

Quant over Qual: A pilot exploration of Qualitative Researchers Practices

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Introduction

- Publication bias and Questionable Research Practices (QRPs), such as hidden analytical flexibility (p-hacking), hypothesising after the results are known (HARKING), have contributed towards a *credibility crisis* in quantitative psychology (Chambers, 2017).
- After a period of reflection, various methods have been proposed to improve psychology, such as pre-registration of analysis, open data and materials, Registered Reports (Chambers, 2017), and the "21 Word Solution" (Simmons, Nelson, & Simonsohn, 2011).
- These suggestions limit flexibility, aiding the management of error rates, and aim to improve reproducibility and replicability.
- Attempts have been made to apply these methods to qualitative research methods (Kern & Gleditsch, 2017), although QRPs have not been identified in this field.
- This pilot study aimed to explore the research and publishing experiences of qualitative researchers to identify possible problems and avoid 'one size fits all' solutions.

Method

- At the point of analysis, 5 researchers, ranging from PhD candidates, to late career researchers, completed the survey.
- Participants completed 12 open ended questions online, as well as questions about their epistemological positions and methodological preferences/training.
- Responses were analysed using semantic-level, deductive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Example Questions



Results



Discussion

- The issues surrounding quality in qualitative research were somewhat different to those in quantitative.
- The researchers analyse their data through a lens that is grounded in philosophical meta-theory, with a clear understanding of their position in the data generating process.
- Reproducibility and replicability were deemed irrelevant by many of the researchers.
- Accountability and being true to the voice of their participants was more important. A barrier was not having the time and space to construct an understanding of individual experiences.

Conclusions and Future Directions

- Quantitative researchers could learn much from adequate training in qualitative research methods.
- Although pre-registration may hold some value, it does not solve the larger social and institutional issues that researchers described as leading to bad research.
- We will follow up this study with in-depth semi-structured interviews with qualitative researchers. This will allow a more fluid discussion of challenges and potential solutions.

References

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