

## **Potential application of template analysis in qualitative hospitality management research**

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# **Potential application of template analysis in qualitative hospitality management research<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

This article is primarily intended for researchers examining hospitality management who are unlikely to be familiar with template analysis (TA) as a form of thematic analysis. It demonstrates the use of TA in a specific setting and how TA contributed to developing a conceptual model and theory of cultural centrism in a hospitality setting. The article offers new perspectives even for those who have prior experience in thematic analysis.

**Keywords:** template analysis, thematic analysis, qualitative research, cultural centrism, guest's satisfaction, hospitality management

## **Introduction**

Qualitative methods have become well-established in business and management research since the 1990s. In the first of their four edited texts on qualitative methods in organizational research, Cassell and Symon (1994) noted a growing, although 'under-reported', interest in the area. By the fourth volume (twice the size of the first) they noted that qualitative methods had become much more widespread, with a growing range of techniques and approaches available (Symon and Cassell 2012). Furthermore, there is also increasing interest in qualitative research within hospitality management research; see, for example, the special

issue of the *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* in 2012 (Sharma and Altinay 2012). However, this area is arguably less developed in its understanding and use of qualitative methods than some other areas of business and management research. This under-development can be seen in textbooks presenting a rather simplified picture of qualitative research as a single paradigm (e.g. Altinay et al. 2016) as opposed to recognizing the philosophical and methodological diversity of the field. Awareness of the range and potential for different forms of qualitative data analysis (QDA) remains particularly limited (Mehmetoglu and Altinay 2006).

This article aims to make a contribution by presenting one specific qualitative data approach, template analysis (TA), striving to illustrate the ways in which this systematic yet flexible analytical procedure has helped to provide new insights into research in the area of cultural backgrounds, customer perceptions and behaviour in hospitality management. TA has been widely used not only in organizational and management research but also across other disciplines (Brooks et al. 2015); the most important contributions have been made by researchers who applied frequently loose, qualitative methodology. TA is a focusing technique that analyses data to identify tight generic themes originating within the data, whilst simultaneously allowing for problem solving and theory building.

The authors argue that increasing awareness of the different ways of thematically analysing data will be helpful to qualitative hospitality and service researchers. This article will highlight both the opportunities and the challenges of utilizing TA in hospitality research and enhance the options that the researchers may consider as part of their QDA strategies. It attempts to show the ways in which TA allows researchers to build and develop theory, construct models with respect to hospitality management, and subsequently make the research in this area more robust. First, techniques and epistemological position will be discussed, followed by the presentation of an example project that serves to illustrate how TA

can be employed to analyse data and develop a model. This article is primarily intended for researchers in the area of hospitality who may not be overly familiar with this particular form of thematic analysis. TA offers new insights even for those who already have experience with thematic analysis. The flexibility of TA gives researchers the opportunity to use it in varying scenarios and from different methodological approaches (Brooks et al. 2015).

## **What is TA?**

### ***Methodological overview***

TA is a qualitative research method for analysing textual research material (King 1998). More specifically, it is a particular form of thematic analysis that emphasizes the use of hierarchical coding but achieves a balance between a relatively high level of structure in the analysis of textual data, with the potential of flexibility allowing it to be adapted to the needs of a particular study (Brooks et al. 2015; King and Brooks 2017). According to Waring and Wainwright (2008) and King and Brooks (2017) this method has gained credibility and attention in the United Kingdom in recent years in a variety of areas within business and management research and beyond.

The data analysed in studies using TA are mostly from interview transcripts, reflecting the ubiquity of this form of data collection (e.g. Goldschmidt et al. 2006; Lockett et al. 2012; Slade et al. 2009; Thompson et al. 2010). However, TA can be used with all kinds of textual data, including interviews and focus groups (e.g. Kirkby-Geddes et al. 2013), diary entries (e.g. Waddington 2005) and even open-ended question responses on written questionnaires (e.g. Dornan et al. 2002; Kent 2000).

It is important to consider how TA relates to thematic analysis more widely. While thematic

analysis is sometimes referred to as if it were a discrete method, this article argues in line with King and Brooks (2018) that it is more accurate to view it as a broad approach to analysis that encompasses many different forms. Any type of thematic analysis involves two fundamental processes: defining recurrent themes in the textual data and organizing those themes into some kind of structure. Different forms or styles of thematic analysis vary in how these processes are carried out and for what purpose. An important distinction is between methodology-specific and generic types of thematic analysis. The former refers to cases where thematic analysis is an integral part of a wider methodology, such as Grounded Theory (GT) or Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). It is not legitimate to unpick the thematic coding aspect of such approaches and use them independently of the wider methodology and its requirements and assumptions. In contrast, generic forms of thematic analysis do not come with specific methodological commitments and philosophical underpinnings. Rather, the researcher must identify their position and consider how these influence the use of the technique for any particular study.

