

RESEARCH METHODS

Qualitative Data Analysis

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Date: Friday 30th January 2026



**Masters in
Human Resources Management**

Lecture Outline

- The process of qualitative analysis
- From codes to data categories and themes
- Thematic analysis
- Different analytical strategies
- Data display processes
- Evaluating explanations and formulating conclusions
- Use of software for qualitative data analysis
- Writing the analysis section or discussion chapter



The Interpretivist Approach

- Most qualitative research follows an **interpretivist** approach.
- The aim is to offer a **credible explanation** of what is happening.
- Researchers consider **different contexts** and **multiple perspectives**.
- Understanding is built through **interpretation**, not measurement.

Qualitative vs Quantitative Analysis

- Quantitative analysis is usually **linear** and **standardised**.
- Data is collected, summarised, then analysed at the end.
- Qualitative analysis is **continuous** and begins early.
- Researchers analyse while they are still **collecting data**.
- The process is **iterative**, not a single final stage.

The Process of Qualitative Analysis

- Qualitative analysis is an iterative process which **takes time** and cannot be rushed.
- It is more than **describing** what people said or what you observed.
- The aim is to **interpret** the data and explain **why** things appear as they do.
- As a new researchers you might **underestimate** how long analysis will take.
- Your interpretation must be **supported with evidence** from the data.

Four Common Processes in Qualitative Analysis

- **Familiarisation**
 - Reading, listening and reviewing data to understand what is there.
- **Summarising / Coding**
 - Reducing data to manageable parts through coding and/or categorisation.
- **Exploring Themes**
 - Identifying the key ideas or the 'essence' of the data.
- **Connecting Themes**
 - Looking for relationships to build a credible explanation.

Different Ways to Start your Analysis

There is **no single correct method**.

- You may listen repeatedly to audio recordings.
- You may write summaries or notes.
- You may use **visual tools** (charts, maps, diagrams) to explore patterns.

Managing Large Volumes of Data

- Qualitative data sets are often **large and overwhelming**.
- Asking curious questions helps you understand what matters.
- Summarising can help create a **manageable data set**.
- This gives you a clearer sense of what is there.



Using Reflections in Your Analysis

- Your reflections can support your **analytical conclusions**.
- They help you explain how you made sense of the data.
- Always separate your **own thoughts** from what participants actually said or did.
- Clear distinction strengthens the **credibility** of your dissertation.

— The Role of Diary Entries or Memos

- These capture your **thinking process** during analysis.
- They help you track ideas, questions and early interpretations.
- They provide evidence for how you reached your conclusions.
- Never throw memos away — they often contain your **best insights**.

Memo Template: Key Sections

- **Data in focus** (what you are reflecting on).
- **Date of the memo** (to track your thinking over time).
- **Who/what was involved** (names, events, context).
- **Date, time, location** of the data collection.
- **Other possible sources** of similar data.

Linking the Memo to Your Research Questions

- What data is relevant to your **research questions**?
- What was **surprising** or unexpected?
- What new concepts or issues might be important?
- What are the implications for **future data collection**?
- What are the implications for **ongoing analysis**?

Good Practice When Writing Memos

- Write memos **regularly**, not only at the end.
- Keep them short, honest, and focused.
- Do not delete them — even early ideas can be valuable.
- Use them to guide your **coding, theme development** and **interpretation**.

The Qualitative Data Analysis Process Steps

- **Collect and assess data**
 - Gather information and begin understanding what it shows.
- **Reduce and abstract the data**
 - Organise and simplify the data using coding or categorisation.
- **Explore key themes and patterns**
 - Look for ideas that connect categories and show what matters.
- **Evaluate alternative explanations**
 - Consider different ways to explain what is happening.
- **Formulate and verify conclusions**
 - Develop clear findings and check they are supported by the data.

Advice from Silverman (2021)

- **Start early** — begin analysis while collecting data.
- **Try different approaches** — find what works for you.
- **Stay open-minded** — avoid settling on one answer too soon.
- **Be fair and thorough** — don't ignore less obvious data.
- **Zoom in first** — focus on a small section, then expand outward.



Case Example : Qualitative Synthesis

Qualitative synthesis is a valuable skill for **evidence-based HRM using secondary data**.

