

Analysing Qualitative Data: The Use of Storytellers as Validators in the Construction of Analyses

Stanley Mukasa^{1,*}

¹University of Wales, UK

*Correspondence: University of Wales, UK. E-mail: mukasaly@yahoo.com

Received: February 28, 2019

Accepted: March 28, 2019

Online Published: April 20, 2019

doi:10.5430/mos.v6n1p31

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/mos.v6n1p31>

Abstract

This paper demonstrates how the perspectives of stakeholder groups regarding contested issues can be represented with a degree of credibility. This is possible when *interviewees* are used as externals to verify, refute, or to improve constructed analyses of their own stories before conclusions are drawn. As assumptions differ about what reality is and whether or not it is measurable, researchers are beginning to focus more on approaches and techniques that can improve validation of their findings. This paper proposes an approach to help achieve this. The paper draws on the author's experience as a researcher in a study that focussed on how Developmental Agencies (DAs) – specifically Amnesty International, Water Aid, Christian Aid, Action Aid, and Oxfam GB could improve their use of Donor Funds (DFs). Using this method, interviewees are given the opportunity to review constructed analyses in order to verify or amend how their perspectives are presented. They clarify, make corrections and provide further insights to their initial stories. The aggregated reconstructions are then relied on to arrive at agreed representations. The proposed approach demonstrates how to engage *storytellers* in the validation of analyses and findings regarding contested issues. Five elements are discussed in relation to the subject, these are, Story-tellers, Constructed Analyses, Contested Issues, Aggregated Reconstructions and Validating Findings.

Keywords: story-tellers, contested issues, aggregated reconstructions, validating findings

1. Introduction

This paper aims to demonstrate how qualitative analyses can be presented with a degree of credibility, and how to rely on aggregated reconstructions to arrive at agreed findings.

The paper focuses on a discussion of this unique approach as used in a study regarding Developmental Agencies (DAs). The stakeholders of DAs often have contradicting views regarding how the use of Donor Funds (DFs) could be improved. The suggested approach is not only of interest to the managers of DAs, and to donors, policy makers, and researchers but also to all groups and communities associated with such DAs (Mukasa & Warburton, 2018).

This paper contends that qualitative findings can be presented with a greater degree of credibility: in the first instance, by using storytellers who provide the bulk of primary data to either approve or refute constructed analyses of their perspectives before the conclusion stage; and in the second, by requesting storytellers to make clarifications and corrections that provide further insights into their initial interview responses. Finally, aggregated reconstructions are used as springboards to arrive at conclusive findings

The suggestion to rely on such an iterative approach to validate analyses is motivated by:

- the existence of contradicting views among stakeholders associated with DAs with regard to the topic of DF usage;
- the view shared by a significant number of stakeholders that those who manage DCs rely on their individual experiences and reasoning to decide for the majority of other stakeholders how DFs should be used.
- the belief that all stakeholders should be given the opportunity to verify, improve, or to refute a study's analyses before conclusions are drawn.

This paper begins with a review of the literature, and a discussion of alternative approaches that can also demonstrate

credibility. It then discusses the key features inherent in the suggested approach. The subsequent sections focus on demonstrating how analyses are constructed and validated, and how aggregated reconstructions are relied on to arrive at findings.

2. Literature Review

Qualitative analysis is sometimes generalised as the social interpretation or construction of people's reasoning regarding a named phenomenon or contested issue, as derived from real-world views, observations, and experiences and evidence that explains why people's perspectives cannot be rightly represented by simply relying on scientific methods or rule-governed acts (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1984:2009; Hall, 1997; Du Gay et al, 1997). This is entire subjective and based on ad hoc logic. Spiggle (1994) describes qualitative analysis as the interpretation and development of meanings from responses to questions asked in the form of *how*, *what*, and *why* and that deal with links that should be traced over time, rather than treated as mere frequencies or incidences.

In essence, qualitative analysis is about interpreting or constructing meanings from responses carried in the language form of narratives or stories (Hall, 1997; Du Gay et al., 1997). According to Hall's Representation Theory (1997, pp.11), in order to analyse narratives and stories researchers are guided by three approaches. These are *naturalistic*, *constructionist*, and *interpretive*. According to the naturalistic approach stories regarding a specific subject, when gathered from various sources, inherently contain meanings and can be presented without interpretation or development (Hangen, 1997; Hilpinen, 1993; Weir, 2005). The constructionist approach takes the view that readers and writers construct meanings from what people say only if these constructs satisfy some sort of description included in the author's productive intention (Hilpinen, 1993; Bloom, 1996; Thomasson, 2003; Ross, 2007; Scholes, 1980). The interpretive approach is based on the observation that readers meaningfully interpret or make sense of what is written or said in order to advance knowledge (Hall, 1997; Du Gay et al, 1997; 2013).

