

# ENTREPRENEUR & MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

Interpreting Research Findings

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Present By  
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# REVIEW OF MEETING 11

## QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS: FROM CODING TO THEMATIC MEANING

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01

**Coding helps researchers move from raw statements to analytic units**

e.g., repeated references to “feeling watched” and “staying invisible” can become codes before they become findings.

02

**Thematic analysis turns clusters of codes into patterned meaning**

e.g., a set of codes about shame, exposure, and recovery may become a theme about failure stigmatization.

03

**e.g., a set of codes about shame, exposure, and recovery may become a theme about failure stigmatization**

e.g., researchers do not merely sort narratives; they explain how those narratives are organized and why they matter.

# INTRODUCTION

## Why Interpreting Findings Matters

### Findings are not self-explanatory

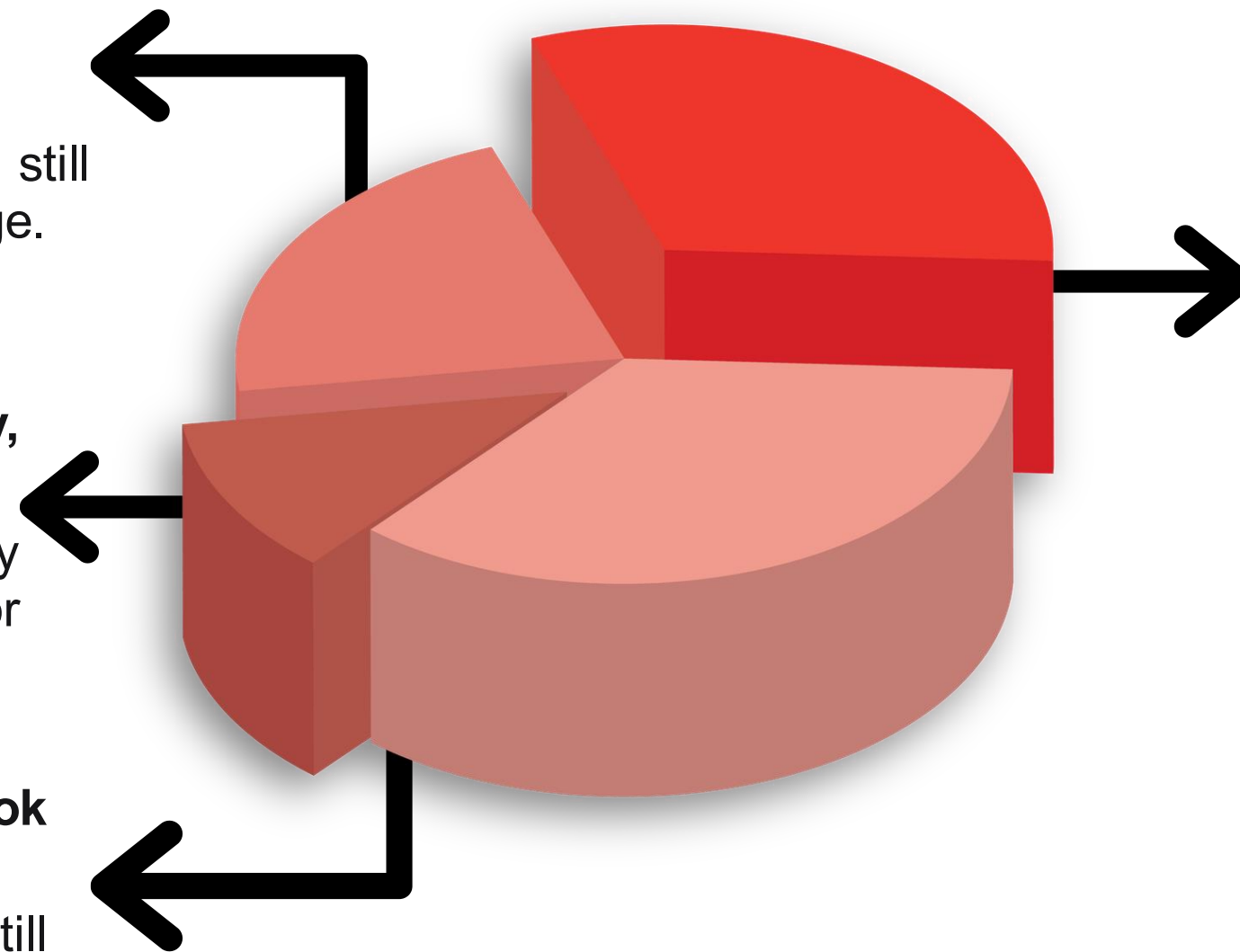
e.g., a significant coefficient or a strong theme still needs interpretation before it becomes knowledge.

### Interpretation connects results to theory, context, and implication

e.g., a pattern of customer hesitation only matters when linked to uncertainty, trust, or decision processes.

### Weak interpretation makes strong data look trivial

e.g., rich interviews or robust models can still produce a thin discussion if the researcher only restates the results.

