

Introduction to Research Methods

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Introduction to Research Methods

Lecture 6



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Learning Outcomes

1. Explain the importance of simultaneous data collection and analysis in grounded theory and describe the iterative approach involved.
2. Understand theoretical sampling methods to select information-rich cases and achieve theoretical saturation in grounded theory research.
3. Learn data coding and construct categories from empirical data, ensuring the emergence of grounded theory from data rather than preconceived notions.

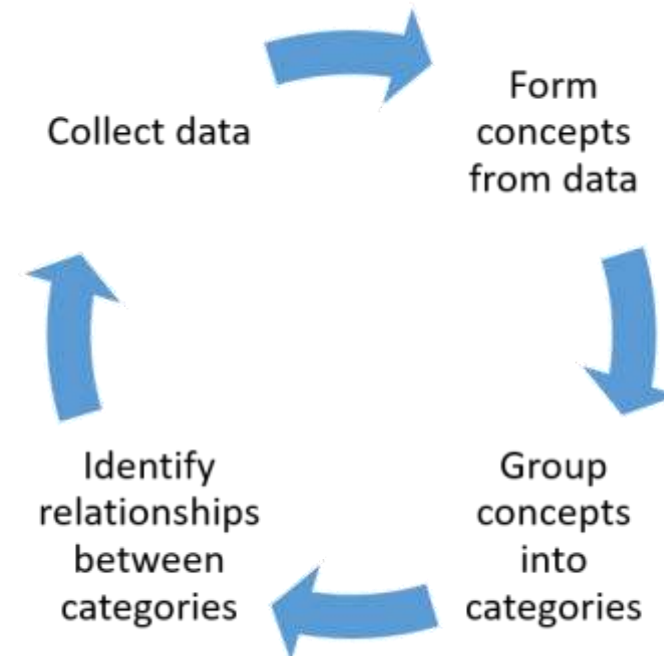
Learning Outcomes

4. Utilize memo writing for theory advancement
5. How to conduct various types of research interviews, including structured and unstructured formats, to collect qualitative, descriptive, and in-depth data.
6. Implement and analyze interview data

Defining Grounded Theory

Not a Specific Research Method

Grounded theory is not tied to a particular method but involves key principles in any research design, such as ethnographic studies, case studies, or action research.



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An example of using grounded theory in business

- One example of how grounded theory may be used in business is to support HR teams by analyzing data to explore reasons why people leave a company.
- For example, a company with a high attrition rate that has not done any research on this area before may choose grounded theory to understand key reasons why people choose to leave.



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Researchers may start looking at the quantitative data around departures over the year and look for patterns.

Coupled with this, they may conduct qualitative data research through employee engagement surveys, interview panels for current employees, and exit interviews with leaving employees.



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From this information, they may start coding transcripts to find similarities and differences (coding) picking up on general themes and concepts. For example, a group of excerpts like:

“The hours I worked were far too long and I hated traveling home in the dark”

“My manager didn’t appreciate the work I was doing, especially when I worked late”

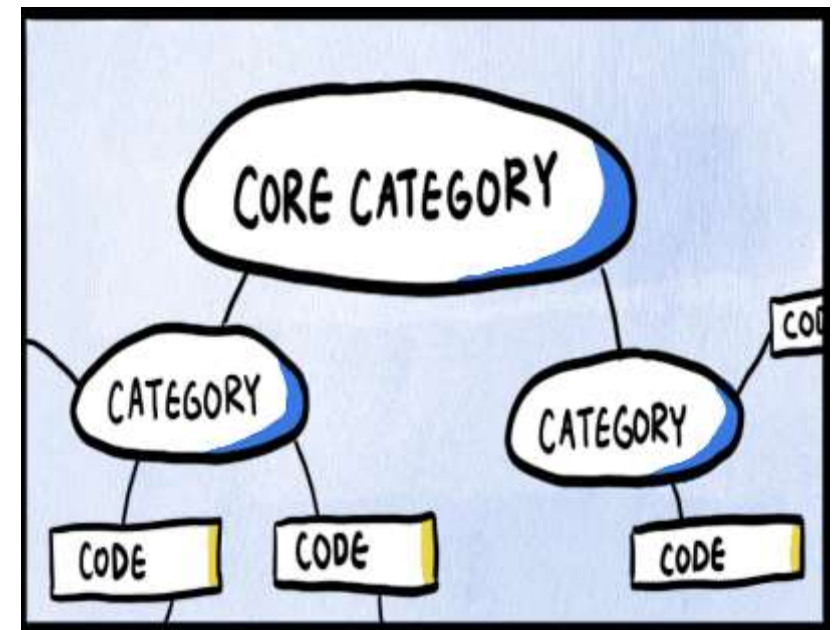
There are no good night bus routes home that I could take safely”

