

The construction of the semi-structured interview guide

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It is important to realize that an *interview is not:*

- a conversation:



Qualitative Research Methods

Interviews

Conversation

A conversation generally lacks an explicitly mentioned purpose.

There are unspoken rules that you should avoid repeating yourself.

Both participants can ask questions.

Both participants are likely to express interest and/or ignorance in what the other is saying of topics which are raised in an interview

Conversation depends to a high degree on shared common knowledge.

Answers should, in general be as brief as politeness allows.

Interview

An interview always has an explicitly mentioned purpose.

Repetition of questions enables one to check that the information is reliable and can reveal new information.

Questioning is largely restricted to the interviewer.

Both interest and ignorance are likely to be expressed only by the interviewer.

Interviewing requires that all implicit knowledge from a respondent is brought out into the open and made explicit.

Answers should always be as detailed as possible.

It is important to realize that an
interview is not:

- an interrogation:



Example of interrogation:

While walking down the street, Officer Peddy sees Estelle, a well-known con-artist in town. Because he suspects her of bilking a visitor to his town earlier in the week, Officer Peddy approaches her and starts asking her questions about the victim of the scheme. ***“Where were you the night of August twelfth? Who were you with? Have you ever seen this man before (and produces photograph of the victim)? What do you know about fixing horse races? Do you play the piano?”*** He rapid-fires these questions at Estelle, who breaks down in tears and sobs ***“It was me. It was all me! Take mercy on my soul.”*** Because Estelle was not in custody and was free to continue her walk, she cannot invoke her Fifth Amendment privilege at trial as an affirmative defense to exclude the evidence of her extrajudicial confession.

It is important to realize that an
interview is not:

- a press interview



DALE WINTON 1955-2018: ON

Some people are just hell bent on self destruction

New insight into star's troubles

EXCLUSIVE

by Patrick Hill

DALE Winton spoke of his struggles and insecurities before his death and said: "Depression is a terrible thing."

In a never-before-published interview, the Sunday People can reveal that the Supermarket Sweep host also claimed nine out of 10 suicides are "merely a cry for help."

Dale added: "Some people are hell-bent on self-destruction."

The TV star, found dead aged 62 at his home on Wednesday, was haunted after his actress mum Sherree killed herself in 1976 when he

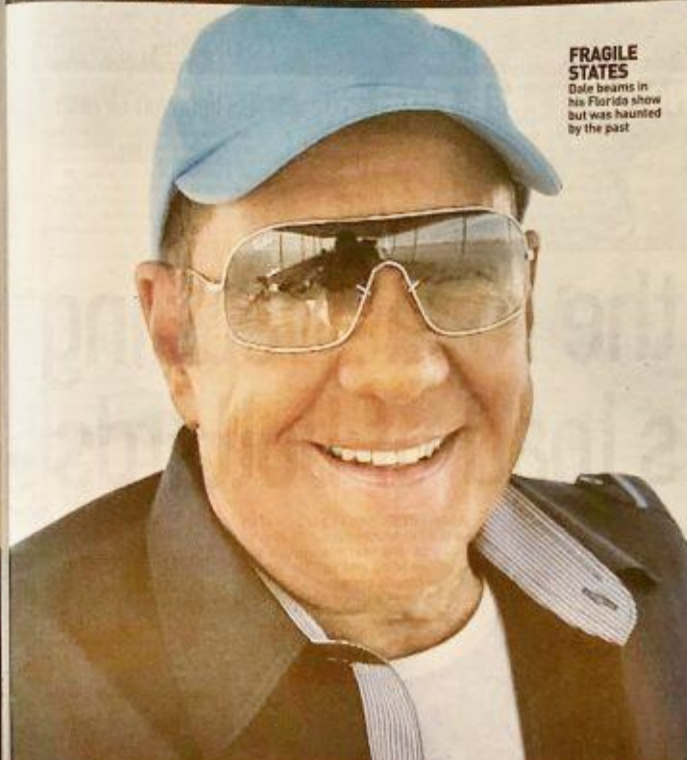
was just 21. BBC National Lottery host Dale said: "Let's not forget, when somebody takes their own life, nine times out of 10, 99 times out of a hundred, a suicide attempt is a cry for help so they don't really mean to do it."