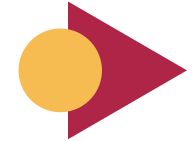


### Interpretation is where researchers show intellectual maturity

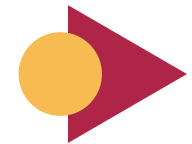
e.g., researchers demonstrate judgment by explaining what can and cannot be claimed from their evidence.

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO INTERPRET FINDINGS?

## From Result to Meaning



**A result is what the analysis produced**  
e.g., a coefficient, a p-value, a theme, or a category



**A finding is a result that has begun to carry meaning**  
e.g., an indirect effect suggests that one variable works through another

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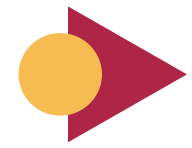


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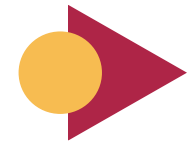
# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO INTERPRET FINDINGS?

## From Result to Meaning



**Interpretation explains why the finding matters**

e.g., a pattern of selective visibility matters because it reveals how entrepreneurs manage competing stakeholder demands.



**A contribution emerges when interpretation is linked back to theory and practice**

e.g., a finding becomes a contribution when it refines theory and informs managerial action.

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# INTERPRETING QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

## BEYOND “SIGNIFICANT OR NOT”

**01** Quantitative interpretation must go beyond statistical significance  
e.g., a significant coefficient still needs substantive meaning.

**02** Researchers should interpret direction, magnitude, mechanism, and condition  
e.g., whether an effect is positive or negative, large or small, direct or indirect, stable or conditional.



# INTERPRETING QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

## BEYOND “SIGNIFICANT OR NOT”

- 03** A model result must be read in light of the theory that generated it  
e.g., mediation findings matter only because the theory expected a mechanism.
- 04** Good quantitative interpretation answers “so what?”  
e.g., the researcher explains why the statistical relationship matters for theory, policy, or managerial decision-making.

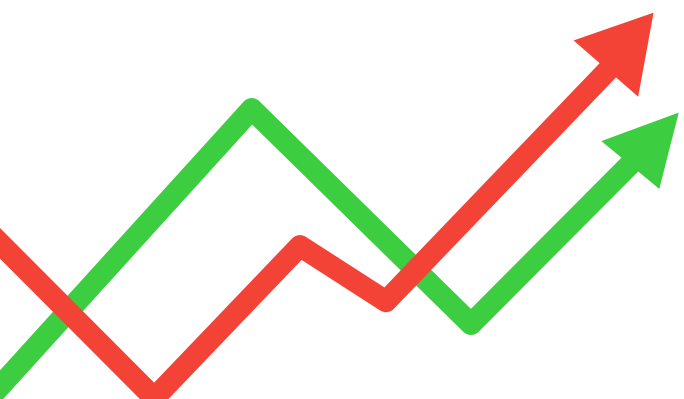


# INTERPRETING QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

## BEYOND “INTERESTING QUOTES”

**01** Qualitative interpretation must go beyond repeating what participants said

e.g., quotes about “pressure” are not enough unless the researcher explains what kind of pressure is being enacted.

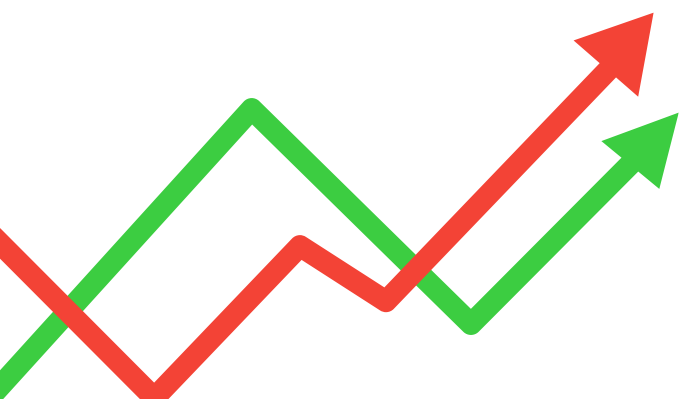




# INTERPRETING QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

## BEYOND “INTERESTING QUOTES”

**02** Themes must be interpreted as patterned meaning, not as topic containers  
e.g., “trust” is not a theme unless it explains a recurring pattern of relationship or action.



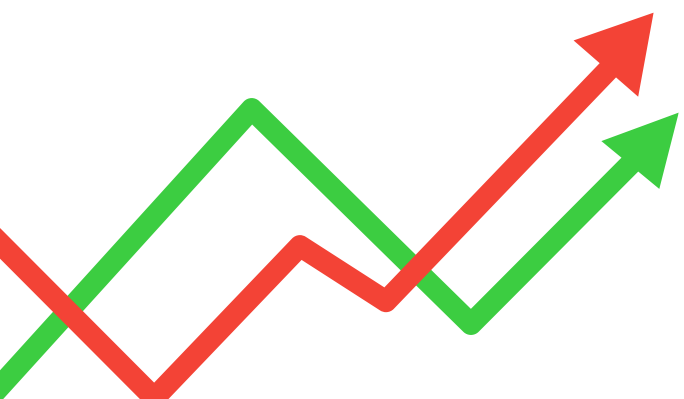


# INTERPRETING QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

## BEYOND “INTERESTING QUOTES”

**03** Interpretation should explain process, tension, and consequence

e.g., managers may describe cooperation with competitors, but the researcher must show how that cooperation is sustained amid tension.





