

## CHAPTER 14

# QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

*Turning Participant Experiences and Perspectives into Meaningful Evidence*

Presented by

**Dr Abenet Yohannes, Ph.D. | MEAL training series**

# Learning Objectives

*By the end of this chapter, participants will be able to:*

- Explain the purpose of qualitative analysis
- Prepare qualitative data for analysis
- Transcribe and translate interviews and discussions
- Develop deductive and inductive codes
- Prepare a qualitative codebook
- Index and organize qualitative data
- Conduct thematic analysis
- Conduct basic content analysis
- Develop qualitative analysis matrices
- Compare findings across stakeholder groups
- Apply triangulation
- Select and use quotations responsibly
- Identify negative and deviant cases
- Maintain an audit trail
- Reduce researcher bias
- Use qualitative-analysis software
- Interpret and report qualitative findings
- Develop actionable recommendations

# What is Qualitative Data Analysis?

*The systematic process of organizing, examining and interpreting non-numerical information. Qualitative information may include:*

- Interview transcripts
- Focus-group discussions
- Observation notes
- Community consultations
- Open-ended survey responses
- Case studies
- Documents
- Photographs
- Audio and video records

# What Qualitative Analysis Helps Us Understand

*Qualitative analysis can explain:*

- Why results occurred
- How people experienced the project
- What barriers affected participation
- How social norms influenced behaviour
- Why some groups benefited more than others
- What participants consider meaningful
- What unintended outcomes occurred
- How the context affected implementation

# Typical Qualitative Questions

*Qualitative analysis helps answer:*

- How did participants experience the intervention?
- Why was the service used or not used?
- What factors supported success?
- What prevented expected change?
- How did experiences differ among groups?
- What changes were most valued?
- What should be adapted?

# Quantitative versus Qualitative Analysis

| Quantitative Analysis       | Qualitative Analysis                           |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Analyses numerical data     | Analyses text, speech, images and observations |
| Identifies magnitude        | Explains meaning and experience                |
| Uses statistical procedures | Uses coding, categories and themes             |
| Often seeks generalization  | Often seeks depth and contextual understanding |
| Answers “how many?”         | Answers “how, why and under what conditions?”  |

# A Qualitative Analysis Workflow

- 1 Clarify the analysis questions
- 2 Organize and secure the data
- 3 Transcribe and translate
- 4 Familiarize yourself with the data
- 5 Develop codes
- 6 Code or index the data
- 7 Develop categories and themes
- 8 Prepare matrices and summaries
- 9 Compare groups and sources
- 10 Triangulate findings
- 11 Interpret meaning
- 12 Report findings and recommendations

# I

SECTION I OF XXII

## Preparing Qualitative Data



# Begin with the Analysis Questions

*Before analysis, review:*

- Evaluation questions
- Learning questions
- Theory of Change
- Indicators
- Interview and FGD guides
- Sampling plan
- Stakeholder groups
- Intended use of findings
- Ethical and confidentiality requirements



# Inventory the Available Data

*Prepare a data inventory showing:*

- Source type
- Respondent group
- Location
- Date
- Interviewer
- Language
- Recording status
- Transcription status
- Consent restrictions
- File location



# Organize Files Consistently

## Example file-naming structure:

*Project\_Method\_Location\_Group\_Date\_ID*

## Example:

*WASH\_FGD\_VillageA\_Women\_2027-05-12\_01*



# Separate Raw and Working Files

*Maintain:*

## Raw Files

- Original recordings
- Original notes
- Original transcripts
- Original documents

## Working Files

- Cleaned transcripts
- Translated transcripts
- Coded files
- Matrices
- Analytical summaries

# Protect Sensitive Qualitative Data

## Qualitative data may contain

- Names
- Personal histories
- Safeguarding disclosures
- Political opinions
- Health information
- Complaints
- Community conflicts
- Identifiable quotations

## Protect data through

- De-identification
- Restricted access
- Encryption
- Secure storage
- Controlled sharing

