

In-depth interview

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In-depth interview

(1) Qualitative research technique that involves (2) conducting intensive individual interviews with a (3) small number of respondents to explore their (4) perspectives on a particular (5) idea, program, or situation.

Perspectives on interview

- Interview as a tool to reveal the knowledge which is considered given (positivism)
- Interview as an (collective) activity to develop knowledge and meaning (constructivism)
- The middle ground:
 - The researcher is not simply a knowledge-transfer tool
 - The knowledge of the social world beyond the interaction can be obtained

When to use in-depth interview

- To get detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviors
- To explore new issues in depth
- To provide context to other of data

Advantages and disadvantages

- Detailed information
- Prone to bias
- Time-intensive
- Demands appropriate interview training
- Not generalizable

The process

- Planning
- Preparing the instrument
- Training
- Data collection
- Analysis
- Reporting

Planning

- Target group identification
- What information exactly is needed?
- List of interviewees
- International and national ethical standards

The research instrument

- Interview protocol
 - Setting up the interview
 - Beginning of the interview + informed consent
 - What to do during the interview (tape, notes)
 - Concluding the interview
- Interview guide
 - Different guides for different groups
 - Up to 15 main questions + probes where needed/helpful
 - MQ: *Please describe your position in the institution.*
 - P: *Would you give me an example?*
 - P: *Would you explain that further?*

Training of the interviewers

- Review of data collection techniques and instruments
- Practice in using the instruments
- Discussion of research ethics

- Objectives of the research and interview
- Understanding of the interview protocol and interview guide

Data collection (the interview)

- Setting the interview up (purpose, selection, expected duration)
- Informed consent (anonymity, the use of the data)

Questions

- Content mapping
- Content mining

Content mapping questions

- Ground mapping
 - Widely framed to encourage raising important issues
 - *What kind of work does your job involve in a day-to-day basis?*
- Dimension mapping
 - Bring the focus on particular issues/topics mentioned in response to ground mapping question
 - *What does it mean to be flexible?*
- Perspective-widening
 - Different perspectives on the issue add more layers of meaning and richness
 - *What other factors influence your working routine? I am thinking of things like switching between languages, late meetings and so on.*

Content mining questions (probes)

- Amplificatory
 - Encouraging to elaborate further
 - *When you say the cooperation did not work, what gave you that impression?*
 - *What was is exactly that found difficult in that task?*
- Exploratory
 - Explore the views and feelings that underlie descriptions of behavior, events or experience
 - *Why did you think it was important to close that deal?*
 - *How did your approach change when you found out these details?*
- Explanatory
 - Reasons, motivations and explanations for views, decisions, behavior...
 - *What was it about the deal that made you decide to opt out?*
- Clarificatory
 - To clarify terms and language, or details, sequences or inconsistencies
 - *You said it was very difficult to get all those people onboard. In what way it was special?*

Formulating questions

To follow

- Use broad x narrow (open-ended, closed-ended) questions correctly
 - Content mapping x controlling
- Clear and simple questions

To avoid

- Leading questions
 - *Were you furious when the project failed?*
- Double-barreled questions
- Too abstract/theorised questions

Processing

- Transcription
- Analysis
- Reporting