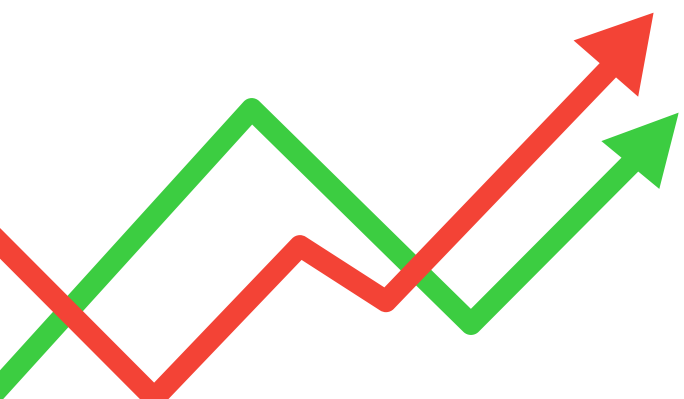
# INTERPRETING QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

## BEYOND “INTERESTING QUOTES”

**04**

**Good qualitative interpretation transforms theme into argument**

e.g., a theme becomes academically valuable when it supports a clear explanation about the phenomenon.





# INTERPRETING FINDINGS THROUGH THEORY



## WHY RESULTS MUST RETURN TO THE CONCEPTUAL CONVERSATION



**Interpretation is weak if it stays only inside the  
dataset**

e.g., a finding matters more when it speaks back to theory

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# INTERPRETING FINDINGS THROUGH THEORY

## WHY RESULTS MUST RETURN TO THE CONCEPTUAL CONVERSATION



**Theory helps explain why the finding is  
intellectually important**

e.g., selective visibility matters because it extends social  
embeddedness and visibility theory

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# INTERPRETING FINDINGS THROUGH THEORY

## WHY RESULTS MUST RETURN TO THE CONCEPTUAL CONVERSATION



**Interpretation should ask whether the finding confirms, refines, extends, or challenges prior knowledge**

e.g., a finding may support a theory in one context but reveal its limits in another

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# INTERPRETING FINDINGS THROUGH THEORY

## WHY RESULTS MUST RETURN TO THE CONCEPTUAL CONVERSATION



**The best discussion sections re-enter the  
literature, not merely leave it behind**

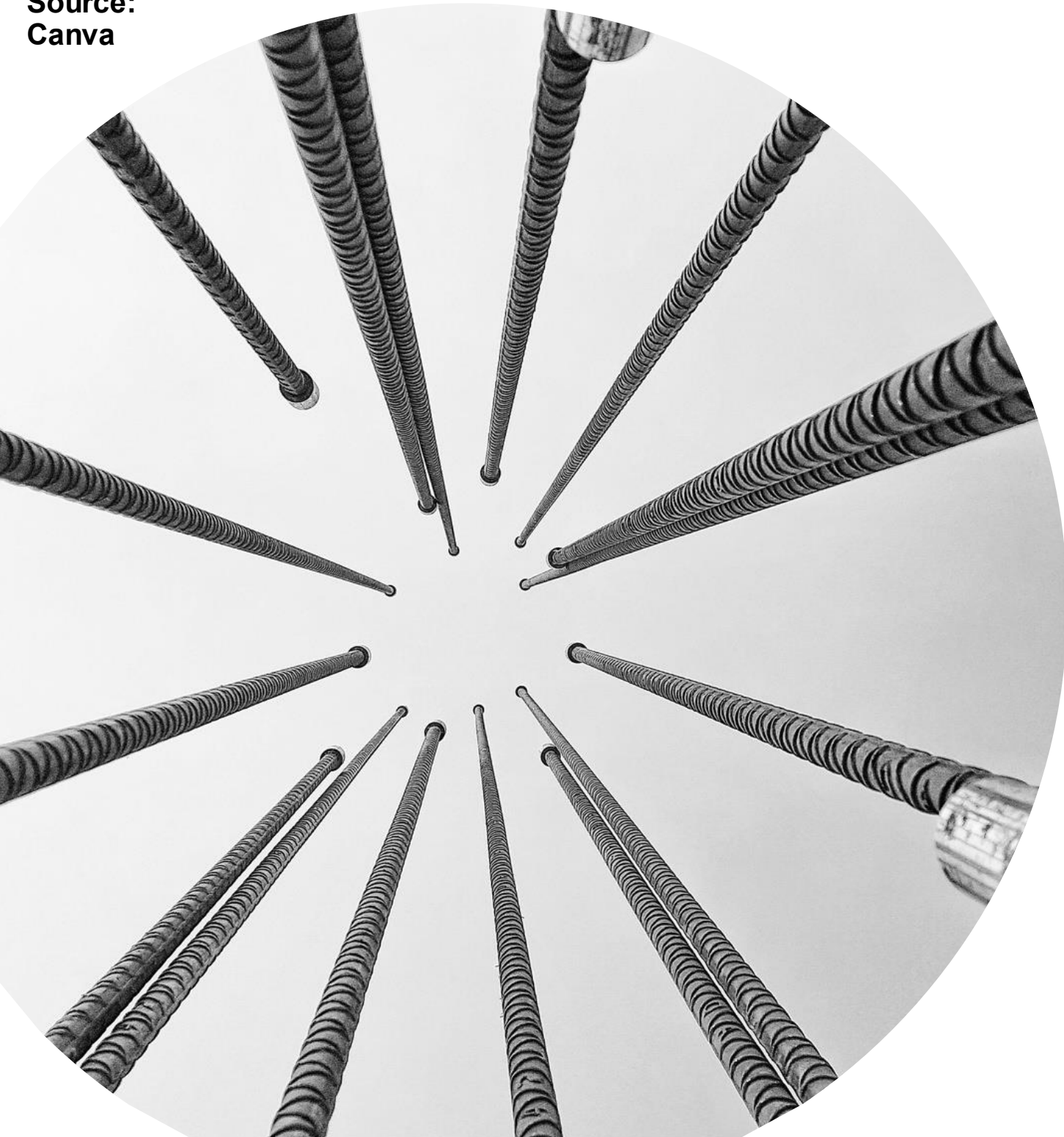
e.g., a discussion should return to the literature review and show how  
the study changes the conversation.