- **Example:**
- Demir worked in a football club through an apprenticeship scheme.
- He noticed that emotions influenced decision-making at work.
- He wanted to study emotional labour in his club.
- The club refused interviews or any primary data collection.
- His tutor suggested a **qualitative synthesis** of published studies.

Why This Matters for HR Students

- HR decisions often involve **emotion**, not only rationality.
- Understanding emotional labour helps improve:
 - leadership,
 - communication,
 - conflict management,
 - staff wellbeing.

What Is Qualitative Synthesis?

- A way of analysing **published qualitative research**.
- Useful when you cannot collect your own data.
- Involves comparing findings across different studies.
- Helps build a **holistic explanation** of a topic.

Step 1: Setting Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Demir included:

- Peer-reviewed **journal articles** only.
- Studies written in **English**.
- Studies using **qualitative methods**.
- Studies in **sports settings** (not only football).
- Studies published between **2004–2025**.

He excluded:

- Practitioner articles, books, dissertations, PhD theses.
- Conceptual papers with **no empirical data**.
- Studies outside sports contexts.

Step 2: Searching for Studies

- Used library databases recommended by his tutor.
- Search terms included:
 - *emotional labour, emotional labor, emotion work, emotion management.*
- Initial search produced **37 papers**.
- After skim-reading for relevance, reduced to **25 papers**.



Step 3: Creating a Data Summary Table

Demir recorded for each study:

- Aim of the research.
- Country and sport.
- Sample size.
- Data collection method.
- Type of analysis used.
- This helped him organise the evidence.

Step 4: Analysing the Studies

- Compared findings across all studies.
- Looked for **similarities, differences** and **overlaps**.
- Grouped similar ideas into **categories**.
- Noted context-specific issues that might not transfer.

Step 5: Moving Beyond Description

His tutor advised him to:

- Explain **why** themes occur.
- Explore **relationships** between categories.
- Identify **tensions** or contradictions.
- Build a **coherent explanation**, not just a list of themes.

Key Tensions Identified

- Demir found three major tensions across the studies:
- **Rationality vs emotionality** in decision-making.
- **Professional detachment vs emotional investment.**
- **Experience** as a factor in managing emotionality.

These helped him understand emotional labour in sports settings.

Applying Findings to His Football Club

Demir proposed recommendations such as:

- Simulation exercises.
- Sharing experiences between staff.
- Mentoring for novice decision-makers.

These aimed to help staff manage emotional demands at work.

What This Case Shows Academically

- How to conduct a **qualitative synthesis**.
- How to set **clear sampling criteria**.
- How to extract and organise data.
- How to compare themes across studies.
- How to move from **description** to **interpretation**.
- How to apply findings to a **real HR context**.

From Codes to Categories and Themes

- Coding is central to qualitative data analysis.
- A **code** is a label that captures the meaning of part of your data.
- Coding helps you compare data, spot patterns and understand what is happening.
- Codes act as **units of meaning** that help you organise your data.

What Can Be Coded?

- A word
- A phrase
- A sentence or paragraph
- A longer section of notes or transcript
- One piece of data can have **more than one code**.
- Coding is flexible and depends on what the data is showing.

Where Do Codes Come From?

- Your research aims and questions.
- Ideas from the **literature**.
- Issues you notice during **data collection**.
- Insights from **reflections and memos**.
- New, unexpected codes are often the **most valuable**.

From Codes to Categories

- After coding, look for **similarities** between codes.
- Group related codes into **categories**.
- Categories help you see the structure of your data.
- This step reduces complexity and prepares you for deeper analysis.



From Categories to Themes

- Themes capture the **essence** of what is happening in the data.
- A theme may appear across **several categories**.
- Themes help you understand what lies **beneath the surface**.
- This process is **iterative** — you move back and forth between data, codes, categories and themes.

What is Qualitative Coding?

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Coding Is an Iterative Process

- You refine codes as you learn more about your data.
- You may merge, split, rename or remove codes.
- Categories and themes develop gradually.

Analysis is a **continuous cycle**, not a one-off task.

Four Types of Codes You May Identify

In qualitative analysis, students often encounter:

- **Descriptive codes**
 - Capture the basic topic or content.
- **Process codes**
 - Capture actions, activities, or changes.
- **In vivo codes**
 - Use participants' own words.
- **Interpretive codes**
 - Reflect your deeper understanding of meaning.