Qualitative analysis is traditionally based on either a deductive or inductive approach. Newman and Benz (1998) state that the deductive approach draws on a structure predetermined by the researcher, who has an idea of the likely responses from the sampled population. This approach is commonly relied on when a researcher is a key informant or a participant making observations (value participant). Conversely, the inductive approach is described as a more thorough and time-consuming approach and is often used when the researcher knows little of the subject or phenomenon. With this approach data may be analysed by way of case and cross-case analyses, pattern-matching, and triangulation of data sources (Evered & Louis, 2001; Newman & Benz, 1998). The inductive approach is also said to emphasise methodological rigour (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Zahra & Pearce, 1990).

The approaches emphasised in the aforementioned Hall's Representation Theory (1997) are supported by the earlier work of Patton entitled "Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods". Patton (1987, pp. 69) suggests that it is possible to interpret or construct meanings from narratives and stories because individual and group arguments that make sense are carried in what they say. Yin (2003) explains that languages in the form of narratives carry within them the perspectives and personal experiences of those represented. In the same vein, Prosser (1998) and Hangen (1997) suggest that the content carried inside stories and narratives are relied on to advance people's knowledge and to help make sense of and reach an understanding of the world and the issues that affect them. Walker (1997) argues that there are two unique features associated with qualitative analysis. These are:

- the construction of meanings from observations;
- the development of meanings from stories gathered from the persons associated with these observations.

Qualitative analysis is associated with the *accretion* and *aggregation* of data gathered from multiple sources, and with enriching evidence through the provision of examples of key moments, critical incidents, and quotes from key informants (Mukasa & Warburton, 2018; Warburton & Saunders, 1996; Eisenhardt, 1989; Miles & Huberman, 1984). For example, in their work entitled "The Collective Use of Forms of Language as Cultural Artefacts to Represent Public Understanding in Case-studies", Mukasa and Warburton (2018) provide examples of the above from key informants as evidence to enrich their analyses. Unlike quantitative analysis, which provides a clear distinction in its results of the different sets of data analysed, qualitative analysis believes the interpretation and construction of meanings from one data set can alter the analyses of all other sets (Eisenhardt, 1989; Lee, 1989; Yin, 1994).

Interviewee feedbacks are used as one of the most common methods to correct errors in the stories/narratives gathered, and to collect clarifications and further insights regarding what storytellers mean in their interview responses (Hagens et al, 2009). Strasser (2017) explains that analyses and validity of findings can be improved upon when feedback is gathered through several iterations. He further explains that after the researcher's initial analysis, *controlled* feedback

should be provided to all participants who should then reflect and revise their opinions and judgements. This iterative process should stop when the research questions are answered. Similarly, Yin (2017) argues that objectivity of a study can be achieved when participants with no emotional attachments to the subject matter are used carefully to provide feedback on analyses. In the same vein, Smith and McGannon (2018) argue that to overcome analysis bias that may arise from the influence and views of researchers, the process of analysis and validity of findings should be iterative and robust to encourage collection of further feedbacks that improve results of initial analyses. The use of interviewee feedback therefore, not only demonstrates methodological rigour, but also improves the content carried in the aggregated reconstructions that are drawn on to arrive at credible findings. For example, in their work focusing on the Canadian health-care system, Hagens et al (2009) use interviewee feedbacks from 51 key informants to improve their analysis. Surprisingly, literature regarding the use of interviewees/storytellers in the validation of analyses-in-progress seems to be *underreported* or *limited to specific studies*. This paper therefore, contributes to the existing body of literature by demonstrating how interviewees/storyteller can be integral to the validation process of analyses and findings. The suggested approach emphasises that:

- storytellers are used as externals to approve or refute constructed analyses of their perspectives;
- aggregated reconstructions are relied on to arrive at findings - these incorporate verified perspectives, corrected errors, clarifications, explained meanings, and further insights.

This approach of engaging storytellers in such a way is significantly novel in studies regarding DAs. The managers of these organisations may not yet have realised the benefits of engaging the other stakeholder groups with regard to the distribution of DFs (Mukasa & Warburton, 2018).

