

Does the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee matter in qualitative research?

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this viewpoint is to outline the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee in qualitative research, data collection and data quality. The argument draws upon qualitative research and publication among academicians and researchers, as well as the researcher's observation. The relationship is an epic in qualitative and quantitative research and data collection. The relationship has positive and negative responses as well as advantages and disadvantages. Familiarity within the industry and respondents may make the data collection process more accessible, suitable and less time worthy, and money savings in collecting data set for the qualitative research. At the same time, unfamiliarity among the interviewer and interviewees may lead to the bias data from the interviewee and time-consuming. The researchers need to consider the relationship in future qualitative research and data quality for greater flexibility to attain research objectives. The viewpoint is valuable to those engaged in various aspects of qualitative research, data collection, and data evaluation either in a familiar or unfamiliar face.

Keywords: Qualitative research, Relationship, Data collection, Data quality

1. Introduction

Every research project necessitates the use of interviewees or participants or samples. There are several methods for researchers to incorporate bias into a study when gathering data for qualitative research. In-depth interviewing and observation can be broadly intrusive as the highly personal issues of individuals are interviewed in qualitative research (Darlington & Scott, 2003). Every research project must be planned, carried out, and published in an open, honest, and truthful manner. Research that does not adhere to these fundamental standards is misleading. The viewpoint aims to show the gap by highlighting the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee regarding data quality collecting for quantitative research. Though the importance of actually identifying qualitative research is critical because it is the focus of this section—but it is difficult to do so (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013) since it lacks a distinct concept or paradigm, as well as an apparent series of techniques or practices those are unique to it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Here, this viewpoint covers both benefits and drawbacks that researchers face in terms of collecting the needed information or stories for qualitative research. Besides, the pros and cons of the power relationships among the participants and the researchers which can be known and unknown, are also described.

2. Relationship between the interviewer and interviewees

Relationship is the way in which two or more people or things are connected or the state of being connected. The term researcher-participant relationships refer to the relationship between psychological investigators, on the one hand, and the individuals who provide data, on the other hand (Harrington, 2003). This relationship specifies functions and roles for each party (e.g., designating which party collects data from the other) (Hibbard et al., 2001).

The relationship is an epic in qualitative and quantitative research and data collection. The relationship has a positive and negative response as well as advantages and disadvantages. Familiarity with the industry and respondents may make the data collection process easier, suitable and less time worthy, and money savings in collecting data set for the qualitative research. At the same time, unfamiliarity among the interviewer and interviewees may make the research more challenging to get the data and time-consuming (Shah, 2004).

The interviewer seems to be completely reliant on the interviewees' desire to participate in the study and communicate their information about the research topic with the researcher (Karnieli-Miller, Strier and Pessach, 2008). The interviewees seem to have control and ownership of the data. The amount and quality of data provided to the interviewer are influenced by the connection that develops between the researcher and the different participants. The researcher must endeavor to extract as much information as possible from the participants, including their tales, experiences, and extensive knowledge of the study issue. The capacity to recover and obtain the interviewee's narrative or data set, as well as approval to use it in the study and associated articles, is one indicator of the author's success (Ely et al., 1991; Reason, 1994; Woods, 1986) which greatly depend on the relationship; are they familiar or not.

2.1 Power relationship

For collecting data for qualitative research, the power of relationships can be positive as well as negative. Using qualitative methods of research has a number of advantages. Interviewer and interviewee have a positive correlation because in qualitative research generates a dense (detailed) characterization of the interviewee's feelings, opinions, and experiences, as well as perceives the interpretations of their own acts to the interviewer (Rahman, 2017). Besides, it can be negative; 'bias' or manipulation or exploitation might happen during this time (Karnieli-Miller, Strier and Pessach, 2008). According to a study, self-disclosure, doing errands, sharing a meal (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputtong, 2006), or "faking friendship" are examples of strategies which sometimes used by the interviewers for biasness.

As the interviewer has the majority of the authority since he offers the study topic, establishes the topic, and controls the dialogue. The interviewer starts the discussion, chooses the themes to be covered, manages the structured interview, and chooses when to end it (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005) and it easily manipulates the data. For more easier understanding, if I declared that I want the positive ideas such as how Covid-19 made the business people more depressed which I want to cover in a qualitative research paper, in that case, if the participants have the negative ideas about the topic, he/she may not share properly as his/her experiences if the participant had positive experiences in business through the Facebook business of Bangladesh where he/she might achieve more expand in business as people were idle in the covid-19 time. It is a simple example of biasness in research while

collecting the data set. So, the interviewer has to avoid these behaviors to avoid 'biasness' for getting the targeted data set from the participants.

At the same time, the assumption of the researchers' exclusive power is only partly accurate, since the amount of collaboration in the conversation may also be determined by the interviewees itself for example, by showing some of the troublesome interviewing behaviors (e.g., flattery, flirting, and social desirability; (Collins, Shattel, & Thomas, 2005), alter the discussion's topic (Hutchinson & Wilson, 1992), and finally choose to end the interview.

When the interviewer is more senior in the position than the interviewee person, while taking data for his qualitative research, he (the superior or senior) might use his power to get the data according to his necessity or his demand. Sometimes, I have seen many researchers force their colleagues to give an interview or attend the survey though the colleagues have no interest at all. Even some seniors offer benefits or treats to juniors for attending their interview and giving the data quality, which is prohibited in research ethics. Similarly, the vice versa also happens to seniors. Some juniors request their colleague to help or attend in terms of qualitative research collecting data.

