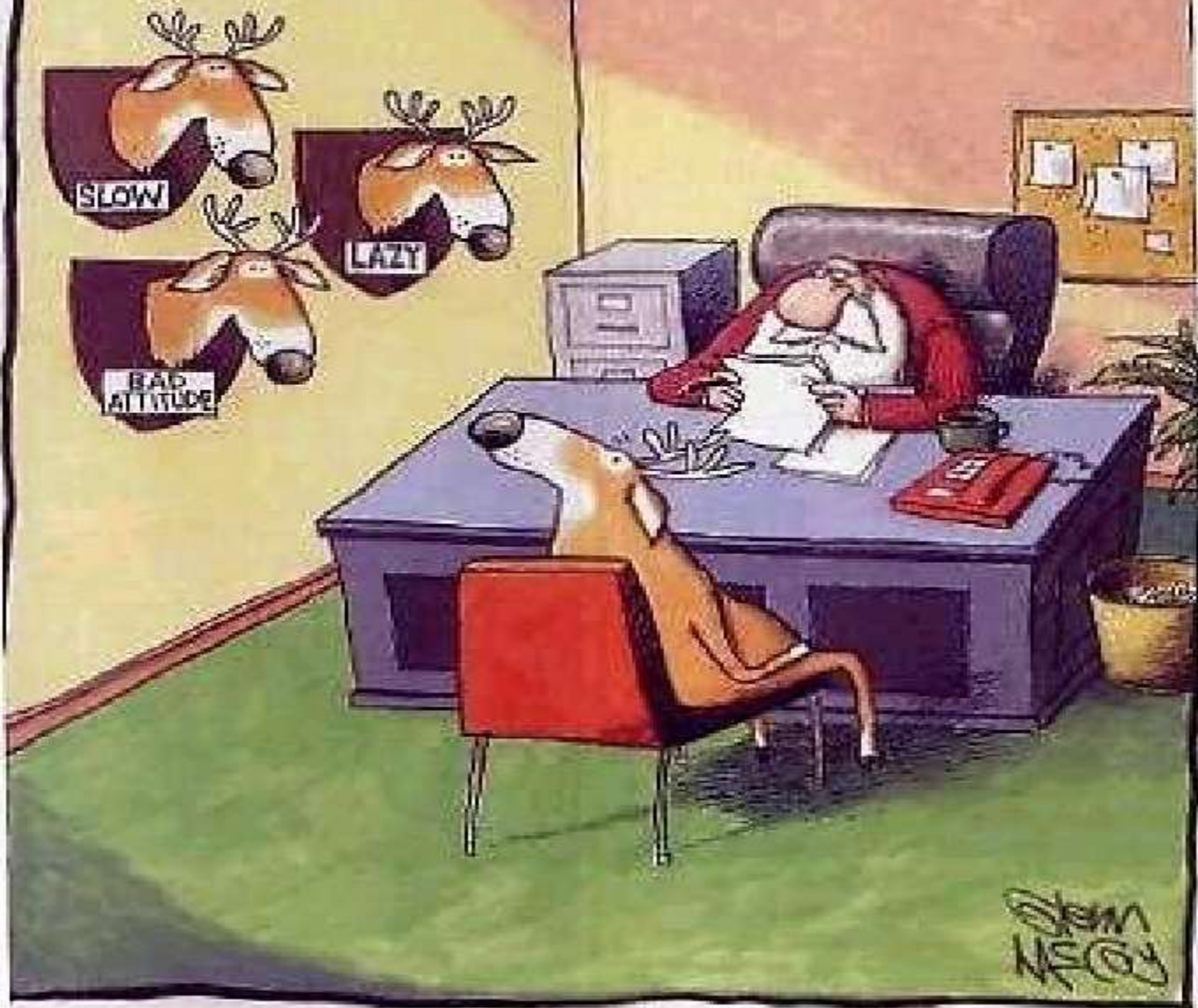


Qualitative Research Interviews- Inter views

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JOB EVALUATION DAY





What distinguish a research interview from an ordinary conversation?

- ▶ A professional conversation – demands skills and training! (and certain personality?)
- ▶ A way of gaining knowledge
- ▶ Follows certain structure
- ▶ Has a clear purpose
- ▶ Not equal roles researcher - informant

Planning most required

▶ **What** am I going to study?