# II

SECTION II OF XXII

## Transcription and Translation



# What is Transcription?

*Transcription converts audio or video recordings into written text.*

## **Possible approaches:**

- Full verbatim transcription
- Clean verbatim transcription
- Detailed notes
- Structured summary



# Full Verbatim Transcription

## Full verbatim captures

- Every spoken word
- Repetitions
- Pauses
- Incomplete statements
- Relevant non-verbal expressions

## Best suited for

- Detailed research
- Sensitive discourse analysis
- Studies where exact wording matters



# Clean Verbatim Transcription

*Clean verbatim:*

- Preserves participant meaning
- Removes unnecessary repetition
- Corrects obvious speech fillers
- Retains important expressions
- Remains faithful to the original answer



# Structured Summaries

**Structured summaries organize notes by:**

- Question
- Topic
- Participant group
- Key finding
- Example
- Quotation

## Advantages

- Faster
- Practical for rapid assessments

## Limitations

- May lose detail
- Relies heavily on note-taker judgment
- May hide unexpected themes



# Transcription Standards

*Transcription protocols should specify:*

- Speaker labels
- Time stamps
- Pauses
- Unclear audio
- Local terms
- Non-verbal reactions
- Interruptions
- Sensitive identifiers
- Quality review procedures



# Transcript Quality Review

*Review transcripts against recordings to check:*

- Completeness
- Accuracy
- Speaker identification
- Correct terminology
- Missing sections
- Misheard statements
- Sensitive information
- Translation issues

# Translation of Qualitative Data

## Translation may occur

- During transcription
- After transcription
- During coding
- During reporting

## The process should protect

- Original meaning
- Tone
- Cultural expressions
- Technical terminology
- Emotional content



# Translation Quality Assurance

*Good practice includes:*

- 1 Use trained bilingual staff
- 2 Develop agreed terminology
- 3 Review difficult expressions
- 4 Back-check selected passages
- 5 Retain the original-language file
- 6 Document interpretive decisions
- 7 Review quotations before publication





# Handling Local Expressions

*When an expression has no direct equivalent:*

- Preserve the original phrase where useful
- Provide a clear explanatory translation
- Document cultural meaning
- Avoid replacing it with a misleading term
- Consult local experts

# III

SECTION III OF XXII

## Familiarization

# What is Familiarization?

*Becoming deeply acquainted with the data before formal coding.*

## **Activities include:**

- Reading transcripts
- Listening to selected recordings
- Reviewing field notes
- Writing initial observations
- Identifying repeated ideas
- Noting surprising findings
- Comparing respondent groups





# Analytical Memos

*An analytical memo is a written note documenting emerging ideas.*

## **Memos may record:**

- Possible themes
- Contradictions
- Questions
- Relationships
- Assumptions
- Potential explanations
- Methodological concerns
- Decisions requiring follow-up



# Initial Familiarization Questions

*Ask:*

- What issues appear repeatedly?
- What is surprising?
- Where do participants agree?
- Where do they disagree?
- Which groups have different experiences?
- What explanations are offered?
- What assumptions are challenged?
- What issues were not discussed?

# IV

SECTION IV OF XXII

## Coding Qualitative Data



# What is Coding?

*Assigning a short label to a section of data that represents its meaning.*

*“The clinic is close, but women avoid it because the waiting area offers no privacy.”*

## Possible codes:

- Physical access
- Privacy concern
- Gender barrier
- Service avoidance

IV



# Purpose of Coding

*Coding helps analysts:*

- Organize large amounts of text
- Identify recurring ideas
- Compare responses
- Locate supporting evidence
- Develop themes
- Connect findings to evaluation questions
- Identify unexpected issues



# Deductive Coding

*Deductive coding begins with predefined codes derived from:*

- Evaluation questions
- Theory of Change
- Interview guide
- Project indicators
- Evaluation criteria
- Existing frameworks
- Literature

## **Example codes:**

- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Access
- Service quality
- Sustainability





# Inductive Coding

*Inductive coding develops codes from ideas emerging directly from the data.*

## Examples:

- Fear of community judgment
- Informal service charges
- Transport-sharing arrangements
- Household negotiation
- Unexpected workload burden

IV

# Combining Deductive and Inductive Coding

*A strong coding process often uses both:*

## Deductive Codes

Ensure alignment with planned questions.

