

# **The Use of Sacred Texts as Tools to Enhance Comparative Interview Research**

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## **Abstract**

Many creative methods and enhancing tools are used in social research aiming at empowering research participants, contextualising the research setting or simply adding an element of creativity to the research process. Among the challenges of using creative methods is the challenge of using them in a comparative capacity, as some methods may lend themselves to some cultural contexts excluding others. Sacred texts, such as short excerpts from the Bible and the Quran, comprise some qualities that make them potential enhancing tools in research interviews. Their transcultural nature, as they are subscribed to by faith followers spanning a range of cultural, national, linguistic, and demographic backgrounds, allows for their use in a comparative capacity in social research.

This presentation reports on the use of sacred texts as tools to enhance social research interviews in a qualitative study where three sets of Biblical and Quranic verses were used with 28 participants (15 Christians and 13 Muslims) from different nationalities. The findings show that using sacred texts was perceived favourably by the participants, enhanced the dynamics of the interviews and provided a platform to produce data that are rich, varied and nuanced. This research points out the usefulness of sacred texts – as enhancing tools – when used in social research interviews to produce natural conversations that, in turn, lead to rich, nuanced data. This suggests that sacred texts can be added to the creative qualitative research interview-enhancing toolbox especially with exploratory comparative studies that are open for emerging themes during interview settings.