Clarke et al. (2019) make a further distinction between three broad approaches to generic thematic analysis. ‘Coding reliability’ approaches follow a positivistic philosophy and use a highly structured style of analysis concerned with establishing coding reliability and validity. ‘Codebook’ approaches also emphasize structure in the process of coding but are underpinned by a more truly qualitative (non-positivist) philosophical stance. Finally reflexive thematic analysis is less concerned with coding structure and strongly emphasizes reflexivity and flexibility in theme development. TA fits into the second, ‘codebook’, approach in this schema. Indeed, the term ‘template’ is synonymous with ‘codebook’, describing a coding structure that is applied to the data in the analysis process.

The various forms of thematic analysis will inevitably share certain common aspects. For instance, some form of preliminary open coding is found in almost all versions of thematic

analysis. However, they also each have distinctive features that mark them out as specific forms of the wider approach. We will highlight here the main distinguishing features of TA.

### ***Use of a priori themes***

TA explicitly allows (although does not compel) the researcher to identify potentially useful and applicable themes in advance of the main analysis; these are referred to as a priori themes. This may seem at odds with the generally open and inductive nature of qualitative research. However, it should be emphasized that much qualitative research includes some top-down, deductive elements – for example, where there is a strong theoretical framework guiding analysis, or where a qualitative evaluation study needs to address specific criteria set in advance by the research sponsor. Even in an approach as inductive as GT there is a recognition that the researcher may bring prior interests to the analysis in the form of ‘sensitising concepts’ (Charmaz 2006: 16). In any case, a priori themes in TA should always be considered as tentative. If they do not prove to ‘fit’ with the data they can be revised or deleted just like any other theme.

### ***Iterative development from an initial template***

TA places a strong emphasis on a systematic, iterative process of applying the template, modifying it in the light of limitations uncovered, and then reapplying it. This encourages the researcher to continually review how themes are defined and how they relate to each other. It also makes it easy for the researcher to keep an audit trail of how the template has developed to reach the final version.

### ***Depth of coding***

Like most forms of thematic analysis, TA uses hierarchical coding – i.e. narrower, more specific themes are nested within wider themes. However, many other forms tend to restrict themselves to three levels of coding, representing preliminary coding, interpretive coding and overarching themes. TA is much more flexible about how many levels to use and encourages the researcher to code areas of data that are rich in meaning and relevant to the research question(s) in considerable depth. It is not unusual to see five or even more levels of coding in some parts of a template; equally, aspects of the data that are only of contextual relevance may only be coded to one or two levels.

### **Why TA!**

TA may be chosen and preferred by researchers who are pragmatists, who for example are not in favour of the assumptions of GT, and find it too strict in its procedures for data collection and analysis (King 1998: 119). In addition to this, King (1998) states that, although there are clear procedures within TA, methods are very flexible and the researcher has a good deal of freedom of interpretation in how to use them. Furthermore, the use of a priori or an *initial* template can present instances in which techniques are varied, influencing researchers to choose TA over a traditional qualitative approach like classic GT (King 2012: 429).

TA can be, to an extent, considered a tool with which to make sense of research. It is a tool to work with the text and allow researchers to fully understand the research and gain insight. In other words, it does not seek to analyse the coding results to judge whether or not coding has been done correctly. For instance, if a coder applied a code to completely different segments than all other coders, it would not mean that it was wrong coding; however, this approach provides an opportunity to expand discussion, acquire different individual perceptions and help to better understand the corpus (King 2004b; King and Brooks 2017).

Richards and Morse (2007: 157) recommend categorizing codes, which help researchers to ‘get up’ from the diversity of data to the shapes of the data, the sorts of things represented (Saldaña 2011: 10). The action of categorizing codes supports Corbin and Strauss (2008: 55), who state that these themes and concepts are systematically interrelated and lead towards developing theory. In TA, the key decision is made when the initial template begins to develop, which takes place following the grouping of preliminary codes into meaningful groups, within which ‘hierarchical and lateral relations between themes can be defined’ (King 2012: 435–36).

### **Procedural steps in TA**

The procedural steps that are characteristically followed in TA are as follows:



**Figure 1:** Familiarization with the data.



These will be briefly summarized below and will be further illustrated in the subsequent case example. Note that these steps are not intended to be rigid and unmodifiable; they provide a scaffolding for a typical analysis but can be modified to suit the particular needs of an individual study (Brooks et al. 2015; King et al. 2018) (during the example, the authors will go through each of these in more detail). King et al. (2018) identified the following steps:

### ***Familiarization with the data***

Before any coding commences, the researcher should become as familiar as possible with the data, by reading through transcripts (or other forms of textual data) several times, and perhaps listening to audio-recordings when relevant. He or she should avoid the temptation to start defining themes at this phase, except to perhaps refine a priori themes when these have been used

### ***Preliminary coding***

The researcher works through his or her data, or a sub-set of it (see ‘initial template’ section below), identifying material of relevance to his or her research question and annotating (‘coding’) to capture what is of interest. He or she may also record where a priori themes appear to fit the data. Some further consideration of what we mean by a priori may be helpful here. It was noted above that they are themes defined before the main analysis, but within this broad definition they may come from different sources and take different forms. Thus some may draw on theory in a strong way; others may reflect real-world concerns that have shaped the research design, such as evaluation criteria. They may also be developed from a pilot study or an earlier study in a programme of related studies. In addition, as King and Brooks (2017) describe, they may be relatively ‘hard’, with clear and detailed definitions, or ‘soft’ in the form of broad sensitizing concepts.

