



Analysing Interview Data (1)

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WARWICK INSTITUTE *for*
EMPLOYMENT RESEARCH



Aims of the week 3 and 4 sessions

- To reflect on the nature and purpose of interviews, etc. as a form of qualitative data
- To introduce different processes, techniques and theories for analysing and synthesising data
- To explore different techniques for analysing and coding data

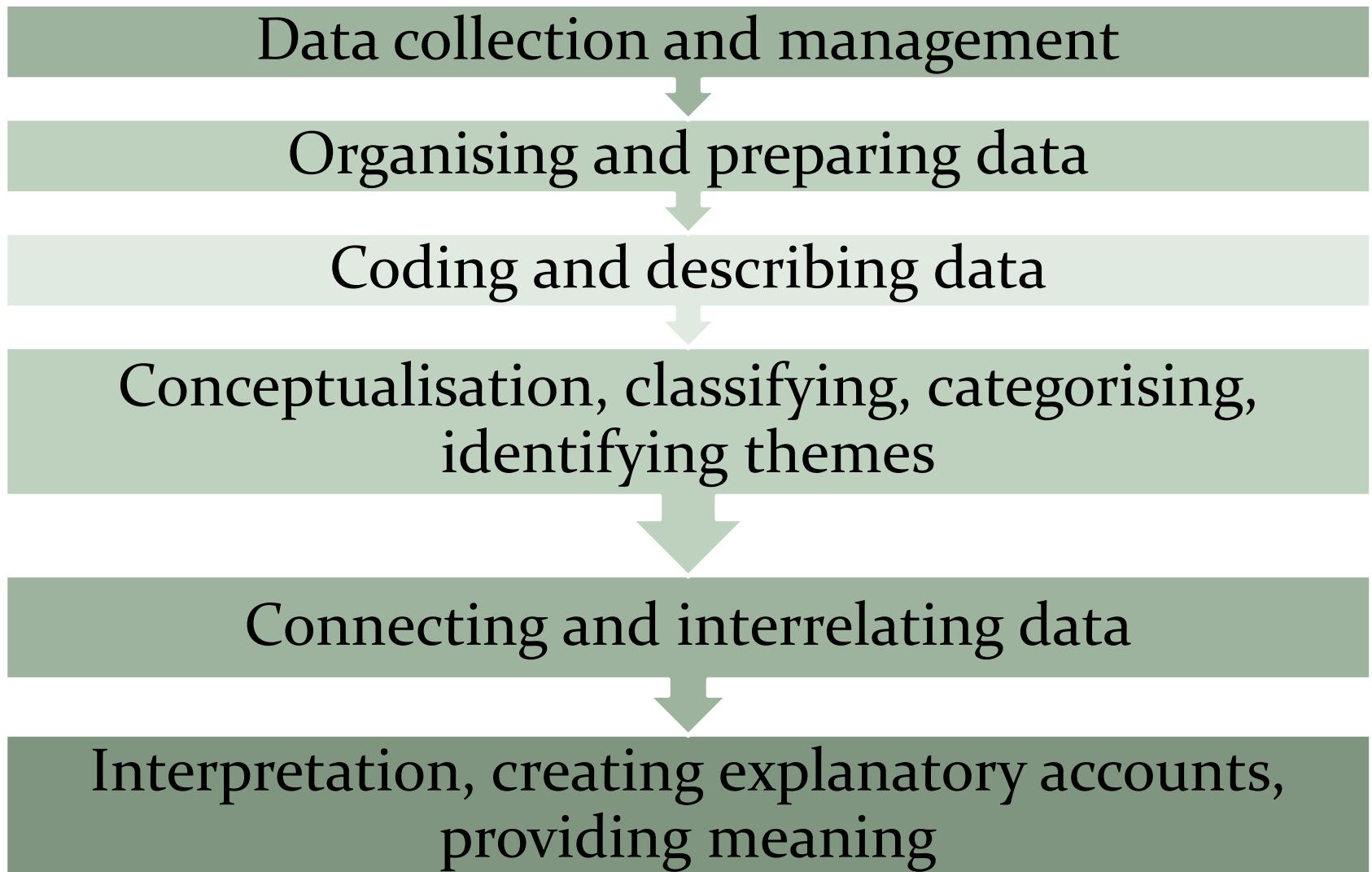
Week 3

- Overview of analyses process
- Review of approaches and techniques for analysing interview data
- Process of data analysis, conceptualisation and theory building
- The processes we are going to work through can be used to analyse other data such as field notes, observations, articles....

What is data analysis?

