

EFFECTIVENESS OF STORYTELLING IN TEACHING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS IN ZOOM MEETINGS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The current study investigated how the teacher's use of storytelling, among other strategies, for teaching qualitative research affected the learning experiences of research students in the Zoom classroom. This study assumes that the ability to learn through dialogic interactions between people, materials, and objects is crucial to the success of the process. Semi-structured interviews were conducted for data collection from ten MPhil (Educational Leadership and Management) research scholars at a private university. The results found storytelling to be a highly effective tool in producing reflective learning outcomes in the research class. In addition, storytelling prevented research students from being distracted in class. Moreover, digital storytelling helped research scholars build in-depth knowledge and skills of various aspects of qualitative research methods.

Keywords: Reflective learning, Qualitative research, Storytelling methodology, engagement and motivation, Higher education.

INTRODUCTION

Stories have infiltrated every aspect of human culture throughout history. In the domain of teaching, teachers' stories connect and persuade their students. By immersing students in the plot and promoting the brain's ability to think and evaluate the scenes to infer deeper meanings critically, stories capture the research scholar's mind and enable them to contextualise the world as it is presented by the storyteller.

It is correctly said that storytelling sparks the students' imagination, enhances curiosity, and, most importantly, enhances student engagement and attention span (Schrum & Bogdewiecz, 2021). Storytelling is one of the most effective ways to teach qualitative research methods because it not only engages the students but also strengthens their critical thinking which engages them in the learning process without distractions. In addition, it heightens the interest of research scholars in carrying out their research in a qualitative manner, thereby engaging the critical thinking process and easing the learning process.

It has been demonstrated that the act of listening stories stimulates the imagination and enhances curiosity among students (Niemi & Multisilta, 2015). Storytelling has the power to increase student engagement and attention span (Ivala, Gachago, Condy, & Chigona, 2013; Suwardy, Pan, & Seow, 2013). When teaching qualitative research methodologies, the storytelling approach has the ability to continue the thought process and learning since it involves students on a personal level (Schrum & Bogdewiecz, 2021). It fosters critical thinking and accelerates learning by urging research students to conduct their studies by utilising the qualitative paradigm. Through storytelling, students can actively engage in learning resulting in their deep understanding of qualitative research.

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While storytelling has several benefits for teaching qualitative research methodologies, there is a lack of empirical evidence about the usefulness of storytelling during Zoom classroom. Hence, it is vital to examine how diverse types of storytelling, such as storytelling in Zoom meetings, might improve the learning outcomes of qualitative research students.

The current study investigated *how the teacher's use of storytelling, among other strategies, for teaching qualitative research affected the learning experiences of research scholars in the Zoom classroom*. This study seeks to address the following research questions:

- (1) How did the teacher's use of storytelling and other strategies for teaching the philosophical foundations of qualitative research affect the learning experiences of research students in the Zoom classroom?
- (2) How did teacher's use of storytelling and other strategies for teaching data collection and analysis affect the learning experiences of research students in the Zoom classroom?
- (3) How did teacher's use of storytelling and other strategies for teaching trustworthiness in qualitative research affect the learning experiences of research students in the Zoom classroom?
- (4) How did the teacher's use of storytelling and other strategies for teaching how to conduct ethical research affect the learning experiences of research students in the Zoom classroom?

These research questions were addressed using a phenomenological inquiry methodology, which is qualitative research that focuses on the descriptions of people with lived experiences. Interviews, a data collection method taught in Zoom meetings for a qualitative research course at a Pakistani university, were used to compile the data for this study. The study analyses the lived experiences of the students to understand how storytelling influenced their learning experiences and outcomes.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows: The next section provides a literature review on storytelling, digital storytelling, and constructivist classrooms. The following section describes the methodology of the study, including the research design, data collection, and data analysis. The subsequent section presents and discusses the results of the data analysis. The final section concludes the paper with some implications and recommendations for future research.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Storytelling

Storytelling supports adult learning as learning is a phenomenon that acquires understanding from lived experiences (Schrum & Bogdewiecz, 2021). The perceived notions transform the person through cognitive development and emotional connections, producing a more experienced person. In this regard, research students in a Zoom classroom believe their learning will enhance their self-understanding of society in their chosen profession. The environment developed in the class is learner-centred and creates a mutual understanding between the professor and students. The complex content of the textbooks can be well understood by the practical examples and the lived experiences shared by the resource person.