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Using open coding, a researcher could compare excerpts and suggest the themes of managerial issues, a culture of long hours and lack of traveling routes at night.

With more samples and information, through axial coding, stronger themes of lack of recognition and having too much work (which led people to working late), could be drawn out from the summaries of the concepts and themes.

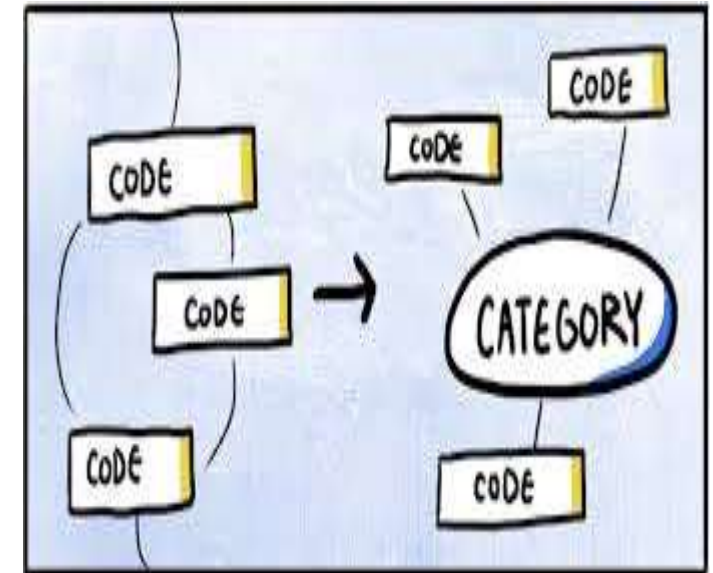


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This could lead to a selective coding conclusion that people left because they were 'overworked and under-appreciated'.

With this information, a grounded theory can help HR teams look at what teams do day to day, exploring ways to spread workloads or reduce them. Also, there could be training supplied to management and employees to engage professional development conversations better.



Major Principles

Research Question

Begins with a broad, open-ended question focused on discovery.

Simultaneous Data Collection and Analysis

Data is collected and analyzed simultaneously to inform ongoing research.

Sampling Towards Theory Construction

Sampling continues until theoretical saturation is achieved, meaning no new information is found.

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Constructing Data Categories

Empirical data is used to develop categories that help in understanding the phenomena being studied.

Developing Theory Continuously

Theory is developed throughout data collection and analysis phases.

Memo-Writing

Writing memos helps in advancing the theory by documenting insights and reflections (Charmaz, 2006).



Research Question and Process

- Grounded theory research aims to discover new insights rather than answer specific questions or test hypotheses.
- Suitable for studying individual processes, interpersonal relations, and interactions within larger social contexts (Charmaz, 1995).
- Research begins with a very open question, such as "How do people engage in the information seeking process?" The focus is on understanding the process and the user group involved.
- As research progresses, specific focuses and questions emerge based on observations and data collection.

Engaging in Questioning

Observation Techniques (Charmaz, 2006)

Watch for Actions and Processes: Pay attention to what people do and the processes they engage in, not just what they say.

Contextual Understanding: Carefully note the context in which actions occur to understand underlying reasons and conditions.



Detailed Recording: Record details of who did what, why, and under what conditions to capture the complexity of interactions.

Identifying Conditions: Determine the conditions that influence actions, intentions, and processes.

Flexible Exploration: Start with an open question and explore its many facets, allowing salient issues to emerge naturally.