## ***Clustering***

Once preliminary coding – usually of a sub-set of data – is completed, the researcher will seek to group the codes, and any a priori themes used, into clusters and begin to define the main and the subsidiary themes within these. As noted above, there is no fixed limit to how many levels of sub-themes can be used; aspects of the data that are particularly rich and of vital importance for the research question(s) will tend to be coded in the greatest depth – perhaps to five or more levels.

## ***Developing the initial template***

As clusters become more defined, the researcher can begin to organize them into an initial version of the template. Themes and sub-themes will be defined as clearly as possible; it can be useful to write definitions, at least for the higher level themes and for any that could be ambiguous. The researcher may choose to define some themes as linking across clusters; in TA those that link several clusters are often referred to as ‘integrative’ themes.

## ***Modifying the template***

The initial template is then used to code further data and/or to recode that which were coded at the preliminary stage. This is an iterative process of trying out the template, changing it where it does not ‘fit’ well, and applying it again. Themes may be added, deleted, redefined or moved between clusters to enhance the template’s ability to capture relevant meaning in the data.

## ***Defining the ‘final’ template***

We have put ‘final’ in quotation marks here, because it is in fact always possible to go on refining the template. The goal for the researcher is to recognize when the template is good

enough for the current analysis; this will be when it is clear in its structure and theme definitions, and when no relevant sections of the data remain uncoded.

### *Using the template to analyse and interpret the data*

The process of defining and organizing themes within a template is of course an interpretive one. However, it is not the end-point of interpretation in any given study. The researcher needs to use the template to further make sense of how the data will answer his or her research question(s). There is no one fixed way of doing this – it will depend on the overall approach, specific methodological details and the aims of the study. It will always involve prioritization of what is most important in the thematic coding for the research question(s), and the seeking of patterns in the analysed data.

King (2012: 446) identifies three ways to write up findings from TA, any of which may prove useful:

- A series of individual case studies, with a discussion of their similarities and differences between cases (however, for a large number of participants, this can be confusing and will not provide an adequate description for each case).
- An account structured around the main themes, drawing illustrative examples from each transcript as required (the threat is one of over-generalization and losing sight of individual experiences).
- A thematic presentation of the findings using an individual case study to illustrate each of the key themes (the key challenge is to select the case that could best represent the themes in a data set as a whole).

Using direct quotes from participants helps to enhance the researcher's understanding and interpretation and serves to provide rich information.

### **The applicability of TA in Hospitality and service research**

King (2012) indicates that TA is a method developed for the thematic analysis of qualitative research data that has been widely used within a variety of applied areas such as health care practitioner and in recent years within business, tourism, hospitality, sport and management (Brooks et al. 2015; King et al. 2013, 2018).

Before we present our example of the utilization of TA, we would like to highlight the main reasons why we feel that the method is worth considering for qualitative researchers in this area. First, we would suggest that TA works particularly well in applied research addressing real-world concerns. For example, a priori themes can be used to ensure that key concerns of a funder or host organization are addressed in the analysis process. Second, TA is well suited to studies in which multiple perspectives on some phenomenon are sought, either by contrasting different groups coding within a single template (e.g. King et al. 2010) or by developing different versions of a template for different groups (e.g. Wyatt and Silvester 2015). Finally, the structured approach, combined with the availability of methodological and empirical literature, makes the method relatively easy for novice qualitative researchers to grasp.

The need for the application of qualitative methodologies to increase valid insights, develop theory and help to undertake effective decision-making within the hospitality management area has been acknowledged among academic and practitioners. Therefore, TA as one of the qualitative approaches can be considered as a suitable technique for researchers. TA has been

used widely in different research areas such as: nursing, sociology, psychology and recently within business studies. We have provided a summary of researches from different fields such as education, tourism, hospitality and business that employed TA during the last ten years (Table 1).

