Interviews

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Definition

“A meeting in which someone asks you a series of questions as part of a research project”

(Macmillan Dictionary)
Motivation

• Get insights into other viewpoints
• Get new ideas
• Get an overall idea of a research topic
Interview vs. Focus Group

**Interview**
- Single opinion
- Question & Answer
- Good for sensitive topics

**Focus Group**
- Group norms
- Guided discussion
Types of Interviews

Quantitative research
• Structured interview

Qualitative research
• Unstructured interview
• Semi-structured interview
Structured Interview

“Spoken questionnaire”

- Standardization
- Processing answers
- Inflexible
- Less insight into the interviewee’s point of view
Unstructured Interview

“Guided Conversation”

• Flexible
• Rich answers

• No comparability
• Loss of focus
Semi-structured Interview

“Good balance“

• Combines advantages of both
• List of questions but free order
• Follow-up questions possible
Interview Guide

“What do I need to know in order to answer each of the research questions I’m interested in?”

My Sample Interview – Interview Guide

Date:
Participant:

Question 1
Can you tell me about your experiences with smartphones?

Question 2
Do you own a smartphone?
Interview Guide

• Certain amount of order
• Not too specific
• Comprehensible language
• No leading questions
• Ask for “face sheet” information
Kvale’s 9 Types of Questions

1. Introducing questions
   “Can you tell me about...?”

2. Follow-up questions
   “When you use ... how do you ... ?”

3. Probing questions
   “Do you have further examples of this?”

Hint
Use open-ended questions.
Avoid “yes”/”no” questions.
Kvale‘s 9 Types of Questions

4. Specifying questions
   “What did you actually do when...?”

5. Direct questions
   “Have you ever...?”

6. Indirect Questions
   “What do you think your colleagues think about...?”
Kvale‘s 9 Types of Questions

7. Structuring questions
   “I would now like to move on to a different topic …”

8. Silence
   “… “

9. Interpreting Questions
   “Is it correct that you feel that …?“
Tape Recording

- Limitations of our memory
- No distraction by taking notes
- Repeated examinations
- Opens data to public examination
- Reuse for other purposes
Tape Recording

- Participant is bothered
- Participant refuses
- Technical issues

Hint
In all cases: Still go ahead with the interview!
Tape Recording

Often, the most valuable parts of the interview are said after the recorder is switched off!

„Well, if you want to know what I really think …“
Get the right People

• Important for good results
• Work outline should contain information about target group
• Ask “insider” to get in touch with groups
Ethical Guidelines

- Respect local laws and guidelines
- Explain purpose of interview
- Inform about possible risks
- Prove Confidentiality
  - Be prepared
  - Be punctual
  - Don’t name or refer to other participants

Hint
Remember to clear the room from all previous surveys and questionnaires.
Reimbursements

• Should cover travel expenses
• Everyone should receive reimbursement
  – Even when they did not participate!
Consent

• Ask for local template
• Read it, understand it
• Explain it to participants
• Get signature before the interview
Preparation: Location

- Quiet
- Private
- Available

→ Create a comfortable situation

Hint
If you can’t think of a good location, ask the participant.
Right before the interview

• Be on time
• Be prepared (consents, recording device)
• Sit in a 90° angle
During the interview

Take brief notes during the interview

My Sample Interview – Interview Guide

Date: 21.05.2014 13:00
Participant: 5

Question 1
Can you tell me about your experiences with smartphones?

Surprised by question

Question 2
Do you own a smartphone?

Seemed very unsure
My Sample Interview – Interview Guide

Date: 21.05.2014  13:00
Participant: 5

Question 1
Can you tell me about your experiences with smartphones?

  Surprised by question

  Participant answered very slowly and seemed unsure.

Question 2
Do you own a smartphone?

  Seemed very unsure

  I saw the phone after the interview: old Nokia phone.
  Not a smartphone.
Evaluation

Transcribe recording and notes

My Sample Interview

Date: 21.05.2014
Participant: 5

Q1: Can you tell me about your experiences with smartphones?
   A: Well have used quite a lot of phones in the 90s.
      Participant seemed to be surprised by this question and answered very slowly.

Q2: Do you own a smartphone?
   A: Hm – yeak – I do.
      Participant was very unsure. After the interview he showed me his phone. It is a Nokia 6210 and so not a smartphone.
My Sample Interview

Date: 21.05.2014
Participant: 5

Q1: Can you tell me about your experiences with smartphones?

A: *Well have used quite a lot of phones in the 90s.*

Participant seemed to be surprised by this question and answered very slowly.

Q2: Do you own a smartphone?

A: *Hm – yeak – I do.*

Participant was very unsure. After the interview he showed me his phone. It is a Nokia 6210 and so not a smartphone.
Takeaway Message

A good interviewer …

• is prepared
• is gentle and polite
• asks the right questions
• is a good listener
• records the interview
• respects ethical guidelines
Discussion

• What types of interviews did you conduct?
• Did you make a mistake and what have you learned from it?
• Did something go wrong and how could it have been prevented?
• Which situations are inappropriate for interviews?
Literature

• Seidman, I. Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences. Teachers college press, 2012


• Kvale, S. An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing. London SAGE, 199