Cross-culture qualitative research:
what we learned from EU Kids Online III

David Smahel

Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Czech Republic

EU Kids Online: WP4 Objectives

www.eukidsonline.net

- To identify and stimulate the conduct of innovative qualitative methods for difficult contextual and ethical issues in researching children's understandings of/responses to online risk.

- To explore the qualitative meanings of risk for children, drawing on innovative methods where possible, to exploit the value of such approaches and explicate their potential for comparable findings.

www.eukidsonline.net

T30: D4.2 Report: Understanding the meaning of risks

- Develop a common methodology for the qualitative research which will be used by at least in five countries.

- Carry out qualitative investigation in at least five European countries, using the same methods, coding manuals, producing comparative results.

Output:

Smahel, D. & Wright, M. (2014). *The meaning of online problematic situations for children: Results of cross-cultural qualitative investigation in nine European countries*.

http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/56972/

Starting position

Countries (15):

the Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Norway, Slovenia, the UK, Belgium, Malta, Portugal, Spain, Romania, Turkey, Australia, Malta

Limited funds

&

Enthusiastic researchers ☺

Questions and more questions ..

?? What are our research goals? (i.e. victims/experienced risks/bystanders/which risks…) … goals from EUKO II?

?? What will be our population / sample?

?? Which method? Focus groups / interviews / online methods

?? Ethic of the research

?? How to do comparable interviews/focus groups?

?? In which phase and how to translate data?

?? How to create common coding book ?

?? Will we have more independent coders? (Reliability issues..) (In which language they will code data?)

?? "Comparable results" – what we will "compare"?

?? Other qualitative research – will we connect results in some way?

Review of cross-culture studies with qualitative design

Review of 13 cross-culture research articles based on qualitative investigations:

- 11x interviews, 2x focus groups

- 4x pilot study – made in every country and the structure of the interview was remade according to the results

- Coding in: every language (5x), one language after translation (4x), both (1x)

- Coding manual based on first interviews (3x), or coding independent in every country (1x), coding manual proposed by leading country researchers (1x), analyses made in every country and reports analyzed in leading country together as „blind reports"

Research goals

(1) *Meaning of risks*

Which risks children perceive on the internet? Which all risks they can see?

How children evaluate these risks? What impacts and consequences can mentioned online risks have?

Relations between risk and harm – what is risky but not harmful?

(2) *Coping with risks*

What children do to avoid experience of mentioned risks? (preventive coping)

What can children do after experiencing some of risks? (coping after experience)

Which strategies of coping are best in children perspectives?

Focus groups structure & Sampling of schools

(1) Single gender versus mixed gender focus groups – if single, we need 6 focus groups per country – age distribution: 9-10, 11-13, 14-16 (or more?)

(2) School selection - many different criteria:

- age, gender, rurality, private x public …

My suggestion:

3 schools total, 1 school = 1 male focus group + 1 female group

2 schools from cities, 1 rural area

Organization of the focus group

Ideal proposal:

- Arrive at a school 20 minutes before school starts (allow time for necessary arrangements, administration, …).

- At the beginning of the first lesson (8 a.m. in the Czech Republic) each researcher goes to one or two classrooms (according to previous arrangement). Optimally, two children from 4 classes will be chosen to match the age groups.

- The rest of the first lesson: preparation of the room where the focus group will be conducted.

- The 2nd and 3rd lessons (i.e. 2x 45 min.) - focus group – see description below.

- Interview – it can be conducted straight after the focus group or after the lunch break (preferred). The children are tired after the two-hour discussion, which should be taken into consideration.

Next presentation ☺

Choice criteria for children

- *Who has the internet at home?* (probably almost everyone)

- *Who uses it every day or almost every day?*

- *Who of those who use the internet almost every day would like to take part in a group discussion with other kids about experience with the internet?*

- The researcher will randomly choose from the children who are interested using a table of random numbers we will supply. (Note: Do not take the teachers' opinion into account because they may label some candidates as inappropriate.) The selected pupils should not sit next to each other as they could be friends and know each other well. If a random number chooses a child sharing a desk with an already selected child, the researcher chooses the child next in line.

Focus groups x interviews

- Two interviews with children from each focus group will be realized.

- Choosing the candidate for the interview: ideally a pupil who has mentioned having a *potentially risk experience* and is willing to talk about it in a one-to-one interview.

- It could have happened there wasn't enough space for a child to give details about a sensitive topic in the focus group.

- It is also possible to choose a pupil who has mentioned potentially interesting topics only briefly, but didn't get the word in the focus group.

→ First draft of the topic and coding guide were developed

Pilot research

- From October 2012 to January 2013

- minimum of 1 focus group and 2 interviews per country

- Discussions of **Topic guide** and **Coding guide**

- Example of first level coding (+Researcher notes)

MI   Yes, for example when we were outside school people used to take picture of us, I mean, we were taking a picture of us and one... she has a funny face or look and they used to put it on Facebook but the people didn't like it because they will say, I don't look good in this picture, can you take it off?

Komentář [H59]: Images: Miriam knew of instances when people posted pictures and those in the picture asked them to take the image off the profile because it was embarrassing—which they did

Sections for translations

- Do not forget: researchers notes! .. Explain national specifics! - use the code „RC" (Researchers' comment), use new note!

- Second reading: please reread and add RC!

- Example „Downloading movies is considered a skill rather than an illegal activity, which is hardly surprising as the lack of a strict policy framework for downloading content in Greece frames the activity as a competence; in this respect, although typically illegal, downloading is a well-honoured practice]"

Numbers of 1. level codes

Countries	Number of first level codes	Number of translated interesting sections	Number of problematic situation experiences codes
Belgium	4518	137	788
Czech Republic	2707	161	618
Greece	3180	120	384
Malta	2809	121	524
Italy	2493	241	403
Portugal	1992	102	661
Romania	3371	168	732
Spain	3410	154	498
United Kingdom	2216	228	567
Summary	26696	1432	5175

Second level of coding

- <u>Research area</u>: problematic situation experience, impact, awareness, preventive measures…

- <u>Problematic situation</u>: strangers, bullying & harassment, sex, unwanted content, commercial risks, technical problems, health & overuse

- <u>Platform</u>: SNS (Social Networking Sites), e-mail, pop-ups, websites, chat & message, video platforms…

- <u>Actors</u> – who was involved: respondent, friend – peer, sibling, parents, teachers & school, media, other people

- <u>Feelings</u>: if any feeling were present, both positive and negative

Limitations of the EU Kids Online cross-culture investigation

- Usage of the topic guide – if many researchers are collecting data -> <u>higher control is needed</u>

- Best option: continuous coding with the control of the coordinator and continuous feedback to each interview & coding

- First level coding: good tool, but remember that many things are lost already here.

- First level coding: differences across research teams

- First level coding: researchers notes for cross-culture? – not enough

Limitations of the EU Kids Online cross-culture investigation

www.eukidsonline.net

- Second level coding – you are again losing information and also the context!

- Second level coding – how to work with researchers notes?

- Is cross-culture "comparison" possible?

-> 6 international meetings not enough?

-> usage of video conferencing tools?

-> higher control on the side of coordinator?

-> better less countries?

-> more focused research?

-> more homogenous samples?