3. Alternative Validation Methods

Other approaches that can be relied on to present qualitative findings with a degree of credibility were considered. The first of these was to consider how credibility is added to analyses and findings through participant observations. This approach was rejected because:

- the researcher was already a key informant and familiar with each of the stories;
- relying solely on participant observations would not achieve the desired methodological rigour, and thus the study would lack a certain objectivity.

The study then considered validation of analyses based on case and cross-case analysis, pattern-matching, and triangulation of data sources. This approach, however, would not offer those interviewed the opportunity to either verify or improve upon the constructed analyses of their perspectives. Thirdly, it was considered that using examples of critical incidents, key moments, and specific quotes from the bulk of the data gathered would enrich validation. This approach was also rejected as the stories provided during interview already carried these features (Eisenhardt, 1989; Evered & Louis, 2001; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Zahra & Pearce, 1990).

The use of storytellers to validate the analyses of their own stories regarding contested issues has proved to be extremely useful in the study described in this paper.

The most important features associated with storytellers validating analyses are: (a) enrichment of analyses with clarification and explanations to add further insights and improved interpretation of the issues at hand; (b) addition of detailed texts to analyses constructed/interpreted from a wide range of empirical materials, individual experiences, interactions, observations, introspection, and interview; (c) demonstration of credibility, as the *principal* participants confirm or refute constructed analyses of their own perspectives; and, (d) the aggregated reconstructions that incorporate analysis feedback, which aids researchers in arriving at agreed findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Patton, 1990).

The proposed validation of analyses emphasised in this paper fits well with a constructionist approach: a key feature in Hall's Representation Theory (1997). To reiterate, the constructionist approach takes the views that meanings responding to contested issues or phenomena can be constructed from what people say (Weir, 2005; Hilpinen, 1992; Thomasson, 2003)

4. Analysing Contested and Complex Issues

The decision to validate analyses responding to contested issues in a unique way was motivated by the existing argument that qualitative analyses and findings can lack methodological rigour (Eisenhardt, 1989; Newman & Benz,

1998; Creswell & Miller, 2000). In this paper, an approach which emphasises rigour in the validation of qualitative analyses and findings is demonstrated. Moreover, this approach does not conflict with any existing philosophical views or methods.

The terminology 'contested issues' is applied in reference to the differing and conflicting responses gathered from individual informants regarding the complex subject of how DAs can improve the expenditure of DFs. Each individual informant has a unique story to tell and when all stories are compiled then construction of meanings and analyses is possible from specific texts pre-selected as relevant (Yin, 2003; Kvale, 1996; Mukasa & Warburton, 2017).

Whoever contributes a story to a study should also be given the opportunity to cross-check analyses based on that story by way of providing specific clarifications or explanations to what they meant in their initial responses. The approach suggested here demonstrates how qualitative analyses and findings can be presented with a degree of validity when the principal players are given the opportunity to complete their own stories. This approach can prove to be extremely helpful in the validation of qualitative data regarding complex studies/subjects.

This paper relies on semi-structured dialogic interviews as an integral part of the method of gathering texts. To reiterate, the objectives of the study described in this paper were:

- to identify factors relating to the need for DAs to improve the allocation and use of developmental funds;
- to explore a significant problem, i.e. that the managers of the DAs represented in the study described might not have seen the benefits that could be gained by their organisations incorporating wider public perceptions into the strategic planning of how DFs can be effectively used;
- to address the benefits of why public understanding should be incorporated into the allocation and use of DFs, and to put forward a new and robust operating model incorporating the perceptions of all stakeholders who contribute to and/or have a vested interest in the operations of DAs by accretion and aggregation which could help them improve the spending of DFs.

5. Outline of the Method

In order to construct analyses, a two-phased approach was emphasised. Firstly, examples of critical incidents and the perspectives of key informants carried in stories were analysed by accretion and aggregation. This involved comparing and contrasting data gathered by way of case and cross-case analysis (Mukasa & Warburton, 2018; Newman & Benz, 1998). In the second phase, storytellers were given the opportunity to verify or amend how their perspectives were presented in the constructed drafts.

Research questions were structured to suit all key informants, who were then categorised into four data sets and introduced to de-briefing interview prompts. These prompts carried pre-determined themes either taken or developed from the research questions. The prompts were used as a guide to probe for specific *texts* that might respond to specific themes. In effect, these prompts guided the interviewer to ask general questions at the start of the interviews and for the questions to become more specific as the interviews progressed.

