



“People still go on this stereotypical view of a mild, meek, quiet South Asian woman”: British South-Asian Women Academics’ experiences in HE.

Creating a Codebook

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“If it doesn’t look like you are doing something weird, you are not coding”

(supervisor comments)

PhD Project Summary (final year)



- Exploring British South-Asian Women Academics' Experiences in Higher Education Employment.
- 10 Participants: lecturers, senior lecturers, senior management and professors
- In-depth semi-structured interviews (1.5hrs each) > 424 pages 150,376 words to analyse.
- Interpretative paradigm > qualitative approach

My data challenges

- Maternity leave: gap in data collection and time length
- Organising data: what makes sense?
- Capturing nuances of experiences

The challenge for qualitative researchers is 'not how to get data but how to figure out what to do with the data they get' (Walcott, 1994: 4)

Thematic Analysis



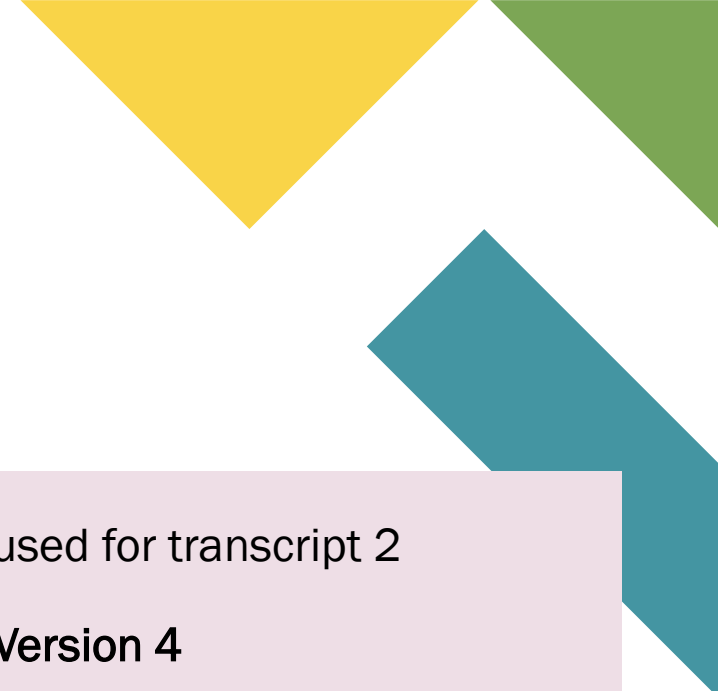
- Maternity leave: gap in data collection and time length
- **Organising data: what makes sense?**
- Capturing nuances of experiences

- The ‘...ability to digest large amounts of information by breaking it into smaller pieces is how our brains turn information into knowledge’ (Saldana and Omasta, 2022: 4).
- Transforming data into intelligible accounts (Walcott, 1994).

Coding/Codebook

- Codes are tags/labels (words/short phrases) that symbolise data (DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall and McCulloch, 2011)
- ‘Coding enables you to organize and group similarly coded data into categories or “families” because they share some characteristic—the beginning of a pattern’ (Saldana, 2025: 12)
- **Codebook** is a list of codes, definitions and examples (from data) used as a guide to analyse data >> formalised process

Codebook



Coded transcript 1

List of codes > **Version 1**

Codes were analytical

↓

Coded transcript 1 again to reflect codes that were descriptive and more data-driven > use participant words

> **Version 2**

↓

V2 was checked for similar codes to avoid repetition and organised into themes on the table

> **Version 3**

Version 3 codebook used for transcript 2

New codes added > **Version 4**

↓

Version 4 codebook used for transcript 3

2 New codes added and refined with the supervision team > **Version 5**

Code Name	Description	Examples from Transcripts
Relationship with students	What relationships with students mean to Participants, how their South Asian identity works in HE spaces with students and student expectations	xxx
Experiences of Allyship	Instances where Participants have spoken about experiencing support from colleagues or management	xxx
Just glides off me	When Participants discuss ignoring comments made about their identity/appearance	xxx
How would I prove what I was saying?	Instances when Participants spoke about the need to have evidence in order to complain or not wanting to, as they see it as pointless. Participants explain their feelings/opinions around complaining, including wanting to complain	xxx
Professional reputation and subject knowledge	Instances when Participants talk about their professional reputation and expertise in their subject/role. This includes how they want/are seen in their professional role.	xxx

Type of coding: Patterns



- Maternity leave: gap in data collection and time length
- Organising data: what makes sense?
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‘When you search for patterns in coded data to categorize them, understand that sometimes you may group things together not just because they are exactly alike or very much alike, but because they might also share something in common—even if, paradoxically, that commonality consists of differences, variation, or contradiction’

(Saldana 2025: 9).

Progression code sample

Code Name	Description	Examples from Transcripts
Progression	Talking about progression (positive and negative)	“I mean I have to say, (university name) obviously paid for my masters. Yeah, so I had no cost implication for me at all. The leader of the masters said..., I really feel this is PhD worthy and I'd recommended you for sponsorship for your PhD next. So how could I say that I've been discriminated against?” (Anvi) Discussing her progression of an internal post> “One of my colleagues at my previous institution used to say to me, I'm going to get you a T-shirt with lots of ticks on it because you tick all the boxes...you know. Asian, a woman of colour, etcetera. Female. And I remember saying to my then line manager who was the Professor at the university, that you know all of these things are happening. And I don't, you know, I'm. I'm there as a token person” (Seema)

From patterns to meaning (Saldana, 2025)

- Critical link between data and making-meaning
- coding is analysis > coding is synthesis
- multidimensional facets about the people we study



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Thank you

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