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## Interviewing Adolescent Females in Qualitative Research

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## Interviewing Adolescent Females in Qualitative Research

### Abstract

Qualitative interviewing is widely used in educational research. However, while research related to effective interview strategies for use with many different population groups exists, the study of successful interview strategies for use with adolescent girls has been limited. To address this limitation, the researcher explores the various methodologies of qualitative interviewing, selects the most appropriate for her study, then outlines three important considerations for this population group: Ethical issues, power dynamics, and building trust. After discussing how these issues can best be addressed, the researcher includes reflections made after conducting two interviews each with eight adolescent females. The interview approach presented in this paper is not limited to use with adolescent girls but can be used in studies with varying population groups as well.

### Keywords

Interview, Adolescent Females, Qualitative Research Phenomenology

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## Interviewing Adolescent Females in Qualitative Research

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*Qualitative interviewing is widely used in educational research. However, while research related to effective interview strategies for use with many different population groups exists, the study of successful interview strategies for use with adolescent girls has been limited. To address this limitation, the researcher explores the various methodologies of qualitative interviewing, selects the most appropriate for her study, then outlines three important considerations for this population group: Ethical issues, power dynamics, and building trust. After discussing how these issues can best be addressed, the researcher includes reflections made after conducting two interviews each with eight adolescent females. The interview approach presented in this paper is not limited to use with adolescent girls but can be used in studies with varying population groups as well. Keywords: Interview, Adolescent Females, Qualitative Research Phenomenology*

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In no other field has the qualitative interview become so heavily used as educational research (Seidman, 2013). Such interviewing is based in an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. The experience of those interviewed is the means by which research can investigate the educational process. In fact, interviewing has been described as “the ability of people to symbolize their experience through language” (Seidman, 2013, p. 8).

Qualitative interviewing offers several advantages that other methodologies do not. Quantitative methods such as surveys can be used, but Tierney and Dilley (2002) point out that they lack the depth of understanding that a qualitative interview provides. Another advantage of interviewing is that the researcher can go beyond the rudimentary information that is often gained in using quantitative methodology and gather data directly from the participants in their own words to learn the rationale behind the results. Seidman (2013) says that if the researcher’s goal is to understand the meaning that educators make of their experience, then interviewing provides a necessary mode of inquiry. A third advantage for interviewing is its use with other research methods. In combination with quantitative methods such as surveys, for example, the researcher gains an even wider perspective from the participants than from either method alone.

The qualitative interview has become popular in a number of fields. Because of its usefulness and benefits it has been widely used across many fields of study with different population groups. However, interviewing different population groups requires different approaches. Previous studies have indicated that interviewing different populations such as the prison population (Lintonen, Vartiainen, Aarnio, Hakamaaki, Viitanen, Wuolijoki, & Joukamaa, 2011) and the hospitalized population (Angstrom-Brannstrom & Norberg, 2014) necessitate different approaches. Unfortunately, examples for this kind of information are very limited, and more work needs to be done.

Research to determine the best interview techniques for a specific group in a general setting, which would work well for educational purposes, has yet to be completed. “Baseline” research is clearly needed so that further studies can target specific groups such as adolescent females. Currently, the research that focuses on techniques to interview adolescent females is very limited. The literature available describes very specific situations that are too focused for general qualitative research. For example, there are articles focusing on interviewing

adolescent (male and female) suspects (Lingwood & Bull, 2013), interviewing adolescents within psychotherapeutic situations (Boyle, 2007), and interviewing adolescents about their health information (Sacks & Westwood, 2003). However, the researcher only found one article about interviewing adolescents in a general manner that would apply to any form of qualitative research (Beyer, 2013). Some general guidelines were proposed that could be applied to most interview research, but there is currently no research that focuses only on how to interview a group of adolescent females. When proposing to interview adolescent females, researchers must have many concerns, including how the researcher protects the research participant when interviewing minor children, effective interview techniques, and deciphering what unique information can be gained by interviewing this population group.

The purpose of this article is to describe an approach to interviewing adolescent females for research that involves their experiences in an educational setting. Since the best approach to interviewing adolescent girls has not been widely studied, guidelines remain to be established. After reviewing the current research available on interviewing children, the researcher started examining interview methodologies such as narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case studies (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013). Choosing the correct approach provides the researcher the framework needed to design interview questions, which will elicit the desired information. The next step is to identify the ethical issues involved with interviewing minors so that researchers can protect both themselves and more importantly, the participants in the interview process. Once these steps are taken, the interviewer should address issues that may appear or surface during the interview itself, such as ensuring that the power dynamic between the researcher and the participant is balanced so that the participant does not feel over-powered or pressured in any way. Additionally, earning the trust of the participants during the interview must be considered. Participants should feel open and relaxed enough to give honest, truthful, and reflective answers to the questions posed. Following a discussion of the interviews, the researcher will reflect upon the interview process, and discuss steps that can be taken to improve the process of interviewing adolescent females.

