

# A GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION FOR THE INTEGRATION OF THE C.O.S.T.A. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK IN TEACHING OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

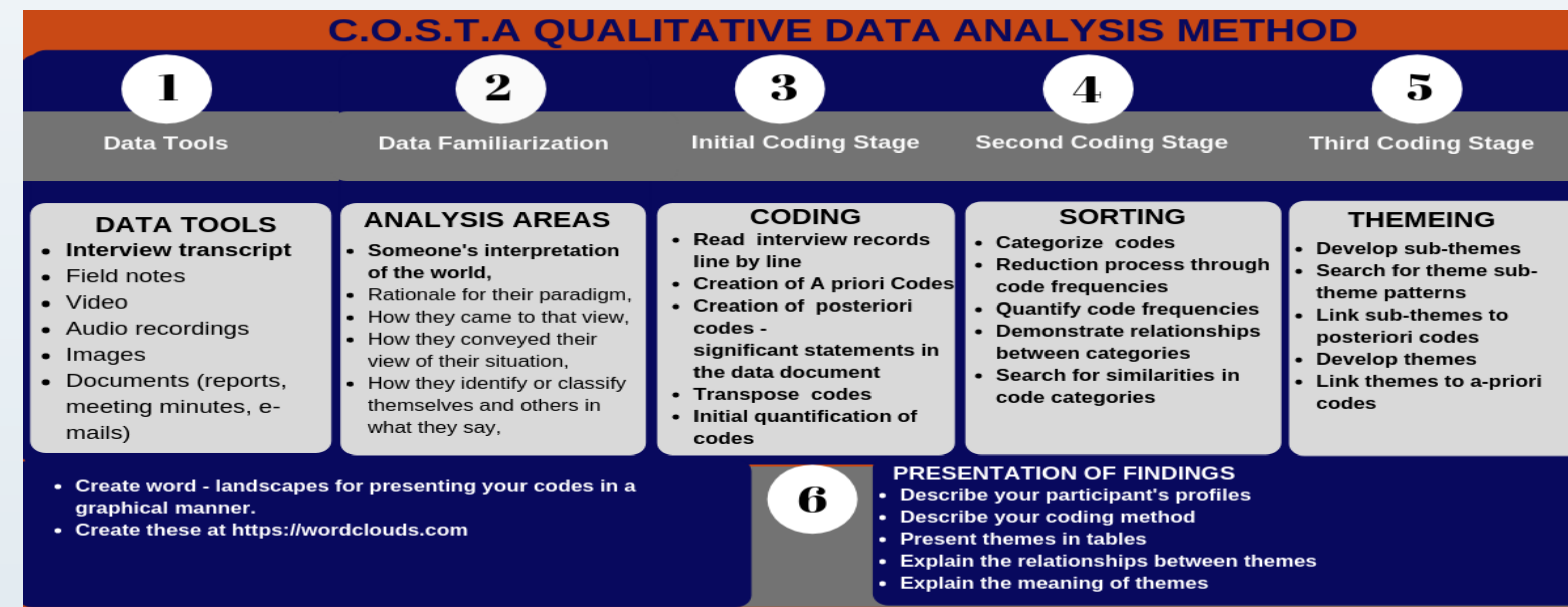
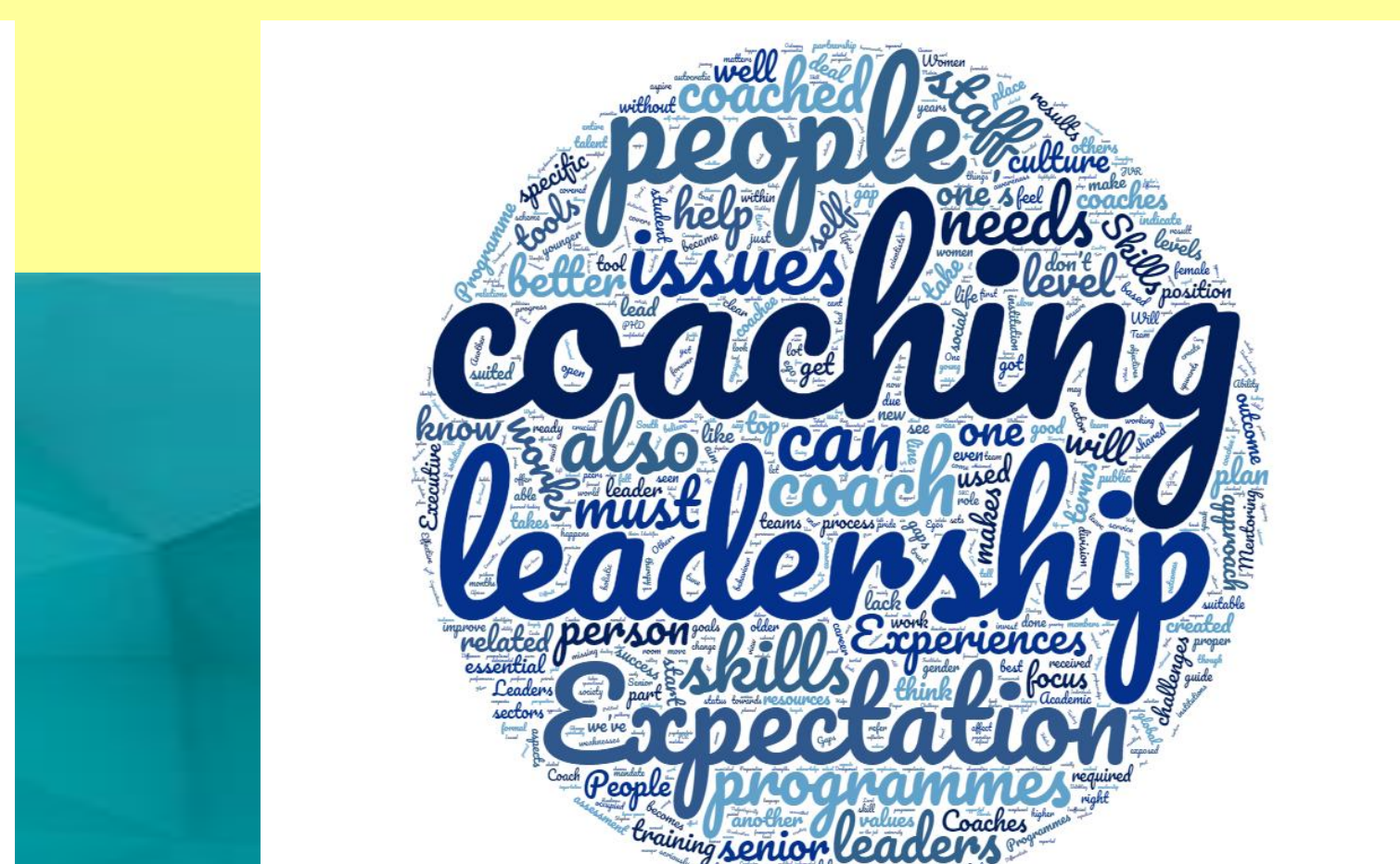
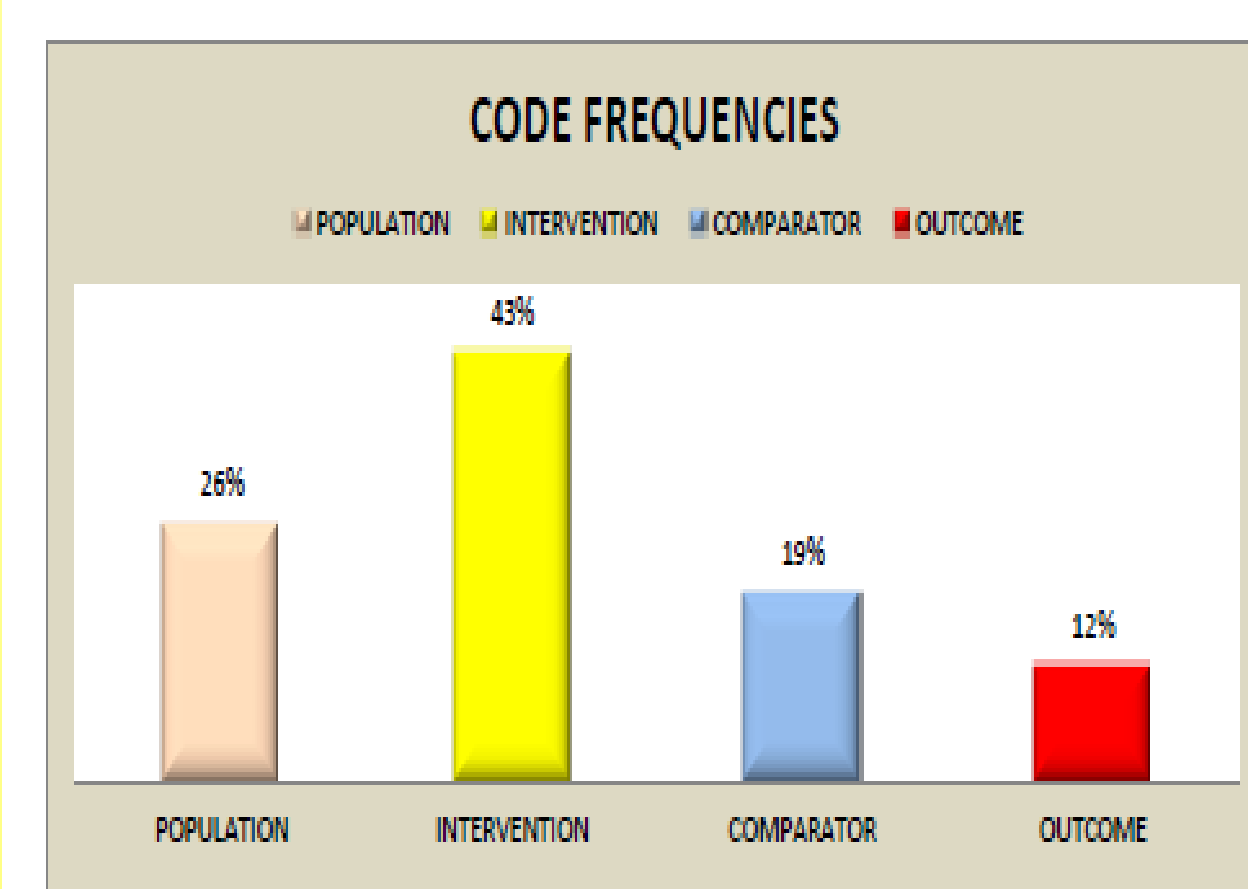
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## INTRODUCTION