"My mother tried it many times - she was forever being rushed to the hospital getting her stomach pumped. The bond that a mother has on her son is like no other. You only get one mother and that bond once in your life."

"Depression is a terrible thing. The doctor said, 'You know, she means to do it and one day we're not going to be able to save her' - but this time it happened." Dale added:

"Interestingly enough medicine has changed

LIVING WITH MUM'S SUICIDE



FRAGILE STATES

Dale beams in his Florida show but was haunted by the past



HIDEAWAY: Dale's home in America

Neighbour feared he'd kill himself

by Christopher Buckton

ONE of Dale's worried neighbours says he used to check up on the star every day - to make sure he had not killed himself.

John Winstel, 69, who lived two doors down from the TV host's Miami home, said Dale was laid low with depression after a love split and failing physical health.

He said: "When we last spoke it was about six weeks ago - and Dale was in a really bad state of mind. We spoke about politics for a bit, then he mentioned his depression."

"He said he was still devastated by the break-up of his relationship and couldn't get over it. He said 'I have a broken heart'."

"He really must have been in love with the man and I think the depression of his break-up is what killed him."

"He was such a happy guy at first, but then I saw the life sucked out of him."

Dale also suffered from breathing problems and crippling shoulder and back pain that left him struggling to walk.

In the end the star hardly left his house, but some locals who spotted him out dubbed him "the man with the deformed back".

Former turning saloon owner John said: "Dale's shoulder was bad, he had back problems and he could hardly breathe as he smoked four packs of cigarettes a day."

"He got so thin over the past few months and he looked really quite ill."

John and Dale became neighbours and friends 13 years ago when the star bought a three-bedroom house in Sarasota, Miami.

It is believed Dale lived between the US and the UK, where he died in a rented house in north west London.

John, 60, believes Dale went to Florida to escape the glare of publicity. He said: "He was a guy who always wanted to be in the light - but he didn't always want to share."

"Sometimes he wanted to turn that light off. He loved the fame but he also wanted to get away from it."

"Here he could be himself. I think it is the only time he could be."



DATING

so much. The medicine she was prescribed was so inappropriate and so wrong. In hindsight I've known then what we know now: things would have been different. They treat depression now in a different way. There is a sadness in that of course."

Dale, who won fame presenting ITV's daytime chat classic Supermarket Sweep in the 1990s, was found dead at his £1,000-a-month rented home in the North London suburb of Wembley.

He was trying to relaunch his career with a new Channel 5 series, Dale Winton's Florida Fly Drive.

During the 2010 interview uncovered by the Sunday People, he spoke of his need to be liked and his insecurities, including his fear of putting on weight.

He said: "When I walk down the street and people meet me, from cab drivers and people meet me, from ladies I get, 'Hi Dale, trucks or old ladies I get, 'Hi Dale, how are you?' And they all say the same thing: 'Oh, you're not what we were expecting, you're really nice'."

"I'm too terrified to ask them, 'What were you expecting?' It's a lot to do with my personality, it gives against me sometimes because I'm easy to please and anxious not to offend."

"I got round that by being friendly and making people laugh. I was never the attractive guy to be around. I was always the chubby child and weight is my constant battle to this day."

"You can say to me, 'You're rubbish on TV and have the eyes of a serial killer', and I'll forgive you. But Heaven forbid you say I've put on half a stone. That is my sensitive subject. I'm up and down half a stone but I used to be up and down four stone."

at night and think about it and think I hope I didn't offend them or say the wrong thing." So, that comes across on TV that I'm too eager to please, which is a unattractive quality, but it's genuine as I want them to like me. I want to be liked, not to offend anybody."

Dale, who was born in Marylebone, central London, added: "I was a fat child to the point my mother was dragging me off to dieticians and health farms from the age of 12."

"I got round that by being friendly and making people laugh. I was never the attractive guy to be around. I was always the chubby child and weight is my constant battle to this day."

"You can say to me, 'You're rubbish on TV and have the eyes of a serial killer', and I'll forgive you. But Heaven forbid you say I've put on half a stone. That is my sensitive subject. I'm up and down half a stone but I used to be up and down four stone."

"I considered liposuction as we all have different shapes, but I live with it. I've had a liposift and my

eyes and chin done and I'm done now, other than maintenance. I see it as maintenance. It's part of the job. There are people coming up all the time who are better looking, zipper, younger."