Avoiding Preconceptions: Grounded theory research avoids rigid preconceptions and allows specific, detailed questions to arise organically during the research process.

Simultaneous Data Collection and Analysis

Key Principle

Emphasizes the simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis phases (Charmaz, 1995).

Inductive Analysis

Ongoing process from the outset; essential for formulating a theory grounded in raw data.

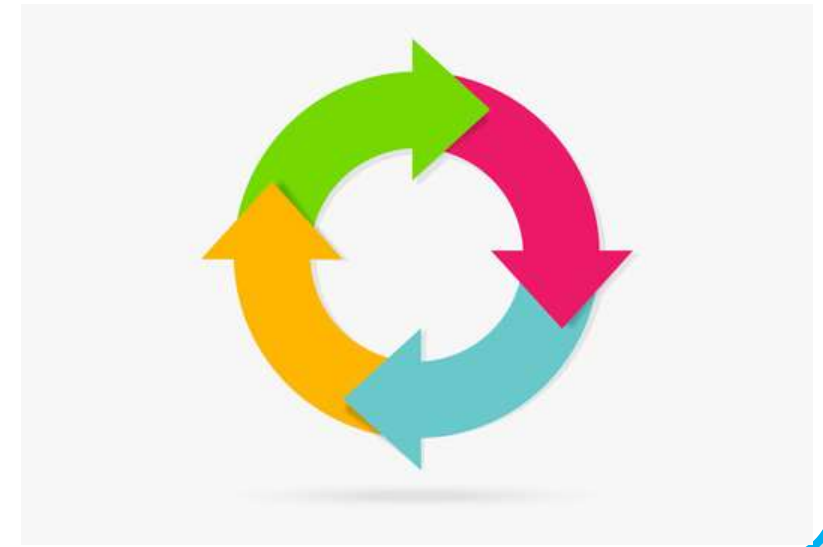


Iterative Approach

Data collection and analysis occur together, promoting the emergence of substantive theory (Marshall and Rossman, 1995).

Initial Data Analysis

First step in analysis, providing preliminary categories and guiding subsequent data collection decisions.



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Iterative Data Collection and Analysis

Continuous Process

Avoids a linear approach by constantly moving between data collection and analysis.

Guiding Further Steps

Initial data analysis informs what types of data are needed next and who to collect it from.



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Rich Data

Requires detailed and full descriptions of events, emotions, reactions, etc.

Intensive Interviews and Observations

Essential for gathering rich data, requiring careful scheduling to allow for transcription and initial analysis before the next data collection activity.



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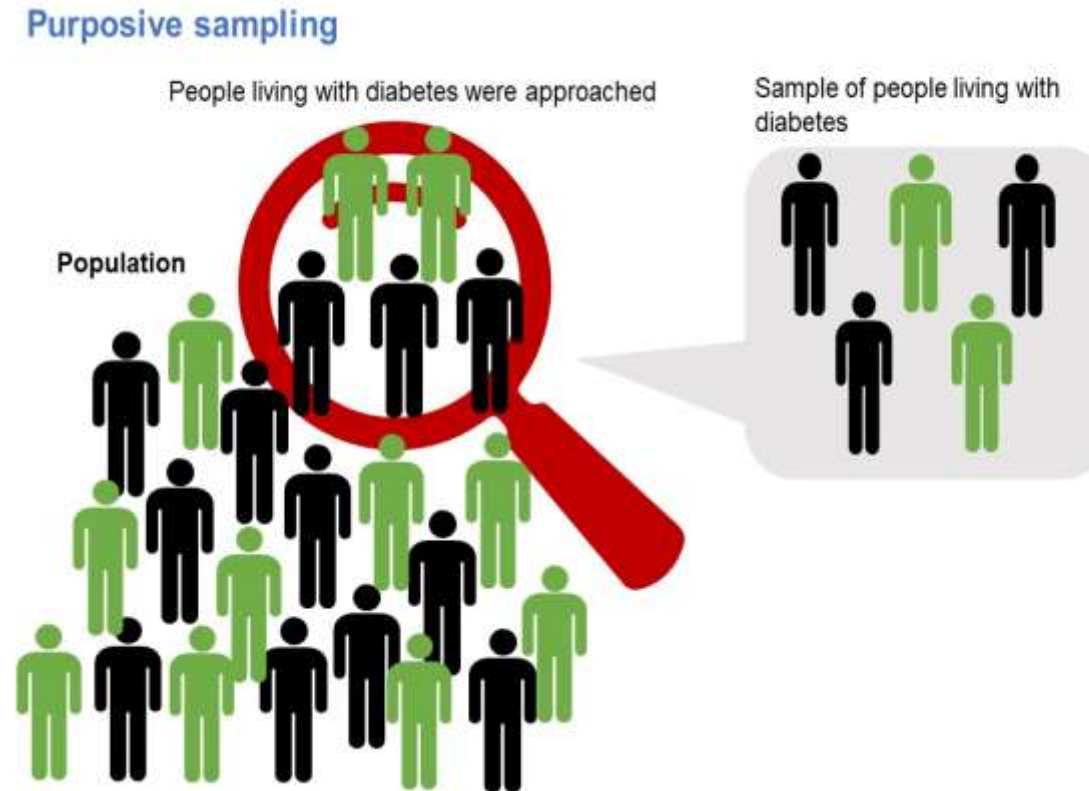
Sampling Towards Theory Construction