The best storytelling is the one in which the listener cannot predict the story's ending. The curiosity curve directly relates to the learning process and enhances critical thinking among the research students. During the qualitative research class, the research students shared their views and opinions about the lectures, stating that the storytelling style helped in properly understanding the concepts and encouraged future education. The research students with prior knowledge of conducting research shared their experiences regarding the ethical constraints they encountered. Such teaching methodology in the classroom is rooted in the social constructivism approach. The constructivist classroom environment is learner-centred, which intrinsically motivates research students for deep learning. Research students think and respond in a constructive environment. Storytelling models the writing process in research students and professionals; therefore, storytelling is an effective strategy to achieve related intended learning outcomes.

Digital Storytelling

In this digital world, people use technology to share their stories, views, and experiences. Similarly, due to technological advancement, different digital tools are used in classrooms (Smeda, Dakich, & Sharda, 2014) through which research students structure and model their ideas. Digital storytelling supports research students and teachers in developing creativity and innovatively communicating their research ideas.

The recorded video lessons provided by the teacher served as a great source to facilitate self-paced online learning and to enable thorough understanding of the content. Reliable and deep learning is achieved through the active participation of research students in their learning process. Active participation also helps in acquiring lifelong learning, deep learning and high-order learning skills, thus facilitating curriculum development (Smeda et al., 2014).

Digital storytelling enhances motivation among research students, increasing their desire to acquire knowledge by enabling complete comprehension of the concepts. It considers the needs of research students throughout elementary school to university and even in their professional lives. When classrooms are designed as constructivist learning environments supporting narratives, it becomes easier to learn qualitative research methodologies.

Digital storytelling supports the development of learning characteristics and corresponding teaching strategies for qualitative research methods. It supports the constructivist theory of learning and student-centred learning (Robin, 2016). Constructivist learning is not based on high or low-level guidance in the research class. Instead, it selects the task level according to the particular research methods (Taber, 2017). The tasks assigned in learning qualitative research methods through digital storytelling enhance the digital, global, visual, technological, and informational literacy of the research students and help teachers incorporate different teaching strategies.

The researchers' collective opinion is that qualitative research is a systematic and subjective approach. Many academic psychologists and researchers insist that learning methods and conducting research are stressful and anxiety-driven phenomena that require great passion, consistency, and courage to reach the desired goal (Rock, Coventry, Morgan, & Loi, 2016). The teachers cultivated numerous learning and teaching strategies for the propagation of effective learning in the classroom, in which storytelling is the most efficient process (Saunders et al., 2018). It helps to infer meanings from daily life experiences in various fields (Mohajan, 2018).

Storytelling is a tool to share information and knowledge in classes (Smeda et al., 2014). According to Behmer, "Storytelling is a process where research students personalise what they learn and construct their meaning and knowledge from the stories they hear and tell" (As cited in Moreau, Eady, Sikora, & Horsley, 2018). Indeed, digital storytelling is a merger between traditional storytelling and technology in the educational setting. Benmayor's storytelling definition is "a short multimedia story that combines voice, image, and music" (Smeda et al., 2014).

Furthermore, a literature review has revealed that digital storytelling is a powerful tool for creating a model of a constructivist e-learning environment (Nganji, 2018). This e-learning digital storytelling framework has highlighted different aspects which proved helpful for the teachers to develop an engaging class environment which ensures that students quickly grasp concepts. Digital storytelling enhances research students' research and interpersonal skills through peer learning and collaboration. It improves information literacy of research students and develops an interest in efficiently conducting research projects (Azhari et al., 2020). The engagement levels of research students soared when multimedia was incorporated into qualitative research lessons. Research students are more engaged in the practical learning environment. The research class in higher education gives productive results when the concepts are applied practically in the field. The information gathered from the area is disseminated through stories among research students, paving the way for collaboration, student motivation, and encouragement (Darlington & Scott, 2020). The positive effects of storytelling are depicted in group and peer learning. Stories create curiosity which automatically improves the attention span of individuals and enhances creative and critical thinking (Yang, Chen, & Hung, 2022). Such research students are more organised in their quotidian chores, and they do not hesitate to ask questions. Thus, it is evident that storytelling enhances research students' cognitive skills, thus ensuring a reliable and consistent transfer of knowledge.