## Inductive Codes

Capture unexpected ideas and participant-defined meaning.

# Descriptive and Interpretive Codes

## Descriptive Code

Summarizes the topic.

Example:

“Training attendance.”

## Interpretive Code

Captures deeper meaning.

Example:

“Fear of losing daily income prevents attendance.”



# In Vivo Codes

*An in vivo code uses participants' own words.*

*“The service is for people who know somebody.”*

**In vivo code: “Know somebody”**

**Possible meaning:**

- Perceived favouritism
- Informal access networks
- Lack of fairness

IV



SECTION V OF XXII

# Developing a Codebook



# What is a Codebook?

*A structured list of codes and instructions for applying them.*

## **It may include:**

- Code name
- Definition
- Inclusion criteria
- Exclusion criteria
- Example quotation
- Related codes
- Notes





# Sample Codebook Entry

| Field      | Example                                            |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Code       | Transport barrier                                  |
| Definition | Difficulty accessing services because of transport |
| Include    | Distance, cost, lack of vehicles                   |
| Exclude    | Security-related movement restrictions             |
| Example    | “There is no transport after midday.”              |



# Hierarchical Coding

*Codes may be organized into parent and child categories.*

## Parent Code: Access Barriers

- Distance
- Transport cost
- Disability access
- Service hours
- Security restrictions





# Avoiding Too Many Codes

*Excessive coding may produce:*

- Confusion
- Overlap
- Inconsistent application
- Slow analysis
- Weak thematic synthesis
- Difficulty comparing analysts



# Codebook Revision

*The codebook should be revised when:*

- New ideas emerge
- Codes overlap
- Definitions are unclear
- Analysts disagree
- Some codes are unused
- Important distinctions are missing

# VI

SECTION VI OF XXII

## Indexing and Applying Codes



# What is Indexing?

*Indexing means tagging sections of transcripts with the relevant codes.*

## **Indexing allows analysts to:**

- Locate related statements
- Compare participants
- Review code frequency
- Identify strong quotations
- Examine patterns across sources

VI



# Unit of Coding

*The unit coded may be:*

- A word
- A sentence
- Several sentences
- A complete answer
- A discussion exchange
- An observation note
- A document section



# Coding the Same Passage More Than Once

## Example statement:

*“Women attend fewer meetings because meetings occur after dark and the venue is far away.”*

## Possible codes:

- Gender participation
- Inappropriate timing
- Distance barrier
- Safety concern

VI



# Manual Coding

*Coding without dedicated software still follows a disciplined process.*

## Tools & Methods

- Printed transcripts
- Highlighters
- Sticky notes
- Microsoft Word comments
- Excel tables
- Structured matrices

## Advantages

- Low cost
- Easy for small datasets
- Useful for participatory analysis



# Team Coding

*When multiple analysts code data:*

- Train all coders
- Use the same codebook
- Code sample transcripts independently
- Compare differences
- Clarify definitions
- Revise the codebook
- Conduct periodic consistency checks



# Inter-Coder Consistency

*Questions to review:*

- Are coders identifying the same concepts?
- Are codes applied at similar levels of detail?
- Are inclusion rules understood?
- Are important passages being missed?
- Are differences due to valid interpretation?

V

SECTION VII OF XXII

# Categories and Themes

I



# From Codes to Categories

*Related codes may be grouped into categories.*

## Example codes:

- Transport cost
- Long distance
- No public transport
- Unsafe travel

**Category: Physical and transport barriers**

VII



# What is a Theme?

*A theme is a meaningful pattern that helps answer the analysis question.*

## Example theme:

*Access improved overall, but women, persons with disabilities and remote households continued to face structural barriers.*

VII

# Topic versus Theme

## Topic

Transport.