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# INTERPRETING UNEXPECTED, MIXED, OR NON-SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

Source:  
Canva



## WHY NOT ALL VALUABLE FINDINGS ARE “POSITIVE FINDINGS”

**01**

**Unexpected findings are not research failures; they are interpretive opportunities**

e.g., a variable expected to matter may not matter in the way theory predicted.

**02**

**Mixed findings often reveal conditionality rather than contradiction**

e.g., one mechanism may work strongly while another works only in specific contexts.

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# INTERPRETING UNEXPECTED, MIXED, OR NON-SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

Source:  
Canva



## WHY NOT ALL VALUABLE FINDINGS ARE “POSITIVE FINDINGS”

**03**

**Non-significant results still matter when they narrow theoretical claims**

Non-significant results still matter when they narrow theoretical claims.

**04**

**Interpretive maturity means resisting the temptation to oversell**

e.g., researchers should explain results carefully without forcing every finding to sound revolutionary.

# QUANTITATIVE EXAMPLE 1

## INTERPRETING A MODERATED OR CONDITIONAL RELATIONSHIP

**01**

A relationship may not be universal; it may depend on a condition

e.g., user experience can alter how willingness or adoption is formed



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# QUANTITATIVE EXAMPLE 1

## INTERPRETING A MODERATED OR CONDITIONAL RELATIONSHIP

**02**

**Moderation findings should be read as boundary-setting, not just model embellishment**

e.g., a moderator clarifies for whom or under what condition an effect becomes stronger or weaker.



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# QUANTITATIVE EXAMPLE 2



## INTERPRETING MIXED-METHODS QUANTITATIVE RESULTS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

**01**

**Findings become stronger when statistical results are read alongside contextual evidence**

e.g., innovation and resilience may be confirmed quantitatively but explained more meaningfully through qualitative support.

