

INTERVIEW METHOD IN PSYCHOLOGY

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Definition of Interview

- Interview refers to a one-on-one conversation with a specified purpose, where one person acts as interviewer and other person is in the role of interviewee.
- According to Kerlinger- *“The interview is face to face interpersonal role situation in which one person, the interviewer, asks a person being interviewed, the respondent questions designed to obtain answers pertinent to research problem.”*
- According to Dezen: *“An interview is any face-to face conversational exchange where one person elicits information from another.”*

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- According to Good and hatt: “Interview is a process of social interaction between interviewer and interviewee.”
- According to APA(American Psychological Association): “Interview is a directed conversation in which a researcher, therapist, clinician, employer, or the like (the interviewer) intends to elicit specific information from an individual (the interviewee) for purposes of research, diagnosis, treatment, or employment. Conducted face to face, by telephone, or online, interviews may be either standardized, including set questions, or open ended, varying with material introduced in responses by the interviewee.”

Characteristics of Interview

- A widely used research technique.
- Interviews involve social interaction
- It is a directed conversation with specific purpose.
- Provides in-depth knowledge about the issue being investigated.
- Different types of data are generated from interview depending upon different type of questions a researcher asks.
- Interview is a type of verbal communication.
- There is considerable flexibility in the process of interview.

Types of Interview: Structured and Unstructured

Structured Interview

- According to APA(American Psychological Association):
“ Structured Interview is a method for gathering information, used particularly in surveys and personnel selection, in which questions, their wordings, and their order of administration are determined in advance. The choice of answers tends to be fixed and determined in advance as well. With structured interviews, answers can be aggregated and comparisons can be made across different samples or interview periods; interviewees can be assessed consistently (e.g., using a common rating scale); and order effects are minimized. Also called standardized interview.”

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- It is a quantitative research method.
- Predetermined set of closed-ended questions are used. Interviewer asks same questions in the same order from every interviewee.
- Also known as formal interview.
- Easy to replicate, this means it is easy to test for reliability.
- Structured interviews are less time consuming, so large sample can be obtained with this method. This considerably enhances representativeness of sample.

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- At the downside, structured interviews are not flexible. Because interviewer has to follow an *interview schedule*, he cant ask additional questions even if he feels there is a need.
- Closed-ended questions have their limitation, they generate quantitative data but they lack details.

Unstructured Interview

- According to APA: “ *Unstructured interview is an interview that is highly flexible in terms of the questions asked, the kinds of responses sought, and the ways in which the answers are evaluated across interviewers or across interviewees. For example, a human resource staff member conducting an unstructured interview with a candidate for employment may ask open-ended questions so as to allow the spontaneity of the discussion to reveal more of the applicant’s traits, interests, priorities, and interpersonal and verbal skills than a standard predetermined question set would. Also called nondirective interview.*”

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- In such type of interviews, set questions are not used.
- Interviewer asks open-ended questions based on a specific topic and tries to give whole process, a natural flow.
- Interviewer remains free to modify his questions based on respondent's answers at any moment if he considers it necessary.
- Often called informal interview.
- Generates qualitative data. Interviewer is able to get deeper understanding of person's situation. This improves validity of this method.

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- Unstructured interview can be time consuming.
- Analysis of information gathered through this method is also cumbersome.
- Interviewer needs to be well trained for conducting an informal interview. He should have ability to establish rapport and understanding that when he needs to dig deeper.

Merits of Interview method

- In-depth investigation is possible.
- Interview is a great tool to discover how individuals think and feel about a topic and why they hold certain opinions.
- Useful to obtain detailed information about personal feelings, perceptions and opinions.
- Produces high response rate.
- Respondent's own words are recorded and if there is any ambiguity, follow up questions are asked to clear it.
- In one on one conversation, interviewee feels less self conscious.

Limitations

- Time consuming and costly.
- Different interviewers elicit different response from same respondent.
- Interviewer can be biased.
- Interviewee can sometimes hide correct information.

.....to be continued.....

*Thank
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