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EDTC 803 Data analysis and Report Writing

Assessment 2 – Using Primary Data

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## Using Primary Data

Coding qualitative data is taking parts of the data or transcripts and organizing them systematically to find pattern and themes so that it can help us analyze our data and understand what it represents (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). We can combine themes, ideas, concepts, keywords or phrases using codes labels so we can compare them at a later stage when we analyze data (Taylor & Gibbs, 2010). For the purpose of coding, I looked at ten interviews on “This is how I work” from the website Lifehacker (<https://lifehacker.com>). I choose interviews of ten women (Chichi Anyanwu, Heather Hass, Jessica Lessin, Kendra Pierre – Louis, Meghan Walbert, Melinda Moyer, Nancy Glass, Orna Gulranik, Preeti Chhibber, and Ximena Vengoechea) who are working as authors, journalists, editors and creative producers. Most of the interviews were about how these women do work in their daily lives, while taking care of families and striking a balance between the two. Some of interviews also focused on advice given by the interviewees to their readers and life lessons learned by them or how to get stressors out of their lives. Three interviews also focused on hacks that women used in their lives to save time and what kind of apps and gadgets they use to stay on task.

While reading the interviews I was able to generate a lot of codes. Some codes could be grouped together to make coherent categories (Davis, 2012) and some had to be dropped because they could not be connected to a particular theme. After the reading and rereading the interviews multiple times I was able to group some codes

together and find themes among the responses. I could identify three major themes from the interviews:

- adaptations due to Covid -19
- advice or life lessons
- ways to relax and reenergize

All but one interview that I decided to code were written during or after Covid -19 pandemic. There was a recurring theme of how the featured women dealt with the aftermath of the pandemic, how it affected their work life and family and what adjustments they had to make to deal with the pandemic and strike a balance between work and family life. Kendra Pierre – Louis describes that during the pandemic, she moved out to New England where her COVID set-up was a one-bedroom apartment where she carved out a workspace in her living room with a desk, a bookshelf, a printer and a plant (Calhoun, 2021b). Melinda Moyer, an author, wrote several pieces for the New York Times while her kids were with her, constantly interrupting. She described her life during the pandemic as “chaotic”. She resorted to writing between the hours of 8:00pm to 1:00 am because those were her only uninterrupted writing blocks (Calhoun, 2021a). For Preeti Chhibber, a writer and Young - Adult author, pandemic brought a change in her life where she had to move in with her family. She lost her personal workspace and was forced to work out of the dining room table. She ended up buying a folding desk so that she can move around and get privacy when she needed (Calhoun, 2020). However, all the interviewees did not have negative experiences. Chichi Anyanwu, a talent manager, seized the opportunity made available by the pandemic and decided to start her own talent management company, managing the careers of

actors in theater, film, and television. Even though it was bit of gamble, she took the decision because Broadway was shut down at that time and there weren't any television or film sets either; everything was slow for a while because of Covid so she took the time to embark on her new journey (Jordan, 2021). Another positive way Melinda Moyer adjusted to pandemic was by going on walks during the day. This gave her some time alone and to reconnect with neighbors who were outside gardening.

The second theme that I could connect using codes was "Advice" or life lessons that these women learned and imparted to the readers. Nancy Glass, a six-time Emmy winning journalist suggests that if one's "to do" list is too long, then one should tackle first the thing that one likes the least. Her other advice is to find a way to turn negatives into positives, as not everything will work out the first time and one should try not to dwell on failures, but to look ahead to what is next (Blum, 2021d). Meghan Walbert's (parenting columnist and editor) advice to parents is to not strive to give 100% effort to parenting. She says "It's impossible anyway and the more perfect you try to be, the more stressful and unpleasant life becomes. Pick your battles and then lower your standards on the stuff that doesn't really matter" (Walbert, 2019). Author Preeti Chhibber advises the readers to make sure to structure your time in terms of how much time you want to dedicate to work. Working from home, people often lose track of time and end up working all the life because "there's no differentiation between office life and home life. It's just all work life all the time" (Calhoun, 2020). Ximena Vengoechea, author, advises against doing too many things at one time. She urges the readers to understand their natural productivity cycle and work accordingly. Not everyone works

the same way throughout the day, so one should find a time of the day when they are most productive and stick to those times to do their work (Blum, 2021c).

My third theme from the in interviews was that of “relaxing and reenergizing”. All the women who were interviewed, lead very busy and sometimes chaotic lives juggling home and work life. They all have certain ways to rest, relax and recharge so they are able to tackle their busy days. Melinda Moyers sometimes stop work early so she can make elaborate dinners because she loves cooking and finds comfort in sitting down with her family. She also works out six days a week which energizes her and gives her a sense of normalcy (Calhoun, 2021a). Dr. Orna Guralnik , psychologist and author, relaxes by reading, meditating and practicing yoga (Blum, 2021a). Meghan Walbert, parenting editor at Lifehacker, likes to read books with her son and sometimes looks through sites to read for inspiration (Walbert, 2019). Author Ximena Vengoechea likes to go for walks and do “lean back” activities like reading expert books, researching or making illustrations for her books in the evenings (Blum, 2021c). Editor – in – chief of “The Information”, Jessica Lessin likes to be outdoors as much as she can. Working remotely doesn’t afford her much outside time, but she claims that her best ideas and writing come when she has a chance to be outdoors (Blum, 2021b). Lastly Heather Hass, who is a creative producer at Lifehacker works in the office and in her free time, likes to wander around the office to connect with other people and eat snacks (Hass, 2019).

In conclusion, coding qualitative data is a labor-intensive work but if done right can be very rewarding. It was very daunting to me at the beginning but as I read and reread the interviews, I could generate some codes. I watched a few videos and read many

articles on generating codes and how to group the codes together to identify themes and patterns. I am hoping that with practice, I will be able to do it better in the future.

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