## Theme

Transport costs prevented the poorest households from using services consistently.



# Characteristics of a Strong Theme

*A strong theme should:*

- Be supported by evidence
- Address the analysis question
- Be internally coherent
- Be distinct from other themes
- Capture important meaning
- Reflect agreement or meaningful difference
- Be explainable to stakeholders



# Theme Development Process

- 1 Review coded data
- 2 Group related codes
- 3 Identify broader patterns
- 4 Compare across groups
- 5 Review supporting evidence
- 6 Test alternative explanations
- 7 Refine theme wording
- 8 Identify implications

VII



# Frequency Does Not Equal Importance

*An issue mentioned only a few times may still be important when it concerns:*

- Safeguarding
- Severe exclusion
- Serious service failure
- Fraud
- Rights violations
- Unexpected negative impact
- A highly vulnerable group

VI

SECTION VIII OF XXII

# Thematic Analysis

II



# What is Thematic Analysis?

*Identifies and interprets recurring patterns of meaning across qualitative data.*

## It is useful for:

- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Open-ended survey questions
- Consultation notes
- Case studies
- Observation notes

VII  
I

# Steps in Thematic Analysis

- 1 Familiarize yourself with the data
- 2 Generate initial codes
- 3 Group codes into categories
- 4 Develop themes
- 5 Review themes against the data
- 6 Define and name themes
- 7 Interpret relationships
- 8 Report findings with evidence

# Theme Review Questions

*For each theme, ask:*

- Is there sufficient evidence?
- Does the theme answer the question?
- Are different perspectives represented?
- Are contradictions acknowledged?
- Is the theme too broad?
- Does it overlap with another theme?
- What groups or locations support it?
- What evidence challenges it?



# Theme Naming

## Weak theme title

Service Quality

## Stronger theme title

Participants valued staff respect but reported long and unpredictable waiting times.

# IX

SECTION IX OF XXII

## Content Analysis



# What is Content Analysis?

*Systematically examines and categorizes the content of texts, documents or communications.*

## **It may analyse:**

- Reports
- Policies
- Meeting minutes
- Complaints
- Social media content
- Open-ended responses
- Interview transcripts





# Qualitative Content Analysis

*Qualitative content analysis focuses on:*

- Meaning
- Framing
- Messages
- Priorities
- Language
- Absences
- Context
- Patterns



# Quantifying Content Carefully

## Analysts may count:

- Number of complaints by theme
- Frequency of policy references
- Number of respondents mentioning a barrier
- Occurrence of specific concepts

**However: counts should support interpretation, not replace it.**

IX

# Thematic Analysis versus Content Analysis

| Thematic Analysis              | Content Analysis                          |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Focuses on patterns of meaning | Focuses on categorized content            |
| Common for interviews and FGDs | Common for documents and text collections |
| Highly interpretive            | May include structured counting           |
| Develops themes                | Develops categories and content patterns  |



SECTION X OF XXII

# Qualitative Analysis Matrices

# What is a Qualitative Matrix?

*A qualitative matrix organizes summarized findings in rows and columns.*

## Rows may represent

- Respondents
- Locations
- Groups
- Cases

## Columns may represent

- Questions
- Themes
- Evaluation criteria
- Project components

# Respondent-by-Question Matrix

| Respondent | Access | Quality | Barriers | Recommendations |
|------------|--------|---------|----------|-----------------|
| KII 1      |        |         |          |                 |
| KII 2      |        |         |          |                 |
| KII 3      |        |         |          |                 |



# Group Comparison Matrix

| Theme           | Women | Men | Persons with Disabilities | Youth |
|-----------------|-------|-----|---------------------------|-------|
| Access          |       |     |                           |       |
| Safety          |       |     |                           |       |
| Satisfaction    |       |     |                           |       |
| Recommendations |       |     |                           |       |