The C.O.S.T.A. Research Framework is a tool that was developed to assist students and novice researchers to navigate postgraduate studies with clarity and understanding. The emphasis of the method is on a five step approach comprising of (1) Concepts in research that are foundational to research language; (2) Objective of research which is being undertaken – likened to development of protocol or proposal; (3) Situation, emphasizing pre-comprehension of the current debate, likened to literature review; (4) Tact, which deals with methodological approaches to formulation of conclusions; (5) Assessment of output – ability to make judgments on trajectory followed and study results.

This current study focused on the use of thematic analysis by students and novice researchers in completion of their research reports and scientific writings, which essentially forms part of Stage 4 of the C.O.S.T.A Framework. The author used a systematic mapping review to select units of analysis for the sole purpose of demonstrating gaps and inconsistencies on the application of the concept of thematic analysis. In most research reports, students demonstrate clear articulation of methods in coding and themes generation, however, evidence of these codes and how themes were generated was not reflected on most of reports reviewed. This situation seems to be a prevalent in most research reports, which detailed explication of interpretation of participant's comments during interviews taking the prominent feature of presentation of results/findings section.

It is for this reason that the C.O.S.T.A. Research Framework (Costak, 2019) is proposed as one of the methods for teaching students about different methods of qualitative data analysis in general and thematic analysis in particular.