Not only research students but digital storytelling also assisted teachers in improving their digital skills and helped teachers stay updated with new technological advancements to empower learning (Lal, Donnelly, & Shin, 2015). UNESCO defines storytelling as "a key teaching strategy for achieving the objectives of education for sustainable futures" (Bradbery, 2013). Storytelling aids in the professional

development of teachers (Yang et al., 2022). Teachers learn effective communication strategies through storytelling, which automatically enhances the scholars' leadership skills (Cleverley-Thompson, 2018).

This research study is essential for teachers and research students in higher education who want to learn how to teach and do qualitative research effectively. Studying different qualitative research methods and understanding their philosophies might be difficult in a Zoom classroom. It creates challenges for both research students and teachers. The storytelling style engages the research students in the classroom, thus minimising the chances of distraction, specifically regarding the interpretation, validity, and credibility of qualitative data. Digging up the required data and keeping the information simple and unbiased is the responsibility of the researcher. This requires the proper utilization of research concepts.

METHODS

This study used a 'hermeneutic phenomenological approach' (Langdridge, 2007; Vagle, 2018) to explore the lived experiences of qualitative research students in relation to storytelling in a Zoom class to teach qualitative research methods. Phenomenology is the study of a phenomenon through an inquiry about how 'things' appear (Larsen & Adu, 2021). Phenomenology attempts to uncover the significance of lived experiences, which makes it a good fit for education since it is through such experiences that educators are pushed to question established norms and procedures (Larsen & Adu, 2021; Vagle, 2018). Hermeneutic phenomenology is a qualitative research method that seeks to understand the meaning of human experiences from the participants' perspectives (Lydall, Pretorius, & Stuart, 2005). This method enables the researcher to completely comprehend the perspectives and worldviews of the participants, making it suitable for researching complicated and subjective experiences like learning qualitative research.

Participants

This study was conducted at a private university in Lahore, and a purposive sample of ten qualitative research students was employed for the study. 'Criterion sampling' (Patton, 2015)—which aims to choose a research sample based on a pre-established criterion—was used to recruit participants. Such criteria play a significant role in research when the researcher wants to study a narrow or specific selection and understands its implications. Criterion sampling provides in-depth meanings and emphasises the research on a particular area (Patton, 2015). Data was collected through semi-structured interviews of participants chosen through criterion sampling.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were used to examine the students' lived experiences and perspectives (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Seidman, 2019). The interviews were conducted by the first researcher and lasted approximately one hour each. The interview guide included questions about the participants' experiences of using storytelling in their teaching, the benefits and challenges of using storytelling, and their recommendations for other qualitative research teachers who are interested in using storytelling. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

A framework analysis method developed by Ritchie and Spencer (2002) was used to analyse the interview data. The first author carried out the analysis—which was later checked by other authors for accuracy. As a systematic approach to qualitative data analysis (Furber, 2010), framework analysis was conducted in the following steps: Firstly, the interview transcripts were read through to become familiar with the data. Secondly, critical themes in the data were identified. Thirdly, the data was coded according to the identified themes. Fourthly, a thematic framework that organised the coded data into a coherent whole was developed. Lastly, the findings of the study, including a discussion of the themes and their implications, were shared with all authors to comment on the write-up. As a result of incorporating feedback, a final version of the findings was produced. These findings are provided in the finding section in the form of assertions supported by evidence and warrant.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with the following ethical considerations: It was ensured that all participants provided their 'written informed consent' (Ryen, 2021) to participate in the study beforehand. All participant identities were kept confidential throughout the research process—from conceptualisation

to the reporting of the findings (Iphofen & Tolich, 2018). As part of the research process, the researchers took steps to minimise potential harm to participants, such as providing them with information about resources and support services (Paoletti, Tomas, & Menendez, 2013). The participants were selected based on their experiences and the phenomenon of interest to meet the criteria.