▶ **Why** – what is the purpose?



▶ **How** to do it? Type of data collection, analysis etc.

Are qualitative methods required?

- ▶ Correlations, numbers and percentages not enough
- ▶ Deep understanding needed
- ▶ Complex realities of life
- ▶ Interactions between people

What kind of qualitative data do I need?

▶ Knowledge, attitudes, perceptions

- INTERVIEWS

▶ Norm systems

- FOCUS GROUPS

▶ Behavior

- OBSERVATIONS

Methodological issues

- ▶ How to get started?
- ▶ How many informants do I need?
- ▶ Risk of any harm for informants?
- ▶ Do I need to transcribe the interviews?
- ▶ How to analyze the interviews?

No standard rules!

Choices and considerations

- ▶ What is most appropriate/needed based on existing knowledge?
- ▶ What are the methodological choices available?
- ▶ What are the probable consequences?

Different types of research interviews

- ▶ **Closed quantitative research interviews**
 - Questions and answers pre-determined
- ▶ **Open-ended qualitative interviews**
 - Unstructured, semi-structured or standardized

<p>Standardised questionnaire</p>	<p>Open-ended question in an interview</p>	
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Do you think that bicycle helmets provide a good protection against head injuries

What do you think about bike helmets?



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Well, I have read about a lot of investigations about how good they are in preventing severe damage of the head in case of an accident. I always tell my children to use it.... well, I actually force them to use it and the school is also teaching them to wear it. I myself have tried to learn to use it...but I find it rather hard. You see, it flattens my hair and it makes me look like a fool, I just become so ugly.

1. Unstructured interviews

Characteristics	Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Questions emerge from the immediate context and are asked in the natural course of things▶ There is no predetermination of questions topics or wording	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Questions can be matched to individuals and circumstances▶ Good for exploration of new topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Diverse information - different questions from different people▶ Less systematic and comprehensive▶ Data organisation and analysis can be difficult

1. Unstructured interviews

Could you tell me about your life?

2. Semi-structured interview (interview guide approach)

Characteristics	Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Topics to be covered are specified in advance▶ Interviewer decides sequences and wording of questions during the interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ More systematic and comprehensive interviews▶ Still fairly conversational and situational	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Important topics may be unintentionally omitted▶ Different responses from different perspectives might reduce comparability

2. Semi-structured interview

► Interview guide

► Themes to be covered (an example)

1) Presentation

2) Views about the community and the community members

- describe, typical attributes, history, locating themselves

3) Views about “The Health Association”

- Knowledge of the process, own involvement, important forces

3. Standardised open-ended interview

Characteristics	Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Exact wording and sequence of questions determined in advance▶ Worded so that responses are completely open-ended	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Increased comparability of responses▶ Data complete for each respondent▶ Facilitates data organisation and analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Little flexibility in relating interview to particular individuals and circumstances▶ Standardised wording of questions may constrain and limit naturalness and relevance of questions and answers

3. Standardised open-ended interview

- ▶ Interview Guide

- ▶ Questions (examples)

- 1) How long have you been living in this community?
- 2) How would you describe the characteristics of this community
- 3) What do you know about the building of the health association?

Sampling – how many?

- ▶ Interview as many subjects as necessary to find out what you need to know! (Kvale)
- ▶ Until saturation has been reached (Dahlgren et al)
- ▶ Not possible to decide on the numbers on beforehand
- ▶ More common that too many interviews are performed than too few!

Saturation?

- ▶ When additional interviews do not add much new information, almost able to predict the result of the next interview



Sampling – who?

► **PURPOSIVE SAMPLING**

- A certain purpose for selecting the informants
- Who can best contribute to a deeper understanding of the situation of inquiry?



Purposive sampling

- ▶ Purpose of selecting cases according to variation in some characteristic
- ▶ Reach people within the study area who can share their unique slice of reality
- ▶ all slices together will then be able to illustrate the range of variation
- ▶ theoretically representative – represent a range of variation in the study area

Examples of purposive sampling

Type of sampling	Purpose
Snow-ball or chain sampling	The first selected informant is used as a resource for identifying the next subject
Maximum variation sampling	Informants should be as different from each other as possible to document variation
Extreme or deviant cases	To learn from highly unusual manifestations of the phenomenon of interest, test emerging theories
Homogenous sampling	Select similar types of informants, simplifies analysis, facilitates group interviewing
Convenience sampling	Selecting those who are most easily enrolled, low credibility

Information to the informants

Letter and/or telephone call

- ▶ Study aim
- ▶ Confidentiality
- ▶ Informed consent
- ▶ Do they have questions about the study?
- ▶ Decide on a date and time
- ▶ Schedule at least 2 hours

Building trust...

