

# **METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

## **THE INTERVIEW**

# INTRODUCTION

- ❖ **Definition:** the **interview** is a fact-finding/data collection technique where by the researcher collects data/ info from respondents through face-to-face interaction.
- ❖ It is also an oral administration of a questionnaire or an interview schedule.
- ❖ To obtain maximum co-operation from the respondent the researcher must establish a friendly relationship with the respondents prior to conducting the interview.

# ADVANTAGES OF INTERVIEWS

1. They give the researcher an opportunity to motivate the interviewee to respond freely and openly.
  - ❖ By establishing a rapport the researcher is able to give the respondent a feeling of actively contributing to the research project.
2. They allow then researcher to probe for more feedback from the respondent.
3. They give the researcher an opportunity to observe the interviewee's non-verbal communication.
  - ❖ There is a lot of info gained by observing body movements and facial expressions as well as by listening to verbal replies to questions.

## ADVANTAGES OF INTERVIEWS contd.

4. They allow the researcher to reword/adapt/rephrase questions for each individual respondent.
5. They provide an in-depth data which is not possible to get using a questionnaire.
6. Interviews yield higher response rates mainly because it is difficult for a respondent to completely refuse to answer questions or to ignore the interviews.

# DISADVANTAGES OF INTERVIEWS

1. Interviewing is a very time consuming and therefore a costly fact-finding approach.
2. The success of interviews is highly dependent on the researcher's human relations skills as it requires communication and interpersonal skills.
3. It may be impractical due to the location of the interviewee.
4. It generally involves smaller samples because they are time consuming.
5. Responses may be influenced by the respondents reaction to the interviewer.
6. Interviewers need to be trained to avoid bias.

# GUIDELINES TO CONDUCTING AN INTERVIEW

1. The interviewer must be pleasant. Any kind of antagonism between the interviewer and the respondent will affect the responses given.
2. Interviewer must show genuine interest in getting to know respondents without appearing like spies.
3. In order to create good rapport, the interviewer must try to find out very clearly what kind of a person the respondent would like to interact with.
4. Interviewer should be relaxed and friendly. However they should not appear to be casual and clinging.
5. Interviewer should not ask leading questions.

## GUIDELINES TO CONDUCTING AN INTERVIEW contd.

6. Interviewer should be familiar with the questionnaire or the interviewer guide.
7. When interviewing, the interviewer should have a guide which indicates what questions are to be asked and in which order and the allocated time for each question.
8. The interviewer should interact with the respondent as an equal. Respondents should not be talked down to or belittled. This can create antagonism and affect responses given.
9. The interviewer should inform the respondent about the confidentiality of the info given.

# TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

**A. Unstructured Interviews:** in this kind of interview, the interviewer asks questions or makes comments intended to lead the respondent towards giving data to meet the study objectives.

❖ **It has the following disadvantages**

1. Probing is commonly used to get deeper info however it is time consuming.
2. Unstructured interviews are subjective because a lot of freedom is given to the interviewee.
3. Usually get off track and the researcher must be prepared to redirect the interview back to the main goal or subject.



# TYPES OF INTERVIEWS contd.

- B. Structured Interview:** the interviewer has a specific set of questions to ask the interviewee.
- Depending on the interviewees responses, the researcher will direct additional questions to obtain clarification amplification. Some of these questions may be planned and others spontaneous.
  - Open-ended questions allow the interviewee to respond in many ways that seem appropriate
  - Closed-ended questions restrict answers to either specific choices or direct responses.

# TOOLS USED IN THE INTERVIEW

- ❖ The following are tools that are available to the researcher. They can be designed while some are already available
  - i. Questionnaire (NB: discussed earlier)
  - ii. Interview schedule/schedule
  - iii. Recording devices: audio and video

# INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- ❖ An interview schedule is a set of questions that the interviewer asks when interviewing. It makes it possible to obtain data required to meet specific objectives of the study.
- ❖ They are also used to standardize the interview situation so that interviewers can ask the same questions in the same manner.
- ❖ **Structured Interview Schedule:** the interview schedule consists of structured questions which have categories with responses and the interviewer simply checks the respondents response. In structured interview schedule answers are not followed up to obtain greater depth of info.