The interviews took place as part of a study that interviewed eight adolescent females on two separate occasions as part of a research project called "Girls in Science Day [GIS]." In this study, adolescent girls' experiences in science class were analyzed to understand their perspective related to science and to determine why many girls lose interest in science during the middle school years (Yanowitz & Vanderpool, 2004). The reader is taken through the researcher's process of gathering information related to conducting these interviews, how the information gained can be applied to the current study, and finally, what was learned about interviewing this age group that has not been researched in earlier studies.

### **The Approach to the Interview**

The interview approach researchers employ has a significant impact on the study. The approach consists of two distinct parts: Choosing the methodology to be used in the study, and determining how many interviews the researcher chooses to conduct. Prior to beginning the interview process, it is necessary to determine which methodologies the researcher wishes to use. While each process can produce valid results, it is important to understand that each interview method can also distort the data to some extent. However, the use of each of these methods can produce productive results when used properly. While the work on qualitative interviewing in general was vast, it was quickly narrowed down to five qualitative interview methodologies used widely in the field of research, namely those used in narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case studies.

Results can vary depending upon the type of interview methodology being used, so it is important to investigate them all carefully. The five types of qualitative methodologies, while vast, are also complex. The use of the interview is a key factor in each one, but the focus of the interview varies widely. Ethnography is based on describing and interpreting a culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2007) and leans toward the fields of anthropology and sociology. Case study involves developing an in-depth description and analysis of one case or multiple cases (Creswell, 2007) and is very often used for studies related to psychology, law, and political science. Grounded theory leads the researcher to develop a theory grounded in the gathered interview data (Creswell, 2007) and is used widely in sociology. Narrative research explores the life of a single individual and draws from the humanities.

After review of these various research methods, the approach that seemed to best serve the proposed GIS study was the phenomenological approach. The goals of this particular study were to explore the overall impact of GIS participation, what attending GIS meant to each participant, and how she constructed it into her learning. Since the phenomenological approach seeks to understand the essence of an experience (Creswell, 2007), in this case the event of "Girls in Science Day," it seeks to understand the girls' perspectives and perceptions of this event. This methodology is common in the fields of philosophy, psychology, and education (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013).

The purposes of the phenomenological interview are to gather narrative material to help understand a human phenomenon (Van Maanen, 1990) and to develop a relationship with the interviewee about the meaning of an experience (Van Maanen, 1990). According to Seidman (1998), three interviews should be conducted. The first interview, implemented in the pre-interview phase, focused on the GIS participant's life history. The second interview focused on the details of the GIS experience, and the third asked the participant to reflect on the meaning of the experience. It was determined that for this study, the researcher would need to conduct two interviews with each participant. There would be a pre-interview before attending GIS, and then a post-interview after the event and this would meet Seidman's (1998) requirements.

Now that these research components were addressed, the next consideration the researcher needed to make was to consider the means by which the interviews should be conducted with the protection of both the researcher and the minor female participants in mind. This should stand out first and foremost to a researcher working with minors, because protecting participant's best interest should be top priority for the researcher to avoid ethical and legal issues.

### **Ethical Issues for Interviewing Adolescent Females**

There are many ethical matters to be considered when interviewing adolescent females. These include informed consent, confidentiality, and the issue of consequences.

#### **Informed Consent**

Informed consent means that (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) all subjects participating in an interview must freely and voluntarily consent to participate in this study. This consent includes informing participants of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty or repercussion, informing them about the nature of the study, and telling them why they are being interviewed. The questions asked could be of an emotional or controversial nature, and the participants should be prepared for that possibility.

The issue of consent applies to all studies utilizing human subjects including minors. Obtaining consent from the participants involves explaining the study to them, telling them there is no penalty for choosing not to participate, and that they may stop being interviewed at

any time. Parental consent must be given, and the researcher will need to secure each girl's assent as well. Since the participant's consent is obtained from the minor herself, the research process must be explained in terminology that is age-appropriate.