FINDINGS

In this section, we present findings that emerged as research students discussed the challenges of learning qualitative research methods in a Zoom classroom. The stories provided by the research students indicate specific themes concerning their understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research, their command of various data-gathering strategies, and their perceptions of the ethical factors that influence the research process in a qualitative study. Evident from the findings given below, the research students were better able to traverse the complexities of qualitative research through real-life examples, interesting anecdotal techniques, and narratives of actual research experiences of the teachers in relation to the challenges and opportunities they had during their careers in academia. The results of this study illustrate the multifaceted nature of qualitative research and the importance of philosophical underpinnings, data collection methods, and ethical considerations in conducting thorough and insightful research.

SET OF INTERRELATED ASSERTIONS 1: In the Zoom classroom, it was not easy to understand the philosophical foundations of qualitative research. However, the teacher shared real-life examples and stories to help research students understand the philosophical foundations of qualitative research, which motivated the research students to learn qualitative research with more interest and concentration. The students found the qualitative research paradigm was completely different from the quantitative research. The understanding of qualitative research methods such as Phenomenology, Grounded Theory, Ethnography, Case Study, and Narrative Research requires in-depth knowledge of the research area. The research students who studied the philosophies of qualitative research for the first time realised that the principles of qualitative research are incorporated into our daily lives. For instance, the quotations from the research students illustrate these findings:

Real-life examples shared in the classroom cleared our misconceptions about the philosophical foundations of research. I attempted my Pakistan Public Service Commission (PPSC) exam after learning philosophical foundations, and I attempted all questions. I was amazed to see my knowledge of research. (Participant 8)

The concept of philosophies and philosophical assumptions were new to me. I scoured the internet for further knowledge to improve my understanding. I still remained confused and distracted until the teacher explained the concept through his lived examples. (Participant 6)

I believe qualitative research is more authentic. We study just one phenomenon deeply. When experiences are explored, we find ourselves a part of that experience. I heard that qualitative research is challenging, but I enjoyed it when I learned from my teacher. His storytelling and linking with research knowledge were simply amazing. (Participant 8)

We started reading a real-time story with the method instructed by our teacher. We concluded that almost every aspect of the story increases our knowledge and belief as every aspect becomes meaningful after reading and decoding it systematically. (Participant 10)

SET OF INTERRELATED ASSERTIONS 2: Research students were satisfied with the teaching methods employed by the teacher. Two methods were specifically highlighted, which were conducive to the learning of research methods in general and data collection methods in specific. First, data collection techniques were easy to learn for the research students in group discussions. Also, the research students found the skilful use of research videos interesting. They learned the art of interviewing, observing, and collecting data in documents and pictures through extensive discussions. The videos shared with the class show how much patience and unbiasedness are essential for the researcher to collect data.

There was no fear that our teacher would say, "You are unable to understand these simple sentences." There was no element of fear, no hesitation between teachers and students, which amplified the learning process. (Participant 3)

Our teacher left no room for distractions by keeping us engaged in stories and discussions. The lived examples and stories were specifically shared when teaching data collection techniques in the class. I remember the mock presentation of a PhD student. (Participant 4)

Yes, data collection is challenging as our teacher shares his data collection experience and how it was not easy to find data and seek permission. He said while searching for data, "I faced challenges; I used to write them in my diary, and then I was able to write a book chapter on research challenges." Through his stories, he taught us the lesson of remaining humble and calm at every step of the research process. (Participant 8)

The teacher elaborated on many data collection methods. He gave routine life past experiences based on his own examples to make the concepts easier to understand. Watching informative videos on data collection methods and ethical challenges were also a wonderful experience. (Participant 1)

These quotes from research students demonstrate how crucial it is, when teaching qualitative research methodologies, to establish a supportive learning environment, provide meaningful examples and stories, share personal experiences, and use a variety of teaching strategies. By applying these tactics, teachers may build a good and successful learning environment that equips students with self-efficacy to traverse the challenges of qualitative research.