Based on their individual experiences and reasoning, the 54 key informants interviewed were expected to suggest how DAs can improve the use of DFs.

The interview schedule was divided into five sections. The interview themes were:

1. The management of DAs.
2. Income sources of DAs and expenditure of DFs.
3. Projects undertaken by DAs and improving the management of projects.
4. Resource-use practices that are in common with businesses and DAs.
5. The transfer of practices from profit-driven organisations to DAs, which are novel to those agencies.

Table 1. Key Informants Categorised by Role**Data Set 1**

This set was made up of senior managers representing the five DAs.

Data Set 2

This was an integrated data set. It was made up of managers of the five DAs at lower management levels, regular donors/funders to the five DAs, and informants representing the regulators of DAs in the United Kingdom.

Data Set 3

This data set was made up of managers experienced in the management of both DAs and businesses, and of campaigners and activists for DAs.

Data Set 4

This data set was created to specifically provide documentary data relevant to the study from informants associated with the five DAs (information that has never been made public before).

Data Set 5

This data set was made up of beneficiaries of DFs, opinion leaders, celebrities, and fundraisers.

6. Thematic Analysis – Method of Constructing Meanings

In this section, we demonstrate how meanings are constructed from texts gathered from a wide range of key informants providing conflicting perceptions.

6.1 *The Management of Developmental Agencies*

The vast majority of the 54 key informants are of the opinion that although DAs may be well-managed, some of their practices relating to the allocation and use of DFs are a concern to stakeholders. Of the 54 key informants interviewed, 32 described the management of DAs to be appropriate, 12 described it as good, while 10 described it to be outstanding:

“People support DAs not necessarily because their use of DFs is outstanding. The tradition of giving to charities is deeply ingrained in the culture of the British people.” (Informant D19)

The view contained in the above text is shared by 31 other interviewees, who made three observations: (a) the managers of DAs associate the increase in the number of donors and DFs respectively to the outstanding resource-use practices of their organisations; (b) people who are motivated and inspired to help others in need will do so regardless of how DAs use DFs; and (c) donating to charities is morally rewarding, especially for those people with the desire to help others.

Of the 54 key informants interviewed, 47 appreciated that: (a) DAs are organisations working towards the relief of poverty and distress in the poorest communities of the world; and (b) DAs are trying to help ‘needy and vulnerable’ people in the poorest communities of the world by establishing sustainable infrastructures that are able to provide them with the basics of life.

From the constructed themes, 37 key informants strongly argued that DAs need to improve the management of DFs. They argued that because DAs help people in need, they seem to be immune from scrutiny.

“When you try to advise DAs to improve their use of DFs others might think you don’t care for those suffering or dying. With £billions being received as donations every year, the management of DAs has to be improved.” (Informant D33)

6.2 *Income Sources of Developmental Agencies and Expenditure of Donor Funds*

Some of the approaches DAs use to generate income are a concern to many stakeholders. From the responses gathered 39 informants were concerned with the practice of face-to-face street and door-to-door fundraising. The informants shared issues associated with the practice; the first of which being that the practice is perceived to be associated with ‘guilt-tripping’ and ‘harassing’ members of the public, and as such is damaging the image of charities.

“I believe people are increasingly getting tired of being stopped every single day by different fundraisers asking for money. It’s possible to be stopped on every street in central London by a

fundraiser and I guess this is the case in other parts of the country.” (Informant D19)

Secondly, the practice is perceived to be both very expensive and unethical for charities. It takes between 18-24 months to recover fundraising costs (i.e. for a donor paying by direct debit: the first 18-24 monthly payments go towards the fundraising costs involved in getting a donor to sign up in the first place). Thirdly, the practice is associated with encouraging the culture of paying higher salaries and bonuses to employees in the not-for-profit sector as evidenced by payment of commissions and target-achieved payments.

“The management of DAs is okay but I don’t agree with their expenditure and I don’t believe it’s right to pay their marketers and fundraisers bonuses or performance-related pay.” (Informant D22)

On the contrary, 10 of the 54 key informants who are directly involved with the management of DAs stressed the importance of face-to-face and door-to-door fundraising for charities. They offered three reasons as to why the aforementioned practice is important for the existence of DAs. Firstly, street and door-to-door fundraising has rescued many charities from a downward spiral in income when the cost of the ‘tried and trusted’ methods of fundraising escalated. Informants explained that every £1 spent on street and door-to-door fundraising generates at least £4 over a period of time (normally 5 years).

