In Quantitative Study**

Statistically, higher numbers of something (or higher numerical values) often lead to something substantial. These “peaks” often present a commonality among respondents/subjects within the target group.

For example, let’s say you were studying a construction company (i.e., a group of construction workers) in a quota sample. You asked them a few questions, for example: What is your ethnicity?

5 - indicate Hispanic - 50%

1 - indicates Black - 10%

4 - indicate White - 40%

The higher numbers often indicate commonalities or trends. For example, in this quota sample, the construction company often hires more Hispanic people and White people. The minority within the work group is Black. Likewise, there are no Asians, Pacific Islanders, etc. This information (based on your data set) provides you with some statistically significant information which discusses the ethnic makeup of the construction company.

In another example, we ask the construction workers what they like best about their jobs. We ask a closed question:

What do you like best about your job? (Circle All That Apply)

- A) The Salary/Pay
- B) The Benefits
- C) The Work Place
- D) Vacation Time

You find these numbers

- A = 7
- B = 5
- C = 8
- D = 3

You should convert the numbers into percentages or ratios.

- A) The Salary/Pay 70%
- B) The Benefits 50%
- C) The Work Place 80%
- D) Vacation Time 30%

- A) The Salary/Pay 70% -OR-  $7/10$
- B) The Benefits 50% -OR-  $1/2$  or  $5/10$
- C) The Work Place 80% -OR-  $8/10$  or  $4/5$
- D) Vacation Time 30% -OR-  $3/10$

These percentages reveal that most workers (7 out of 10 or 70%) are satisfied with their salary/pay and the overall (8 out of 10 or 80%) are satisfied with the workplace. However, the workers seem to be less satisfied with the benefits and the vacation time.