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Medical Research

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1. Interview Method

Definition of Interview

- Interview method is the art of questioning and interpreting the answers (**Qu & Dumay, 2011**).

2. Advantages of Interviews

- **Open-ended questions** allow participants to respond in **their own words** instead of choosing fixed responses.
- Interviews give the researcher **flexibility to probe** responses by asking **why or how**, helping in further elaboration (**Stuckey, 2013**).

3. Interview Settings

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

4. Types of Interviews

- **Structured Interviews**
- **Unstructured Interviews**

5. Structured Interviews

(**Qu & Dumay, 2011**)

- Use a series of **pre-established questions**.
- Questions are asked in the **same order** for all respondents.
- Interviews are **rigid** and follow a **script closely**.
- Researchers may **unintentionally bias** collected data through question design.
- **Highly standardized procedures** help reduce interviewer bias.

7. Unstructured Interviews

(**Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009**)

- More **flexible** and do **not** use predefined questions.
- Also called: **informal conversational interview, ethnographic interview, in-depth interview, non standardized interview**.
- Depend on the **spontaneous generation** of questions during interaction (**Patton, 2002**).
- Can be guided loosely by an **aide memoire or agenda**, which lists **topics** rather than exact questions.
- The **order of conversation** can change based on interviewee responses.
- **Audio recording is preferred** because note-taking may disrupt the natural flow of conversation.

8. Challenges of Unstructured Interviews

They require a significant amount of time.

The researcher must control the direction and pace of conversation.

Unexpected topics may appear and affect focus.

Training and experience are essential.

Data analysis is difficult because questions and answers vary across interviews (Patton, 2002; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).

9. Challenges of Interviews

Interviews require transcription before analysis, which is time-consuming (1 hour may take 5–6 hours) (Bryman, 2016).

Analysis is also time-consuming and detailed.

Researchers must avoid leading questions and non-verbal influence (Barrett & Twycross, 2018).

10. Quality of Interviews

Maintaining quality requires:

- **Preserve the flow of the interviewee's story (avoid interruption or redirection)**
- **Maintain a positive relationship (avoid shock, surprise, or personal opinions)**
- **Avoid interviewer bias by not using leading questions or ignoring important topics**

11. Focus Groups

- **Focus groups (sometimes called focus group interviews) take place in a group setting.**
- **Focus groups are not recommended for sensitive topics that people may be reluctant to discuss in public (Qu & Dumay, 2011).**
- **A key characteristic is the interaction between group members (Cameron, 2005).**
- **Focus groups typically consist of 8–12 people (ideal: 4–8) with a moderator who focuses the discussion on relevant topics in a non-directive manner.**
- **Smaller groups gather less information.**
- **Groups with more than 10 people may become crowded and make participation difficult.**
- **Multiple focus groups should be conducted to gather sufficient data, opinions, and views on the study (Oun & Bach, 2014).**

12. Advantages of Focus Groups

- **Convenience**

- Time and expense savings
- The researcher (facilitator/moderator) takes a less active role, so less bias is introduced compared to individual interviews.

13. Examples of Studies Using Interviews and Focus Groups

- *Surgeons' aims and pain assessment strategies when managing paediatric post-operative pain: A qualitative study* (Interview study).
- *"I couldn't even talk to the patient": barriers to communicating with cancer patients as perceived by nursing students* (Focus group study).

15. Observation (Observing in the Field)

- Simply: Observation in qualitative research involves "going into the field"—describing and analysing what has been seen (Mays & Pope, 1995).
- Observation is one of the oldest and most fundamental research methods in qualitative research.
- It is widely used in social sciences, psychology, and medical settings.
- Questionnaires and interviews may be affected by social desirability, where participants say what they think the researcher wants to hear rather than what they truly think or do (Twycross & Shorten, 2016).
- Observation involves collecting data using the senses, especially looking and listening in a systematic way (McKechnie, 2008).

16. Nature of Observation

- Observation is also referred to as an unobtrusive method.
- Unobtrusive measures allow data collection without the researcher interfering in the setting.
- Participants are often not aware they are being studied, so behaviour is more natural.
- Also called non-reactive or indirect methods.
- Participant observation takes place in the natural daily environment of informants (Spradley, 2016).
- Observation produces a large amount of data that requires careful analysis.
- Data can be qualitative, quantitative, or both.
- Observation is not passive; the researcher actively interprets what is happening.

17. Why Use Observation to Collect Data?

- Helps identify non-verbal behaviour, interactions, and communication patterns.
- Allows checking of interview data accuracy and clarification of terms used by participants.

- Helps detect distortions or inaccuracies in participants' reports (Kawulich, 2005).
- Provides access to real-life situations and behaviours that participants may not report.
- Helps researchers understand the culture and context more deeply.
- Enables collection of both qualitative and quantitative data (Bernard, 2017).

18. Types of Observation

- **Non-participant observation:** Researcher observes without participating in the activity.
- **Participant observation:** Researcher participates in the setting or activity being studied.

19. Participant Observation

- “The systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study” (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).
- Provides a “written photograph” of the situation using all senses.
- Involves learning through participation in real-life activities of the group being studied.
- The researcher may take an active role in the setting (e.g., working or training within the group).

20. Context in Observation

In both types of observation, the researcher studies behavior within its context, including:

- Physical surroundings.
- People in the setting.
- Interactions among individuals.
- Social, cultural, political, and economic factors influencing behaviour.

21. Styles of Observation

- **Unstructured observation:** Describes what occurs without predefined categories; provides rich description (Mulhall, 2003).
- **Structured observation:** Uses predefined definitions and records specific behaviours for measurement and analysis (Callahan & Bertakis, 1991).
- **Mixed observation:** Combines structured and unstructured approaches.

22. Data Collection Tools in Observation

- **Field notes:** Written records of observations, impressions, and interpretations.
- **Photographs:** Used to support analysis of setting and behaviour.
- **Audio and video recordings:** Used to document observed events for detailed review.