TA helps researchers to manage rich unstructured qualitative data (Waring and Wainwright 2008). In addition TA encompasses a ‘group of techniques for thematically organising and analysing textual data’. Essentially, emergent themes are written up in a template from the data that have been gathered during the research process and some of the themes ‘will be gathered a priori’ but may be added to the template as the research is going on (King 2004a: 256). Therefore the flexibility of the technique provides an opportunity to researchers in the hospitality field to adopt it based on the needs and uniqueness of their research and ensuring that the study could be adaptive in relation to emerging issues. The most important factor is that TA allows for the inclusion of a priori themes identified through engaging with the existing literature and theory within the field.

<b>Authors name and year</b>	<b>Title of paper</b>	<b>Samples</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Reason for using TA</b>
Waring, T. and Wainwright, D. (2008)	Issues and challenges in the use of template analysis: Two comparative case studies from the field	Two case studies	<i>The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods</i>	The use of template analysis, combined with a critical success factors methodology, for large volume of rich textual material, resulted in a novel approach for learning about current IT project management practices
Alexander, M., Lynch, P. and Murray, R. (2009)	Reassessing the core of hospitality management education: the continuing importance of training restaurants	3 case studies (17 semi-4 structured interviews)	<i>Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education</i>	The template was created using concepts, themes and dimensions ... to let themes emerge as the research progressed
Yap, Matthew H.	HIV-infected employees in the	12 telephone	<i>Journal of Service</i>	This technique was employed due

T. and Ineson, Elizabeth M. (2009)	Asian hospitality industry	interviews and 32 postal questionnaire responses	<i>Management</i>	to its flexibility regarding the modification of codes, categories and themes as the analyses of qualitative data progresses
Konstantinos, A. (2010)	Brits behaving badly: template analysis of newspaper content	Secondary data (315 articles in 42 newspapers)	<i>International Journal of Tourism Anthropology</i>	The convention of template analysis (‘a priori themes’ were defined based on the key issues deduced from the literature review)
Alexander, M., Chen, C. C., MacLaren, A. and O’Gorman, K. D. (2010)	Love motels: Oriental phenomenon or emergent sector?	Two focus groups of ten and 20 semi- structured interviews	<i>International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>	Emergent themes are written up in a template from the data gathered during the research process ... emergent themes from the focus groups became the a priori themes and these were added to and refined after the conclusion of the second stage of the data collection process

McMillan, C. L., O’Gorman, K. D. and MacLaren, A. C. (2011)	Commercial hospitality: A vehicle for the sustainable empowerment of Nepali women	24 semi-structured interviews	<i>International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>	... emergent themes from the literature review are written up in a template from the data gathered during the research process
Tabari, S., Wilson, J. A. J. and Ingram, H. (2016)	Conceptualizing the impact of culture and language upon hospitality service management	36 structured interviews	<i>Worldwide hospitality and tourism themes</i>	A highly flexible approach that can be modified for the needs of any study ... particularly because the ‘discipline of producing the template forces the researcher to take a systematic and well- structured approach to handling the data
Jabbar, A. and Mirza, M. (2017)	Managing diversity: academic’s perspective on culture and teaching	22 In-depth interviews and observation	<i>Race ethnicity and education</i>	Template analysis also lends itself well to usage across multiple methodological and epistemological approaches, especially in an



				interpretative approach...
Kim, H. and Kim, B. G. (2018)	A qualitative approach to automated motels: A rising issue in South Korea	50 semi-structured interviews, participatory observations and focus group interviews	<i>International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>	... documented contents are grouped under corresponding major themes
Lewis, K., Rodriguez, A., Kola-Palmer, S. and Sherretts, N. (2018)	‘It’s not mind blowing really...it’s about keeping people happy’: The perceptions of player welfare managers in Rugby Super League	Semi-structured interviews	<i>Qualitative research in sport, exercise and health</i>	This allowed for the identification of new themes over the course of the work, ensuring that the study could be adaptive in relation to emerging issues and allows for the inclusion of a priori themes identified through engaging with the literature
Lapworth, L.,	Examining public service	35 semi-structured	<i>Public Management</i>	A flexible form of thematic analysis

James, P. and Wylie, N. (2018)	motivation in the voluntary sector:  Implications for public management	interviews	<i>Review</i>	in which a coding template is developed at an early stage in the analytical process, thereby allowing for the inclusion of more deductive or a priori themes to be applied to the full data set...allows for the later inclusion of additional (inductive) themes based on a close reading of the data, which in our case supported the identification of additional motivations that could not be explained by PSM dimensions
Daly, S. J., King, N. and Yeadon-Lee, T. (2018)	Femme it up or dress it down:  Appearance and bisexual women in monogamous relationships	19 interviews and participant diaries	<i>Journal of Bisexuality</i>	Flexible and can be adapted to meet the needs of research across different domains and topics and

				also is not bound to a specific epistemological position
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**Table 1:** Summary of published papers employing TA in the last ten years.

## **Example of research using TA**

To illustrate how TA can be used in hospitality management research, the following sections will demonstrate the insights that this approach can bring to hospitality research. This specific case which was undertaken successfully as a Ph.D. by one of the authors, shows how the method can be utilized to develop a model of cultural centrism.