Secondly, DAs and fundraising agencies are comfortable with the practice. It has been relied on for many years and has generated £millions for worthy causes. Lastly, such practices lead to the employment and work experiences of hundreds of people within the not-for-profit sector.

“One of the reasons why charities [were perceived] to be badly managed is that they relied too much on goodwill and provided little financial reward for those people involved with their management.” (Informant D3)

Of the 54 key informants interviewed, 41 were concerned with the expenditure of DAs. They stressed six areas that concerned them most, and these are:

- the failure by those who manage DAs to find more cost-effective means of generating incomes;
- the payment of higher salaries to employees working in the not-for-profit sector;
- sanctioning expensive marketing and publicity costs;
- undertaking large-scale projects hastily;
- inadequate monitoring and supervision of developmental funds and projects,
- the ‘unsatisfactory’ management of emergency and disaster funds.

6.3 Projects Undertaken by Developmental Agencies and Improving the Management of Projects

The need for DAs to improve the supervision and management of developmental funds in the beneficiary communities was a recurring theme emerging from the responses of the interviewees. Of the 54 key informants interviewed, 38 were concerned with those who supervise developmental projects in the beneficiary communities, people who are trusted to supervise the use of DFs without close supervision by the executives of DAs.

“... remember those who manage DAs are hired to allocate and use other people’s money and not their own money. We shouldn’t expect them to watch over it with the same rigour as those who manage private organisations.”

The majority of key informants (38) shared two issues which are represented in the above text: (a) too much freedom is given to partners in communities where projects are undertaken to allocate DFs without close supervision, monitoring, or adequate accounting systems in place for the effective management of these donor funds; and (b) the ‘top managers’ of DAs are not always based in the communities where developmental projects are undertaken to practically oversee the organisational activities and the cost of associated operations.

Of the 54 key informants interviewed, 14 are satisfied with how DFs are allocated and used in the beneficiary communities.

“We are satisfied with how DFs are spent on projects, and we would not have increasing numbers of funders and donations if the majority of members of the public disagreed with our resource use-practices.” (Informant D2)

Of the 14 key informants who are satisfied with how developmental funds are spent in the beneficiary communities, 10 are directly involved with the management of DAs and shared two views. Firstly, they appreciate that their style

of allocating and using DFs might not satisfy every individual stakeholder and that, therefore, some stakeholders will always have concerns.

“Even when you have a million volunteers, DFs should be managed by professionals with the knowledge, right skills, and experience. If charities fail to do so donors will be discouraged.”
(Informant D9)

Secondly, they are of the view that DAs are organisations managed by professionals who put systems in place to ensure DFs are effectively used.

6.4 Resource-Use Practices That Are in Common with Businesses and Developmental Agencies

The perception that DAs can adopt some of the practices common to the business field in order to improve their management is one held by 39 of the key informants. These 39 share the opinion that what are construed or described as business-related practices are, in effect, practices that can be applied by all organisations irrespective of the sector as long as they do not conflict with organisational ethos.

They emphasised that as long as practices more traditionally associated with businesses do not conflict with the ethos of DAs and can lead to the improvement of how DFs are used, then such practices should be considered by those managing DAs to improve their performance.

The 39 key informants who held the aforementioned view went on to mention specific business practices that would be likely to improve the allocation and use of DFs if considered by DA managers. They mentioned specialisation in specific projects, vigorous and tight supervision of funds, robust cost-cutting measures to reduce operational costs, limiting the influence of politicians in the management of projects, and choosing to represent causes based on the preferred priorities/demands of the service users/beneficiary communities.

6.5 The Transfer of Practices from Profit-Driven Organisations to Developmental Agencies, Which Are Novel to Those Agencies

Thirty-three key informants are of the perspective that the management and supervision of funds by business organisations is more vigorous and tight than that of not-for-profit organisations.

“What I have observed over some many years is that negligence and profusion must always prevail, more or less, in the management of the affairs of not-for-profit organisations that use agents and volunteers.” (Informant D21)

These 33 key informants shared the narrative that because managers of DAs allocate and use other people’s money rather than their own, it should be assumed that they will not always be expected to vigorously supervise it as tightly as would partners of a private company.