SET OF INTERRELATED ASSERTIONS 3: Research students shared that they effectively learned how to achieve the trustworthiness of data as their teacher shared his working experience of data triangulation in the classroom. In addition, all the research students shared their perceptions that data collection and analysis can meet the objectives of the research if validity and reliability are maintained; otherwise, the research becomes impossible. Furthermore, research students realised that the reliability of the data depends on the researcher. However, they were not concerned about how the teacher was unable to balance conceptual discussions and practical application and how this anomaly influenced their learning of important research concepts. For instance, some research students underscored these findings as follows:

He taught us that for the validity, reliability, and credibility of data, the researcher is unbiased, and the data collection procedures affect the analysis process considerably. As the storytelling method was consistent throughout the course, it was not challenging to understand the fundamental concepts when we came to the analysis part. (Participant 9)

To be honest, understanding the function and process of reliability and validation during data analysis remained vague. Here, a practical approach was required, but the teacher kept discussing the concepts, and no hands-on experience was given. (Participant 1)

Understanding whether data is reliable is not exactly difficult. However, our teacher often taught the concepts mentioning their use in quantitative research. It became most challenging to understand. (Participant 2)

It was more challenging for me to understand validity than reliability. The key points of validity are a bit confusing for me. (Participant 5)

Different procedures were taught to check the validity and credibility of data. We can maintain our data with consistency. These concepts were not difficult to understand at the end of learning qualitative research because prior discussions in the learning process were so clear. (Participant 3)

In conclusion, these quotations from the research students highlight the significance of teaching qualitative research in a way which emphasises the ideas of data validity, reliability, and credibility using conceptual discussions and practical applications of these concepts. This method of teaching can ensure a deeper understanding of these concepts—and ultimately can play a role in improving students' ability to conduct independent, trustworthy qualitative research studies.

SET OF INTERRELATED ASSERTIONS 4: Research students highlight that Ethics is an integral part of qualitative research and must not be ignored in any phase of the research study. They also emphasised that the researchers mention the code of ethics to set boundaries, and no limits are crossed, disturbing the participants or their rights. Consent to research and permission to visit sites for research purposes requires patience; it may be challenging, but the researcher must ensure the absence of any misinterpreted

information. The research students reported that this was the exciting part of learning ethics in qualitative research class as it created curiosity in learning. The stories shared were interesting and gave an understanding of the research and how all parts of research are linked with ethics.

I learned many new things. Ethical considerations play an essential role in research work. It significantly affects data collection and the interview process. Participants should be assured that all the data will remain confidential after the interview. That helps ease the participants. (Participant 10)

I consider securing the interviewee's rights and safeguarding the interviewer's responsibilities, the most crucial part of the research process. (Participant 1)

Our teacher taught us that the researcher immerses himself in the community for the research. This may change his/her belief system, and it is pretty tough. (Participant 6)

Most of the research students were aware of the research ethics but did not know when the researcher becomes an insider or outsider in the research and how essential ethics are when switching between these modes. Communities are sensitive to their culture and norms, and the researcher cannot ignore this for the research purpose. Many research students shared exciting stories in class regarding ethics.

Our facilitator shared the interview of a secondary school teacher. He told us to listen to the interview and then share our views. The learning experience I gained from that interview was a precious one. I was not interested in the content of the interview, but I was watching the ethics of the interviewer. I was watching how he was prioritising things. As the interviewee was sitting in his office, the presence of another person was distracting. The interviewer remained relaxed. I learned that while conducting an interview or observing, you should be a good listener and observer and control your mood. Oftentimes, the interviewee might behave unexpectedly. You must keep yourself composed. During the interview and observation, you should also ensure confidentiality as you learn a person's views and opinions. (Participant 3)

Ethical issues are the backbone of any research. If you conduct an interview, you must be a good listener. If the person is not answering according to your questions, you cannot interrupt, and you must listen to the participant patiently, asking questions when they are finished speaking. If anyone shares something personal, we should also make sure to not intrude in their personal space. In qualitative research, the whole process revolves around an individual. It is a matter of subjectivity, so you must respect the person's emotions, sentiments, and social circumstances. It is essential to implement ethical values. (Participant 5)

Basically, there is some code of ethics that we need to follow while conducting research that might impact the credibility of the researcher and their work. I particularly remember that the teacher guided us on how a researcher should blend into the environment so that he won't make the subjects uncomfortable. Yet, he would stay separate from them so that the results are not biased. (Participant 7)

In our class, we studied the concept of triangulation in a case study. I asked my teacher a question: If the participant does not allow access to documents or anything required for research purposes, what should we do while staying within the ethical boundary? Our teacher told us we must change our research design and methodology because respect for the participant is crucial. Ethical considerations are essential. (Participant 5)

It created much curiosity among us as research students about maintaining ethics, privacy, and unbiasedness as outsiders and insiders. (Participant 9)

As the learning process remained fruitful, most research students understood that to ensure the trustworthiness of data, the researcher must be unbiased, and no participant must be pressurized for data.