# Location Comparison Matrix

| Theme           | Village A | Village B | Village C |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Service access  |           |           |           |
| Quality         |           |           |           |
| Barriers        |           |           |           |
| Local solutions |           |           |           |



# Benefits of Analysis Matrices

*Matrices help teams:*

- Visualize patterns
- Compare groups
- Identify exceptions
- Summarize large datasets
- Validate findings
- Support stakeholder discussion
- Link conclusions to evidence



SECTION XI OF XXII

# Comparing Stakeholder Groups



# Why Compare Groups?

*Different groups may experience the same project differently because of:*

- Gender
- Age
- Disability
- Location
- Wealth
- Role
- Social status
- Project participation
- Power relationships



# Comparison Questions

*Ask:*

- Which experiences are shared?
- Where do perspectives differ?
- Which groups report greater barriers?
- Who expresses satisfaction or dissatisfaction?
- Which groups were excluded?
- What explains differences?
- Are some voices dominating the evidence?



# Comparing Participants and Non-Participants

*Include perspectives from:*

- Participants who completed activities
- Participants who dropped out
- Eligible people who did not join
- People who benefited strongly
- People who experienced limited benefit
- Community members indirectly affected

XI

SECTION XII OF XXII

# Triangulation

I

# What is Triangulation?

*Triangulation compares evidence from different methods, sources, groups or periods.*

## Examples:

- Interviews and surveys
- FGDs and observation
- Participants and staff
- Different locations
- Baseline and endline
- Monitoring data and community feedback

XII

# Convergent Findings

*Evidence converges when different sources support a similar conclusion.*

## **Example:**

- Survey shows low attendance among women
- FGDs identify safety barriers
- Monitoring records confirm evening-session absences
- Observation shows poor lighting

XII

# Divergent Findings

*Evidence diverges when sources disagree.*

## **Example:**

- Staff report that services are accessible
- Participants report long waiting times
- Records show high service coverage

XII

# Explaining Divergence

*Differences may result from:*

- Different perspectives
- Different time periods
- Different definitions
- Social desirability
- Sampling differences
- Power relationships
- Data-quality problems
- Genuine variation

XI

SECTION XIII OF XXII

# Quotations

II



# Purpose of Quotations

*Quotations can:*

- Illustrate a theme
- Preserve participant voice
- Explain meaning
- Show emotional significance
- Demonstrate variation
- Strengthen reporting

# Selecting Quotations

*Select quotations that are:*

- Directly relevant
- Clear
- Representative or analytically important
- Concise
- Ethically safe
- Faithfully translated
- Linked to a documented source

# Protecting Identity in Quotations

## Use general source labels such as

- Female participant, Village A
- Health worker, District 2
- Youth FGD participant
- Local government official

## Avoid including

- Exact job titles in small locations
- Rare personal details
- Names
- Case histories that reveal identity
- Sensitive combinations of characteristics

# Editing Quotations

## Quotations may be lightly edited to

- Remove filler words
- Improve readability
- Correct obvious translation grammar
- Remove identifying details

## Do not

- Change meaning
- Combine separate statements without disclosure
- Remove important context
- Invent quotations

XI

SECTION XIV OF XXII

# Negative and Deviant Cases

V



# What is a Negative Case?

*A negative case is an example that does not fit the dominant pattern.*

## Example:

*Most households report easier water access, but one remote community reports increased collection time.*





# What is a Deviant Case?

*A deviant case is an unusual or exceptional case that may reveal:*

- A hidden mechanism
- A special barrier
- An innovative solution
- An overlooked subgroup
- A flaw in the Theory of Change

XI

V



# Why Analyse Exceptions?

*Exceptions help teams:*

- Avoid overgeneralization
- Refine themes
- Identify contextual conditions
- Improve targeting
- Discover unintended outcomes
- Test assumptions
- Strengthen recommendations



SECTION XV OF XXII

# Audit Trail and Documentation



# What is an Audit Trail?

*An audit trail documents how qualitative findings were produced.*

## **It may include:**

- Raw-data inventory
- Transcription protocols
- Codebook versions
- Coding decisions
- Analytical memos
- Matrix versions
- Theme revisions
- Quotation sources
- Meeting notes
- Report revisions