Purposeful Sampling

Selecting information-rich cases to learn about central research issues (Patton, 2002)

Theoretical Sampling

Driven by data; no a priori identification of precise participants.



Empirical Inquiry

Starts with data, constructs tentative ideas, and examines these ideas through further empirical inquiry (Charmaz, 2006).

Sample Size and Saturation

Sample size and structure are not predetermined; sampling continues until theoretical saturation is achieved (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).



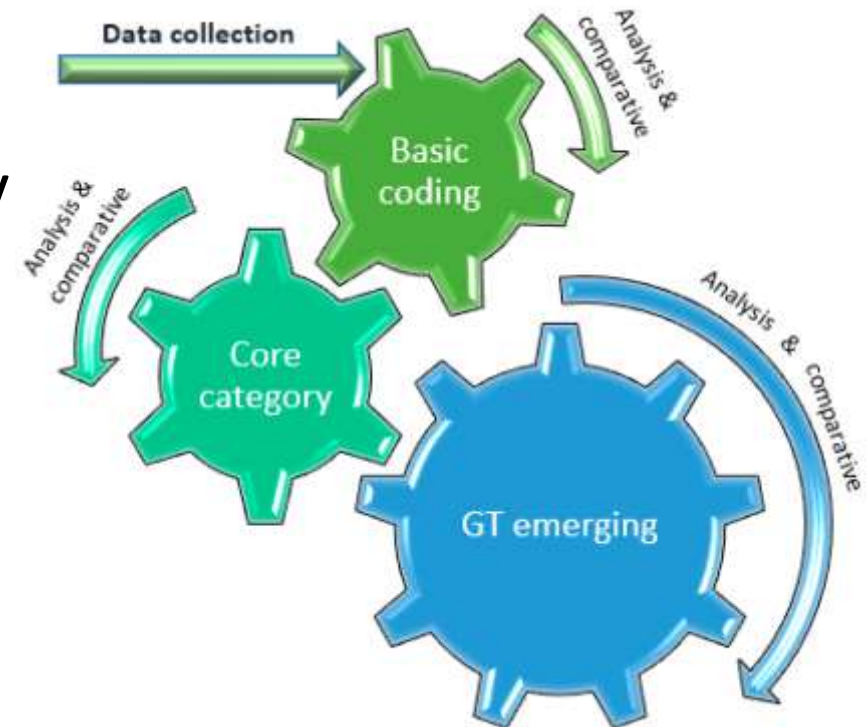
Constructing Categories from Empirical Data

Coding as a Pivotal Link

Coding connects data collection to theory development (Charmaz, 2006).

Emergence of Categories

Categories emerge from coding rules, serving as higher-level concepts.



Empirical Evidence

Categories must arise from data, not be preconceived by researchers.

