

Training on MAXQDA for Qualitative Research Analysis to Empower Beginner Researchers in Academic Writing

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Abstract

Purpose: This community engagement program aimed to introduce beginner researchers to MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software, to enhance their understanding and application of qualitative research methods. The initiative sought to address the low interest in qualitative research by providing practical tools and training that simplify data interpretation and improve academic writing.

Method: The program was conducted through face-to-face sessions, including theoretical instruction and hands-on practice. Participants learned to install and operate MAXQDA, analyze interview data, and visualize findings using features such as word clouds and code matrices.

Practical Applications: The training enabled participants to conduct qualitative research more effectively, improving their ability to manage complex data and present results clearly. It also fostered greater interest in qualitative inquiry and encouraged the use of digital tools in academic research.

Conclusion: MAXQDA proved to be a valuable tool for beginner researchers, enhancing their analytical skills and confidence in qualitative research. The program contributed to the development of methodological competence and improved the quality of academic writing.



Introduction

Qualitative research plays a vital role in understanding complex human behaviors, social phenomena, and organizational dynamics. However, its abstract nature and interpretive approach often pose challenges for beginner researchers, especially in terms of data analysis and presentation (Rahardjo, 2014). Unlike quantitative research, which relies on numerical data and statistical tools, qualitative research demands deep engagement with textual or visual data, requiring nuanced interpretation and methodological rigor (Harahap, 2020).

In Indonesia, the interest in conducting qualitative research among academics remains relatively low. This is primarily due to the perceived difficulty in managing large volumes of non-numeric data and the lack of standardized tools for analysis (Atmaja, 2023). Moreover, the absence of clear benchmarks for quality and the time-intensive nature of qualitative inquiry further discourage researchers from pursuing this approach (Andrias, 2023).

To address these challenges, the use of digital tools such as MAXQDA has emerged as a promising solution. MAXQDA is a software designed to assist researchers in organizing, coding, and visualizing qualitative data efficiently. It offers features like word clouds, code matrices, and thematic mapping, which help in simplifying complex data and enhancing the clarity of research findings (Hadi, Asrori, & Rusman, 2021).

This community engagement program was initiated to empower beginner researchers by introducing them to MAXQDA and demonstrating its practical application in qualitative research. Through hands-on training and guided practice, participants were equipped with the skills to conduct qualitative analysis more effectively and confidently. The ultimate goal of this initiative is to foster greater interest in qualitative research and improve the quality of academic writing among early-career scholars.

Method

This community engagement activity employed a face-to-face training method to introduce beginner researchers to the use of MAXQDA software for qualitative data analysis. The training was conducted in a classroom setting at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Brawijaya, and involved a series of structured sessions designed to build both theoretical understanding and practical skills.

The first session focused on the fundamentals of qualitative research, including its philosophical foundations, research paradigms, and methodological approaches (Harahap, 2020). Participants were introduced to various types of qualitative research such as phenomenology, case study, grounded theory, ethnography, and biography (Hadi, Asrori, & Rusman, 2021).

Figure 1. Fundamentals of Qualitative Research



Source: Private Documentation, 2024.

In the second session, participants were guided through the installation and basic operation of MAXQDA. The training emphasized key features of the software, including coding, memo writing, document management, and visualization tools such as word clouds and code matrices. Participants practiced analyzing interview transcripts and other qualitative

data using MAXQDA's interface.

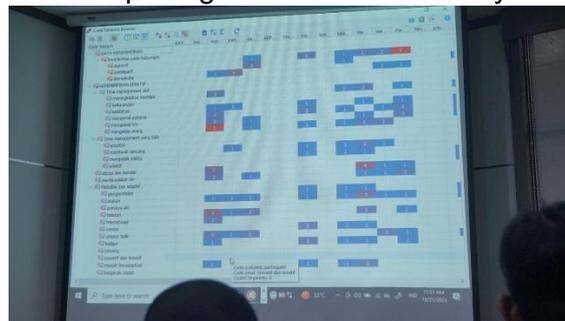
Figure 2. Installation & Basic Operations of MAXQDA



Source: Private Documentation, 2024.

The third session involved interpreting the results generated by MAXQDA. Participants learned how to identify themes, patterns, and relationships within the data, and how to present findings in a clear and academically rigorous manner. The training also included discussions on ethical considerations, data validity, and the importance of triangulation in qualitative research (Rahardjo, 2014).

Figure 3. Interpreting Results Generated by MAXQDA



Source: Private Documentation, 2025.