### **Background of the example**

Multiculturalism is a major trend for today's hospitality and service industries. The globalization, pluralism and hybridization of culture within a multicultural society increase the challenge of studying culture; however, studies about culture and cultural centrism are very important as these have a pervasive influence on consumer behaviour. Tabari et al. (2016) underline the important effect of cultural differences (in their research defined as language, customs and belief differences) on hospitality and guests' satisfaction by considering that different values of other cultures are not always suitable universally. They acknowledge that the way to balance cultural differences is to generate a cultural intelligence that involves emotion, sentiment and sensitivity.

Thus, this study aimed to develop a model to identify the role of cultural differences and the influence of cultural centrism and sensitivity of culture in the process of managing customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry. Therefore, there was a need for theory-generating approaches, particularly qualitative research, in hospitality research.

The purpose of the following section is to illustrate how TA can be used in qualitative hospitality research. The following example has been drawn from the doctoral research of the author, whose aim was to identify the impact of cultural centrism on customer expectations and behaviour in the hospitality industries. The study sought to answer the following broad research question:

- How do cultural differences impact upon customer expectations and perceptions, and what role does cultural sensitivity, as demonstrated by service providers, play in managing expectations and perceptions and enhancing customer satisfaction?

### ***Development of theory and cultural centrism model***

The investigation focused on two major multicultural cities: London and New York. The data collection method chosen for this study was semi-structured interviews, which was considered to be an appropriate strategy for the particular subject area since the focus of research was on personal experiences and attitudes towards the hospitality industry. Over 72 semi-structured interviews were conducted, with both hosts (hospitality organizations) and guests (customers in hospitality organizations). Previous research stressed the impact of cultural difference both on expectations and behaviour according to the opinions of managers and service employees, and also customers' independently based points of view. However, the service encounter is twofold in nature, meaning that the interaction is happening between guests (customers) and hosts (employees). To understand the expectations in hospitality, there is a need for more in-depth research as the nature of commercial hospitality arguably is about providing the best experience and maximizing customer satisfaction within the constraints of a commercial setting. In this respect, Strauss and Mang (1999) state that intercultural service encounters (ICSEs) are all about interactions between service providers and customers from different cultures. The most frequently cited challenges in ICSEs are language barriers and differences in expectations among customers and service providers. The first author decided to collect data from both parties (hotel managers as hosts and customers as guests of the same hotels) to fill the gap in previous studies and, furthermore, to gain more insight to inform the development of a new model of the impact of cultural differences on host and guest interactions based on the nature and aim of the study. The flexible and open nature of qualitative research made it appropriate to the aim of this study

and to the intention of developing a new model examining the host and guest experiences (King et al. 2018).

Therefore, two sets of semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were designed to generate detailed descriptions of the experiences and opinions of both hosts (hotel managers) and guests (customers of the same hotels). The interview questions were developed based on the literature and sample questions from previous intercultural research with respect to the aim of the study. The questions were based on consideration of areas such as respect for cultural differences, intercultural interaction, reaction to communication within differences in culture, awareness of cultural differences and cultural sensitivity. The managers' interviews lasted approximately 30–45 minutes (the scale was structured by the participants), and the customers' interviews about twenty–30 minutes. The first author used the same initial structure for each interview; additional topics were explored based on insights gleaned from previous participants (Morrison et al. 2002). All of the interviews were undertaken face to face and took place at times and in locations most convenient for the interviewees. Noting Blaxter et al.'s (2001: 172) reflections, the interviews revealed the need for greater flexibility in the questioning approach and confirmed the necessity to record interviews, as 'concentrating on asking questions, listening to the responses and taking notes is a complete process'. All the interviews have been recorded with the permission of participants. In addition, as Creswell (2015) and Groenewald (2004) suggested to qualitative researchers to take notes or memos to establish the relationship between the researcher and the interviewees to highlight the general attitude, facial expressions and other non-verbal forms of expression and the level of confidence of interviewees while providing information, notes were taken therefore for each interview.

- *Choosing hotels and managers*

At the time of sampling, the first author contacted twelve hotel managers who after the pilot study agreed to help with the research. Via e-mails the first author explained the nature of the study in more detail and sent official requests to the managers with the proposed times of visits. They had been chosen based on purposive sampling as discussed earlier. The first author chose hotels in both cities with similar characteristics such as their location, their size (more than 100 rooms), being part of a chain, having international guests and employees and a range of staff with different roles. The managers were also chosen based on their experiences of working with international hotel brands. The researcher's expectation was that they would have awareness of cultural differences. The managers fulfilled a range of roles such as operations manager, senior manager, front desk manager and food and beverage manager. Finally, six managers from different hotels in New York in the area of Times Square and six managers from different hotels in London in the areas of Leicester Square, Kensington and Charing Cross were chosen for interviews.