# QUANTITATIVE EXAMPLE 2



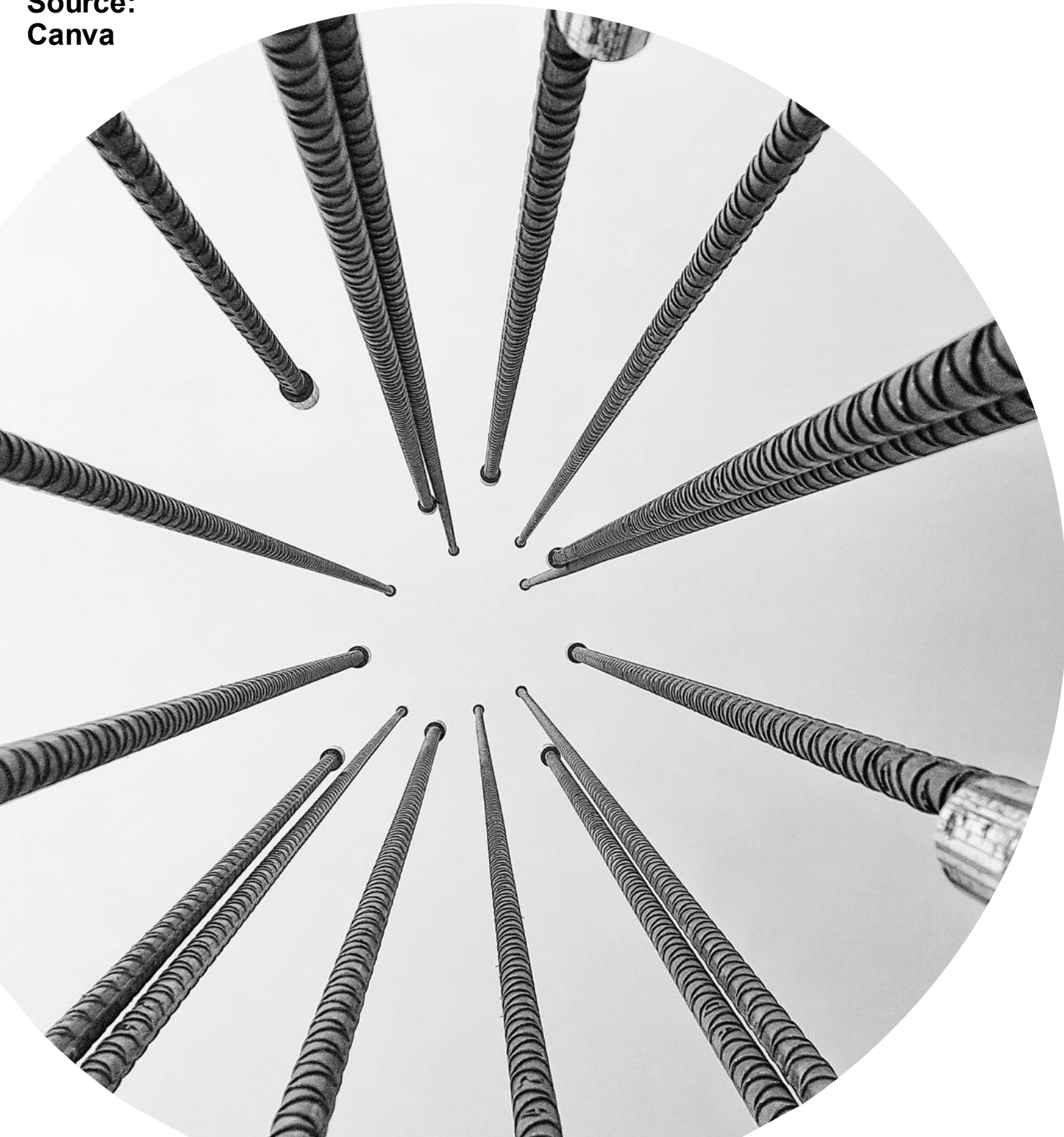
## INTERPRETING MIXED-METHODS QUANTITATIVE RESULTS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

**02** Interpretation should connect measured effects to organizational reality  
e.g., statistical effects should be translated into how organizations actually adapt, coordinate, and perform.

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# QUALITATIVE EXAMPLE 1

Source:  
Canva



## INTERPRETING SELECTIVE VISIBILITY IN INFORMAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**01**

Qualitative findings often explain paradoxes rather than simple effects  
e.g., visibility may create opportunity and danger at the same time.

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# QUALITATIVE EXAMPLE 1

Source:  
Canva



## INTERPRETING SELECTIVE VISIBILITY IN INFORMAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**02**

Interpretation should identify what the paradox reveals about action and context  
e.g., researchers explain why entrepreneurs act strategically under competing stakeholder pressures.