Descriptive Codes

- These are usually the **first codes** you assign.
- They capture what is **obvious on the surface** of the data.
- Neuman (2013) calls them “**manifest**” or “**obvious**” codes.
- They often reflect **recurring words, phrases or ideas**.
- Useful for getting an initial sense of what is happening in the data.

What Descriptive Codes Capture

- Key terms that appear repeatedly.
- Simple descriptions of actions or topics.
- Clear, surface-level meanings.
- Early patterns that help you organise the data.

From Descriptive Codes to Categories

- Some descriptive codes naturally **cluster together**.
- These clusters form **categories**.
- Categories help you see structure in the data.
- They prepare you for deeper analysis and theme development.

Thematic Codes

- Thematic codes help you move **beyond description**.
- They show deeper thinking about what is happening **under the surface**.
- They capture **topics, concepts or ideas** that help explain relationships in the data.
- They support a richer, more meaningful analysis.

What Thematic Codes Do

- Identify **underlying meanings** in the data.
- Highlight **connections** between different parts of the data set.
- Help you understand **why** something may be happening.
- Support the development of **themes** for your findings chapter.

Academic Terms for Thematic Codes

- Neuman (2013): calls them *latent codes*.
- Silverman (2021): calls them *interpretive codes*.
- Both emphasise that these codes involve **interpretation**, not just description.

Using Judgement and Interpretation

- You must examine the data for **meaning**, not only content.
- Thematic codes require careful **reflection** and **critical thinking**.
- You must label features of the data that provide **evidence** for your claims.
- These codes form the basis of your **themes** in the final analysis.

Four Stages of Analysis

- **Familiarisation**
 - Repeated reading of transcripts, notes, documents.
- **Coding**
 - Deductive codes first, then inductive/open coding.
- **Theme identification**
 - Searching for patterns across the data set.
- **Cross-case comparison**
 - Exploring similarities and differences between organisations.



Levels of Analysis

1. Initial (First-Level) Analysis

- What interpretations of the issue or topic are shown in the data?
- How do participants describe themselves and others?

Levels of Analysis (Deeper Understanding)

2. Deeper Level Understanding

- Why do participants hold these views?
- How did they come to these views?
- Where are the tensions or ambiguities?

Choosing a Qualitative Analysis Method

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GRADCOACH

What Is Thematic Analysis?

- A widely used method for analysing **qualitative data**.
- Helps you identify **patterns, meanings** and **themes**.
- Flexible and suitable for many HR projects.
- Clarke et al. (2015) outline a clear 6 step-by-step process (explained in next slides).

Step 1: Familiarise Yourself with the Data

- Read and reread transcripts, documents, or notes.
- Listen to recordings if relevant.
- Note down **initial ideas** or observations.
- Aim: understand the data as a whole.

Step 2: Generate Initial Codes

- Identify features of the data that seem **interesting** or **meaningful**.
- Codes may be numerous and very specific.
- Coding helps you organise the data into manageable parts.
- This is still descriptive — not yet interpretation.

Step 3: Search for Themes

- Begin interpreting the codes you have created.
- Group related codes into **potential themes**.
- Sort extracts into theme folders or categories.
- Keep notes on your thinking and possible relationships.

Step 4: Review the Themes

- Check whether themes **fit the data**.
- Combine themes if they overlap.
- Refine or separate themes if they are too broad.
- Remove themes that lack enough supporting data.
- Themes should be **clear and distinct**.

🔑 Step 5: Define and Name the Themes

- Refine what each theme **means**.
- Write a short **working definition** for each theme.
- Choose clear, meaningful theme names.
- At this stage, your overall **story** or interpretation should begin to emerge.

Step 6: Write the Analysis

- Turn your themes into a **narrative account**.
- Go beyond description — explain **what the themes mean**.
- Use **illustrative examples** from the data.
- Link your analysis to your **research questions** and the **literature**.

— Additional Advice from Other Scholars

- (Robson, 2024; Neuman, 2013, Silverman, 2021; Yin, 2018)
- Be clear about your **research questions**.
- Use a **justifiable sampling strategy**.
- Decide on **initial categories** based on your topic and questions.
- Conduct a **pilot analysis** to test your coding approach.
- Ask someone else to review your pilot coding for **trustworthiness**.