- *Choosing customers*

Thirty customers from each city were interviewed. They were also chosen based on certain characteristics and they were approached by the researcher and asked to participate in the study and give their time for interviews. They were all staying in or visiting these hotels and had experience staying in hotels before. As it was not their first time staying in a hotel they were familiar with hotels. Both domestic and international customers were chosen based on the literature that mentions that conflict may sometimes occur between people from the same cultural background and lead to dissatisfaction with service.

Table 2 highlights the summary of the characteristics of the interviewees. 72 participants came from six hotels in London and six in New York – twelve managers and 30 guests from each city.

Type of participants	Roles	Characteristics	City and number
Managers of hotel	Variety of roles (front office managers, food and beverage managers, and restaurant managers)	Experience working with international customers and working in the hotel for more than 3 years	New York (6) and London (6)
Customers of the same hotels	Guests	Domestic and international	New York (30) and London (30)

**Table 2:** Participants' characteristics.

### **The procedure of TA**

After all interviews were collected from New York, the researcher transcribed them and began to analyse them. The steps of analysis were as follows:

The first stage of preparing data was to transcribe all audio-recorded interviews. The first author used Dragon Dictate program to transfer audio to word format, which took approximately between one and five hours for each interview based on the length of the interview and the accent of the participants: the researcher used this program to increase the speed of transcribing due to the large data set. When the transcribing was done (28,132 words) all transcripts were read and all audio recordings were listened to for the researcher to



become familiar with the data. Transcripts were then transferred into the MAXQDA (qualitative analysis software). Diccio-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) state that using software to assist with data management and analysis is a relatively recent development, and although using such tools permits easy navigation between the source and the result, they might raise some difficult questions over how to integrate this QDA tool.

QDA software ‘can assist to go through coding and help researchers to analyse their text better’ (Altinay et al. 2016: 215). Using computer programs for the process of data analysis can save time, make procedures more systematic, reinforce completeness and permit flexibility with revision of analysis processes, and also help the researcher to develop his or her analysis through in-depth understanding and better interpretation (Altinay et al. 2016). Saunders et al. (2012: 281–82) suggested that systematic use of the software was to benefit the process by increasing the level of transparency and methodological rigour of the analysis at all steps. On reflection to that the first author used the combination of manual and software approaches which led to the deeper understanding of the data and codes.

The coding was performed through all sections of the text that were possibly relevant to the research question. The initial approach chosen for coding was ‘bottom-up’, with some of the a priori themes being developed from the pilot study rather than using the literature for a top-down approach that is sometimes adopted by TA researchers. The process is iterative, with potentially a number of iterations. One of the strengths of TA is its flexibility and the researcher has a number of options in the process of producing the final TA. Afterwards, the first author decided that, rather than working on a sub-set of the data, as is sometimes done in TA, she would undertake the preliminary coding on the full New York data set, so as not to overlook potential themes.

After this came the clustering of preliminary coding and then the emergence of a set of themes, which were then grouped together into a number of meaningful clusters. The MAXQDA software provided a framework with which to highlight words and phrases in different colours. As King et al. (2018) highlight, it is essential that clusters capture communal meaning rather than possible semantic similarities among themes. However, to be sure of her clustering process, the first author listened to audio recordings during this process. The next step was to produce the initial template. For this, themes were to be organized hierarchically in format. The initial template started with a total of thirteen top-level themes, the majority of these then being sub-divided into three hierarchical levels. It is worth noting that there were exceptions: one had only a single sub-theme level while another had a seventh level. The last stage was to produce the final template, but, before this initial level was produced, the first author went back through all of the New York data to be certain of the themes and ensure that no new themes needed to be added and no existing themes needed to be changed. In this instance, the latter was the case.

Some themes had become redundant and were deleted. Table 3 shows an example of how one theme was changed in the process of template development. This kind of change provides flexibility in clustering other codes under it at a sub-level (King and Brooks 2017). After modifications to the initial template of New York, the final template was produced and the same process was repeated for the London data. The researcher chose to provide a separate template for each city to avoid making the assumption that issues for cultural differences would be the same in both places.

For instance the code ‘respectful vs disrespectful’ in the final template was moved from child code (second layer) to main code (first layer); in the final template one extra parent code has been added with a few child codes (impact of knowing more languages). Although some of the changes from the initial to the final template (Table 4) are minor, they help to provide clearer and more robust analysis towards developing the model and understanding the role of cultural centrisms on customer behaviour and interaction.