"For me to give me confidence, it's part of the job. If I didn't do this I wouldn't bother. It's a business decision it is not a vanity decision."

Asked if he would ever get married, Dale said sadly: "I don't think that's on the cards do you?"

The gay star was badly hit by the breakdown of a relationship in 2011.

Dale had sold his townhouse in Regent's Park, central London, four weeks ago after voicing fears about his debts to friends.

Police are treating his death as unexplained but not suspicious.

In his book, My Story, Dale had admitted taking "super-strength slimming pills and amphetamines" to shed weight.

He wrote: "I'd never dream of doing illegal drugs but these were on prescription and supposed to help me lose weight. They gave me a real buzz. I didn't realise they were amphetamines."

Dale later turned to stronger pills, adding: "I went to a private doctor, who prescribed super-strength pills. The first time I took one, I didn't sleep three days. That really triggered the weight loss."

I'm eager to please but I want to be liked, not to offend anyone



'Adoption gave me this sense I don't belong'

TV detective Lucy Sharp tells Peter Sarsfield about her upbringing, which is full of her birth family, such as her mother and 'Taste of Honey'

WHEN I WAS 11, I WAS ADOPTED. I WAS TAKEN TO A FOSTER HOME IN A VILLAGE IN THE COTSWOLDS. I WAS ONE OF SEVERAL CHILDREN WHO WERE BROUGHT TO THE UK FROM A CHILDREN'S HOME IN POLAND. I WAS ONE OF THE FIRST CHILDREN TO BE BROUGHT TO THE UK FROM A CHILDREN'S HOME IN POLAND. I WAS ONE OF THE FIRST CHILDREN TO BE BROUGHT TO THE UK FROM A CHILDREN'S HOME IN POLAND.

44
Meredith Grey can't remember a time when she wasn't an orphan

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BY PHILIP MCGEE FOR THE GUARDIAN. PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW HARRISON

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Can you believe...
Celine Dion's
husband is
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It is important to realize that an *interview is not:*

- a confession



- You:
- (after kneeling down, you cross yourself and whisper) Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It's been two weeks since my last confession, and I accuse myself of the following sins:
- I took the larger piece of cake when I knew my sister was hungry and there were only two pieces left. Once I watched a movie that was causing me to have lustful thoughts, and did nothing to stop it. I missed Mass last week.
- Priest:
- ***Why did you miss Mass?***
- You:
- ***I'd been up all night before and was just extremely tired.***
- Priest:
- I see...
- You:
- Oh, and I lied to a cop when he asked if I knew how fast I was driving.
- For these and all the sins of my past life, I ask pardon of God, penance, and absolution from you, Father (or your own words to this effect, such as "That's all, Father. I ask for absolution.")
- Priest:
- Alright. Say five Our Fathers for your penance.
- You:
- Thank you, Father.

Different types of interviews:

- Structured interviews
- Semi-structured interview
- Non-structured interview



Three types of interviews:



Difference between these three types of interviews in the eyes
of
The little Prince

- Grown ups love figures. When you tell them you have made a new friend they never ask you, “What does his voice sound like? What games does he like best? Does he collect butterflies?” Instead, they demand, “How old is he? How many brothers does he have?” Only from these figures do they think they have learned anything about him.

St Exupery



Le Petit Prince

The structured interview: questionnaire



The structured interview: definition

- By using the structured interview “the researcher follows a specific set of questions in a predetermined order with a limited number of response to each ordered question, which are often shorter in nature.” (Stuckey, 2013, p.57)

Examples: 1

Did you buy anything in the hotel shop?

- Yes ⇒ Go to Q19
- No ⇒ Go to Q21

What did you buy in the shop (Please tick as many boxes as apply)?

- Toiletries*
- Souvenirs*
- Clothing*
- Stationery*
- Other*

⇒ Please specify

Examples: 2

Were you, yourself, <i>actively</i> involved in the following stages of your company's involvement with Alpha Zero computer?		
	Yes	No
a. <i>Reviewing various options</i> to Alpha Zero that would meet your need?	Y	N
b. <i>Testing</i> Alpha Zero before deciding to buy it?	Y	N
c. <i>Making the final decision to buy</i> Alpha Zero (either on your own or as part of a decision-making team)?	Y	N
d. Handling the <i>ordering process</i> to buy Alpha Zero?	Y	N
e. Helping or overseeing the Alpha Zero <i>installation</i> ?	Y	N
f. Actually <i>using</i> the Alpha Zero?	Y	N
g. <i>Paying</i> Alpha Zero invoices?	Y	N