Example Source for Thematic Coding

- **Source used:** ITV News report on P&O Ferries sacking 800 staff (2022)

Context:

- Written by a **journalist** for a national news outlet.
- Published **on the day of the event** (17 March 2022).
- Purpose: to **inform the public** about the sudden mass dismissal and its consequences.
- Tone: urgent, factual and focused on public reaction.

Using text to practise descriptive coding and thematic analysis.

In March 2022, P&O Ferries dismissed 800 employees with immediate effect. The news was delivered in a short video message, and many staff said they felt shocked and disrespected. Some employees had worked for the company for more than 20 years and believed their jobs were secure. P&O explained that the decision was necessary because the business had been losing money and needed to cut costs. The company planned to replace the dismissed staff with cheaper agency workers. Unions, politicians and members of the public strongly criticised the decision, raising questions about employment law, fairness and the company's reputation.

Step 1: Read and notice

Read the text slowly and underline key words or phrases.

- Who is involved?
- What happened?
- How was it done?
- How did people react?
- How did the company justify it?



Step 2: Descriptive codes (surface level)- codes that describe what is in the text, not yet what it means.

From this text, possible **descriptive codes** include:

- immediate dismissal
- shock
- long service
- business losses
- agency workers
- political criticism
- reputation
- video message
- disrespect
- job security
- cost-cutting
- union criticism
- employment law

Step 3: Thematic codes (deeper meaning)

These themes capture **underlying ideas** that run through the text.

- From the same text, possible **thematic codes** include:
- **trust and betrayal**
- **power and control**
- **precarious employment**
- **fairness and ethics**
- **organisational reputation and legitimacy**
- **employment relations breakdown**



Step 4: Link text → codes → themes

- Example:
- “Dismissed 800 employees with immediate effect”
 - Descriptive codes: immediate dismissal, job loss
 - Thematic codes: power and control, fairness
- “Short video message... staff felt shocked and disrespected”
 - Descriptive codes: video message, shock, disrespect
 - Thematic codes: trust and betrayal, ethics
- “Business had been losing money... needed to cut costs”
 - Descriptive codes: business losses, cost-cutting
 - Thematic codes: organisational justification, survival narrative
- “Replace... with cheaper agency workers”
 - Descriptive codes: agency workers, cheaper labour
 - Thematic codes: precarious employment, power

Extract from the text

"P&O Ferries dismissed 800 employees with immediate effect."

"The news was delivered in a short video message."

"Many staff said they felt shocked and disrespected."

"Some employees had worked for the company for more than 20 years."

"They believed their jobs were secure."

"The business had been losing money and needed to cut costs."

"Replace the dismissed staff with cheaper agency workers."

"Unions, politicians and the public strongly criticised the decision."

"Raising questions about employment law, fairness and the company's reputation."

Descriptive codes

immediate dismissal, job loss

video message, communication method

shock, disrespect, emotional reaction

long service, loyalty

job security, expectations

financial losses, cost-cutting

agency workers, cheaper labour, replacement

union criticism, political criticism, public reaction

employment law, fairness, reputation

Thematic codes

power and control, fairness

trust and respect, ethics

trust and betrayal, emotional impact

organisational loyalty, fairness

psychological contract, trust

organisational justification, survival narrative

precarious employment, power imbalance

employment relations breakdown, reputation

ethics, legitimacy, trust

Step 5: Connect to your feedback notes

- Key learning points:
- **Different analysts** may choose different codes and themes.
- Your **assumptions and position** influence what you see.
- You must also code data that **does not fit** your preferred view.
- Coding is **iterative**: you may add, combine or remove codes as you go.
- Good coding supports **strong, credible qualitative analysis**.

Different Analytical Strategies

Choosing an analysis method

- Different methods help you see different things. Choose the approach that best fits:
- your **research question**,
- the **type of data** you have collected.
- the **type of insight** you want to produce.

Thematic analysis is common in HRM, but other approaches may be more suitable.

Thematic Analysis

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Three Other Alternative Analytical Strategies

1. Content Analysis

- Focuses on **counting** and **categorising** features in the data.
- Often used to identify **patterns, frequency** or **trends**.
- Useful when you have large amounts of text and want to be **systematic**.
- Can be **quantitative, qualitative**, or a mix of both.

