

Expanded Research Methodology

for

Paul M. Patinka and Zipporah Peddle,

“Musical Selection in Western Classical Academic Voice Studies:

Does Composer-Singer Identity Alignment Matter? Part 1,”

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Interview Length

Qualitative researcher Irving Seidman advocates for three interviews with subjects to place the studied phenomena within the context of their life and experiences.¹ He states, “The first interview establishes the context of the participants’ experience. The second allows participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs. And the third encourages the participants to reflect on the meaning their experience holds for them.”² Irving Seidman recommends that each interview is ninety minutes and spaced three to seven days apart from one another.³ His general recommendations emphasize the practicality of collecting data in an abbreviated period without capitalizing on the time of the researcher or subject, but he states they should be adapted as needed to fit the study phenomenon.⁴

Sample Size

Sample sizes in qualitative research vary dramatically by the kind of research, the field of study, the target journal, and the overall study design.⁵ There are no established rules for specific *n* numbers, and this is especially relevant in exploratory studies where the broader themes are not yet known.⁶ Conceptual *Sufficiency* (a reflection of the range of participants and sites of the phenomenon) and *Saturation* (when data starts to repeat itself from multiple participants) appear regularly in the literature to determine *n* values.⁷ *Sufficiency* determined data validity in this research due to resource limitations and the few prior publications in qualitative voice studies that might be models for saturation achievement. Six subjects, or three faculty-student subject pairs, were determined to be a viable *n* value given the wealth of data generated from the eighteen interviews and forty-two journal entries spread across the semester.⁸

Participant Sample and Setting

Recruitment of faculty participants began in January 2020 based on interpersonal connections with the researchers using a purposeful sampling model.⁹ Agreeable faculty participants engaged their studios to determine student interest and qualification for the study. Students were earning a degree as a vocal performance, music education, or music major with a concentration in voice. Subject pairs completed consent and demographic intake forms. Study participation was voluntary. Subjects received no financial remuneration and retained the option to stop participating at any time and for any reason.

The authors determined that the explication of each individual's identity (for example, a queer Hispanic woman in her 40s teaching with tenure at a large university in the Midwest) would make the subjects identifiable.¹⁰ These explicit descriptions were determined to be unnecessary when understanding the broader thematic essences because of the intentionally broad and transferable nature of discovered themes in qualitative research.

Interview Protocol and Data Collection

The first author met with participants using the Zoom video conferencing platform.¹¹ Interviews averaged thirty-two minutes in length. Faculty interviews lasted roughly thirty-six minutes, and student interviews were shorter at twenty-eight minutes. The first series of interviews averaged the longest at forty-four minutes followed by the third interview averaging twenty-nine minutes, with the shortest average interview time being the second of twenty-three minutes. Interview prompts are found in the supplemental materials.

Journal Protocol and Data Collection

Participants were asked to complete seven written, audio, or video journals (subjects' preference) via a pre-scheduled Google Form emailed to them over their semester timeline.¹² Subjects were asked to answer all questions to the best of their ability without a requirement on length. The prompts of journals two, four, and six were identical to facilitate ongoing reflection on the unique experience and track changes over time. Journal prompts can be found in Appendix 2.

Validity

In congruence with methodological practice, the potential biases of the researchers are explicated above.¹³ The researchers triangulated data from two subject pools (students and teachers) and different minority groups experiencing a similar phenomenon.¹⁴ Using a robust three-interview model accompanied by journal entries collecting data evenly throughout the semester in free-flowing and semi-structured ways increases the validity of the triangulation methods.¹⁵ Regular meetings paired with independent coding, analytic memos, and codebooks by each researcher increase trustworthiness through independent corroboration. All data collected from the participants was examined and used, regardless of its positivity, negativity, neutrality, or disagreement with other data.

Uncertainties

Qualitative studies highlight any known uncertainties in their work as a means of acknowledging limitations and increasing validity. Uncertainty in the study findings centers around the concept of identity itself. Intersectional theories argue that characteristics like ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, family role, societal role, age, and religious beliefs coalesce in each unique identity.¹⁶ This same intersectional interaction influences encounters with systematic cultural structures. Conclusions based on external perceptions of a student's identity can be misleading. Members of a given minority group will not necessarily have the same beliefs, experiences, or values. Teachers must consider the individual when discussing potential musical selection. A piece may address parts of their identity but will likely not encompass every aspect of how they define themselves.

Endnotes

¹ Irving Seidman, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences 3rd ed* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006): 17.

² Seidman, *Interviewing*, 17.

³ Seidman, *Interviewing*, 20–1.

⁴ Seidman, *Interviewing*, 20.