Throughout the program, participants were encouraged to engage actively, ask questions, and apply the tools to their own research contexts. The hands-on approach ensured that participants not only understood the theoretical aspects of qualitative research but also gained confidence in using digital tools to enhance their academic writing and data analysis capabilities.

Result

The implementation of the MAXQDA training program yielded several tangible outcomes that demonstrated its effectiveness in enhancing participants' understanding and application of qualitative research methods. The training was attended by beginner researchers from the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Brawijaya, who actively engaged in all sessions. During the initial phase, participants successfully installed the MAXQDA software and familiarized themselves with its interface. They were able to import qualitative data, such as interview transcripts, and apply basic coding techniques. This hands-on experience enabled them to visualize data using features like word clouds and code matrices, which facilitated deeper insights into the research themes (Hadi, Asrori, & Rusman, 2021).

In the practical session, participants analyzed a case study related to leadership styles in a government housing program. Using MAXQDA, they identified dominant leadership styles such as task-oriented, relationship-oriented, and participative leadership. The software's visualization tools helped them correlate leadership behaviors with indicators of effective team performance, such as decision-making, motivation, and communication (Feralda, 2023). The training also highlighted the use of MAXQDA's analytical models, including Miles and Huberman's framework, which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing

719) Training on MAXQDA for Qualitative Research Analysis to Empower Beginner Researchers in Academic Writing, Adi, A. N., Azzuhri, M., Fithriana, N., & Wibawanti, K. P.

(Harahap, 2020). Participants applied this model to interpret their findings and present them in structured formats suitable for academic writing.

Figure 4. Ending of Training Session of MAXQDA



Source: Private Documentation, 2023.

Overall, the results indicated that the use of MAXQDA significantly improved participants' ability to manage and analyze qualitative data. It also increased their confidence in conducting qualitative research and encouraged them to consider this approach in future academic projects.

Discussion

The training program on MAXQDA demonstrated significant potential in addressing the challenges faced by beginner researchers in conducting qualitative research. By integrating theoretical foundations with practical application, the program successfully bridged the gap between abstract methodological concepts and real-world data analysis. One of the key outcomes was the increased confidence among participants in handling qualitative data. Prior to the training, many expressed uncertainty about how to analyze non-numeric data effectively. The use of MAXQDA provided a structured and visual approach to coding, categorizing, and interpreting data, which helped demystify the process (Hadi, Asrori, & Rusman, 2021). This aligns with previous findings that digital tools can enhance the accessibility and clarity of qualitative research (Harahap, 2020).

The case study on leadership styles within the BSPS program served as a practical example of how qualitative data can be transformed into actionable insights. Participants were able to identify dominant leadership behaviors and correlate them with indicators of effective team performance. This not only reinforced their understanding of qualitative analysis but also highlighted the relevance of such research in organizational and policy contexts (Feralda, 2023). Moreover, the training emphasized the importance of methodological rigor, including the use of triangulation, ethical considerations, and data validation techniques. These elements are crucial for ensuring the credibility and reliability of qualitative research (Rahardjo, 2014). The application of Miles and Huberman's model further provided a systematic framework for data reduction and interpretation, which participants found particularly useful.

The program also revealed certain limitations. Some participants required additional time to fully grasp the software's advanced features, indicating a need for follow-up sessions or supplementary materials. Additionally, while MAXQDA offers powerful tools, its effectiveness depends on the researcher's ability to formulate clear research questions and maintain analytical discipline. In conclusion, the training program not only equipped beginner researchers with technical skills but also fostered a deeper appreciation for qualitative inquiry. It demonstrated that with the right tools and guidance, qualitative research can be both accessible and impactful, paving the way for more robust and meaningful academic contributions.

Conclusion

This community engagement initiative successfully demonstrated the value of integrating digital tools into qualitative research training for beginner researchers. The use of MAXQDA significantly enhanced participants' ability to manage, analyze, and interpret qualitative data, bridging the gap between theoretical understanding and practical application. The training not only introduced participants to the fundamentals of qualitative research but also equipped them with the technical skills necessary to conduct rigorous analysis using MAXQDA. Through hands-on sessions, participants learned to visualize data, identify patterns, and draw meaningful conclusions, thereby improving the quality and clarity of their academic writing.

Moreover, the program fostered a greater appreciation for qualitative inquiry and encouraged participants to consider this approach in future research endeavors. While some limitations were noted, such as the need for extended training time for advanced features, the overall impact of the program was positive and transformative. In conclusion, the integration of MAXQDA into qualitative research training represents a practical and effective strategy for empowering early-career scholars. It supports the development of methodological competence and contributes to the advancement of qualitative research practices in academic settings.

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