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# QUALITATIVE EXAMPLE 2

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## INTERPRETING PATTERNS ACROSS CASES, NOT JUST WITHIN CASES

**01**

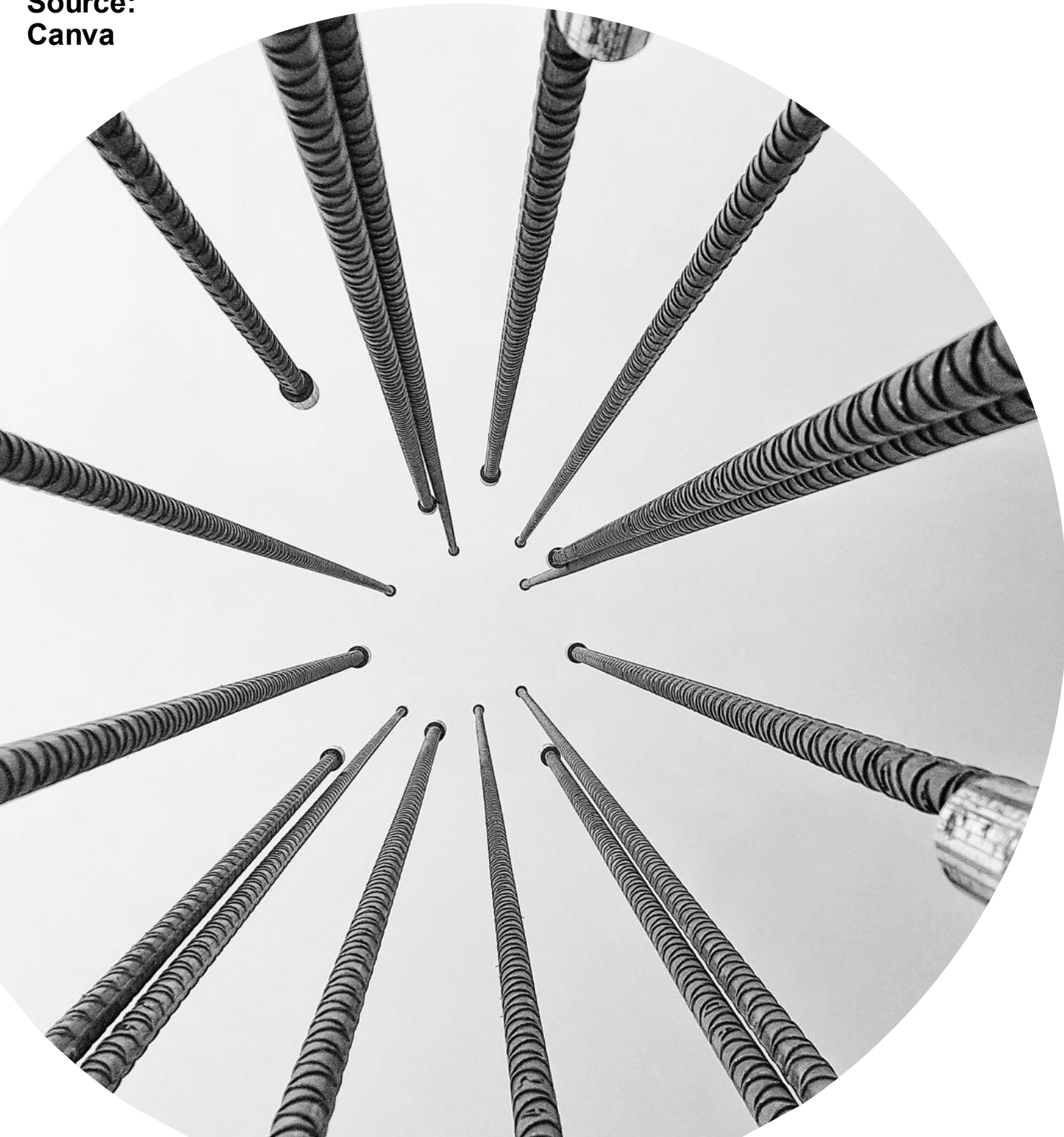
Qualitative interpretation should look for patterned logic across multiple accounts

e.g., managers across firms may repeatedly connect customer engagement with trust, reputation, and non-financial goals.

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# QUALITATIVE EXAMPLE 2

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## INTERPRETING PATTERNS ACROSS CASES, NOT JUST WITHIN CASES

**02**

**Cross-case themes become powerful when they reveal a coherent strategic orientation**  
e.g., themes across firms can show how a business type or context shapes managerial action.