XV

# Decision Log

*A decision log may record:*

| Date    | Decision                           | Reason                  | Responsible Person |
|---------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 12 June | Merge transport and distance codes | Strong overlap          | Analysis team      |
| 14 June | Add stigma code                    | Emerged from youth FGDs | Lead analyst       |



# Traceability

*Every major finding should be traceable to:*

- A theme
- Supporting codes
- Source summaries
- Original transcripts or notes
- Relevant respondent groups

XV

XV

SECTION XVI OF XXII

# Researcher Bias and Reflexivity

I



# What is Researcher Bias?

*Occurs when analysts' expectations, experiences or interests influence:*

- Coding
- Theme development
- Quotation selection
- Interpretation
- Reporting
- Recommendations

XV

I



# Common Qualitative Biases

*Examples include:*

- Confirmation bias
- Selective attention
- Favouring dramatic stories
- Overweighting leaders' perspectives
- Ignoring negative findings
- Cultural misunderstanding
- Donor-expectation bias
- Translation bias
- Groupthink among analysts



# Reflexivity

*Examining how the analyst's identity, role and assumptions may affect interpretation.*

## Questions:

- What did I expect to find?
- Which perspectives do I understand best?
- Which voices may be missing?
- How might my role influence participants?
- Am I privileging evidence that supports the project?

XV

I



# Reducing Bias

*Strategies include:*

- Use a mixed analysis team
- Include local perspectives
- Compare multiple sources
- Conduct peer review
- Analyse negative cases
- Use stakeholder validation
- Maintain an audit trail
- Document limitations
- Separate evidence from assumption

XV

SECTION XVII OF XXII

# Qualitative Software

II



# Software Options

## For small datasets

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Google Sheets
- Structured matrices

## For larger datasets

- NVivo
- MAXQDA
- Dedoose
- ATLAS.ti
- Other CAQDAS platforms



# What CAQDAS Can Support

*Qualitative software can help:*

- Store transcripts
- Apply codes
- Retrieve coded passages
- Compare groups
- Manage memos
- Develop code hierarchies
- Link quotations
- Create visual maps
- Maintain an audit trail



# Limitations of Software

*Software cannot replace:*

- Contextual understanding
- Ethical judgment
- Critical thinking
- Theme development
- Interpretation
- Stakeholder validation
- Programmatic decision-making



# AI-Assisted Qualitative Analysis

## AI tools may assist with

- Initial transcript organization
- Suggested codes
- Summarization
- Translation review
- Searching large text collections

## Risks include

- Confidentiality breaches
- Invented interpretations
- Loss of context
- Bias
- Inaccurate translation
- Weak traceability

XV

SECTION XVIII OF XXII

# Interpreting Qualitative Findings

III

# Analysis versus Interpretation

## Analysis

Identifies codes, categories, themes and patterns.

## Interpretation explains

- What the patterns mean
- Why they occurred
- How they relate to the context
- What they imply for the project
- What action is required



# Interpretation Questions

*For each theme, ask:*

- What does this tell us?
- Why might this pattern exist?
- Which groups experience it?
- What evidence supports it?
- What evidence challenges it?
- How does it relate to the Theory of Change?
- What management decision follows?



# Stakeholder Interpretation

*Invite different stakeholders to help interpret findings:*

- MEAL staff
- Project staff
- Technical specialists
- Partners
- Community representatives
- Government
- Marginalized groups

# Interpreting Qualitative Frequency

## Terms may include

- Nearly all participants
- Most participants
- Many participants
- Several participants
- A small number
- One participant

## Use cautiously because

- Samples are often purposive
- Group size differs
- Repeated comments do not equal prevalence
- Dominant voices may influence discussions

# Generalization Limits

## Qualitative findings normally represent

- The participants consulted
- The selected locations
- The study context
- The experiences captured