Where to conduct the interview?

► Natural setting!

- The informant's choice
- Peace and quiet, no interruptions
- Comfortable

In the informants home?

At the work place (own office)?

At an institution (hospital, clinic)?

Interviewing – how to get started?

- ▶ **Introduction and presentation**

- ▶ **Repeated information**

Aims, confidentiality, use

- ▶ **“Warming up”**

Building trust...

Steps to Individual Depth Interviews

- 1: Understand In-depth Interviews
- 2: Identify Appropriate Key Informants
- 3: Coordinate Logistics of Interviews
- 4: Define and Tailor Interview Structure
- 5: Develop Interview Guide
- 6: Conduct the Interview
- 7: Collect Data from Individual Interviews

1: Understand In-depth Interviews

- The collection of data through systematically asking questions and carefully listening to the answers given
- *provide access to information* - interviews offer indirect access to a range of experiences, situations and knowledge that researchers would not be able to study otherwise.
- *uncover meanings* - interviews allow the meanings and definitions that individuals give to events and activities to be explored and understood.
- *facilitate interventions* - local problems usually have local solutions. Talking and listening to local people is important for highlighting the constraining and facilitating factors that an intervention may face.

2: Identify Appropriate Key Informants

- There is no rules on selecting appropriate informants to interview → better to have wide range of key people (individuals who have knowledge or access) rather than a few marginal individual or groups

Can contact potential key informants through:

- NGO and government agencies,
- “snowballing,”
- being present in the setting,
- recognizing icons/signs (clothing, badges, insignia),
- through doctors and hospitals

Systematic selection of informants

Sampling techniques:

- *Purposive sampling* - individuals are interviewed on the assumption that they will provide the *best information*.
- *Network sampling* - this is useful for undertaking interviews with members of 'difficult to reach' populations.

Selection of Informants

- *What information needs to be collected?* The more *specific* a researcher can be about the data they want to collect, the easier it is to identify potential informants.
- *can 'mapping exercises' highlight informants?* Mapping is particularly useful in the early stages of conducting interviews, as it allows a researcher to **identify potential informants** in the local area.
- *are key informants able to help?* Key informants can often suggest and arrange access to individuals and groups that a

3: Coordinate Logistics of Interviews

- Contact individuals as soon as possible to schedule
- Explain why you want to talk
- Correct any misconceptions
- Discuss confidentiality v. use of names and quotes
- Clarify any incentives
- Negotiate a time and place for interview
- Collect contact details to allow interviews to be rearranged

Logistic (cont'd)

- Interviews should be conducted in a location that facilitates discussion.
- Ideally be neutral, safe free from interruptions and as comfortable as possible.
- Accessible.

4: Define and Tailor Interview Structure

- Structured or unstructured
- Kinds of questions and information:
 - Questions of fact; specify, confirm or refute a fact. These are normally closed questions. *'do you exchange syringes when you have drugs with friends?'*
 - Opinions; open ended questions which encourage the informant to elicit ideas and beliefs *'why did you use the syringe that your friend had already used?'*
 - Clarification; used to check that the researcher understands or to gain additional information *'and you were the only person there at the time?'* *'are there any other reasons why you*

Kinds of questions (cont'd)

- Representativeness; **to check whether an event is typical of the persons experience.** *'Do you see the same doctor every time you visit the clinic?' 'do other people that you know also rinse their syringes with urine?'*
- Hypothetical questions; **allow the researcher to explore situations that the individual has not yet experience or are perhaps too 'sensitive' or 'shameful' to directly explore''** *imagine that a man called Rashid needs to buy heroin, where would he go first?'*
- Ordering questions; allows the researcher **to check the importance or significance of certain factors** *'in order of importance, which risk behaviors are most common amongst amphetamine users?'*
- Probes and follow-up questions; **encourage a person to provide more information or continue speaking** *'can you tell me more about the exchange behavior...'*

