

## **Unit 5: Interviews and Survey Methods**

Welcome to week 5 where you will be introduced to the use of interviews and survey methods.

Conducting in-depth interviews is one of the most common qualitative research methods. It is a conversational piece, involving only respondent at a time. It provides opportunities for the researcher to get in depth details from the respondent.

A survey is one of the most important quantitative methods of collecting data. There are various types of surveys or polls and they are used to explore opinions, trends, etc. Online surveys are more generally used, with easier accessibility for the target respondents.

These methods are often used in research, but not always well. Often, they are used together to gain further insight into specific area of the investigation.

We will also introduce pre- and post-testing methods which can be used with any of the research methods you have seen. They present a viable “before-and-after” picture of the implementation of a new process or system.

*In this unit we shall:*

- Introduce you to interview methods and survey methods.
- Consider the definitions of population and sample.
- Introduce the concept of pre- and post-testing.

*On completion of this unit you will be able to:*

- Understand how interviews and surveys fit into research and whether either or both of these might be useful for your investigation.
- Understand how pre- and post-testing can be used in research.

### **Reflection:**

### **Interview:**

Interviews are a type of qualitative research in which the researcher speaks in depth with a select group of people to learn more about their thoughts and feelings about a topic of interest.

Structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews are the three main types of interview formats.

### **i. Structured Interview**

All interviewers are asked the same set of questions in the same order, which is why they are called "structured interviews." Because researchers can easily compare responses to the same questions, data analysis is often a breeze.

### **ii. Unstructured Interview**

Since no questions are prepared ahead of time and data gathering is done in an unstructured way, unstructured interviews are typically the least dependable from a research perspective. It is often difficult to compare the responses of different respondents in an unstructured interview because of the variations in question wording.

### **iii. Semi-Structured Interview**

The elements of both structured and unstructured interviews can be found in semi-structured interviews. Each interviewee in a semi-structured interview will be asked the same questions in advance. It's also possible to ask follow-up questions during interviews to get further detail or clarification on a topic (Research-Methodology, n.d.).

### **Examples of interview questions**

The tone, content, and scope of your questions will vary from one interview to the next. In contrast to the more open-ended and impromptu nature of the other interview formats, the questions in a structured interview are predetermined.

### **Advantages and disadvantages of interviews**

Research interviews are helpful. Due to their ability to capture nonverbal cues, spontaneous behaviors, and emotional responses, these research methodologies allow for more in-depth data collection and analysis.

However, if not done properly, they might take a lot of time and effort. In addition to the inherent risk of interviewer effect resulting from mistakenly leading questions, smaller sample sizes can reduce their validity and reliability.

For those who are considering using interviews as a research tool, the following are some pros and cons to consider (George, 2022).

### **Survey:**

Survey research is the practice of gathering information from a specified population (such as current or potential consumers) to learn more about said population's impressions of your company's goods and services.

Survey research, a type of quantitative data collecting, can yield a wealth of useful information for making important business and product decisions. However, getting the

findings you desire from survey research requires careful strategy and execution (Qualtrics, n.d.).

To conduct an effective survey, follow these six steps:

1. Determine who will participate in the survey
2. Decide the type of survey (mail, online, or in-person)
3. Design the survey questions and layout
4. Distribute the survey
5. Analyze the responses
6. Write up the results

### **Uses of Surveys:**

Numerous fields employ surveys as a means of collecting data. They are useful for gathering information on a population, such as its demographics, interests, attitudes, and values.

Uses of surveys in the social sciences include:

- Comparing the traits and dynamics of various social groups
- Market research, the practice of learning about goods, services, and businesses from the perspective of their target demographic
- Data collection for medical studies, including patient reports of symptoms and responses to therapy
- Political science: polling citizens' feelings on issues and candidates
- Behavioral and character characteristic studies in the field of psychology (McCombes, 2019)

### **Types of Surveys**

There are a variety of methods for conducting surveys. There is a considerable probability that you have taken part in a variety of market research surveys in the past.

- A few of the most typical survey administration methods include:
- An alumni survey sent to you via mail from your alma mater is one possibility.
- Telephone — A market research call asking about your thoughts on a certain consumer product is an example of a telephone survey.
- For example, your opinion on a store, item, or website might be solicited via an online survey.
- Surveys can also be administered through at-home interviews, such as the yearly United States Census (Cherry, 2019).

## **Post and Pre-Testing:**

As part of a research project, participants may be given a test to gauge their progress before they get any sort of intervention (known as a "pretest"). After receiving treatment, research participants take a posttest to gauge their progress. Participants in a pretest-posttest study design must take the same evaluation instruments both before and after therapy is administered. The goal of a quasi-experimental strategy, like a pretest-posttest design, is to establish a cause-and-effect link. The lack of random assignment in quasi-experimental studies makes them particularly well-suited to use in the real world (Study.com, 2022).

## **References:**

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