Structured interviews is an:



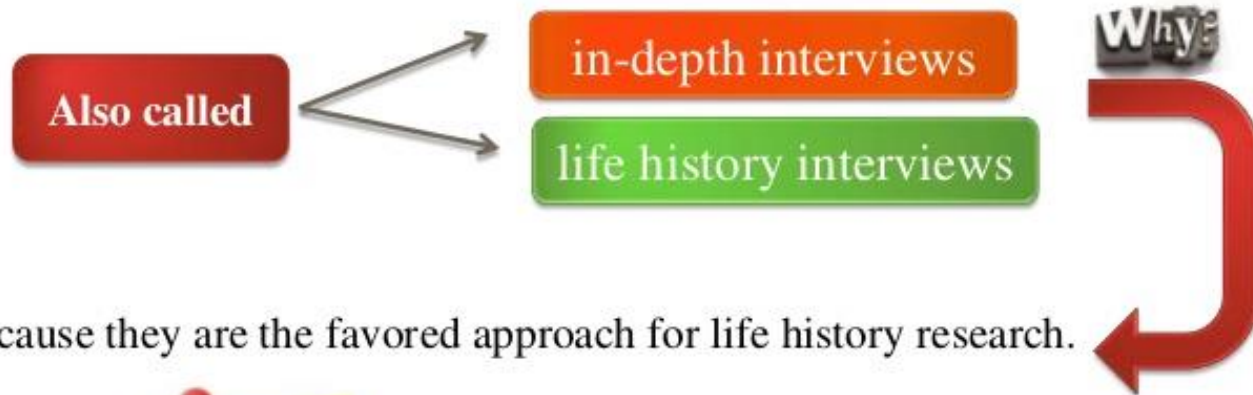
The unstructured interview:

“So tell me about yourself...”



Unstructured interview: definition

Unstructured interviews



because they are the favored approach for life history research.

only used
for qualitative
research.

UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW EXAMPLES

Tell me about yourself.

**What is your greatest
strength?**

**What is your greatest
weakness?**

**How will our company benefit
by having you as an
employee?**

Examples of Common Unstructured Interview Questions

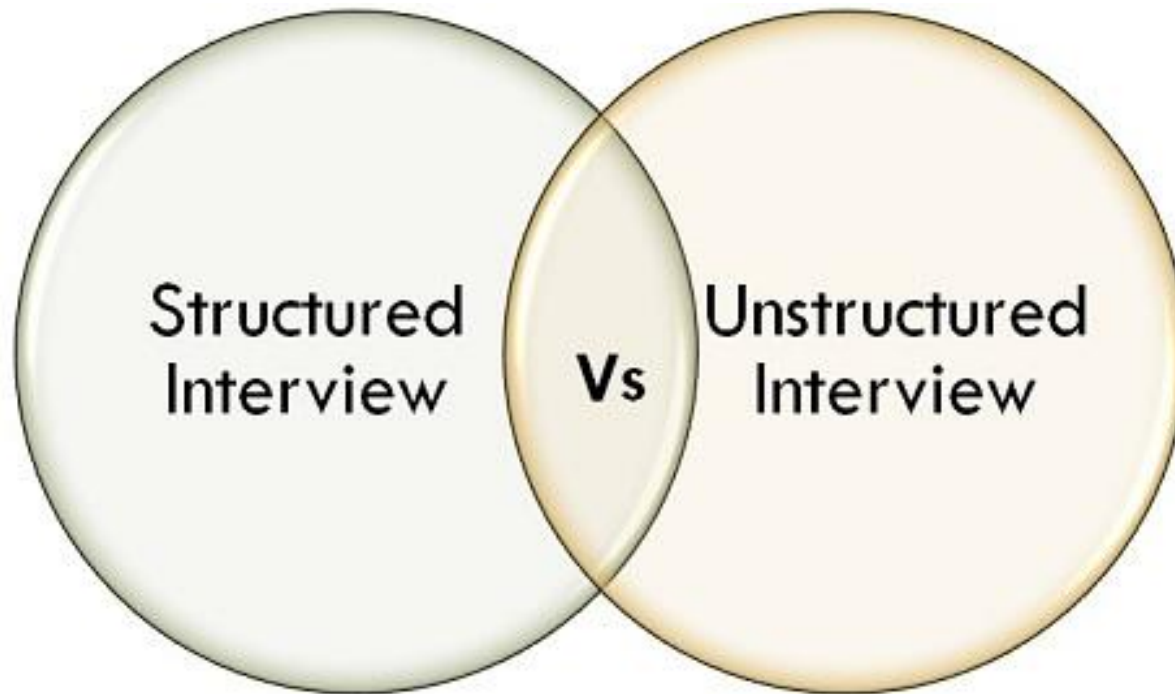
- ▶ Where do you see yourself five years from now?
- ▶ What are your greatest strengths?
- ▶ What are your greatest weaknesses?
- ▶ What subject did you most enjoy in college?
- ▶ Why should I hire you?
- ▶ Why are you interested in this job?



