

REFLEXIVITY AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: A Second Glance

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Abstract

As qualitative researchers, we are actively involved in the research process. We accept the fact that we are the main instruments, thus making us part of the social world we aim to understand. A main reason for this is that qualitative research entails self-awareness and as Parahoo (2006) posits, such reflexivity, as a process, is introspection in the role of subjectivity in the research process that entails a continuous process of reflection by researchers on their values. It is also a process of recognizing, examining, and understanding how their “social background, location and assumptions affect their research practice” (Hesse-Biber, 2007, p.17). Reflexivity, as the abundant literature would indicate, is an elusive term, it being commonly used interchangeably with reflectivity, and even with critical reflection. In this paper, an attempt was made to rediscover how reflexivity has been utilized in various perspectives to define its position and role in the conduct of a robust qualitative research. In the process, I would like to share and to solicit perspectives on reflexivity as a process and as an output that was done thru a review of literature and the integration and highlighting the reflexivity/reflexivities of various research teams that I have been involved with such as: the six country multi-disciplinary team lead by the Ottawa University based in Canada, that undertook participatory research across Asia, Africa and the Pacific to learn how poverty can be defined and measured; the five country multi-disciplinary team, led by the Australian National University, Australia; and various local interdisciplinary researches. These researches were conducted over three years or more, some in various stages using focused group interviews, key informant interviews, observations, ladder, ranking using photographs, record reviews and surveys. I also included documented reflexivities of colleagues who we have worked with in various capacities. I analyzed these documents vis-à-vis the concern of the qualitative researcher to unravel how their personhood intersects with their experiences in the field. Indeed, revisiting reflexivity and research methods enlightens the rigor in traversing the pathways of knowledge generation in qualitative research.

Keywords: *Reflexivity, Approaches to Reflexivity, Research Methodology, Reflexive lens, Credibility and Positionality, Ethics, Trustworthiness and Rigor*

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