# INTERVIEW GUIDE

- ❖ To ensure that aspects of the subject are covered, the researcher should prepare an interview guide.
- ❖ **Definition:** an **Interview Guide** is a list of specific questions the interviewer will ask the interviewee. It consists of the following; name of interviewee, date, time, place, and subject, the interviewers question/objective and a column for interview responses. It is also important to provide space for general comments.
- ❖ It may also contain follow-up questions that will be asked only if the answers to the questions warrant the additional answers. Time should be provided for follow up questions also.

# SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interviewee: Jeff Bentley, Accounts Receivable Manager

Date: Tuesday, March, 23, 2000

Place: Room 223, Admin. Bldg.

Time: 1:30 P.M.

Subject: Current Credit-Checking Policy

Time Allocated	Interviewer Question of Objective	Interviewee Response
1 to 2 min.	<b>Objective</b> Open the interview: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduce Ourselves</li><li>• Thank Mr. Bentley for his valuable time</li><li>• State the purpose of the interview--to obtain an understanding of the existing credit-checking policies</li></ul>	
5 min.	<b>Question 1</b> What conditions determine whether a customer's order is approved for credit? <b>Follow-up</b>	
5 min.	<b>Question 2</b> What are the possible decisions or actions that might be taken once these conditions have been evaluated? <b>Follow-up</b>	
3 min.	<b>Question 3</b> How are customers notified when credit is not approved for their order? <b>Follow-up</b>	

(continued)

# SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE Contd

1 min.

## **Question 4**

After a new order is approved for credit and placed in the file containing orders that can be filled, a customer might request that a modification be made to the order. Would the order have to go through credit approval again if the new total order cost exceeds the original cost?

## **Follow-up**

1 min.

## **Question 5**

Who are the individuals that perform the credit checks?

## **Follow-up**

1 to 3 mins.

## **Question 6**

May I have permission to talk to those individuals to learn specifically how they carry out the credit-checking process?

## **Follow-up**

1 min.

## **Objective**

Conclude the interview:

- Thank Mr. Bentley for his cooperation and assure him that he will be receiving a copy of what transpired during the interview

21 minutes

Time allotted for base questions and objectives.

9 minutes

Time allotted for follow-up questions and redirection

30 minutes

Total time allotted for interview (1:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.)

## **General Comments and Notes:**

# RECORDING RESPONSES

**A. Note Taking-** this is a method of recording in which the interviewer records the respondents responses during the interview.

- ❖ They are recorded as the respondents talks. Recording should be done carefully and exactly as it was expressed.
- ❖ Attempts should not be made to summarize, paraphrase or correct bad grammar.
- ❖ Take comments on the margin about the observed gestures and also interpret their meaning e.g. to portray anger, uncertainty, embarrassment or sadness.

# RECORDING RESPONSES contd.

## ❖ Advantages of Note Taking.

1. When responses are noted as the interview progresses, it facilitates data analysis since the info is readily accessible and already classified into appropriate categories by the interviewer.
  - ❖ This is especially so if the interview guide is semi-structured or structured.
2. If note taking is done as the interview progresses, no info will be left out owing to forgetfulness or any other kind of omission.



# RECORDING RESPONSES contd.

## ❖ Disadvantages of Note Taking.

1. It may interfere with the communication between the respondents and the interviewer. This is especially so when the interview guide has a large number of unstructured questions.
2. Sometimes it becomes impossible to maintain rapport with the respondents because of the interruption as the interviewer takes notes.
3. It might upset the respondent if the answers are personal and sensitive. The respondent may not like the idea of answers being recorded as the interview progresses.
4. If note taking is delayed, important details may be forgotten.
5. Note taking makes the interview lengthy and boring.