Role of Existing Theories

Prior theories can guide but not influence new data collection and analysis. They act as conceptual bridges and cognitive structures (Stake, 1995).

Testing in Real Situations

Codes and categories are tested in real-world contexts to validate them.

Continuous Theory Development

Empirical Basis

Theory is derived from data and illustrated with data examples (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Interpretivist Approach

Relies on researcher interpretations of evidence, not absolute truth.

Early and Ongoing Process

Theory development starts early and evolves with ongoing data analysis.

Substantive Theory

Initial theory related to specific research context and events.

Formal Theory

Higher abstraction level, usually emerging from multiple studies.

Emergence and Application of Theory

Real-world Relevance

Theory must align closely with data to be practical and applicable (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Stages of Theory Development

Substantive theory emerges first, followed by formal theory from broader empirical knowledge.

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Understanding by All

Theory derived from real-world evidence is understandable by researchers, practitioners, and laypeople alike.

Memo Writing

Encourages extensive interaction with data, aiding in theory development.



Importance of Memo Writing

Pivotal Intermediate Step

Memo-writing bridges data collection and writing drafts of papers (Charmaz, 2006).

Continuous Interaction

Theory emerges from constant interaction with data and categories, documented in memos (Glaser, 1998).

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Attachment to Data

Memos are usually attached to the data or kept in a well-maintained research diary/log.

Purpose

Provides a written commentary and interpretation of data as it is gathered.



Benefits and Process of Memo Writing

Visualization and Thinking Aloud

Helps visualize analysis and articulate thoughts about data.

Developing Rhythm

Encourages a rhythm in developing emerging theory and initiating ideas about data relationships.

Identifying Gaps

Highlights overlooked areas and identifies gaps needing further investigation.

Finding Researcher's Voice

Encourages researchers to find their voice and maintain close connection to data.

Memo Writing in Practice

Private Dialogue

Memos are a private dialogue with data, exploring words, actions, feelings, and relationships.

Exploration and Discovery

Memos form a space for exploration and discovering ideas about observed data (Charmaz, 2006).

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Evolving Nature

Memos evolve from short, directed statements to intricate discussions about relationships and patterns.

Data Analysis

Memos are considered part of data analysis and are integral to both Glaser's and Strauss and Corbin's methods.

Interview



Forms of Research Interviews

Structured Interviews

Formal, researcher-administered questionnaires.

Informal Interviews

Purposeful conversations led by participants (Dexter, 1970; Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Researcher takes control during analysis and interpretation (Tagg, 1985).

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Designing Appropriate Interviews

Tailor interviews to the research topic, participant nature, and researcher experience.

Neophyte interviewers should avoid totally unstructured conversations initially.



Becoming a Good Interviewer

Practice is Essential

Practice interviews to improve technique and confidence.

Know Your Topic

A thorough literature review helps immerse in the topic.



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Know Yourself

Understand your reactions and style in interview situations.

Practice with Familiar Topics

Conduct interviews on familiar topics with friends to practice data collection and question formulation.



Purpose and Suitability of Interviews

Accessing the Interviewee's Mind

Interviews reveal what is in and on the interviewee's mind (Stenhouse, 1984).

Qualitative, Descriptive Data

Suitable for complex, in-depth data specific to individuals.



Reconstruction and Prediction

Allows reconstruction of past events, interpretation of present, and prediction of future (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Interaction and Clarification

Facilitates interaction between researcher and subject, clarifying meanings and shared understanding (Bertrand and Hughes, 2005).

Not for Factual Data

Less suitable for precise dates, times, or quantifiable data, which are better collected through other methods.

Overview of the Seven Stages

Kvale (1996) outlines seven stages

- Thematizing
- Designing
- Interviewing
- Transcribing
- Analyzing
- Verifying
- Reporting

Process is iterative, especially in the final stages for unstructured interviews.

Thematizing

Purpose and Topic

- Clarify the "why" and "what" before the "how" (Kvale, 1996).
- Establish research purpose and investigate the topic thoroughly.

Establish Themes

- Identify themes appropriate for each interviewee.
- Structure themes logically to aid in understanding feelings, behavior, and beliefs.