- Making sense of and representing data
- Preparing data for analysis
- Conducting different analysis
- Moving deeper and deeper into understanding data – finding patterns and themes
- Making an interpretation of the bigger picture
- Help improve your next interviews

Qualitative analysis process



Process of analysis

- Approaches to analysis vary in terms of basic epistemological assumptions about the nature of the enquiry
- Approaches also differ in term of analytic approaches – inductive and deductive methods
- Ongoing process of continual reflection

Deductive approaches

- Use of a structure or predetermined framework
- Researcher imposes own structure or theories on the data for the analytic process
- **Advantages** – relatively quick and easy, informed by literature, useful where probable participant responses are known
- **Disadvantages** – inflexible, possibility of biases, limits in-depth exploration of data, can limit theme and theory development

Inductive approaches

- Little or no predetermined theory, structure or framework is used
- Data is used to derive the structure of analysis
- **Advantages** – comprehensive, in-depth, useful where little or nothing is known about the study phenomenon
- **Disadvantages** – time-consuming

Thematic analysis

- An approach to identifying, analysing and reporting patterns across the data
- Widely used approach as supports the organisation and description of data
- **Advantages** – “theoretically flexible”, provides a rich interpretation of study, both inductive and deductive
- **Disadvantages** – concerns that analysis may be weak or superficial

The use of literature in data analysis

- Use of literature varies considered
- Widely debated
- Literature can be used to inform analysis, such as identification of themes in thematic analysis
- Not used in grounded theory (?)

Qualitative analysis approaches and traditions

- Ethnography
- Life history
- Case study
- Content analysis
- Conversation analysis
- Discourse analysis
- Analytical induction
- Grounded theory

Structured/
formal

- Quasi-statistical
- Qualitative to quantitative
- Content analysis
- Hypothesis testing approach

Descriptive/
Interpretative

- Understand meaning
- No or few priori codes
- Typologies/frameworks
- Researcher interpretation

Less structured/
informal

- Immersion
- Reflection
- Form hypothesis to fit data

Analytical process

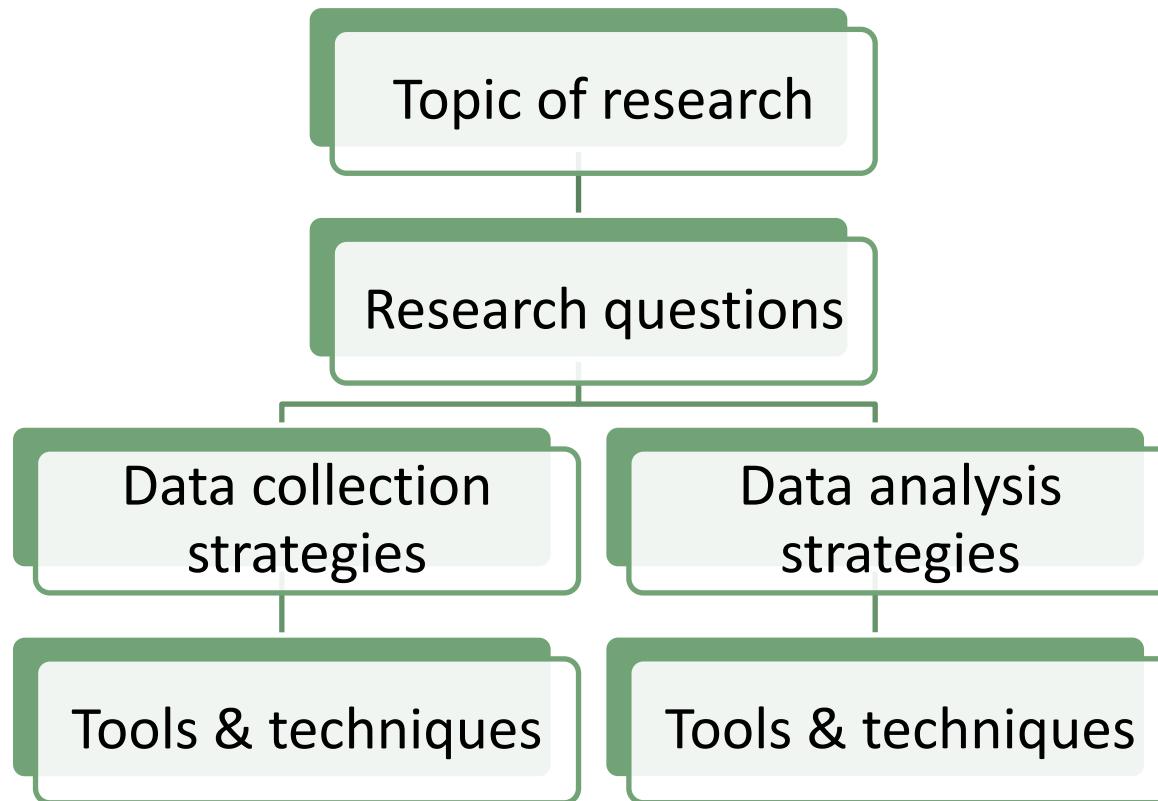
- Know your data – do preliminary analysis
- Be reflective and recognise it is a continuous process
- Focus your analysis:
 - Topic, time period or event
 - Individual, case (one organisation or one family) or group (a group of older men)
- Identify themes and codes
- Organise codes and themes into categories
- Identify patterns and relationships
- Write it up

Questions of reliability and validity

- Internal validity
- External validity – transferable
- Reliable – replicable
- Objective or subjective

Need to shift from positivist to qualitative concepts

The place of ‘analysing interview data’ within the research process



Example

TRACKING STUDENT MOTHERS' HIGHER EDUCATION PARTICIPATION AND EARLY CAREER OUTCOMES OVER TIME

Research question: Do student mothers experience HE differently to non-mothers, and do they benefit differently from higher education?