For the current study, the researcher secured IRB approval to protect all minor participants prior to conducting the study. She included the interview questions and permission slips the parents would complete. The permission slips informed parents of the type of questions to be asked and that questions were not of a private nature. Along with the parental permission slip was an assent form for the girls themselves to sign. In order for complete understanding, the researcher wrote everything at the girls' estimated reading level, then verified this with a middle school teacher, checked the reading level on a Microsoft Word program, and pilot-tested the assent form before using it. The guideline used to determine the standard reading level was the Ohio State Reading Content Standards. If the reading fell into grade levels six through eight, it was deemed appropriate. This allowed them to understand what they would be doing, and informed them of their rights as a research participant. IRB permission is required of all studies using human subjects and should not be omitted.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is another ethical issue that affects all interviewing, but this is especially so with adolescents. Adherence to confidentiality (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) means that private data that can be linked to the participants should not be disclosed. Since a study can potentially be published, each participant was provided with information regarding how the researcher will protect their identities and information. Therefore, all participants should be aware of who might later have access to the data. Adherence to confidentiality can bring about a dilemma because the interviewer can learn of mistreatment, malpractice, child abuse, drug use, or other criminal behaviors. As the researcher is a state-licensed public school teacher, she is a mandated reporter of any kind of child abuse or neglect.

Confidentiality was deemed to be significant for the current study and therefore was carefully respected. The protocol for protecting the participants' identities was outlined and approved by the IRB. All subjects and their parents were told that the girls' real names would be replaced with pseudonyms and no possibility of identification would occur. The participants were assured their anonymity would be protected at all costs. The audio recordings of the interviews would not be heard by anyone but the contracted transcriber, and the transcript would be kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home, when it, along with the recordings, would be destroyed by a certain date. It must be noted that even though the researcher is a science teacher, none of the participants were her students, though they may have been previously acquainted. The participants were strongly reassured that nothing said during the interview would be in any way reported to their science teachers.

### **Consequences**

Another important issue for both the researcher and the participants is that of consequences. Potential harm and potential benefits to the participants must be identified in each study. The risk of harm to a participant should be the least amount possible (*Guidelines for the protection of human subjects*, 2015). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) indicate that from an ethical perspective, the sum of potential benefits and importance of the knowledge gained should outweigh the risk of harm to the participant. The notion to carry on the study must be justified. The researcher felt this study was justified because exploring the way girls feel about taking science classes and understanding their experiences of GIS could lead to a dramatic shift

in their lives. Besides encouraging them to take more science classes, it could influence them towards a science-related career in the future.

The researcher endeavored to reflect upon the benefits gained by the participant in the GIS study. Among those benefits were that her participation might help her clarify what she gained from the experience and perhaps cause her to consider how her attitude toward science differed in comparison to what it was prior to participation in GIS. Of course, the researcher also needed to anticipate any potential risks to subjects. Since subjects would not be asked about highly emotional issues, the researcher did not anticipate risk in that area. A potential risk discussed by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) is that the researcher can hurt the dignity of the interviewee when the transcripts are returned for validation of the statements made. They go on to say that this effect is often unpredictable. However, since in this study, only two, one-hour interviews were planned, that risk was minimized.

For further information on the subject of protecting children during research studies, this researcher suggests the CITI (Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative, 2015) optional course called “Vulnerable Subjects – Research Involving Children.” This module describes the major historical events that influenced how research with children can be conducted. It describes problems with this type of research that may violate ethical standards. It reviews the assent and informed consent requirements, and the current efforts by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ensure the inclusion of children in studies on the safety and efficacy of new drugs. An overview of the categories of research involving children is provided, including examples.

### **Power Dynamics**

The researcher should also be concerned with how to promote the participant’s confidence and comfort level. The researcher needed to convey to the participant that she was not viewed as simply a talking informational tool for the researcher. This was done by telling her about the researcher and encouraging her to talk to the researcher about her life before the interview started, asking questions about her and her school, and giving her responses the researcher’s complete attention. The researcher deemed this especially important so the participants will give truthful, reflective, and authentic responses.

A different type of consideration is one Eder and Fingerson (2002) call power dynamics. Researchers seem to hold most of the power in the interview. They pick the setting, ask the questions, decide when to go on to the next question, and announce when the interview is over. The interviewee can easily be viewed as the one who is subjected to a barrage of questions, has his/her answers written down, coded, analyzed, transcribed, and may be seen as a non-human instrument of information. This is especially true of minor interviewees, and they can be easily intimidated and regarded as a non-entity (Elder & Fingerson, 2002). This is an incorrect dynamic since all people, including adolescents, need to be treated with respect. Three things can help to equalize this delicate balance of power. These include self-disclosure, conducting multiple interviews, and integrating interviews with other methodologies.