Semi-structured v.s Unstructured Interview

- Unstructured (Ethnography)
 1. Let the interviewee map out the topic.
eg. *“Tell me about what teachers do..?”*
 2. Interviewers **probe** to check their own understanding; often using respondent’s own language.
eg.:” *You said ‘sneaking out’. What did you mean?”*

The semi-structured interview



Semi-structured interviews

Structured Interviews

- Tendency toward closed-ended questions
- Questions read verbatim or limited word choice
- Minimize clinical judgment to increase reliability
- Minimal training necessary

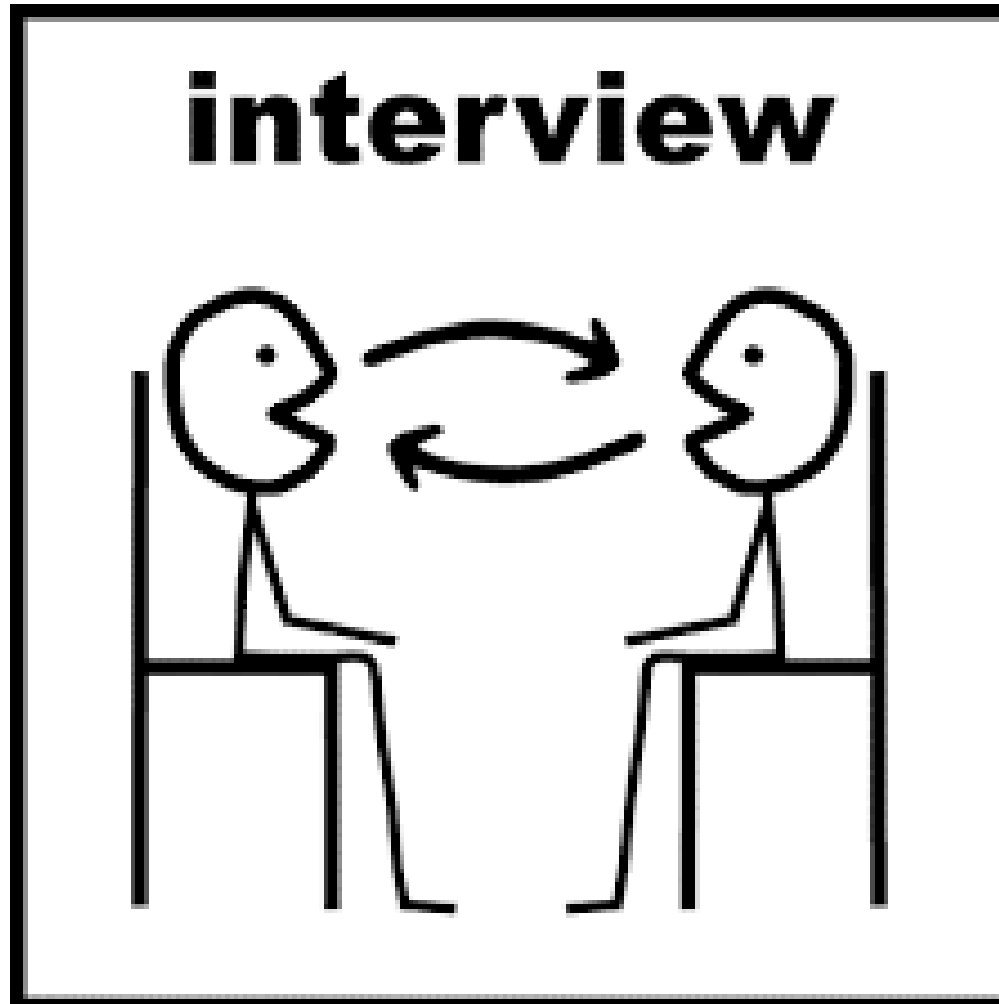
Semi-Structured Interviews

- Open & closed-ended questions
- Suggested Questions/ prompts
- Attempt to balance reliability & validity
- Moderate to substantial clinical judgment & training requirements