5: Develop Interview Guide

- Lists all the questions, topics and issues that the team wants to cover during the interview.
- Can include:
 - Instructions on how to respond to certain answers;
 - Order and wording for questions;
 - Probes and follow-up questions to encourage the respondent to produce more information or talk about certain topics

Interview guide

- Begin with 10 topic areas and questions
- What is missing?
- What can be eliminated?
- Review questions to avoid:
 - **Complex questions:** *‘do you use drugs currently?’*
 - **Long or multiple questions:** *‘what do you feel about the risks involved in sharing syringes now as opposed to five years ago?’*
 - **Leading questions:** *‘why is there so much injected drug user (IDU) in this area?’* is perhaps better rephrased as *‘is there any IDUs in this area?’* or *‘tell me about IDU around here’*.

6: Conduct the Interview

- Arrive early
- Translators briefed
- Introduce anyone to the participant
- Review confidentiality expectations
- Use clear and simple language;
- Sensitive subjects (describe in 3rd person?)
- Reflect participants answers back for understanding

Conducting interview (cont'd)

- Practice good listening, ask why and how
- Ask permission to continue if interview runs longer than expected
- Collect demographic information
 - Age, ethnicity, type of drug use, source of income and status
- Summarize key issues and opinions as soon as possible afterwards

7: Collect Data from Individual Interviews

- Interviewer bias – leading questions
- Informant bias – sampling issues
- Inadequate or inaccurate data recording, retention, or storage
- Ethical problems – confidentiality of individual informants; risk to communities or populations studied
- Taping and transcribing
- Note-taking
- Forms for data collection and summary

Order of questions

High

- Background questions
- Questions about knowledge
- Questions about feelings
- Questions focusing on opinions
- Questions focusing on experiences

Low

► Level of Trust

What type of questions?

► Hypothetical

Suppose something to the informant:
suggestions, ideas –
and let her/him respond to it

What would the situation had been here without community leaders?.

► Provocative

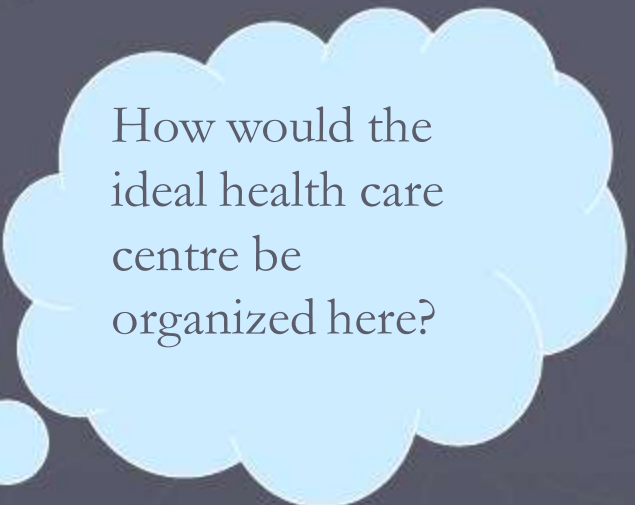
State something that you believe is not accepted, not appropriate, an opinion you have heard etc. and let the interviewee reflect upon it

I have heard that it is not accepted to oppose the health association

Type of questions, cont.

► **Ideal**

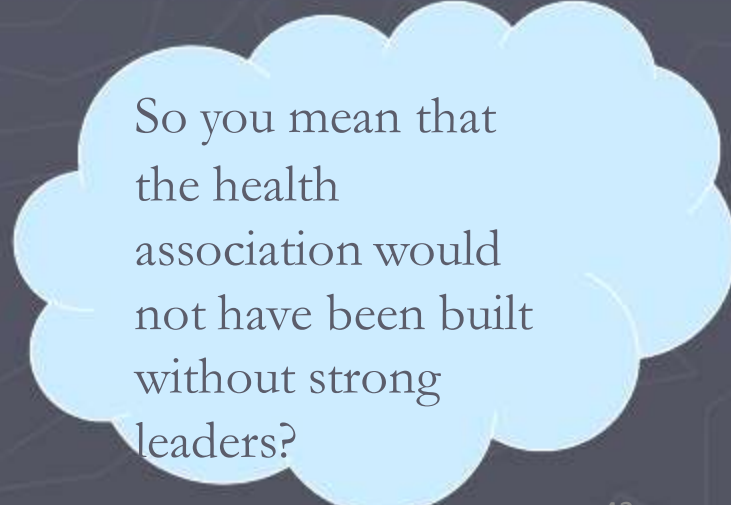
Ask about what the interviewee would regard as being a good solution of a problem, most wanted, ideal situation etc.



