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This research examines the significance and value of evoking informant self reflexivity within the interpretive research process, where the researcher will use a multi-method research design and questioning strategy that encourages informants to become self reflexive. The significance of evoking informant self-reflexivity within the interpretive research process is considerable, as through the evocation of informant self-reflexivity informants are likely to provide in-depth and emotive data.

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Getting Into the Life Worlds of Informants through Reflexive Practice

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This research examines the significance and value of evoking informant self-reflexivity within the interpretive research process, where the researcher will use a multi-method research design and questioning strategy that encourages informants to become self reflexive. The value of evoking informant self-reflexivity within the interpretive research process is considerable as it results in richer interpretive data. Theories relating to reflexivity have been discussed across a variety of fields, from philosophy and the natural sciences to sociology and psychology (Foucault, 1970; Latour, 1988; Gouldner, 1970; Heidegger, 1966; Ashmore, 1989). However within consumer research discussions related to reflexivity have tended to focus on the importance of the researcher maintaining reflexivity, as a route to achieving an improved understanding of the overall research process, as well as remaining unbiased (Bettany and Woodruffe-Burton, 2009). Whilst previous research has focused more on guided introspection (Wallendorf and Brucks, 1993); storytelling and narrative (Brown and Fischer, 1993); storytelling and narrative (Brown and Reid, 1997); and on the notions of power within the researcher-researched relationship (Bristor and Fischer, 1993; Woodruffe, 1996); our paper takes a slightly different angle from this work. Instead, we focus more on evoking informant self-reflexivity because this could be an efficient and effective way of collating richer, in-depth data in the research process. Given that the importance of informants being self reflexive throughout the research process and acting as co-researchers has been overlooked by consumer researchers, we believe that informants can also be encouraged to start thinking about their thinking (Johnson and Duberley, 2003), thereby encouraging them to question their own consumption experiences, as well as providing a credible critical approach to the insights obtained from the phenomena under investigation.

Lynch (2000) suggests that “reflexivity is a central and yet confusing topic, it is an essential human capacity, in others it is a system property, but for some it is a critical, or self-critical, act” (p. 26). Nevertheless when incorporated into a methodology it is seen as being a source of superior insight and awareness (Lynch, 2000). Moreover self-reflexivity is concerned with understanding “the grounds of our thinking by opening ourselves to the hidden nature of truth” (p.36). Within consumer research there is a persuasive argument devoting greater attention to researcher reflexivity (Bettany and Woodruffe-Burton, 2009). Indeed reflexivity is a way of improving our understanding of the actual research process (Wallendorf and Brucks, 2003).

It is important to emphasise that the notion of informant self-reflexivity is not a relabeling of previous research, but rather, it sets a new agenda of trying to understand how evoking informant self-reflexivity within the interpretive research process can lead to richer and in-depth interpretive data. We draw insights from two longitudinal studies that were carried out over a two and a half year period. Study 1 looked at how computer culture was mediating Sikh courtship rituals and study 2 investigated the embedded meanings that were experienced by young individuals through everyday food consumption practices. Study 1 was conducted in four stages and focused on understanding the informants and encouraging them to provide in-depth data by evoking informant self-reflexivity. Stage 1 was carried out through a netnographic approach (Kozinets, 2002) which consisted of online observations of participants (aged 22-35) of the case study (shaadi.com). Stage 2 concentrated on the third generation of the British Sikhs and involved participant observation, netnography (Kozinets, 2002), in-depth face to face interviews and auto-ethnographic accounts. Stage 3 evolved dependent on emergent constructs from the previous stage and involved online and offline interviews with the third generation of British Sikhs. Stage 4, the final stage involved online interviews with the third generation and participant observation. In total the dataset consisted of 15 online interviews, 15 face to face interviews, online participant observation, auto-ethnographic accounts and substantial field notes.

Study 2 was carried out in three stages. Here, stage 1, consisted of observations and participant observations of young children. Stage 2 focused on conducting face to face interviews as well encouraging informants to keep visual diaries and online interviews. Stage 3 consisted of a large number of observations and participant observations. The final data set for this particular study included...
A final theme to emerge was the significant contribution to data triangulation and reliability. By encouraging informants to become more self reflexive and delve deeper into their thoughts and emotions, study 1 found that encouraging informants to become co-researchers ensured that the data they provided was reliable and true, therefore contributing to data triangulation. Moreover study 2 found that by encouraging informants to reflect on their video diaries they were able to assess whether the video diaries were a true representation of their thoughts and emotions, therefore contributing to the process of data triangulation and reliability. This demonstrates that evoking informant self-reflexivity is not only acceptable, but essential for deeper understanding of consumer behaviour research.

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