2. Narrative Analysis

- Focuses on **stories** people tell and **how** they tell them.
- Looks at **sequence, characters, events, and meaning**.
- Useful when you want to understand **personal experience**, identity, or sense-making.
- Common in interviews where people describe their **life events** or **work experiences**.



3. Discourse Analysis

- Focuses on **language, power** and **social meaning**.
- Examines how language shapes **ideas, behaviour** and **relationships**.
- Useful for studying organisational documents, policies, media texts or workplace talk.
- Helps you explore how certain views become **normal, accepted** or **challenged**.

-  **What is Content Analysis?**
- A systematic way of examining written, spoken or visual data.
- **Key Steps**
- **1. Decide your categories**
- Choose what you want to look for in the data.
- Categories can come from the **literature** or from the **data itself**.
- **2. Create clear coding rules**
- Decide what counts as being **in** each category.
- Decide what is **not included**.
- This keeps your coding consistent.
- **3. Apply the codes to your data**
- Read or view the data carefully.
- Mark every place where a category appears.
- **4. Check frequency and density**
- **Frequency:** how many people or sources show this category.
- **Density:** how many times the category appears in the whole data set.
- Look for categories that appear **often** or **rarely**.



Moving Beyond Description

- After counting and organising the data, move towards a **deeper, richer interpretation**. Ask:
- What does this pattern mean?
- What is being communicated overall?
- How do the categories connect?
- Content analysis starts with structure and ends with **meaning**.



Narrative Analysis (Simple and Informative)

What is Narrative Analysis?

- A way of studying the **stories people tell** about their experiences and how they make sense of events.

Key Ideas

- **1. Stories create meaning**
- People understand their own lives by **telling stories**.
- Meaning comes from **what** is told and **how** it is told.
- **2. Stories have structure**
- Narratives often include characters, events, problems and resolutions.
- These structures help the analyst understand the **message** of the story.
- **3. Stories change over time**
- Narratives are not fixed.
- They can be **reshaped**, expanded or corrected as people retell them.
- Listeners also influence the story by accepting, questioning or adding to it.

What Is Discourse Analysis?

- A method for studying **language, communication and meaning**.
- Looks at how people **talk, write and interact** in organisations.
- Helps us understand how HR practices, identities and cultures are **shaped by language**.
- Useful because HR work relies heavily on **policies, conversations, emails, meetings and documents**.

How It Differs from Other Methods

- **Content analysis** → focuses on *what* is said.
- **Narrative analysis** → focuses on *how* a story is told.
- **Discourse analysis** → focuses on *how communication shapes thinking*, behaviour and meaning.
- It goes **beneath the surface** to explore deeper patterns.

Key Ideas in Discourse Analysis

- Communication shapes people's **mental models**, memories and assumptions.
- Meaning is **constructed and reconstructed** through talk and text.
- Discourse includes:
 - spoken language
 - written documents
 - websites
 - images and symbols
- It is a **dynamic process**, not a fixed record.

What Analysts Look For

- The **rules** people use to make sense of HR issues.
- How language **legitimises** or **challenges** HR practices.
- Strategies of **impression management** (how people justify or defend actions).
- Patterns that reveal **power**, identity and organisational culture.

Two Levels of Discourse

1. 'd' discourse (local level)

- Everyday interactions.
- Multiple and competing meanings.
- How people construct and reconstruct their understanding.

2. 'D' Discourse (wider level)

- Cultural norms, power and social expectations.
- How dominant discourses shape what people can say or do.
- How people are **positioned** in organisational life.

When to Use Discourse Analysis

Useful for questions such as:

- How does communication change during **corporate restructuring**?
- How are **blame and responsibility** negotiated in a crisis?
- How do organisations **socialise new employees** through talk and text?
- How do unions shape understanding of **safety, redundancy or rights**?
- How are assumptions about **minority groups** communicated?
- How is **employee wellbeing** constructed in corporate communication?



Data Display Processes (Qualitative Analysis)

- **What is Data Display?**
- A visual way of showing your qualitative data so you can **see patterns, connections and relationships** more clearly.

Why Use Data Display?

- Helps you explore **links between categories and themes**.
- Makes it easier to **spot relationships** that are not obvious in text form.
- Supports you in developing **explanations** about what seems to be happening.
- Encourages deeper thinking after your first round of coding



Types of Data Display

1. Within-case display

- Focuses on **one case** (e.g., one department, one team, one individual).
- Common for practitioner-researchers working inside their own organisation.