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- ⁵ Julius Sim, Benjamin Saunders, Jackie Waterfield, and Tom Kingstone, “Can sample size in qualitative research be determined a priori?,” *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 21, no. 5 (March 2018): 619–634. doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2018.1454643.; Bryan Marshall, Peter Cardon, Amit Poddar, and Renee Fontenot, “Does Sample Size Matter in Qualitative Research?: A Review of Qualitative Interviews in is Research,” *Journal of Computer Information Systems* 54, no. 1 (December 2015): 11–22. doi.org/10.1080/08874417.2013.11645667.
- ⁶ Debra Joubert and Liesl Van der Merwe, “Phenomenology in five music education journals: Recent use and future directions,” *International Journal of Music Education* 38, no. 3 (2020): 344. doi.org/10.1177/0255761419881492.; Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot, “Does Sample,” 15.; Sim, Saunders, Waterfield, and Kingstone, “Can sample,” 621, 630.; Julius Sim, Benjamin Saunders, Jackie Waterfield, and Tom Kingstone summarize a wealth of literature and suggestions from a wide spectrum of researchers and note that there is often little explanation or rationale for these numbers beyond the needs of the specific study design. Adler and Adler 2012 (12–60 subjects), Bernard 2013, (10–20 subjects), Boddy 2005 (30 subjects), Creswell 2013 (3–4 or 10–5 subjects), Dukes 1984 (3–10 subjects), Kuzel 1999 (5–8 subjects), Lincoln and Guba 1985 (12–20 subjects), Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot 2013 (20–30 interviews), Morse 1994, 2000 (at least 6 subjects), Ritchie, Lewis, Elam, Tennant, and Rahim 2014 (50 interviews maximum), Parse 1990 (2–10), Ray 1994 (1, or 8–12), Smith et al. 2009 (3–10), Corbin and Strauss 2015 (5 hours of interviews), Warren 2002 (20–30).
- ⁷ Seidman, *Interviewing*, 55.
- ⁸ Jennifer Mason, *Qualitative Researching* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Ltd, 2002): 39.; Andrea Schiavio, Michele Biasutti, Dylan van der Schyff, and Richard Parncutt, “A matter of presence: A qualitative study on teaching individual and collective music classes,” *Musicae Scientiae* 24, no. 3 (2020): 356–76. doi.org/10.1177/102986491880883, 11 subjects, 30-minute interviews with three subjects.; Amy J. Bovin, “Breaking the Silence: The Phenomenology of the Female High School Band Director,” *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 38 no. 1 (2019): 34–45. doi.org/10.1177/8755123319841664, 8 subjects, three 15–45-minute interviews with each subject.; Tiger Robison, “Male Elementary General Music Teachers: A Phenomenological Study,” *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 26, no. 2 (2016): 77–89. doi.org/10.1177/1057083715622019, 10 subjects, one 35-minute interview with each

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- subject.; Daniel J. Shevock, “The Experience of Confident Music Improvising,” *Research Studies in Music Education* 40, no. 1 (2018): 102–16. doi.org/10.1177/1321103X17751935, 3 subjects, two 22–50-minute interviews with each subject.; Julia Shaw, “‘The Music I Was Meant to Sing:’ Adolescent Choral Students’ Perceptions of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 64, no. 1 (February 2016): 45–70. doi.org/10.1177/0022429415627989. 1 faculty, 3 student subjects, 30 hours of interviews.
- ⁹ Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation Methods*, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1989): 100–1.; Seidman, *Interviewing*, 52–6.; Michael A. Alsop, “Fundamentals of Qualitative Research in Music Education: An Introduction,” *Qualitative Research in Music Education* 4, no. 1 (February 2022): 17.; Mason, *Qualitative*, 124.
- ¹⁰ Subject identities in qualitative research are generally explicated with a significant level of detail to inform the reader of relevant details in understanding the work. The small number and interconnected nature of voice pedagogues in US academia presented concerns about the promised retention of subject anonymity if detailed descriptions of the subjects are used.
- ¹¹ Interviews were conducted over Zoom, but all subjects were using in-person lessons with masks at the time of the study; Yuan, Zoom. Zoom Video Communications. 2011.
- ¹² Google Forms, Google LLC, 2008.
- ¹³ John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches, 4th ed* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Ltd, 2018): 250–5.; Bovin, “Breaking,” 37.; Alsop, “Fundamentals,” 8.; Shaw, “The Music,” 52.; Robison, “Male,” 81.; Thomas Groenewald, “A Phenomenological Research Design Illustrated,” *International Journal of Music Education* 3, no. 1 (2004): 49. doi.org/10.1177/160940690400300104.; Alsop, “Fundamentals,” 5.
- ¹⁴ Alsop, “Fundamentals,” 17.
- ¹⁵ Seidman, *Interviewing*, 24–6.
- ¹⁶ Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989: 139–67.