7. Validation of Analyses and Presentation of Aggregated Reconstructions

In this section, we demonstrate the value storytellers add to the study described in this paper when they are used to verify, refute, or to improve constructed analyses of their own stories presented in the previous section.

When constructed analyses responding to the theme ‘The Management of Developmental Agencies’ were reviewed, 40 key informants agreed with the constructs and 14 provided clarification and further meanings to what they had originally meant to say. Of the 54 key informants, 44 provided clarifications on two issues. Firstly, they clarified that people donate to DAs without knowing how their donations will be used because DAs represent ‘needy and vulnerable’ people in the poorest communities of the world, unable to survive without urgent help. Secondly, they suggested it can be difficult to critique how DAs are managed because, if you do so, you may be construed as someone who does not care for those in need of help. The clarifications above that are gathered using the suggested approach add important texts that are initially missed in the constructed analyses.

When constructed analyses responding to the theme ‘Income Sources of Developmental Agencies and Expenditure of Developmental Funds’ were reviewed, 35 of the 50 key informants agreed with the constructs, and 14 suggested possible measures that could help DAs improve their use of DFs. They suggested that: (a) DAs should limit the influence of politicians and governments of beneficiary communities in the management of DFs; (b) DAs should put more pressure on governments to make policies that help those in poverty; (c) DAs should be bolder and encourage people world-wide to unite against [perceived] oppressive leaders; and (d) DAs should allocate most of their funds towards protecting people’s rights, improving the representation of the beneficiary communities, and setting up their head offices and operational structures inside those communities in which projects are undertaken. The suggestions

above, add further insights to the constructed analyses presented in the previous section.

When constructed analyses responding to the theme ‘Projects Undertaken by Developmental Agencies and Improving the Management of Projects’ were reviewed, 43 key informants agreed with what was constructed but also provided further suggestions. They suggested that DFs should be closely monitored and supervised in the communities where projects are undertaken. They recommended that: (a) DA management should review the scale of projects undertaken and concentrate on those which reflect their visions, beliefs, objectives, and purpose; and (b) DA management should adopt robust cost-cutting measures on overhead costs. The suggestions and recommendation addressed above add more relevant texts that are missed in the analyses presented in the previous section.

When constructed analyses responding to the theme ‘Resource-Use Practices in Common with Businesses and Developmental Agencies’ were reviewed, 39 of the 54 key informants explained that: (a) both businesses and DAs outsource to minimise operational costs and risks and to periodically re-brand their services/causes; (b) both work in partnership with other organisations and third parties to achieve their defined objectives and, are managed by professionals; (c) both are competitive and aim to dominate in their respective fields, and their allocation and use of funds relies on tacit or codified decisions; (d) both market their products/causes to individuals and organisations using similar methods and have systems in place to consolidate their existing customers/supporters; (e) both invest to generate incomes and to expand their products/causes and both value public relations and corporate social responsibility; (f) both rely on strategic business plans and their activities are audited.

When key informants reviewed constructed analyses responding to the theme ‘The Transfer of Practices From Profit-Driven Organisations to Developmental Agencies, which are Novel to Those of Agencies’, 42 of them relied on their individual experiences and observations to explain that: there are procedures, methods, processes, and rules that are widely applied by profit-driven organisations to achieve their objectives that remain untested by DAs. Such practices are likely to improve the allocation and use of DFs if considered by those who manage charities. They recommended that those managing DAs should consider the following: specialisation in specific projects which reflect their aims and objectives, vigorous and tight supervision of funds, robust cost-cutting measures to reduce operational costs, limiting the influence of politicians in the management of projects, and representing causes based on the preferred priorities/demands of the service users/beneficiary communities.

However, 10 key informants clarified that; what is construed or described as ‘business-related’ practices are in effect practices which can be applied by all organisations irrespective of the sector as long as they do not conflict with organisational ethos or lead organisations into disrepute.