2. Cross-case display

- Used when your research includes **more than one case**.
- Helps you compare cases and identify **similarities and differences**.



What You Can Display Visually

- Categories
- Themes
- Relationships
- Processes
- Sequences
- Contrasts between cases



Examples of Visual Formats

- Tables
- Charts
- Matrices
- Flow diagrams
- Concept maps
- Theme networks
- Experimenting with different formats often leads to **new insights**.





Methods of Data Display: Charts

- **Why Use Data Display?**
- Helps you organise your qualitative data visually.
- Makes it easier to **see patterns, compare information and develop interpretations.**

There are no fixed rules — you can experiment to find what works best.

Table 8.4 Example of a data chart: HRD paradigms in different organisations

[Skip table](#)

Organisation	HRD paradigm – learning	HRD paradigm – performance	HRD paradigm – meaningful work
A	Help them improve	Productivity metrics as a feature of training evaluation	Ensure they know what is going on
B	Flexible learning system – opportunities can be accessed at any time	Performance-related incentives	
C		Productivity information informs HRD budgeting and forecasting	Had to address workplace anxiety and the stress

Figure 8.4 Data display using a hierarchy

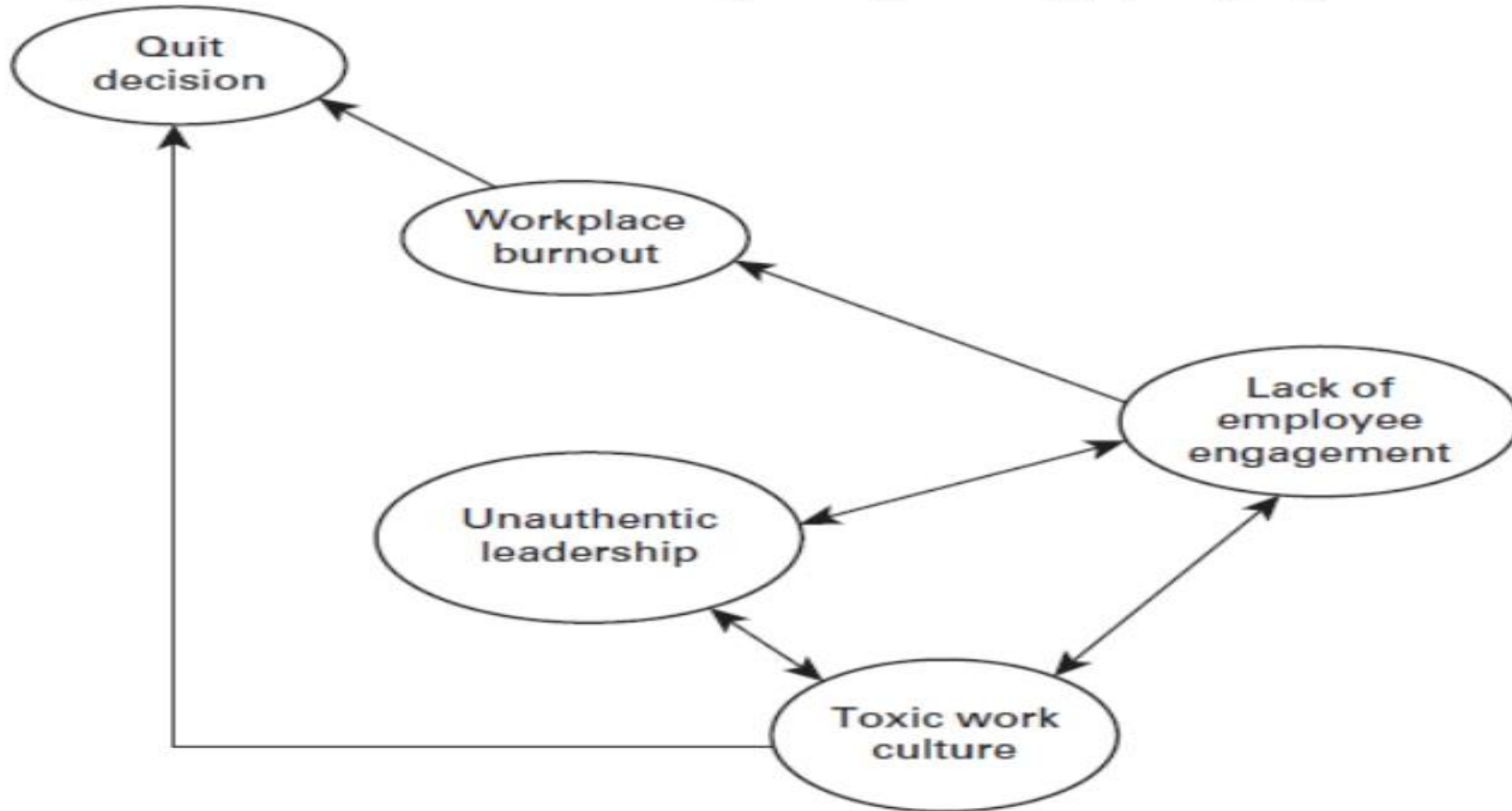


Figure 8.5 Example of a time-ordered display relating to management of return to work

<div> <div>Long-term sickness absence</div> <div>←</div> <div>→</div> <div>Return to work</div> </div>				
Individual	Keep in touch	Self-care	Phased return	Build confidence
Colleagues/team members	Keep in touch		Non-judgemental support and understanding	Support and encouragement of returned colleague
HR/ Occupational Health	Support group/ team	Support employee	Line manager support/training as appropriate	Confidential support/EAP
Line manager	Affirm 'space' for recovery	Prepare/plan for return to work	Workplace adjustments	Return to work conversations/ review

Display by modelling.

Figure 8.6 Influences on 'quiet quitting' (employee turnover)



Evaluating Explanations and Drawing Conclusions

From Data to Meaning

- Analysis is an **iterative process** — it takes time and reflection.
- You move from **data gathering** → **coding** → **provisional explanations**.
- Eventually, you reach a point where **new data adds no new insight** — this is called **data saturation**.
- At this stage, you begin to **evaluate alternative explanations** and decide which ones are **most plausible**.

Key Evaluation Criteria

- Use these questions to assess your explanations:
- **1. Credibility**
 - Is your explanation **supported by evidence**?
 - Have you been clear about your **theoretical stance**?
 - Has this stance influenced which explanations you prioritised?
