

Chapter 5

Using Interviews in Qualitative Research: Considerations for Effective and Ethical Decision–Making

Tiffany Lea Hamblin

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-7913-739X>

University of the Cumberlands, USA

ABSTRACT

As one of the most common sources of data used for qualitative research, interviews hold a critical position within the qualitative research paradigm. Intentional conversations with purposefully selected participants provide rich data for in-depth exploration of human experiences. Researchers must approach interview research systematically with informed decisions in identifying the purpose, structure, and format for an interview; defining participant inclusion criteria and sampling approaches; developing and refining an interview guide to be used as a data collection instrument; and outlining plans for data preparation and analysis. In presenting qualitative findings from interview data, researchers should ensure findings are framed as answers to the study’s research questions that represent the variation of perspectives present in participant data. Findings should be supported with participant quotes as evidence. Throughout the research process, reflexive thinking is critical. This chapter aims to provide guidance for effective and ethical decision-making with interview research.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-3069-2.ch005

INTRODUCTION

Interviews are one of the most common sources of data for qualitative research (Cairns-Lee et al., 2022; Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mwita, 2022; Patton, 2015; Silverman, 2024; Smith et al., 2022). They produce rich information that supports in-depth exploration of research topics. Interviews conducted for research purposes must be approached systematically with the goal of producing data that can be used to answer a study's research questions. Interview data are analyzed at both a participant and group level, with the intended outcome of constructing findings that represent the perspectives of research participants.

A research interview is essentially a conversation with structure and purpose that is valuable for capturing participant perspectives (Alase, 2017; Maxwell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015; Roulston & Halpin, 2022; Smith et al., 2022). Using interviews conducted, data collection relies on the assumption that participant perspectives are relevant to the study being conducted and will be useful in understanding the phenomenon being explored. Despite the popularity and usefulness of interviews, Silverman (2024) cautioned against selecting interviews as a default data collection method for qualitative studies. Instead, researchers should carefully consider whether interviews are the most effective and accurate way to obtain data needed to answer a study's research questions. Researchers should consider observational and document review data collection tools when planning qualitative research. Researchers should evaluate, for example, whether directly observing behaviors and experiences is feasible as an advantage over interviews that ask participants to recall those behaviors and experiences (Maxwell, 2013). Often, this determination is based on the timing of the phenomena being studied.

Effective and ethical interviews are built upon careful planning and introspective preparation. To be effective as interviewers, researchers need to have knowledge about the study's topic and be good listeners. Interviews require focused engagement and active listening. This chapter provides guidance on the complexities of using interviews for qualitative research to assist doctoral students in making effective and ethical decisions. The chapter is intended to provide practical advice on the processes involved with interview research.

ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING IN INTERVIEW RESEARCH

Because an interview is a data collection method that requires interaction with living individuals as research participants, research that uses interviews will always require approval from an Institutional Review Board (IRB) to protect human sub-

52 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/using-interviews-in-qualitative-research/364405

Related Content

Leveraging Technology to Support Adjunct Faculty in Effective Online Teaching

Youmei Liu (2024). *Adjunct Faculty in Online Higher Education: Best Practices for Teaching Adult Learners* (pp. 169-192).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/leveraging-technology-to-support-adjunct-faculty-in-effective-online-teaching/337407

Building First-Generation Student Confidence Through Practice-Based Entrepreneurship

Kristin Burton (2026). *International Journal of Innovative Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 1-16).

www.irma-international.org/article/building-first-generation-student-confidence-through-practice-based-entrepreneurship/399717

Adapting to the Industry 4.0 Era: Transdisciplinary IoT Education

Aliye Saraçand Nesrin Özdener (2024). *Transdisciplinary Approaches to Learning Outcomes in Higher Education* (pp. 95-153).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/adapting-to-the-industry-40-era/353046

Teaching Accompaniment: A Learning Journey Together

Steve Reifenberg (2023). *International Journal of Innovative Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 1-10).

www.irma-international.org/article/teaching-accompaniment/335497

Pedagogical Innovation in Higher Education: Defining What We Mean

Jae Major, Sandi Lynne Tait-McCutcheon, Robin Averill, Amanda Gilbert, Bernadette Knewstubb, Anita Mortlockand Liz Jones (2020). *International Journal of Innovative Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 1-18).

www.irma-international.org/article/pedagogical-innovation-in-higher-education/265504