Data analysis strategy: Use of theoretical propositions arising from literature review and quantitative data analysis

Tools & techniques: Thematic analysis, use of matrices to compare data on common themes, no need to use qualitative data analysis software

Brief exercise

1. Thinking about your own research, reflect on:
 - The topic of research
 - The research question(s)
 - Possible data collection **and** analysis strategy
 - Data analysis tools & techniques
2. Discuss this with people sitting next or around you
3. Share with the rest of the group

INTERVIEWS

- Interviews as a form of qualitative data
- Interview data as one among various forms of qualitative data
- Interview data versus ‘naturally occurring data’

Aim of the interviews as qualitative data

- What do you want out of the analysis?
 - Exploring propositions or constructs (following a more deductive approach)
 - An explanation in the form of substantive or formal theory (following a more inductive approach)
 - A description (of events, behaviour, etc.)

WHEN ANALYSING INTERVIEWS, WE USUALLY
MOVE BETWEEN THESE AIMS

About building theory:

“The final product of building theory from case studies may be concepts, a conceptual framework, or propositions or possibly mid-range theory... On the downside, the final product may be disappointing. The research may simply replicate prior theory, or there may be no clear patterns within the data.”
(Eisenhardt, 1989: 545).

Data analysis: description and conceptualisation

- Description – providing an account of the case or cases considered
- Conceptualisation – the generation of general, abstract categories from the data and establishing how they help to explain the phenomenon under study
- Both valuable and necessary but...

Description: an example

Table 1: Attitudes towards young people in the social care sector

	<i>Demand</i>	<i>Supply</i>
Employer 1	Have no work ethic, lazy, unreliable, late	Live at home and don't want to work, get more on benefits
Employer 2	Unreliable, don't turn up, not interested in working. Under 18s not allowed to work without supervision	Not interested in working, not passionate, no transport
Employer 3	Turn up on the first day and never come back	Not interested in working in social care - hard work, no money, unglamorous
Employer 4	Come dressed for a nightclub, inappropriate attitude	Use template CVs from the Job Centre so are all the same

Description of Table 1

“The social care sector was shown to face both supply and demand issues in relation to young people. Due to the nature of the work and the prevalence of low pay, the sector was not very attractive to young people, but there were also issues in how young people presented themselves when looking for employment. Some of these issues relate to a particular lack of understanding of how to apply for work and others to how to act and dress in interview. It is also the case that employers in the care sector make certain a priori assumptions about the suitability of young people for work. Negative views about the attitude and work ethic of young people as a group dissuaded employers from employing particular young people, and this, coupled with fears that elderly people, in particular, would react negatively to young people who were so different to themselves, resulted in a high level of exclusion of young people from social care.”

Tentative hypothesis

“Attitudes of employers towards young people exacerbate existing supply and demand problems in the social care sector...”

...to test and compare against further data.

Conceptualisation

Thinking about
categories /
subcategories
(themes)

their
properties &
definitions

how they
relate to
each other

Categories, properties and definitions

- A **category** (theme) captures underlining patterns in the data
- **Properties** define or explain a category
- Example: 'Impact on social loss' (category) can be defined in terms of **level** of impact, **type** of impact, **strategies** for dealing with impact...

Properties explain categories, they may represent:

- Conditions
- Causes
- Consequences
- A continuum
- Opposites
- Hierarchies
- A typology
- Strategies
- Qualities
- Contexts
- Contingencies
- Mediating factors
- Covariances
- Etc.



Analysing Interview Data: Practical workshop

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Practical workshop

Aims of the workshops

- To reflect on the conceptual structure of research based on qualitative data such as interviews and observations
- To explore different techniques for analysing and coding data
- To reflect upon the process in terms of your research and what methods of analysis would be appropriate

Activity 1: Outlining the conceptual structure of a piece of research

- Glaser, B.G. and Strauss, A.L. (1964)
The Social Loss of Dying Patients, *The American Journal of Nursing*, 64(6), pp. 119-121.
- Approximately 1 hour

Activity 2: Thematic analysis

Data from the Economic and Social Data Service

Please ensure that you have signed the Access for Teaching Agreement before you leave.

- Approximately 1 hour

Reflections on the process...



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