<b>Initial template</b>	<b>Final template</b>
<b>8. Communication and language</b>	<b>2. Communication and language</b>
8.1. Language barrier	2.1. Language barrier
8.1.1. Non-verbal communication	2.2. Behaviour
8.1.1.1. Misunderstanding	2.3. Emotion
8.1.2. Verbal communication	2.4. Non-verbal communication
8.2. Behaviour	2.4.1. Misunderstanding
8.2.1. Emotion	2.5. Verbal communication
	2.6. Problem
	2.6.1. Action
	2.6.2. Among customers

8.2.2. Problem	2.6.3. Among staff
8.2.2.1. Action	2.7. Respectful vs disrespectful
8.2.2.2. Among customers	2.8. Good vs bad communication
8.2.2.3. Among staff	2.9. Impact of knowing more language
8.2.2.4. Respectful vs. disrespectful	2.9.1. Closeness
8.2.2.5. Good vs. bad communication	2.9.2. Awareness
	2.9.3. Build relationship
	2.9.3.1. Able to express themselves
8.3. Impact of knowing more language	

**Table 3:** Example of changes in themes from the initial template to the final template.

In the end, the two final templates of the two cities were compared with each other and it was clear that the main issues highlighted were similar. Both templates could thus be merged together to form one template for the study. Before the last stage, which is the writing up of the data, it is suggested by King and Brooks (2017) and King (2012) that researchers do a quality check to make sure that their themes make sense. In this case, the researcher chose an independent coder to review and clarify that the final template, after merging the two templates, was accurate. This process involved providing all of the transcripts, codes and

templates to this person. Following the quality check, some changes were made to lower order themes that helped to better emphasize issues. The final template for better understanding has been provided as Table 4.

The final template in TA is used as the basis of the researcher's first interpretation (King 2012). Furthermore, in this study the first author did the same thing – starting with the interpretation of the top-level themes to build a model of cultural centrism in the context of host/guest interactions in the hospitality industry.

The first author, for her study, chose to write up her analysis from a 'theme-by-theme approach'. Meaning that at the start of each section she introduced the top-level theme and sub-themes in a table format. Illustrative quotes from both cities, and both hosts and guests were used to highlight the similarities and differences in their perspectives. The first author drew a conceptual framework from her literature review and the main aim of the study, as previously mentioned, was to help to produce a model of cultural centrism during host/guest interactions. She thus used QDA to refine this further, providing new insight to the existing knowledge and understanding. Therefore, the final template provided the necessary insights to achieving her aim and answering her broad research question.

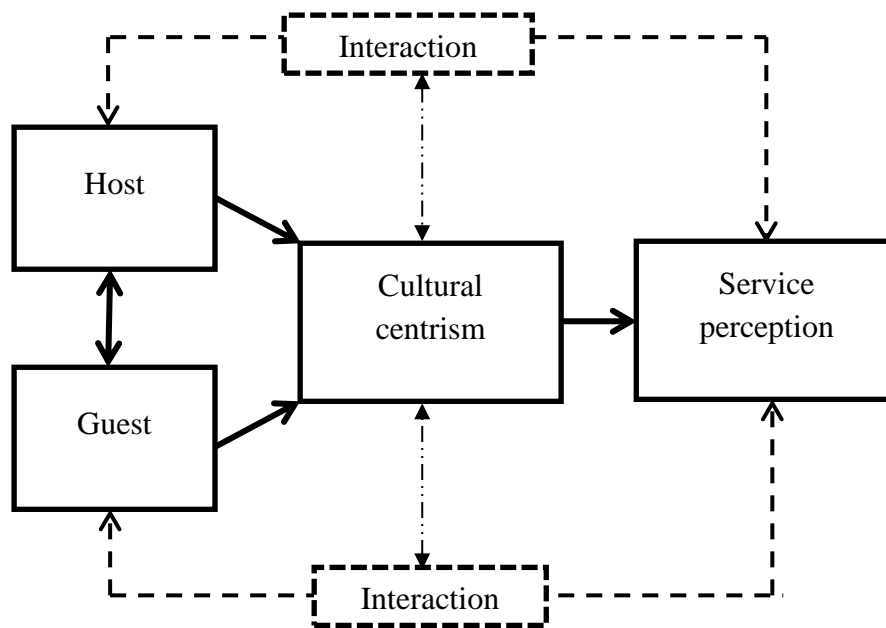
In summary, one of the main advantages of TA is that the researcher has a high level of focus on the research aim and the research questions and is thus able to develop a more robust analysis towards building theory and proposing a model based on the main themes of the final template (Table 4). The final template as can be seen in Table 4 as a summary of the two separate data sets of London and New York, and through a number of iterative analyses, the template is gradually focussed down to a workable number of themes and codes. Although in terms of presentation the codes look imbalanced, this illustrates how TA through an iterative

process focuses, and in some cases expands, the codes concentrating on those codes that are the most significant to answer the research question. Table 4 also illustrates how TA focuses down into the sub-codes identifying the key areas for the model builder.

