



GLOSSARY

CHAPTER CONTENTS.

📅 22 Sep 2025

Some essential terminology for causal mapping.

Term	Definition
Causal claim	A section of text where someone or something says or claims that one thing (a cause) influences or influenced another (an effect). There need be no suggestion that the cause is the only cause of the effect, or totally determines it.
Causal link	A causal link is the representation of a causal claim within a causal mapping system or database. Each link consists of a cause, an effect, a quote or other evidence to back up the claim, and a source, for example an interview transcript.
Coding	The process of capturing a causal claim in a text as a causal link in a database or map.
Bundle	Often there will be many links with the same causes and effects. We call this set of links a <i>bundle</i> of links. Usually these links are mentioned by multiple sources. In a causal map, we usually display all the links in a bundle as one arrow. A thicker line or a label can be used to show the number of links in the bundle.
Source	Sources are where your causal claims come from: respondents you have interviewed or documents you have collected. Sources are usually given an ID like, say, <code>Source_001</code> .

Term	Definition
Cause	A causal factor at the beginning of a link, that affects another factor.
Influence factor	See <i>cause</i> . Sometimes we prefer "Influence factor" over "Cause" to make it clear that we may be talking only about a partial contribution to an effect, not complete determination.
Effect	A causal factor at the end of a link, that has been influenced by another factor.
Consequence factor	See Effect. Sometimes we prefer "Consequence factor" over "Effect" to make it clear that we may be talking only about a partial contribution to an effect, not complete determination.
Factor	A cause or an effect; something that can influence or be influenced by other factors. We use the word both for the text label within the causal mapping representation as well as for the thing in the world to which it refers.
Codebook	A list of factor labels that can be used when coding causal links and/or other instructions for coding.
Causal map	A set of causal links between a set of factors, usually interconnected, such that a link from X to Y means that someone says or claims that X influences or influenced Y. We can think of a causal map as a visual representation or more abstractly just as a table or database of links which can be visualised.
Self-loop	A causal link from one factor to itself.
Column	Data associated with a link or a source: some columns are essential, e.g. a link must have a cause and an effect, and some are optional.
Field	See <i>column</i>

Relevant page:

Names of tables and fields

