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PERSPECTIVE

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QUALITATIVE ONLINE INTERVIEW IN NURSING: CONCERNS AND QUESTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

The use of Internet nowadays has been influencing the nature of qualitative research. Online interview in nursing research has been adopted by most of nurses and nursing students, particularly in undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Videoconference, email, and messenger interview are very common in qualitative study. However, there are some issues regarding the online interview. This article is noted to discuss the qualitative online interview, and then some concerns and questions are raised for consideration.

ONLINE INTERVIEW

Interview is an essential component of qualitative research. Although Interview has been argued that this method is not scientific or only explorative, qualitative studies may be accepted as relevant in the first exploratory phases of research. In a scientific investigation, the preparatory

qualitative steps should lead to more precise hypothesis and theory, which can be experimentally tested.¹

Interview is traditionally conducted by face-to-face. Many nurses are familiar with the process of interviewing, which nurses always do in their practice environment, particularly in nurse-patient relationship. However, technology, especially the growth of the Internet has been influencing the forms of data collection in qualitative research. Therefore, the Interview nowadays consists of both face-to-face interview and online interview.

Online interview has been proposed due to the barriers of distance, cost, and time consuming while having face-to-face interview. Online interview is considered to provide the solutions instead of those barriers. Email, text-based chat rooms, instant messenger protocol and videoconference are the most commonly

used methods for online interviewing.² In fact, there are some benefits of online interview, such as the researchers do not need to tape and transcribe, because the online chat program automatically generate interview transcripts, and allows the researchers to analyze data quickly. It was also found that respondents also reveal more personal information in computer-mediated communication than in traditional face-to-face discussions.³ Furthermore, respondents are more likely to express their deeper feelings and their opinion in an online environment than traditional interview environment.⁴ It can be concluded that online interview is so much better than face-to-face interview.⁵

SOME CONCERNS AND QUESTIONS

Just because there are so many benefits of online interview, it does not mean we forget the essence of qualitative research, which has an important place in nursing science. There are some issues need to be considered in online interview, such as:

Firstly, qualitative research is not only about qualitative methodology. It seeks to understand an individual in holistic view as well as nursing science, aims to gather in-depth understanding of human behavior. During interview, nurses are not only asking the question, but also observing the situation and the way the participants answer including their body language. However, in online interview, such as email, messenger, or phone interviews, we do not see or know what kind of our object reality. It may be misleading of the meaning of qualitative research.

Secondly, to ensure trustworthiness, interviews are coupled with other forms of data collection that is called triangulation, which the researchers emerge interview, observation, and study documentation in order to provide a well-

rounded collection of information for analyses. If the reason of conducting online interview is a distance, then there is a big question of how we do triangulation of data and ensure the trustworthiness.

Thirdly, in qualitative study, we need to do an inform consent before doing interview. In face-to-face interview, we can ask the participants directly to sign their name, or we can record their voice by tape recorder if the participants cannot read or write. However, in online interview, the inform consent is questionable, especially email or messenger interview.

Fourthly, despite the reported benefits of online interview, we could consider the high speed of Internet, which is the antecedent of online interview. On the other hand, we need to confirm that subjects are familiar with online communication.

In conclusion, qualitative online interview is a part of other techniques of collecting data, but it cannot be used as a single technique in qualitative study.

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This study is the original work of the corresponding author.

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