Moreover, in some cases, the power of the relationship can be used in a negative way that the interviewee may be enforced by the interviewer for giving the data for the research which initially the interviewee may not wish to share publicly. Because at the heart of research ethics is the protection of interviewees from any physical or mental or any damage of participants. However, there will be consent form, it is the researcher's obligation to be aware of any dangers that may arise during the interview and result in a state of vulnerability in the researcher-participant interaction in the topic. The psychological interplay between interviewer and interviewee is inherent in qualitative research. Even if the latter does not technically correspond to a particular vulnerable population, he or she may feel driven or forced while taking the interview as a result of the reawakening of a terrible memories or unpleasant feelings associated with a previous event, which might unnecessarily cause or renew a trauma. Here, the power of the relationship may lead to vulnerability for the interviewee. On the other hand, it also happens in some cases, that the data sharer doesn't know where his/her data sets are being used without their consent- this also reflects the negative use of power relationship. It should not be done at all.

2.2 Relationship if Known

Known relationship refers to from whose we collect data for qualitative research or whether interviewees are familiar with the interviewer. In that case, the data collection is easier because the familiar persons try their best to help one another. They don't think about Win-Win habit perception (introduced by Covey in his book of - Seven Habits of Highly Effectively People) (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Shah, 2004). Because participants or interviewees provide their time, effort, expertise, and experiences to help the researcher achieve the study's goal. They provide the necessary information because of helping the known interviewer in the research, that is why it's easy to collect (Alam, 2021). At the same time, this saves the researcher's time and those saved time can use in another part of the research to make quality research.

If the participant is known, it is easier to manage all the stuffs according to the researcher's needs. He(r) can easily ask questions or need relevant information without hesitation and can get the answer

in a comparable manner. On the other hand, since he/she(p) is a known participant, he/she(p) offers excellent data without exaggeration and does not get additional perks, which is cost-efficient for a researcher. Nonetheless, the extraordinary circumstances are normal and occurring here.

The one concern is not to manipulate the data set from the known person. Unfortunately, there is a huge chance to get the manipulated data from the participants of the interviewee. To preserve the quality research paper, a true researcher will always try to demonstrate the news which maintains the all-research ethics and is free from any type of manipulation and plagiarism. Regrettably, when I, as a researcher, ask the known for data by explaining what I am going to accomplish, he/she sometimes supplies the data by guessing at the paper's viewpoint, and this is how the known manipulates data without revealing the genuine one. On the other hand, depending on the amount of exchange present in the connection, the author's goals, which also include setting, kind of investigation, breadth, and sometimes even complexity, may result in additional involvement or indifference from respondents.

However, based on my experience on several research projects, I have found that the relationship and familiarity in the industry helped in data collection and data quality. Moreover, the respondent's reference to other respondents (snowball sampling) made the data collection process easier and ensured data quality. In the second project, I got the flexibility and easy entrance for data collection and saved my time. Moreover, in finance projects, familiarity with the industry, other respondents' references, and direct support in data collection made the data collection process easier. Therefore, it seems that the relationship and the industry familiarity help in data collection and reduce time and biased data. Having familiarity with the industry also supports the research's quality and inherent data. One of my respondents opined independently, freely, and accurately about what was happening in the industry rather than the reports.

2.3 Relationship if Unknown

This comes with a great challenge for the researchers to collect the data quality for the qualitative research which deals with words, thoughts and meaning from the participants' point of view. When I, as a qualitative researcher, choose to work with such participants who have already shelled up themselves, at that time, it's really super tough to collect the needed data. For example, in collecting data from acid burn people about their tragical financial life, I have to follow the statistical inference method to reach them up in terms of getting the data. In that case, it is impossible to know before everyone by the person. So, firstly, I will send the research survey form to my selected participant/participants and the selected person/persons will reach the form to their known ones. Here, the hardest thing researchers face that when it comes to the unknown participants, they don't get really much interest or don't show much seriousness in sharing the data as well as takes a long time to reach the unknown. As a result, it is difficult to manage the data as well as there is a huge chance of getting low data quality just because of avoidance.

Besides, I noticed the trust issues in the unknown participants when they gave the interview or filled out the survey form. Some participants have a fear of being disclosed. In many of the surveys, I mentioned in the survey form that no personal information (name, email id by which the survey form is being filled up etc) would not be collected or shown, even to the research team. But it didn't work in most of these cases; the fear wasn't removed from the unknown participant's mind. As a result, they don't attend the survey, whereas they may provide the important data easily. With this less

quality and less quantity of data from the known and unknown participants results in the low quality of qualitative research paper whereas the 'bias' and manipulations are also being common. In addition, I have to face problems in collecting data from the small and medium enterprise business owners as well as trainers as they are aware of reputation, benefits and conflict. They are looking for self-interest to participate in the research. One of my research mates studied accounting by applying qualitative research and he faced problems during data collection. He collected seven interviews within seven months though his supervisor helped him a lot in data collection. His supervisor referred him to the respondents, but data collection took a huge time.

3. Conclusion

The term relationship has a significant relationship in qualitative research, data collection and data quality. In addition, the term "bias" comes from the quantitative research paradigm. The idea is incompatible with qualitative inquiry's philosophical foundations. Because, in qualitative research, as the data depends on the details of the targeted sample or participants, the power of the relationship in between both of them can affect positively in the research as well as negatively in a broader sense of the validation, trustworthiness, confirmability which resultant the biasness and the manipulations of data. The viewpoint outlined the researcher's own perceptions and experiences in conducting research and data collection. It can be investigated in the future or further evidence can be outlined by the researchers based on their research or from their qualitative research in a broader way that the relationship has any significant effect on qualitative data collection having the data quality.

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