7.1 A Brief Methodological Note

Table 2. Key Features of the Suggested Approach

Validation of Constructed Analyses	
Observations	A word of caution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Storytellers get the opportunity to complete their stories by way of validating or refuting constructed analyses/conclusions ● Storytellers are the principals who correct wrongly interpreted texts, provide clarifications, further explanations, and insights into what they meant in their initial interview responses ● The responses gathered from reviews may be more valuable and accurate than the constructed analyses/conclusions ● The aggregated reconstructions which incorporate reviews help the researcher to easily arrive at codified conclusions and recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analyses may be presented in a way that makes it complicated for interviewees to be able to reflect on specific aspects of their initial interviews ● Interviewees may disagree and indeed request the withdrawal of analyses that the researcher may consider to be very important ● Interviewee reviews can be complicated and expensive in terms of getting interviewees to review analyses, the time required to do reconstructions, and the possibility that storytellers may feel uncomfortable reviewing analyses and providing further details

The validation approach emphasised in this paper is recommended for (a) unscientific analyses which represent people's reasoning regarding contested issues using socially constructed knowledge derived from views which are real, and evidence that explains why people's perspectives cannot be rightly represented by simply relying on scientific methods or rule-governed acts, (b) for studies where the role of the researcher is likely to compromise or impact analyses, (c) for studies where natural languages of key informants/principals are relied on as cultural artefacts in the construction of meanings, (d) for studies where a researcher is able to establish a relationship with interviewees for purposes of gathering data and re-contacting them to validate constructed analyses (Usher, 1996; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Mukasa, 2016; Weber & Mitchell, 1995; Warburton & Saunders, 1996).

Interviewee reviews are extremely useful for qualitative studies focusing on contested subjects.

8. Conclusion/Recommendations

This paper has demonstrated how storytellers can be used in the validation of qualitative analyses and findings. When interviewees are given the opportunity to verify or improve researcher analysis of their own stories, researchers are then able to present their findings with a degree of credibility. As demonstrated, storytellers provide and explain their meanings and experiences, and aggregated reconstructions which incorporate feedbacks are drawn on to arrive at more conclusive findings.

The contribution of storytellers in the validation of constructed analyses has helped us to arrive at four specific conclusions, which are:

- the view shared by those who manage DAs (that increases in donations are associated with success and outstanding resource-use practices within their organisations) is refuted by the majority of the stakeholders. Most stakeholders argue that such increases in donations should be linked to the emotions that donors attach to worthy causes;
- there are under-researched or unreported practices that can improve the allocation and use of DFs;
- there are benefits associated with adopting practices described as 'business-related' that the managers of DAs have not yet identified or applied within their organisations;
- the ever-changing environment in which DAs operate requires the managers of these organisations to consider adopting specific 'business-related' best practices to consolidate their achievements and to achieve further success (as long as the considered practices do not compromise organisational ethos or lead the DAs into disrepute).

Using storytellers to validate analyses has proved extremely useful. The method has allowed us to arrive at conclusions that incorporate differing perspectives.

This study suggests that those managing DAs should consider the following:

1. All stakeholders should be given the opportunity in their organisations, through representation, to validate or refute decisions regarding contested issues, work plans, and stipulated roles before implementation.
2. Those managing DAs should consider using a wide range of stakeholders to review their understanding of the issues affecting other stakeholders as opposed to relying on their personal experiences and understanding, which could easily be compromised in order to achieve specific objectives.

While the perspectives contained within in the aggregated reconstructions may be based upon individual experiences, the validation approach we relied upon has helped us to attain highly credible analyses in the process. DAs need to improve some of their current working practices in relation to the allocation and use of DFs; practices that are a cause of concern for many stakeholders. Given the small-scale nature of this study, questions will be raised regarding making generalisations. Despite the potential for such criticisms, we believe to have demonstrated that the use of storytellers to validate constructed analyses is clearly an important factor, which has enabled us to reach well-informed conclusions.

References

- Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry. *Theory Into Practice*, 39(3), 124-130. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip3903_2
- Du Gay, P., Hall, S., Janes, L., Mackay, H., & Negus, K. (1997). *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony*