## They should not be generalized to

- The entire population
- All project locations
- Groups not included
- Future time periods



# Assessing Credibility

*Credibility is strengthened when:*

- Multiple sources support the finding
- Sampling includes diverse perspectives
- Methods are clearly documented
- Negative cases are considered
- Quotations support themes
- Stakeholders validate interpretations
- Limitations are transparent

XI

SECTION XIX OF XXII

# Reporting Qualitative Findings

X

# Structure of a Qualitative Finding

*A strong finding includes:*

- 1 Clear analytical statement
- 2 Evidence from multiple sources
- 3 Differences among groups
- 4 Relevant quotation
- 5 Contextual explanation
- 6 Exception or limitation
- 7 Project implication

XI

X



# Weak Qualitative Reporting

## Weak example:

*“Participants said transport was a problem.”*

### Problems:

- Which participants?
- What type of transport problem?
- In which locations?
- How did it affect outcomes?
- Was the pattern consistent?

## Stronger Qualitative Finding

*Women in remote communities consistently identified transport cost and safety after dark as barriers to attending livelihood training. Men more commonly reported scheduling conflicts. Attendance records confirmed lower participation among women in the two most distant locations. One community overcame the barrier by organizing shared transport.*



# Using Quotations in Findings

## Example:

*“The training was useful, but the return journey after sunset was not safe for us.”*

— Female participant, remote-community FGD



# Reporting Differences and Disagreement

*A report should include:*

- Shared views
- Different views
- Minority perspectives
- Contradictions
- Location-specific findings
- Exceptions
- Unresolved questions



# Reporting Limitations

*Possible limitations include:*

- Small purposive sample
- Missing groups
- Translation constraints
- Incomplete recordings
- Facilitator influence
- Sensitive topics
- Social desirability
- Limited geographic coverage
- Short data-collection period

# Developing Recommendations

*Recommendations should follow directly from themes and evidence.*

## Example finding

Women face safety and transport barriers.

## Recommendation

Schedule sessions during daylight, decentralize locations and pilot community transport support in remote areas.



SECTION XX OF XXII

# Practical Exercise



# Practical Exercise Overview

*Analyse a sample focus-group transcript and prepare qualitative findings.*

- 1 Familiarize themselves with the transcript
- 2 Develop initial codes
- 3 Prepare a codebook
- 4 Code selected passages
- 5 Develop categories and themes
- 6 Prepare an analysis matrix
- 7 Select quotations
- 8 Identify a negative case
- 9 Draft findings and recommendations





# Exercise Scenario

*A livelihoods project wants to understand:*

- Why some participants completed training
- Why others dropped out
- Whether women and men experienced different barriers
- How participants used the skills
- What project improvements are needed



# Exercise Part 1 — Familiarization

*Participants should:*

- Read the transcript
- Highlight important statements
- Write initial observations
- Identify repeated ideas
- Note unexpected issues
- Record questions



# Exercise Part 2 — Coding

## Develop:

- Five deductive codes
- Five inductive codes

## Possible deductive areas:

- Attendance
- Quality
- Barriers
- Skills use
- Recommendations





## Exercise Part 3 — Codebook

*Complete:*

| Code | Definition | Include | Exclude | Example |
|------|------------|---------|---------|---------|
|      |            |         |         |         |
|      |            |         |         |         |
|      |            |         |         |         |



## Exercise Part 4 — Categories and Themes

*Group related codes into categories. Then develop three analytical themes.*

### Example codes:

- Distance
- Transport cost
- Safety after dark

**Category: Access constraints**

*Theme: Training schedules and centralized venues excluded women from remote communities.*



# Exercise Part 5 — Analysis Matrix

*Prepare:*

| Theme | Women Completers | Women Dropouts | Men Completers | Men Dropouts |
|-------|------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
|       |                  |                |                |              |
|       |                  |                |                |              |
|       |                  |                |                |              |



# Exercise Part 6 — Quotations and Exceptions

*For each theme:*

- Select one supporting quotation
- Identify one contrasting perspective
- Check identification risk
- Explain whether the quotation is typical or exceptional