The concept of an insider and outsider was new to me. One of our batchmates shared a story, stating that she was working in an institute and needed to collect data from the teachers, but when she asked for permission, she was refused. The researcher could get the data internally without prior consent, but she did not do so. (Participant 8)

There was a distinctive learning experience. However, I remember one of the stories where the teacher taught us how to consider ethical norms and abide by the culture. Because of the subjects

or the population, we choose, the interview topic might be offensive to the participants. So, he particularly mentioned becoming somewhat of an insider to understand the ethical norms of a place not to offend the people in the environment. However, we should keep ourselves separate from the population to avoid biases. (Participant 2)

In conclusion, research students highlighted the importance of teaching qualitative research methods in a way that not only covers fundamental ideas of ethical qualitative research, such as cultural sensitivity, insider and outsider perspectives, and ethical issues, but also employs real-world stories and practical research examples. In this way, research students might absorb the fundamental principle which suggests that ethics cannot be separated from research at any stage in the research process.

DISCUSSION

The discussion section of the paper provides an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the qualitative research findings. The results emphasised several important concepts associated with the teaching and learning process of qualitative research, including the philosophical underpinnings, data collection methods, analysis, validity and reliability, and ethical considerations. This discussion section will expand on these themes, make links between the findings, and offer details about how they might be taught in qualitative research education. The results of this qualitative research paper offer important new perspectives on the experiences of research students and how they view studying qualitative research methodologies.

This study aimed to investigate how storytelling may be utilized to improve the teaching and learning of qualitative research in higher education. Data was collected from ten MPhil ELM research students from a private institution for this study using semi-structured interviews. The data were subjected to thematic analysis, and four primary conclusions were drawn from the results. In this part, the implications, limits, and suggestions of these results with respect to the current literature and research topic will be discussed.

It was found that there were difficulties in understanding the philosophical foundations of qualitative research in Zoom classrooms. Despite this, students were able to comprehend the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research via real-world examples and anecdotes from the field, which inspired them to study qualitative research with a great deal of passion and determination. Using narratives to introduce and explain abstract and complicated topics, such as qualitative research philosophy, may prove to be an effective teaching strategy. It is consistent with previous research, demonstrating the benefits of narrative for enhancing student engagement, motivation, understanding, and critical thinking in a variety of subject areas (Moon, 2010; Rossiter & Garcia, 2010). Additionally, storytelling can help students make connections between theory and practice as well as their own personal and professional experiences, which are crucial to developing a thoughtful and reflexive position (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell & Poth, 2018). It implies, however, that student researchers will have difficulty understanding the philosophical foundations of qualitative research, especially in a Zoom classroom where students have diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and expectations. According to the literature, students face a range of obstacles and difficulties when learning qualitative research, including epistemological confusion, methodological anxiety, ethical dilemmas, and practical problems. (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Consequently, teachers need to be aware of these obstacles and provide assistance to help students overcome them.

Students were satisfied with the teacher's teaching strategies. Two strategies were emphasized as being favorable to the learning of research methodologies in general and data gathering methods in particular. During group discussions, the research students learned data gathering strategies with ease. Moreover, research students considered the skillful utilization of relevant research videos from YouTube to be intriguing. Through in-depth conversations, they learnt how to conduct interviews and observations and collect data in the form of documents and images. The videos shown to the students demonstrated the need for patience and objectivity in data collection.

This indicates that the teacher used several teaching strategies to enhance the students' understanding of qualitative research procedures, particularly data collection approaches. This is consistent

with earlier methodological literature that proposes using numerous interactive teaching strategies to engage students in active, collaborative learning of qualitative research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). As they give chances for peer critique, reflection, modelling, and practice, group discussions and research-related YouTube videos may be especially beneficial for building students' abilities and confidence in qualitative data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

This finding also suggests that the teacher did not give sufficient opportunity for students to apply their knowledge in real-life circumstances, such as performing their own qualitative research projects or analysing actual datasets. It is important that research students are provided experiential learning and hands-on practice to enhance their understanding and competence in qualitative research. Furthermore, experiential learning and hands-on experience may aid students in overcoming their concerns and overcoming obstacles in qualitative research, as well as in developing their creativity and reflexivity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Research students shared that they effectively learned how to achieve the reliability of data as their teacher shared his working experience of data triangulation in the classroom. In addition, all the research students shared their perceptions that data collection and analysis can meet the objectives of the research if validity and reliability are maintained; otherwise, the research is devastated. Furthermore, research students realized well that the reliability of the data depends on the researcher. However, they were not concerned about how the teacher was unable to balance conceptual discussions and practical application and how this anomaly influenced their learning of important research concepts.