- **2. Transferability**
 - Is your explanation **context-specific**?
 - Could it apply to **other settings**?
 - Have you explained the **limits** of transferability?
- **3. Dependability**
 - Is your research process **well documented**?
 - Have you missed or overlooked anything?
 - Was your coding **consistent**?

More Evaluation Criteria

- **4. Meaning in Context**
 - Does your explanation **fit the original context**?
 - Has analysis **fragmented** the data too much?
- **5. Recurrent Patterning**
 - Does your explanation apply across **different timeframes**?
 - Is the **sequence of events** plausible?

Drawing Conclusions

- After evaluating alternatives:
- Decide what is **highly unlikely**.
- Identify what is **most plausible**.
- Your conclusions should be:
 - Trustworthy
 - Well supported
 - Clearly explained
 - Transparent and detailed
- Another researcher should be able to **follow your process** and see its **rigour**.



Diversity in Conclusions

- Qualitative conclusions can take **many forms**.
- They may include:
 - **Narratives**
 - **Themes**
 - **Models**
 - **Propositions**
- What matters is that they are:
 - **Grounded in data**
 - **Logically reasoned**
 - **Contextually appropriate**
- (Robson, 2024)



Drawing Conclusions: Deductive vs Inductive

- Your conclusions depend on:
- Your research questions
- Your approach:
 - **Deductive** → start with theory
 - **Inductive** → start with data

Two Paths to Conclusions

Deductive Path

- Start with **theory**
- Theory leads to **propositions**
- Propositions guide **data analysis**
- Analysis leads to **conclusions**
- Conclusions suggest **implications for HR practice and further research**

Inductive Path

- Start with **data analysis**
- Data leads to **alternative explanations**
- Explanations lead to **concepts, models or grounded theory**
- Conclusions suggest **implications for HR practice and further research**

Deductive Conclusions

- If you used a **deductive approach**:
- Compare your data with **existing theory or frameworks**
- Ask: Does the evidence **support or challenge** the theory?
- Conclusions show:
 - Where propositions seem **plausible**
 - Where explanations seem **unlikely**
- Reflect on what this means for:
 - **HR practice**
 - **Further research**

Inductive Conclusions

- If you used an **inductive approach**:
- Gather and analyse data **without using prior theory**
- Explore what is happening in the data
- Conclusions may be:
 - A **model**
 - A **provisional explanatory framework**
- Reflect on what this means for:
 - **HR practice**
 - **Further research**

Summary: Two Approaches, Shared Goal

Both approaches aim to produce plausible, well-supported conclusions that are useful in practice.