# Exercise Part 7 — Draft Finding

*Each finding should include:*

- Main theme
- Supporting evidence
- Group differences
- Quotation
- Negative case
- Limitation
- Project implication
- Recommendation

# Qualitative Analysis Checklist

*Confirm that:*

- ✓ Data were organized securely
- ✓ Transcripts were checked
- ✓ Analysis questions were clear
- ✓ Deductive and inductive codes were used
- ✓ Code definitions were documented
- ✓ Themes were supported by evidence
- ✓ Stakeholder groups were compared
- ✓ Negative cases were considered
- ✓ Quotations were protected
- ✓ Limitations were reported
- ✓ Recommendations followed from findings

XX

SECTION XXI OF XXII

# Common Qualitative- Analysis Errors

I



# Common Coding Errors

*Avoid:*

- Coding without familiarization
- Using vague code names
- Creating too many codes
- Applying codes inconsistently
- Ignoring unexpected data
- Coding only statements that support assumptions
- Losing links to original sources
- Changing code meanings without documentation



# Common Theme-Development Errors

*Avoid:*

- Treating topics as themes
- Developing themes from one quotation
- Ignoring subgroup differences
- Combining unrelated issues
- Overlapping themes
- Hiding contradictions
- Assuming frequency equals importance
- Using project objectives as findings



# Common Interpretation Errors

*Avoid:*

- Generalizing to the full population
- Treating participant perception as verified fact
- Ignoring contextual factors
- Confusing staff opinion with community evidence
- Overstating consensus
- Treating silence as agreement
- Ignoring negative cases
- Claiming causation without supporting evidence

# Common Reporting Errors

*Avoid:*

- Long lists of quotations
- Findings without analysis
- Quotes without context
- Identifiable respondent details
- Reporting only positive views
- No explanation of sampling
- No limitations
- Recommendations unrelated to evidence
- Excessive technical language

XX

SECTION XXII OF XXII

# Chapter Review

II

# Chapter Summary

*In this chapter, we learned that:*

- Qualitative analysis explains experiences, meaning and context.
- Data preparation includes transcription, translation, organization and protection.
- Familiarization should occur before coding.
- Deductive codes come from planned questions and frameworks.
- Inductive codes emerge from participant data.
- Codebooks strengthen consistency.
- Indexing connects transcript content to codes.
- Categories organize related codes.
- Themes communicate meaningful patterns.
- Matrices support systematic comparison.
- Triangulation strengthens credibility.
- Quotations illustrate findings but do not replace analysis.
- Negative cases test conclusions.
- Audit trails support transparency.
- Reflexivity helps reduce bias.
- Qualitative software supports organization, not interpretation.
- Findings must be contextualized and linked to action.

# Knowledge Check

1. What is qualitative data analysis?
  2. What is the difference between transcription and translation?
  3. What is familiarization?
  4. How do deductive and inductive codes differ?
  5. What is a codebook?
  6. What is indexing?
  7. What is the difference between a category and a theme?
1. What is thematic analysis?
  2. What is triangulation?
  3. Why are negative cases important?
  4. What is an audit trail?
  5. What is reflexivity?
  6. Why should qualitative findings not be generalized statistically?
  7. What should a strong qualitative finding include?



# Action Planning

*Each participant should identify:*

- One qualitative dataset awaiting analysis
- One transcription-quality weakness
- One missing codebook
- One stakeholder group not represented
- One theme requiring stronger evidence
- One confidentiality risk
- One analytical-bias risk
- One corrective action
- Responsible person
- Completion date

# THANK YOU

## *Questions and Discussion*

**Dr Abenet Yohannes, Ph.D**

Email: [abenetyohannes@gmail.com](mailto:abenetyohannes@gmail.com)

*Qualitative analysis gives participants' experiences a structured voice. Its value comes from systematic coding, critical interpretation, transparent evidence and the responsible use of findings to improve projects.*