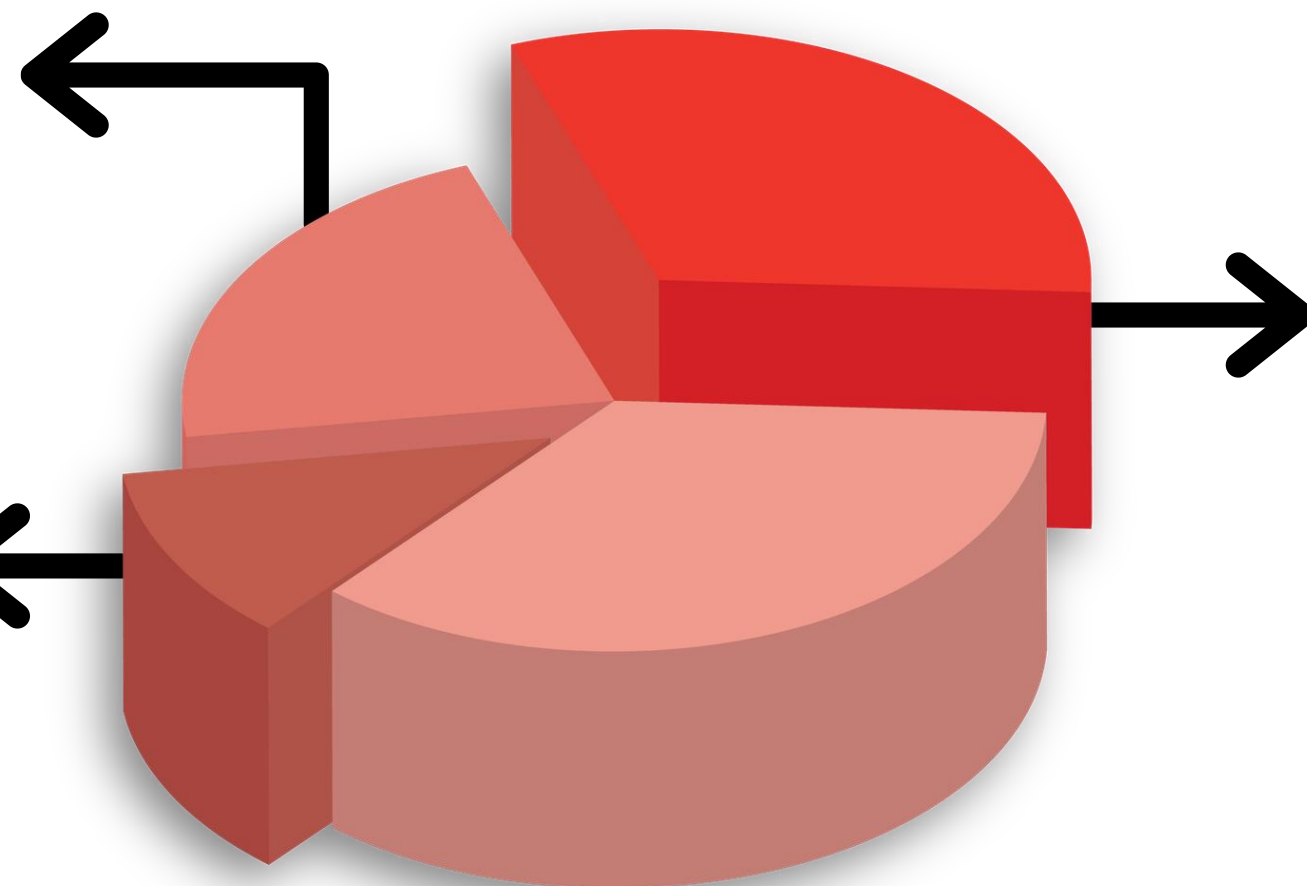
# INTERPRETING FINDINGS FOR THEORY, PRACTICE, AND LIMITATION



## Three Moves of a Strong Discussion Section

**A strong discussion interprets findings theoretically**

e.g., what does the result say about how a theory works, fails, or needs refinement?



**A strong discussion also interprets its own limits**

e.g., what can and cannot be claimed from this design, sample, or context?

**A strong discussion interprets findings practically**

e.g., what should managers, founders, policymakers, or platform designers learn from the result?

# CONCLUSION!

## From Findings to Contribution

01

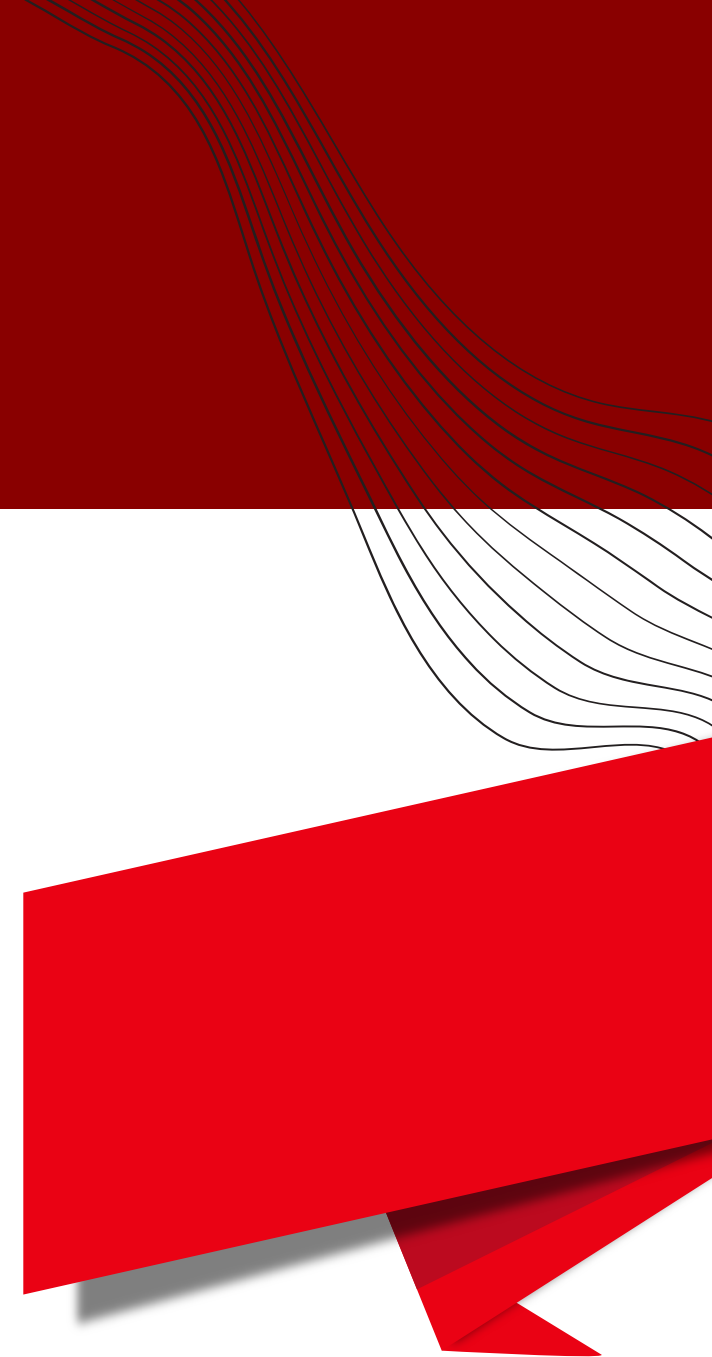
**Research findings become contributions only through interpretation**

e.g., data become academically meaningful when researchers explain their theoretical and practical significance.