How would the ideal health care centre be organized here?

► **Interpretative – follow up**

Try to interpret something already said and ask a question about it.



So you mean that the health association would not have been built without strong leaders?

Open Ended Questions!

- ▶ Could you tell me about....
- ▶ How do you feel about....

Versus

- ▶ Do you feel you can trust people in general?
- ▶ Do you feel at home in this community?

Probing

▶ **Asking for more details**

- When did it happen, Who else was involved, how did you react upon that

▶ **Asking for elaboration**

- Would you elaborate on that, could you say something more about that, tell me more...

▶ **Asking for clarification**

- What do you mean by that, how do you actually do when you...

What makes a good interviewer?

(Kvale)

- ▶ Knowledgeable
- ▶ Structuring
- ▶ Clear
- ▶ Kind
- ▶ Sensitive
- ▶ Open
- ▶ Steering
- ▶ Critical
- ▶ Remembering
- ▶ Interpreting

Quality criteria's - interview

- ▶ Spontaneous, rich and specific answers
- ▶ Short questions, long answers
- ▶ Clarification
- ▶ Interpretations throughout the interview
- ▶ Is the interview self-communicating?

What else facilitate interaction between researcher – informant?

- ▶ Curiosity!
- ▶ Genuine interests
- ▶ Encourage informant to talk
 - Active listening
 - Body language

Ethical issues

- ▶ Advantages with the study?
- ▶ How to get informed consent?
- ▶ How to secure confidentiality
- ▶ Potential consequences for the participants?
- ▶ How do I as a researcher affect the study and the results?

Documenting interviews

Log

Project	Bike helmet use among adults
Date	May 28, 2007
Place	The informant's workplace, Umeå
Informant	No. 5, woman (i.e. ID-code of informant)
Research type	Semi-structured Open-ended interview
Team	NN
Documents	Tape-recorder, notes with preliminary analyses, observations

What do you think about bike helmets?



Well, I have read about a lot of investigations about how good they are in preventing severe damage of the head in case of an accident. I always tell my children to use it.... well, I actually force them to use it and the school is also teaching them to wear it. I myself have tried to learn to use it...but I find it rather hard. You see, it flattens my hair and it makes me look like a fool, I just become so ugly.

Notes directly after the interview

- ▶ **Substantive notes (summary)**

She disliked bike helmets' design, did not use it herself, forced her children to use it, knew about the dangers of biking

- ▶ **Methodological notes**

Telephone rang three times, colleagues opened the door twice, despite these disturbances the dialogue was good.
Relaxed atmosphere

- ▶ **Analytical notes, ongoing emerging theories**

Responsibility of others, neglecting oneself, up-dated knowledge, knowledge is not enough, how one looks is more important



Interview exercise

► Aim;

- To experience a fictive research interview situation
- To practice the use of open-ended questions and probing techniques'
- To observe the importance of environment, body language and interaction in an interview situation

Interview exercise, cont

► Work in groups of three

- Researcher
- Informant
- Observer, note-taker

Interview exercise, cont

- ▶ Fictive research project

“The meaning of smoke free worksite”

Interview exercise, cont

► Role of researcher

- Take 5 minutes to prepare three open-ended questions on the suggested research topic, as well as an short introduction and ending question
- Interview the fictive informant, not more than 10 minutes
- Reflect upon the questions, the response from the informant and the experiences of trying to probe

Interview exercise, cont

► Role of informant

- Reflect upon the questions posed to you, which were hard/easy to answer
- Reflect upon the overall situation – How did it feel being interview about this topic?

Interview exercise, cont

► Role of observer/note taker

- Observe the environment – facilitating or limiting for the interview?
- Observe the interaction and body language between researcher and informant
- Keep the time

Interview exercise, cont

► After the interview

- Discuss your different views in the small groups
- Experiences/reflections from the researcher
- Experiences/reflections from the informant
- Reflections from the observer