

The Title of Your Study Goes Here

A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

*This section is optional, but it will earn you some bonus points! To earn the bonus points, write an abstract and identify keywords for your study in this text box. The abstract is a standard feature of qualitative research articles, and it functions as a quick overview of the aims and outcomes of your qualitative study. Your abstract should be about 150 words and should include summary statements about the **purpose** of the study, the **methods (participants, procedures)**, and **results**. To see an example, check out pp. 443 of *Rhetoric of Inquiry*, 5th edition. You should write the abstract last, after you have completed writing the rest of the paper. If you choose to forego the bonus point opportunity, delete this text box from your paper.*

Keywords: *words/phrases others would use to search to find your study in a search engine*

Introduction

Begin your paper by introducing the purpose for your study. What question are you asking? Why is your question important? How does your study enter the conversations that are already present in the secondary source literature on your topic? Cite other sources in this section to describe the scholarly foundation for your own work—look to the sources you’ve already read as a starting point. You are welcome to conduct additional secondary research to help contextualize your study, but I am not expecting or requiring you to do so. Feel free to rely upon the sources and materials you’ve already read and the research you’ve already conducted.

Your Introduction section should be 300-500 words. To see how one team of researchers set up the introduction for their qualitative study about home health care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, check out:

Sterling, M. R., Tseng, E., Poon, A., Cho, J., Avgar, A. C., Kern, L. M., . . . Dell, N. (2020). Experiences of home health care workers in New York City during the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic: A qualitative analysis. *JAMA Internal Medicine*. Published [online](#) August 4, 2020. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2020.3930

Literature Review

You may or may not choose to include a separate Literature Review sub-heading. Some writers find it helpful to briefly introduce their topic and then discuss the scholarly conversation surrounding the topic in a distinct subsection; others prefer to weave the introduction together as one unified section. It's up to you! To see a qualitative paper that utilizes a distinct Literature Review subsection, check out Jeremy Norton's paper, "Overcoming Challenges Associated with Veterans' Post-Military Transition to Civilian Life: A Qualitative Study," on pp. 441-457 of *Rhetoric of Inquiry*, 5th edition.

Methods

In the second section of your paper, describe the methods used to collect data for your project. You should describe what you did in enough detail that someone else could replicate the study. Your Methods section should be 200-400 words.

Participants

Describe the group(s) of people who participated in the study, the qualifications for being a participant in your study (e.g., over 18, members of a particular campus organization, small business owners in your hometown), and how you invited or recruited participants. You should also include any demographic data (e.g., age, gender, race) about your participants that is relevant to your study.

Here's how Sterling et al. describe the qualifications for their study on home health care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: "To be eligible, workers had to be currently employed by a home care agency in NYC and speak English." They then go on to describe the series of phone calls and emails the research team used to recruit a purposeful sample of participants for their interviews.

Data Collection

This subsection should describe how you collected your data. How did you conduct your interviews? How did you develop your interview questions? What information did you collect? You'll include your full interview protocol in the Appendices, but here you should give a quick overview. Check out how Sterling et al. describe how they conducted 1-to-1 interviews over Zoom using a structured topic guide and then give an overview of the types of questions asked and the information that was collected.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the *process* of arriving at the results or answers to your overall research question. Describe how you coded your information in order to organize it into categories and themes. What was your process? How did you sort and code the data? Take a look at how Sterling et al. describe their transcription and coding processes. Their preliminary efforts yielded 66 unique codes (see eAppendix 2 for a copy of their Code Book), which were eventually categorized and then consolidated into unifying themes.

Results

This section is where you report what you have found as a result of your study. *Refrain from adding personal opinions to this section.* Instead, think of it as factual report of what you've found to be important as a result of your data analysis.

While this section should be 500-700 words, you should also consider how visual representations of your data might help present your results in addition to what you write. For example, Sterling et al. include a table of participant information, a map showing the geographic distribution of their participants' workplaces, and a box listing the major themes and subthemes that emerged from their coding process. However you present your data, you should explain the main themes that emerged from your coding process and give specific examples and quotations from the participants.

Theme 1

The sub-headings in your Results section should reflect the themes that emerge from your own analysis, and you should use as many subheadings as you need. Check out how Sterling et al. used the 5 main themes they identified through their coding process as subheadings within their Results section.

Discussion

In this section, tell readers what is significant about your findings in 400-600 words. Here, you can present some sort of stance based on the results of your study—your perspective on what the results mean. Return again to the question that you've introduced at the beginning of the paper: based on what you've found, have you answered the research question? If so, how so? If not, why not?

For example, from Sterling et al.: "Our findings suggest that additional efforts to support workers' mental and physical well-being during the pandemic are needed," and "Some of the trade-offs that home health care workers have navigated during the COVID-19 pandemic are similar to those faced by other health care professionals, but other challenges are unique and warrant separate attention from government officials and policy makers."

If you do cite secondary sources in your Introduction, this section is a great place to refer to them again as you discuss what your results mean.

Future Work

In this last section, discuss how future scholars, including yourself, might further investigate what you've found to be important in your own study. What additional research needs to be done? Could any groups of people use your findings now? This section should probably be 100-200 words long.

References

On a separate page, list your references in alphabetical order using APA-style format.

Appendix A: Recruitment Script

Include the recruitment script used to invite people to participate in your study.

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Include a blank copy of the informed consent form you gave to your participants (see *Rhetoric of Inquiry*, p. 317, for a sample form).

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Include your interview protocol. To see an example, check out the sample interview protocols in *Rhetoric of Inquiry* on pp. 456-457 and 467, or Sterling et al.'s interview protocol in eAppendix 1.

Appendix D: Interview Transcripts

Include your 3 interview transcripts. If your interviews were longer than 15 minutes, you may transcribe the entire interview or select the most relevant 15 minutes to transcribe for each interview.

Appendix E: Codebook

Include the codebook you developed as you analyzed your interview transcripts. To see some samples, check out the codebooks in *Rhetoric of Inquiry* on pp. 468-469 or Sterling et al.'s eAppendix 2.