<b><u>Final Template</u></b>	
<b>1. Customer's identity</b> 1.1. Different backgrounds/origins 1.2. Different language 1.2.1. Different accent 1.2.2. Different dialogue 1.3. Appearance 1.3.1. Way of dressing 1.3.2. Way of greeting 1.4. Types 1.4.1. Business 1.4.2. Leisure 1.5. Expectations <b>2. Communication and language</b> 2.1. Language barrier 2.2. Behaviour 2.3. Emotion 2.4. Non-verbal communication 2.4.1. Misunderstanding 2.5. Verbal communication 2.6. Problems 2.6.1. Action 2.6.2. Among customers 2.6.3. Among staff 2.7. Respectful vs. disrespectful 2.8. Good vs. bad communication 2.9. Impact of knowing more language 2.9.1. Closeness 2.9.2. Awareness 2.9.3. Build relationship 2.9.3.1. Able to express themselves <b>3. Culture</b> 3.1. Definition 3.1.1. Sub-culture 3.1.2. Socio-culture 3.1.3. Economic-culture 3.2. Cultural differences 3.3. Cultural awareness 3.3.1. Action 3.4. Cultural closeness 3.5. Element of culture 3.6. Your own culture 3.7. Role of culture in daily life <b>4. Reason of adopting home culture or host culture</b> <b>5. Satisfaction vs. dissatisfaction</b> 5.1. Emotion 5.1.1. Unhappy 5.1.2. Happy 5.2. Satisfying all different cultural backgrounds 5.3. Impact of culture on each of them 5.4.1. Meet all customers' needs <b>6. Hospitality</b> 6.1. Definition 6.2. Culture in hospitality 6.2.1. Impact of culture in hospitality	<b>7. Service</b> 7.1. Intuitive service 7.1.1. Action 7.2. Differences in service 7.3. Dissatisfaction of service 7.3.1. Feedback 7.3.1.1. Service recovery 7.4. New York service 7.5. London service <b>8. Diversity of staff</b> 8.1. Problem with cultural diversity 8.2. Religion vs. staff <b>9. Training</b> 9.1. Importance of training 9.1.1. Staff awareness 9.1.1.1. Cultural closeness 9.1.1.2. Build relationship 9.2. Standard training <b>10. Multicultural</b> 10.1. Definition 10.1.1. New York/London as a multicultural city 10.2. Service in New York/London as a multicultural operation 10.2.1. Multicultural operation <b>11. New York/ London</b> 11.1. New York/London culture 11.2. New York/London service 11.2.1. Differences in service 11.3. Reason for being in New York/London 11.4. Living in New York/London 11.4.1. Good things 11.4.2. Bad things 11.5. Operating service industry in New York/London 11.5.1. The best thing 11.5.2. The worst thing
	<b>Uncategorized</b> Anything else Misunderstanding Offended

**Table 4:** Final template of this study.

The proposed conceptual model has been developed following the analysis of themes from the final template. Therefore, the cultural centrism model shows the strength and relationships between key themes during interactions between hosts and guests, and demonstrates the ways in which cultural differences can create barriers in understanding the nature of this interaction and, as a result, affects the customer's perception of the service.



**Figure 2:** Cultural centrism model.

### **Main strength of TA in managing the analysis of qualitative data**

The main challenge of this specific study was the scale of the project; as mentioned earlier, there were 72 interviews from the two different groups (hotel managers and customers) in two different locations. However, the researcher chose to treat each city as a separate data set and developed individual templates for each before merging them at a later stage. This worked well in providing a check that the harmonies between them were not just a result of

the ways in which the researcher conducted the analysis, as could have been the case if she had utilized a single template from the outset. However, the flexibility of TA helped the researcher to manage and overcome difficulties and provide themes that were more focused towards the aim of research to develop a new model and theory. Meanwhile, using MAXQDA software was a great help in managing large volumes of data.

The other main strength of TA is that it provides transparency during the different stages of the analysis, as the researcher is able to keep a careful record of each step. Since the template is developed through numerous repetitions, researchers can review earlier versions to check and critically reflect on the analytical choices that have made. In this way, at the final stage of the analysis a detailed history of the process is available providing an audit trail for quality assurance purposes (King and Brooks 2017; Brooks et al. 2015; King et al. 2018). In addition the template provides a structure to reflection aiding the process of model building in this particular study.

### **Potential limitations**

It is obvious that, in any form of qualitative analysis, there are potential limitations and, as such, TA also has some limitations that researchers need to be aware of. The focus on developing the coding structure can lead to the view that the template is the end goal in itself rather than be seen as simply a means to facilitate a rigorous and convincing analysis of the data. In other words, the focus on TA is typically a cross-case rather than a within-case analysis, the result of which is the unavoidable loss of holistic understanding in relation to individual accounts (King and Brooks 2017; Brooks et al. 2015; King 2004b, 2012).



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Note

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<sup>1</sup> To researchers who are inspired to use TA we are recommending as a comprehensive  
introduction the following book chapter: King et al. (2018).