### **Self-Disclosure**

Feminist research has tried to combat an unequal power balance by promoting interactive interviews in which the researchers self-disclose along with the interviewee (Reinharz, 1992). This helps establish trust between interviewer and interviewee since both people are revealing things about themselves. However, problems can arise if the researcher is not focused on the interview itself. Many people enjoy talking about themselves and researchers can become sidetracked, talking about themselves instead of echoing the thoughts

of the interviewees (Reinharz, 1992). In interviewing adolescent females about GIS, the researcher did not anticipate this to be a problem since only very limited background information was shared, and the researcher did not wish to impose her points-of-view onto the students interviewed. Information that was shared during the introduction and used to develop rapport with the participant included talking about the county the schools were both in, classes the participant was currently taking, what grade the researcher taught, and local school athletics. The researcher felt this made the students build a comfort-level in discussing school issues. In this study, the participants knew that they were asked to participate in the interviews because they attended GIS, and that the questions would have to do with their science class experiences, but nothing was said about the purpose of the research, which was to understand the girls' experiences at GIS, what that meant to each girl, and how she assimilated the experience. The researcher did not wish to bias the participants in this way.

### **Conducting Multiple Interviews**

Another means of creating equal power is for researchers to conduct multiple interviews with the same person, promoting a greater level of depth. Feminists (Reinharz, 1992) believe this approach will promote the empowerment of interviewees by encouraging deeper reflection and trust. Since the researcher planned to complete two interviews with each participant, it was anticipated that a certain level of trust would be established.

Many other ideas related to power dynamics have been shared by researchers who specifically interview adolescents. An approach called reciprocity (Eder & Fingerson, 2002) involves equalizing the power between the researcher and interviewee by helping the interviewee gain something from the interview. Taylor, Gilligan, and Sullivan (1995) interviewed a number of adolescent females and found that when the researcher demonstrated genuine interest, the interviewee felt free to discuss things she would not normally share with her family and friends. Some of the girls interviewed said they had gained new insight into themselves during the interview. One said "But since the question came up, it let me know how I felt. I think that's good. I can do this forever you know...keep on going" (p. 129). Eckert (1989) was not prepared for the students who needed an interested adult to talk with about themselves. However, since the interview was perceived as nonjudgmental and confidential, the interviewees felt safer talking with the interviewer than with adults they knew.

In planning for the GIS study, the researcher hoped for this same effect, that the girls would be open and talk freely with her. It was hoped that those interviewed would understand that this process was not intended to judge or ridicule them but to help them clarify their feelings about the GIS event. In response, the participants seemed honest and sincere in their answers, and seemed more relaxed and comfortable in their speech and body language during the second interview, indicating the increasing rapport and equality between researcher and participant.

### **Integrating Interviews with Other Methodologies**

Another way to equalize the power in an interview is to use other research methods in conjunction with the interview. Eder and Fingerson (2002) suggest combining interviews with field observations. Doing so permits the researcher to see the student in her everyday world, allowing the researcher to introduce the interviews into that setting as a logical next step. They go on to say that observation helps the researcher assess some of the children's communication styles and behavior patterns. This is beneficial because it will ultimately make for more accurate coding and analyzing of the information. Eder and Fingerson (2002) point out that the



researcher can get to know the children and build a rapport with them if they make observations prior to the interview, whether for a little while or for an extended period of time.

In this study, the researcher utilized this mixed methods approach by observing the girls during GIS and noting their behavior patterns and interactions with others while attending the event. Doing this allowed the researcher to ask the participants specific, detailed questions about their science activities participants seemed to enjoy during the event. This further helped to develop rapport, and the researcher believed the participants knew she cared about them. The researcher already had an advantage in this area because she spends five days a week with this age group and is familiar with their communicative “lingo” and other behaviors.

### **Ensuring Comfort During the Interview**

Besides these methods of equalizing the power between the researcher and the participant, the researcher can take steps to make sure the participant feels comfortable talking to the researcher during the interview. Issues here include familiarity with the participant, the interview style, and avoiding controlling behaviors throughout the interview. Eder and Fingerson (2002) say that the naturalness of the interview can be developed if the interview takes place within a larger activity with which the respondents are already familiar.