02

**Quantitative and qualitative findings require different but equally rigorous interpretive moves**

e.g., statistics require effect-based interpretation, while themes require meaning-based interpretation.



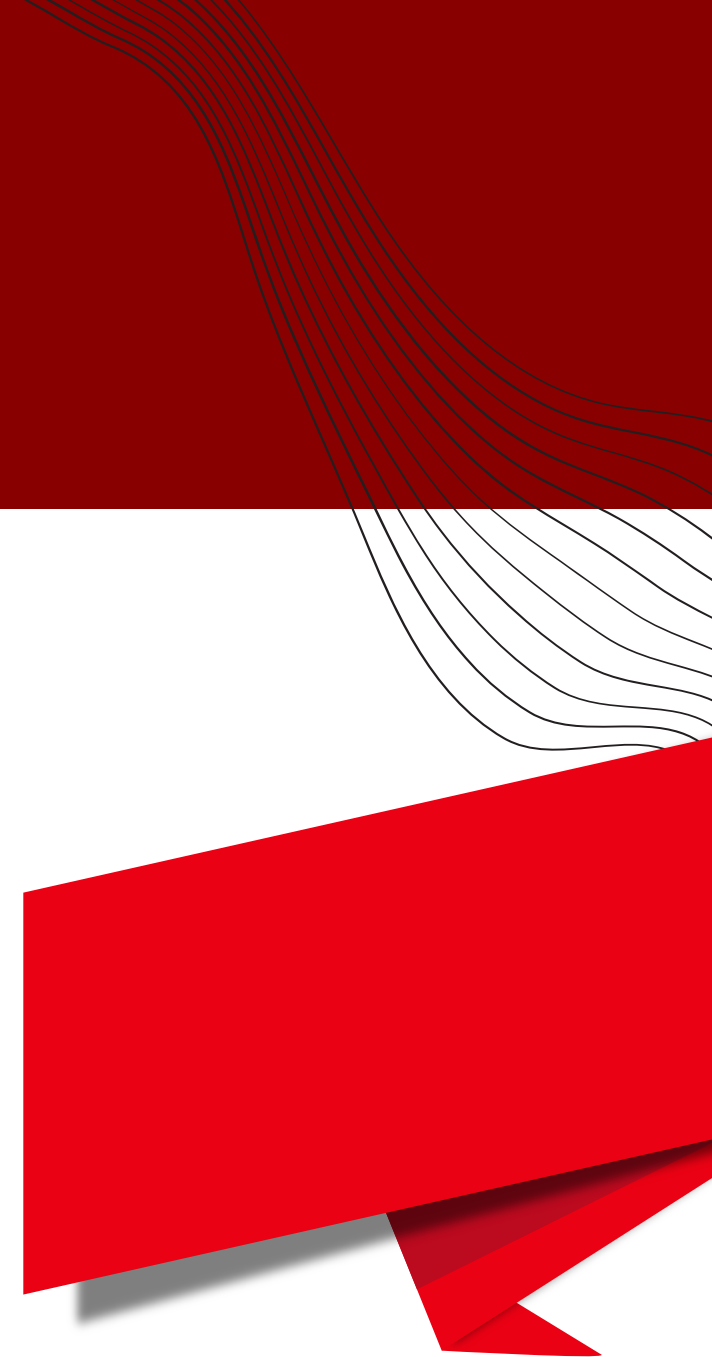
# CONCLUSION!

## From Findings to Contribution

03

**Interpretation is strongest when it links data, theory, context, and implication**

e.g., a strong discussion explains what was found, why it matters, where it matters, and what follows from it.



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

**Results are not the same as findings, and findings are not yet the same as contributions**

e.g., a statistical output must be interpreted before it can support an academic argument.

**The best discussions connect evidence back to theory, context, implication, and limitation**

e.g., a strong discussion shows what the study contributes and what it cannot claim.

**Quantitative interpretation must go beyond significance**

Quantitative interpretation must go beyond significance.

**Qualitative interpretation must go beyond attractive quotations**

e.g., quotes should support an argument about patterned meaning, process, or tension.

# CLOSING REMARKS



**Good researchers do not stop at analysis; they move into interpretation**

e.g., analysis produces evidence, but interpretation turns evidence into explanation.



**Interpretation is where data become explanation**

e.g., statistics, themes, and quotes become meaningful when connected through reasoning.



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# CLOSING REMARKS





**The next step is to learn how findings are written into a publishable discussion chapter**

e.g., students must learn to turn interpretation into a clear, persuasive, and well-limited academic text.



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See you in Meeting  
13, with the topic:

**Academic Writing and  
Reporting**



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**THANK**

**YOU**