# RECORDING RESPONSES contd.

**B. Tape Recording-** the interviewer questions and the respondent answers are recorded either using a tape recorder or a video tape.

## ❖ **Advantages of Tape Recording**

1. It reduces the tendency for the interviewer to make unconscious selection of data in the course of the recording.
2. The taped interview can be replayed back and studied more thoroughly than would be the case if only the notes taken during the interview were available.
3. It makes it possible to reanalyzed the data in order to test objectives or hypothesis which may not have been there originally.

## RECORDING RESPONSES contd.

4. When responses are recorded, a person other than the interviewer can evaluate and categorize responses. This makes it possible to establish the reliability of the data.
5. It speeds up the interview because there is no writing involved.
6. Communication is not interrupted.

# RECORDING RESPONSES contd.

## ❖ **Disadvantages of Tape Recording.**

1. The presence of a tape recorder changes the interview situation considerably. Respondents get nervous when they know whatever they are saying is being recorded.
2. If the interview involves sensitive info, respondents may be reluctant to give info if they know they are being recorded.
3. Transcribing tapes and then analyzing the info is time consuming and tedious.

# COMMUNICATION DURING INTERVIEWS

❖ Effective communication during interview is crucial.

## **Rules of Communication.**

1. The language used must ensure effective communication between the interviewer and the respondent i.e. the respondent must fully understand the language.
2. Technical terms must be avoided when talking to lay people and if they are used then they must be simplified.
3. The interviewer must explain the purpose of the study, and where necessary, the purpose of each question. The interviewer must be honest with the respondents because if suspicion is aroused responses will not be honest.

# COMMUNICATION DURING INTERVIEWS

4. The interviewer should first establish some rapport to put the respondent at ease and also to inspire confidence.
5. The interviewer should monitor the interview situation. E.g. if he/she notices a sensitive questions it can be withdrawn.
6. When communicating, avoid harsh words or discriminatory remarks. A well prepared interview guide will help one to avoid such negative approaches.
7. Sometimes the respondent get carried away when trying to explain a point, in such a case, the interviewer should tactfully bring the respondent back to the point without embarrassing them.

# PROBING QUESTIONS DURING INTERVIEWS

- ❖ Probing questions are necessary to get info especially for open-ended questions. E.g. “how is that?”, “anything else?”, “would you like to elaborate on that?”, etc. Silence is sometimes a good way of probing. When there is silence the respondent will realize that more info is needed.

- ❖ **Rules On Probing Questions**

1. **Probing questions must be neutral.** They should not affect the nature of the subsequent responses. To satisfy this requirement the interviewer should avoid being biased or subjective.

## PROBING QUESTIONS DURING INTERVIEWS contd.

2. Although some probing questions are prompted by responses, as much as possible **they should be thought out before hand**, and jotted down.
3. If probing questions are thought out before, **they will be appropriate**. When they are thought out at the spur of the moment they may not be appropriate.



# TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

- ❖ E.g. when a researcher is dealing with an institution or organization then telephone interview can be used effectively.
- ❖ **Advantages Of Telephone Interviews.**
  1. Sometimes it is cheaper to call than to travel to the respondents.
  2. When no one answers, there is no cost incurred and this makes frequent call backs possible.
  3. In countries where services are accessible to most households, it may be easier to interview subjects on the telephone than through home visits.

# TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS contd.

## ❖ Disadvantages Of Telephone Interviews

1. If subjects are sampled from a large area, calling could be very expensive.
2. Interviewing on the phone takes long and this can be expensive.
3. The respondent may not be very honest with responses, since it is not a face to face situation.
4. Respondents talking on the phone tend to be impatient and this affects the accuracy of the responses given.

# READING ASSIGNMENT

1. Read and make notes on standardized test and non-standardized tests.
  - ❖ Ref: Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches by Mugenda and Mugenda. Page 91-92