#### **Familiarity with the Participant**

One area that familiarity with the participant can be utilized is in that of communication styles. Communication styles also play a role in the level of the interviewee’s comfort and trust. The adolescent girls feel more comfortable and familiar with the researcher when the researcher discusses issues using the girls’ own communicative rules (Eder & Fingerson, 2002). The researcher was very knowledgeable in this area due to her experience teaching this age group. Young people often have their own discourse styles and peer culture. The design, style, and analysis of the interview should come from an awareness of the nature of the respondents’ communicative culture (Briggs, 1986).

For the current study, the researcher notes another possible advantage. The interviews took place at the girls’ home schools, a very familiar setting. They discussed the GIS event, which they are both familiar with. Since the researcher teaches in this county every day, she is accustomed to the communication rules, terms, and “vernacular” used by popular culture.

#### **The Interview Style**

The researcher can further ensure the interviewees’ trust with the setting by addressing the style of the interview itself. Briggs (1986) says that the best interview emerges from a state of cooperation where both the researcher and interviewee form the discourse. Reinharz (1992) agrees, saying that the best way to begin an interview is to start with very unstructured questions to let the interviewees’ concerns emerge. She says the researcher should be less concerned with getting her questions answered than with understanding the interviewee. She says that for youth, it is especially important to emphasize non-directed, open, and inclusive questions. The questions need to let the children direct the flow and say what they want to say. Tammivaara and Enright (1986) noted that if the questions are open-ended, the children will have greater opportunity to incorporate the topics and modes of discourse that are familiar to them. The researcher applied this approach by designing each interview to begin with open questions, such as “Tell me about yourself...” and so forth. This approach was intended to make participants more comfortable discussing future issues with the researcher.

In keeping with this train of thought, a researcher should avoid creating situations that remind adolescents of classroom lessons which are based on “known-answer” type questions (Eder & Fingerson, 2002). Many students are exposed to this type of lesson where questions are asked for the purpose of getting correct answers (Tammivaara & Enright, 1986). If interviewees perceive they are in that type of situation, they may give the researcher answers that they believe the researcher wants to hear instead of answering as they actually think or feel. In preparing to interview the adolescent girls, the researcher took care to write semi-structured interview questions that would give the girls many opportunities to convey their own mood, thoughts, and feelings. The researcher also took care to not interrupt them while answering, and made sure not to influence future responses by indicating to participants that their answers were pleasing to the researcher.

### **Controlling Behaviors**

Researchers should also take special care to avoid controlling behaviors that might lead the interviewees to associate the researchers with teachers (Tammivaara & Enright, 1986). Teacher behaviors include asking interviewees to stop fidgeting or to stop being silly. Another way the researcher can avoid being perceived as a teacher is to not initiate all activities during the interview (Corsaro, 1981). Children need to develop and ask their own questions. By inviting their questions and comments throughout the interview, the researcher conveys a different context of developing knowledge. Corsaro (1981) goes on to say that by encouraging interviewees to initiate questions and comments, the researcher also breaks down the basic power dimension of the interview by personalizing and humanizing him/herself and empowering the respondents. Also, when researchers give interviewees opportunities to introduce their own topics and concerns into the discussion, the knowledge shared and gained reflects the interests of the adolescents being studied as well as the interests of the researcher. Cook and Fonow (1986) indicate that feminist researchers want to avoid treating their subjects as “objects of knowledge” and use an interactive interview approach that allows the interviewees to have a voice during the interview. In interview research with children and adolescents, researchers can also report their findings back to the children to check the accuracy of the researchers’ interpretations (Mayall, 1999).

As a public school teacher, this researcher was greatly impacted by this aspect. The remainder of the issues could be somewhat easily modified in the context of the personal interview process. But the researcher is a teacher and can respond like a teacher in most life situations. Many times the researcher (through her teacher lens) has looked for the “right answer” to a question, and students have probably told her many times what they think she wants to hear. The researcher can also be a “straight down to business” type of person, who has to cover a great deal of material in a class period, and wants to keep things going. Modifying “teacher behaviors” and choosing to allow students to be more involved in the learning process is a valuable lesson for this teacher to learn. The researcher attempted to accomplish this by thinking of herself not as a teacher, and she was not the participants’ teacher, but as an extension of the research department at the university she was representing. One aspect that particularly helped with this process was that the interviews were not conducted in classrooms, but in meeting or community rooms at the schools.