## DATA FAMILIARIZATION

1. Know your data, line by line
2. Develop your coding strategy

CODE PATTERNS AND FREQUENCIES: CODE 1 – CODE 39
<p>1. SMMEs advance income growth and development</p> <p>2. SMMEs key for growth, GDP</p> <p>3. SMMEs have the increasing economic participation</p> <p>4. SMMEs provide alternative employment</p> <p>5. A systematic Review of 55 studies found that SMMEs are critical for economic growth</p> <p>6. SME Growth index 2011 found that SMMEs provide alternative employment</p> <p>7. There is paucity of research on SMMEs in South Africa</p> <p>8. SMMEs contribute 10% to employment in low income countries</p> <p>9. Many entrepreneurs do not have business experiences</p> <p>10. Larger SMMEs tend to be owned by males</p> <p>11. Larger SMMEs exclude women and youth</p> <p>12. Larger SMMEs exclude non-whites</p> <p>13. Ice cream is a dairy product</p> <p>14. Ice cream originated in Europe; England in 1700s</p> <p>15. There is a variety of ice cream products</p> <p>16. Ice cream has high nutritional value</p> <p>17. Ice cream provides lipids, carbohydrates, protein, calcium, phosphorus, minerals</p> <p>18. Ice cream provides income determination in buyer behavior</p> <p>19. Commercial industry established in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the US</p> <p>20. Ice cream provides Vitamins</p> <p>21. A B1 B2 B6 C D E and K</p> <p>22. Manufacturing first produced in 1846</p> <p>23. Russian ice cream industry grows at 2% in 2016</p> <p>24. Unilever leads the industry in Russia</p> <p>25. Ice cream manufacturing in Germany</p> <p>26. Components of ice cream are stable</p> <p>27. Ice cream is different from other dairy products</p> <p>28. Price and consumer income determination in buyer behavior</p> <p>29. Commercial industry established in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the US</p> <p>30. Prices are critical in influencing consumers</p> <p>31. Ice cream industry looked from as far as 1550 in Italy</p> <p>32. Industry establishment dates back to 1851</p> <p>33. Development of technology like continuous freezers introduced in 1920s</p> <p>34. Ice cream industry has been stable over the years</p> <p>35. There has been a lot of research on consumption of ice cream</p> <p>36. Price and consumer income key influencers of buyer behavior</p> <p>37. SMME support increasing in developing countries</p> <p>38. SMMEs create employment</p> <p>39. Slow growth of SMMEs</p>

## FINAL THEMES

1. Sort your codes further
2. Search for sub-themes
3. Develop themes

## REFERENCES (SOME)

Boyatzis, R., 1998. *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V., 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, Volume 3, p. 77–101.

Grant, M. & Booth, A., 2009. A typology of reviews: an analysis of 14 review types and associated methodologies. *Health Information and Libraries Journal*, Volume 26, pp. 91–108. DOI: 10.1111/j.1471-1842.2009.00848

## RATIONALE

The plight of many postgraduate students who enrol at institutions of higher learning for either M or D qualifications was explicated by the researcher in his earlier works (Costa,2018). A close examination of the phenomenon indicated many challenges well researched by many scholars (Cekiso, Tshotsho, Masha & Saziwa,2019). Of the three challenge categorised in Costa (2019), the challenge related to research capacity is the one seen as a major hurdle that students and supervisors have to navigate through. According to Mdyogolo (2012) there are three main hindrances within postgraduate research in South Africa, and these refer to:

1. Supervisors who are specialists in their respective fields, but are not well versed and empowered in relation to diverse research pathways.
2. Scenarios where most students at the postgraduate level have no research skills and proficiency in research language.
3. An instance where there is a conflict between research coordinating unit of a university and the supervisor.

## METHODS

In order to determine the extent to which this problem persists in higher education institutions, the researcher used a Qualitative Mapping Review method to uncover underlying issues related to subject matter. This is a type of a body of Review Research Methods that fall within the qualitative research tradition (Grant & Booth, 2009). Mapping Reviews were developed by the Institute of Education's Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre, 2006). The development of this method was specifically for mapping out current and thematise existing literature, identify gaps and make recommendations for areas that needed further research (Grant & Booth, 2009).

## CONCLUSIONS

The study found that most thesis reports demonstrated lack of in-depth coding strategies and evidence of codes in substantiation of their findings, either in the document corpus or as annexures. This view appeared to be widely supported in literature on thematic analysis by leading scholars such as Boyatzis (1998) ; Braun and Clarke (2006).