Designing

Interview Guide

- Ensures each interview covers the same ground but allows flexibility.
- Can range from a strict script to a list of topics (Ellis, 1993).

Structure

- Decide on the extent of structure based on interview type.
- Example: Semi-structured guide for young teenagers (Pickard, 2002).

Interviewing

Reflective Approach

- Conduct interviews based on the guide and be reflective about knowledge sought (Kvale, 1996).

Rapport Building

- Create a comfortable environment for interviewees.
- Practice to improve technique and reduce nervousness.

Preparation

- Know your questions and the purpose behind them.
- Estimate interview time accurately.

Types of Interviews

Structured Interviews

Preestablished questions with limited response categories (Fontana and Frey, 1994).

Benefits include visual and oral cues, control over response rates, and pre-coding for easier analysis.

Unstructured Interviews

Holistic understanding of interviewee's thoughts and feelings.

Informal conversational interview and general interview guide (Patton, 1987).

Demands high familiarity with the topic and comfort in the interview situation.

Recording

Audio Recording

Provides security but may inhibit interviewees.

Familiarity with equipment is crucial to avoid technical issues.

Note-Taking

Balances writing important information and staying engaged.

Use pre-prepared notepads for efficiency.



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Transcribing

Timeliness

- Transcribe as soon after the interview as possible.
- Allow time for initial transcription and analysis.



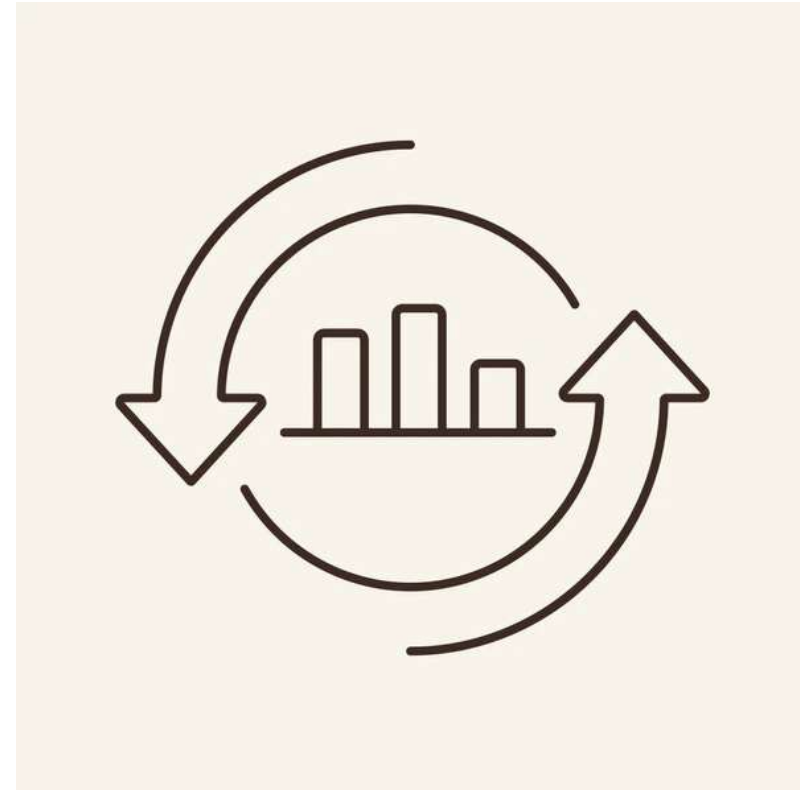
Detail Level

- Decide on full or partial transcription based on research needs.
- Full transcription is necessary for ethnographic studies; specific themes for surveys.

Analyzing

Continuous Process

- Analysis begins during the interview with initial reflections and follow-up questions.
- Qualitative research involves ongoing analysis..



Verifying

Interview Purpose

Ensure the interview answered the research question (Kvale, 1996).

Member Check

Return to interviewees to confirm interpretations match their intentions (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Can yield additional data.



MEMBER
CHECK

Reporting

Use of Evidence

Interviews form the foundation of emerging theory.

Verbatim quotes are crucial evidence in research reports.

Interpretation of what was said should be well-documented.



Thank You