According to the results of this study, the teacher used personal experiences and anecdotes to convey the importance of reliability in qualitative research. In this respect, the findings are in line with earlier research that has demonstrated that narratives are an important aspect of communicating qualitative research ideals and principles, as well as the difficulties and problems that researchers may face in maintaining the quality and rigor of their work as they strive to improve their work (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Moon, 2010). The use of storytelling can also help students gain a deeper understanding of the complexity and variety of qualitative research, as well as the ethical and political implications of the decisions they make in their research. Furthermore, it may be inferred that the teacher did not adequately explain and illustrate the specific processes and criteria for ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative research, as well as how to conduct these procedures. The findings contradicted recommendations in literature, which emphasized the need for clear and consistent language and examples to explain qualitative research concepts and standards, as well as allowing students the chance to apply them to their own work (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). In addition, the use of clear and consistent terminology and examples can aid students in avoiding confusion and misinterpretation when it comes to terms such as validity and reliability, which are frequently used differently in quantitative and qualitative research, leading to confusion and misinterpretation.

Research students emphasized that ethics is an integral part of qualitative research that must not be neglected at any level of the research process and learning research ethics was the most interesting component of the Zoom class. The shared narratives were engaging and provided insight into the study and the relationship between ethics and all levels of research. This finding suggests that the teacher utilized stories of the fields and examples to illustrate the ethical dilemmas and difficulties qualitative researchers may face in their work. This is consistent with earlier studies that have stressed the function of storytelling in enhancing students' understanding and sensitivity to the ethical components and challenges of qualitative research, as well as researchers' moral and social duties (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; McDrury & Alterio, 2003; Moon, 2010). Storytelling may also help students build their ethical reasoning and decision-making abilities, as well as their regard and empathy for the participants and their research surroundings.

CONCLUSION

This research study provides useful insights into the teaching-learning processes in qualitative research—and, more specifically, in the use of storytelling in these processes. Several dimensions—such as philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research, data collection, and analysis methods, trustworthiness (validity and reliability), and ethical considerations—were explored using semi-structured interviews of

research students. This study is limited since it used a small sample size of ten research students, which may limit the statistical generalizability of the findings. Due to the use of semi-structured interviews—a method notorious for the self-reported nature of the data—the study may be subject to bias. In addition, the researcher’s role as an interviewer might have influenced the responses of the research students. Even with these limitations, the findings of this study provide valuable insights into the lived experiences of qualitative research students who were taught the intricacies of qualitative research methods with storytelling as a main teaching strategy. These findings can be used to develop more effective qualitative research teaching methods based on storytelling. Overall, the results of this study highlighted effective teaching methods coupled with practical demonstrations, real-world examples, and engaging narratives promote research students’ knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes towards qualitative research methods. This is very important in the Pakistani context, where there is more emphasis on quantitative research methods, and students are usually wary of qualitative methods.

Implications for Teaching and Learning of Qualitative Research

The following implications for enhancing teaching and learning processes in qualitative research classrooms can be made:

- (1) Real-world experiences, stories, and practical examples and demonstrations should be used to engage and encourage research students. These strategies facilitate a general understanding of abstract research ideas and their application in their own research project.
- (2) Hands-on activities such as group discussions and practical exercises enhance students’ skills in data collection and analysis procedures and self-efficacy in conducting their own qualitative research.
- (3) Reinforcing key ideas like trustworthiness (validity & reliability) and ethical considerations continuously can be useful for research students in improving understanding and application. Furthermore, an explicit discussion of research ethics helps in developing students’ ethical framework for conducting qualitative research, thus equipping them to effectively navigate ethical challenges and dilemmas involved in qualitative research.

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