

LEC 6

What do we mean by interview?

is the art of questioning and interpreting the answers

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Advantages

Use of open-ended questions gives participants the opportunity to respond in their own words, rather than forcing them to choose from fixed responses.

They allow the researcher the flexibility to probe initial participant responses - that is, to ask why or how. Thus aid in further elaboration on their answers

Interviews can take place in an individual (one to one) or a group setting.

Types of interviews

- The interviewer asks interviewees a series of pre-established questions.
- The questions would be asked in the same order for all respondents.
- Structured interviews are rigid as the interviewer reads from a script and deviates from it as little as possible.
- Since researchers take a very active role in question design, there is a possibility that they inadvertently or overtly bias data collected.
- Highly standardized procedures are designed to substantially reduce the probability of the results being influenced by the interviewer's bias.

Example of interview guide (schedule)

- What do you think is the most effective way of assessing a child's pain?
- Have you come across any issues that make it difficult to assess a child's pain?
- What pain-relieving interventions do you find most useful and why?
- When managing pain in children what is your overall aim?
- Whose responsibility is pain management?
- What involvement do you think parents should have in their child's pain management?
- What involvement do children have in their pain management?
- Is there anything that currently stops you managing pain as well as you would like?
- What would help you manage pain better?

• Unstructured interviews

- More flexible, do not use predefined questions.

- Rely entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural flow of an interaction

- Synonyms: Informal conversational interview, in-depth interview, non standardized interview, and ethnographic interview

Can be considered as a natural extension of participant observation, because they so often occur as part of ongoing participant observation fieldwork

Aide memoire or agenda is a broad guide to topic issues that might be covered in the interview, rather than the actual questions to be asked

Unlike interview guides used in structured interviewing, an aide memoire or agenda doesn't determine the order of the conversation and is subject to revision based on the responses of the interviewees

Note-taking is a traditional method for capturing interview data. But in an unstructured interview, note-taking is likely to disrupt the natural flow of the conversation. Thus, when possible, it is preferable to audio record the interviews by tape or digital recorder

It is accepted that the structure of the interview can be loosely guided by a list of questions, called an aide memoire or agenda

Challenges of unstructured interviews

- Requires a significant amount of time to collect the needed information (Patton, 2002).
 - Especially when the researcher first enters the field and knows little about the setting.
 - Because each interview is highly individualized, the length of each unstructured interview session also might be longer than structured interviews.
- The challenge for researchers to exert the right amount and type of control over the direction and pace of the conversation (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).
 - When a new topic emerges in the discussion, it is difficult for the researcher to know whether to follow it and risk losing continuity, or to stay on the major theme and risk missing additional useful information (Patton, 2002).
- To develop your skills in controlling unstructured interviews, both training and experience are important (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).
- Analysing the data gathered by unstructured interviews (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).
- The questions asked in each unstructured interview were dependent on the context of the interview and so can vary dramatically across multiple interviews.
- Different questions will generate different responses so that a great deal of effort has to be made to analyse the data systematically, to find the patterns within it (Patton, 2002)

Challenges of interviews

- Most interviews are recorded and will need transcribing before analysing. This can be extremely time-consuming, with 1 hour of interview requiring 5-6 hours to transcribe (Bryman, 2016).
- The analysis itself is also time-consuming, requiring transcriptions to be pored over word-for-word and line-by-line (Barrett & Twycross, 2018).
- Interviews also present the problem of bias the researcher needs to take care to avoid leading questions or providing non-verbal signals that might influence the responses of participants (Barrett & Twycross, 2018)

Quality of Interviews

- Quality of an interview can be maintained by paying careful attention to the following three principles:

(1) Maintaining the flow of the interviewee's story.

- The flow of the interviewee's story can be inadvertently disrupted by the interviewer, such as by redirecting the narrative or interrupting it, rushing to complete the interviewee's sentences, prematurely terminating a narrative, failing to clarify terms or asking questions the interviewee does not understand. Thereby stalling the interview.

(2) Maintaining a positive relationship with the interviewee.

- Positive relationships with the interviewee can be maintained by not offering opinions about responses and avoiding nonverbal indications of surprise or shock, as well as not using non-verbal cues such as nodding to indicate approval or a correct answer.

(3) Avoiding interviewer bias.

- The interviewer should not pose leading questions or fail to follow up or omit topics introduced by the interviewee.