Approach	Starts With	Leads To	Conclusions Inform...
Deductive	Theory	Propositions → Data → Conclusions	HR practice + Further research
Inductive	Data	Explanations → Concepts/Models	HR practice + Further research



Why Use Software for Qualitative Data Analysis?

- Qualitative analysis is **time-consuming and messy**.
- You work with **text, images, audio, video**.
- You need to **code, categorise and reflect**.
- Software helps you **organise, search and manage** your data.

What Can Software Help With?

- Most packages support:
- **Coding** (tagging parts of your data)
- **Searching and retrieving** coded data
- **Reporting** and exporting findings
- **Creating visual displays** (charts, models, timelines)
- **Storing and organising** multiple data types

(Paulus, 2023)

Choosing a Software Package

- These tools are called **CAQDAS** (Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software).
- Popular packages include **NVivo**, **MAXQDA**, **Atlas.ti**, and **Quirkos**.
- Some are **free to download**; others require a **license**.
- Many universities offer **site access** or **education discounts**.

Important Reminders

- Software helps — but it won't **think for you**.
- It won't **code or analyse** your data automatically.
- **Your judgement and care** are essential.
- Sloppy coding = sloppy analysis, no matter how fancy the software looks.

(Jackson & Bazely, 2019)

Analysing Qualitative Data Without Software

- You **don't need special software** to analyse qualitative data.
- Manual analysis is acceptable and often used in small-scale or practitioner research.
- You'll need to be **organised and consistent**.

— Step-by-Step Manual Process

- **Make copies** of all texts, images and other data.
- **Code the data** by selecting relevant chunks and linking them to your codes.
- **Reference each chunk** to its original source.
- **Paste coded data** into folders or files (electronic or paper).
- **Group codes** into categories.
- **Look for patterns and themes** by laying out the data visually — on a table, wall, or floor.



Staying Organised

- Manual analysis can be **messy and time-consuming**.
- You must keep track of:
 - **Where each data item came from**
 - **How it was coded**
 - **Which category it belongs to**

Using Simple Tools to Help

- Bree and Gallagher (2016) suggest using **Microsoft Excel** to help manage and code data.
- Excel can help you:
 - **Store coded chunks**
 - **Sort and filter** by category
 - **Track sources and themes**

Key Challenges

- **Data tracking** is harder without software.
- You must be careful not to:
 - Lose data
 - Mislabel codes
 - Overlook patterns
- Good manual analysis still needs **clear thinking and careful judgement.**

Writing the Analysis or Discussion Chapter

Why this section is challenging

- You know your data **very well**, but your readers do not.
- Your writing must be **clear, logical and plausible**.
- You need to guide the reader through your thinking.

Explain Your Analysis Process

- Be transparent about how you analysed the data
- Describe **how you coded** the data.
- Explain **how you created categories**.
- Show how you moved from **codes → categories → themes**.
- This usually appears in the **methodology chapter**.
- Detail helps readers see the **rigour** of your work.

Presenting Themes and Categories

Help the reader understand your findings

- Clearly explain each **theme** and **category**.
- Justify why they matter and how they were developed.
- Provide a **summary** of the main features of each theme.
- Use **quotations or examples** to illustrate the themes.
- Keep a good system for **recording and labelling quotations**.
- Ensure quotations **fairly represent the whole data set**.

Avoid Selective Evidence

Be honest with the data

- Do not choose only the quotes that support your preferred view.
- Show the **range** of perspectives in the data.
- This strengthens the **trustworthiness** of your analysis.

Justifying Your Conclusions

- Show your reasoning clearly
- Explain the **different explanations** you considered.
- Show how you evaluated each one.
- Use evidence to argue why your conclusion is **most plausible**.
- Make your reasoning **explicit**, not implied.
- This helps readers follow your **logic and judgement**.

Thank
you
for
your
attention!