### **The Researcher’s Reflections**

While conducting the interviews and especially once the interviews have been completed, it is important for the researcher to reflect on what was learned about the interview process. Taking time to do so can enhance research skills. After sixteen interviews with eight

adolescent girls, the researcher has drawn some conclusions about things that contribute to successful interviewing of adolescent girls. These include same-gender interviewing, projecting positive signals, remaining calm and focused, and leaving time for the girls to engage in self-reflection.

Same-gender interviewing is a term coined by the researcher to indicate that the interviewer and the interviewee are of the same gender. Based on the researcher's experience with this study, same-gender interviewing is especially beneficial when the participants and the interviewer are nearer in age. By the participants' indications, the researcher realized that adolescent girls felt comfortable talking about their experiences and feelings to another female who has possibly "been there." Furthermore, if the researcher doing the interview works with the public and is accustomed to this age group, she may be more comfortable talking with the adolescent female.

A further issue to be examined is that interviewers sometimes subtly, and sometimes not so subtly, send out signals about how they are feeling. The researcher has found the participant being interviewed will often reflect back the signals the interviewer is projecting. For example, if the interviewer is nervous about the session, the person being interviewed tends to be nervous as well. The person being interviewed will react to the interviewer's "vibes," and perhaps behave and speak in response to these non-verbal cues rather than give an honest, objective opinion. In another example, if the interviewer feels rushed and appears to be in a hurry, she may speak quickly, sharply, and impatiently. The person being interviewed will sense this abruptness and will likely respond with little thought, believing the interviewer wants to hurry on to the next question and end the interview as quickly as possible. Beyer (2013) confirms this suspicion. He notes in his research that researchers should follow the adolescent's lead by allowing them to tell their story uninterrupted and to nod in agreement with the adolescent and to make encouraging comments. He further states that body language on the part of the researcher that is calm and conveys openness will increase the adolescent's relaxation, which helps her tell her story.

To overcome this tendency, the interviewer needs to stay calm and focused. She should speak in a normal tone at a normal speed, and model the behavior she would like to see from the person being interviewed. Demonstrating a calm and composed demeanor can take practice, but once mastered will have great benefit. In this same vein, the researcher must make an effort to maintain eye contact with the interviewee. Brief encouraging nods or the use of phrases such as "Um-hmm," or "Okay," or simply clarifying what the person being interviewed has said can encourage the adolescent to speak honestly and openly, without fear of repercussion or disapproval (Beyer, 2013).

It should also be noted that when the researcher creates an open and tolerant environment and allows the respondents ample time to reflect upon the questions, more valid responses are obtained (Beyer, 2013). To do this takes patience and skill and, if the researcher is just beginning to develop interviewing skills, this may be challenging. Also, throughout each interview, it is a good idea to verify the interviewees' responses to maintain accuracy in recording. The researcher must also come to terms with the fact that he or she may not always get the answers expected. When this happens, it is important to accept this and evaluate the answers that are actually received.

## **Conclusion**

More information about how to interview adolescent females is needed. Admittedly, it looks pretty simple to turn on a tape recorder and keep somebody talking, especially if the researcher is comfortable interacting with people. But in reality, it is not that straightforward. Encouraging an adolescent to speak freely with a researcher whom she has never met is much

more difficult than one might imagine. Asking young girls to share private, though not especially sensitive information, can be a highly complex task.

The researcher established that the phenomenological interview is the best approach for this research. Ethical issues were discussed, and the various aspects of power dynamics inherent in interviewing adolescent females were examined. After exploring ways to ensure the interviewee's comfort, the experience of this researcher is offered. Suggestions related to ways the researcher should behave and at times alter her behavior in order to gain the most real, valid answers to questions were provided.

It is not enough to pick a methodology, write your interview questions, and start the process, but researchers must know the population group they are studying. They must be willing to investigate what work has already been done with that population, the interview methods used, and the information that was obtained. Finding out what interview techniques work best with their specific population group is imperative in order to achieve the best results. This paper provides a general pattern for establishing best interviewing practices. This may vary at least slightly with every different population group out there, and doing more work in this field to analyze the best methods for different populations needs to be completed. The limitations to this study are that the researcher has only had one experience interviewing one type of population. This is the result of one researcher's experience with interviewing adolescent girls in the confines of a qualitative research study. The scope of this work needs to be repeated by the same researcher on many different demographics. Only after this work has been done can researchers effectively interview their population to get the truthful, reflective, and authentic answers they are looking for, and then their research can reach its greatest heights.

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### Author Note

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