- Walkman* (pp. 55-95) London, England: SAGE Publications Ltd. in association with Open University. <https://doi.org/10.2307/591607>
- Eisenhardt, K. (1989). Building Theories from Case-Study Research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 532-550. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1989.4308385>
- Evered, R., & Reis, L. M. (2001). Alternative Perspectives in the Organisational Sciences: Inquiry from the Inside and Inquiry from the Outside. *Academy of Management Review*, 6(3), 385-395. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1981.4285776>
- Hagens, V., Dobrow, M. J., & Chafe, R. (2009). Interviewee Transcript Review: Assessing Impact on Qualitative Research. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 9-47. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-9-47>
- Hall, S. (1997). *Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (pp. 1-11). London, England: SAGE Publications Ltd. in association with Open University.
- Hangen, T. J. (1997). A Place to Call Home: Studying the Indian Placement Program. *Dialogue*, 30, 53-69.
- Hilpinen, R. (1993). Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society. *The Aristotelian Society*, 93(1), 155-178.
- Jensen, M. C., & Meckling, W. H. (1976). Theory of the Firm: Managerial Behavior, Agency Costs and Ownership Structure. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 3(4), 305-360. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-405x\(76\)90026-x](https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-405x(76)90026-x)
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing* (pp. 88-135). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s1098-2140\(99\)80208-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/s1098-2140(99)80208-2)
- Lee, A. (1989). A Scientific Methodology for MIS Case Studies. *MIS Quarterly*, 13(1), 33-50. <https://doi.org/10.2307/248698>
- Lewin, C., Somekh, B., & Steadman, S. (2008). Embedding Interactive Whiteboards in Teaching and Learning: The Process of Change in Pedagogic Practice. *Education and Information Technologies*, 13(4), 291-303. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-008-9070-z>
- Mukasa, S. (2016). *The Adoption of 'Business-related' Practices by Overseas Developmental Charities (DCs): A Comparative Study of the Relationship Between Organisational Ethos and the Use of Resources* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation) (pp. 234-278). University of Wales, Cardiff, Wales.
- Mukasa, S., & Warburton, T. (2017). Case-Studies as Representations of Public Understanding Compiled by Collective Accretion Through Cultural Forms. In Lawlor, K., & Buckley, A.P. (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 16th European Conference on Research Methodology for Business and Management Studies* (pp. 258-266). Dublin, Ireland: Dublin Institute of Technology.
- Mukasa, S., & Warburton, T. (2018). The Collective Use of Forms of Language as Cultural Artefacts to Represent Public Understanding in Case-Studies. *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 16(1), 25-37.
- Newman, I., & Benz, C. R. (1998). *Qualitative-quantitative Research Methodology: Exploring the interactive continuum*. Carbondale, IL: SIU Press.
- Patton, M. Q. (1987). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (3rd ed.) (p. 69). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Prosser, J. (1998). *Image-based Research: A Source Book for Qualitative Researchers* (p. 318). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ross, D. (2007). Sapiens as Ecologically Special: What Does Language Contribute? *Language Sciences*, 29(5), 710-731. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2006.12.008>
- Scholes, R. (1980). Language, Narrative, and Anti-narrative. *Critical Inquiry*, 7(1), 204-212. <https://doi.org/10.1086/448096>
- Smith, B., & McGannon, R. K. (2018). Developing Rigor in Qualitative Research: Problems and Opportunities within Sport and Exercise Psychology. *International Review of Sport and Exercise psychology*, 11(1), 101-121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1750984x.2017.1317357>
- Spiggle, S. (1994). Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Data in Consumer Research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21(3), 491-503. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209413>
- Stake, R. E. (1978). The Case Study Method in Social Inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 7(2), 5-8.
- Strasser, A. (2017). Delphi Method Variants in Information Systems Research: Taxonomy Development and

- Application. *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 15(2), 120-133.
- Thomasson, A. L. (2003). Philosophy and Phenomenological Research: Realism and Human Kinds. *Wiley*, 67(3), 580-609. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1933-1592.2003.tb00309.x>
- Usher, R. (1996). A critique of the neglected epistemological assumptions of educational research. In Scott, D., Usher, R. *Understanding Educational Research* (pp. 9-32). London, England: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203287941>
- Walker, K. (1997). Challenging Critical Theory in Environmental Education. *Environmental Education Research*, 3(2), 155-162. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350462970030204>
- Warburton, T., & Saunders, M. (1996). Representing Teachers' Professional Culture Through Cartoons. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 44(3), 307-325. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3122458>
- Weber, S., & Mitchel, C. (1995). *That's Funny, You Don't Look Like a Teacher: Interrogating Images and Identity in Popular Culture* (pp. 1-19). London, England: The Falmer Press. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203453568>
- Weir, C. J. (2005). Limitations of the Common European Framework for Developing Comparable Examinations and Tests. *Language Testing*, 22(3), 281-300. <https://doi.org/10.1191/0265532205lt309oa>
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (4th ed.) (pp. 10-185). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Yin, R. K. (2017). *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Zahra, S. A., & Pearce, J. A. (1990). Research Evidence On The Miles-Snow Typology. *Journal of Management*, 16(4), 751-768.