Unstructured Interviews

- Tendency toward more open-ended questions
- No required questions
- Maximum use of clinical judgment to increase validity
- Extensive training necessary

The semi-structured interview



Semi-structured interview: definition

- Sort of face-to-face interaction, “speech event”, located somewhere between the extremes of completely standardized and completely unstandardized interviewing structures
- “Allow researchers to develop in-depth accounts of experiences and perceptions with individuals”
(Cousin, 2009, p. 71, in Willis & Prescott, 2015)
- Interview is a technique. The goal of this technique is to collect discursive data to analyze the conscious or the unconscious mental universe of individuals.

Characteristics of the semi-structured interview:

- Involves the *implementation* of a number of *predetermined questions* and/or special topics.
- These predetermined questions are typically *asked of each interviewee in a systematic way and consistent order*, but the interviewers are permitted (in fact expected) to *probe far beyond the answers* to their prepared and standardized questions. So it is usually accepted that *the order of asking the questions is flexible* and addressed in line with the “flow” of the interview (Turner, <https://www.quirkos.com/.../semi-structured-interview-guide> qualitat...)
- Has *space for the unexpected*

Characteristics of the semi-structured interview:

- Questions used: Open questions

Give people the opportunity to talk ***openly and freely within the themes***, Interviewer and interviewee create the interview together—unlike questionnaire design

- They are ***time consuming***, but they are more flexible and adaptable than surveys.

The construction of the semi-structured interviews Guide

- the construction of the semi-structured interviews in research takes place at the research design phase. (Dias de Figueiredo, 2010)

2. A TYPICAL QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH



The construction of the semi-structured interviews Guide

To remember:

a semi-structured interview:

- Involves the *implementation* of a number of *predetermined questions* and/or special topics
- Has an *explicitly mentioned purpose*.
- Determined *in the design phase*.

The construction of the semi-structured interviews Guide

A semi-structured interview is influenced by:

- the research questions
- The literature review that gradually builds up knowledge about the research ideas
- Of the strategies for the selection of the sample

The construction of the semi-structured interviews Guide

A semi-structured interview **Guide** is like an **aide memoire** permitting the interviewer to keep the interview within the parameters traced out the aim of the study. (berg.2007,p.39, in Alshenkeeti, p.40)

It is called an interview guide because:

- It may consist of potential questions and probes, or may be little more than a list of possible topics to engage respondent on
- It may be modified during an interview

How does one go about writing a suitable semi-structured interview guide?

- ***Questions should answer your research questions:***

Your research project should have one or several main ***research questions***, and these should be used to ***guide the topics covered in the interviews***, and hopefully answer the research questions. However, you can't just ask your respondents "***Can the experience of male My Little Pony fans be described through the lens of Derridean deconstruction?***". You will need to ***break down your research into questions that have meaning for the participant*** and that they can engage with. The questions should be fairly informal and ***jargon free*** (unless that person is an expert in that field of jargon), open ended - so they can't be easily answered with a yes or no, and ***non-leading*** so that respondents aren't pushed down a certain interpretation. (Turner, <https://www.quirkos.com/.../semi-structured-interview-guide-qualitat...>)

How does one go about writing a suitable semi-structured interview guide?

- ***Link to your proposed analytical approach***

The questions on your guide should also be constructed in such a way that they will work well for ***your proposed method of analysis – which again you should already have decided.*** If you are doing narrative analysis, questions should be encouraging respondents to tell their story and history. In Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis you may want to ask more detail about people's interpretations of their experiences. ***Think how you will want to analyse, compare and write up your research, and make sure that the questioning style fits your own approach.*** (Turner, <https://www.quirkos.com/.../semi-structured-interview-guide-qualitat...>)

(kumar 2012, p.49)

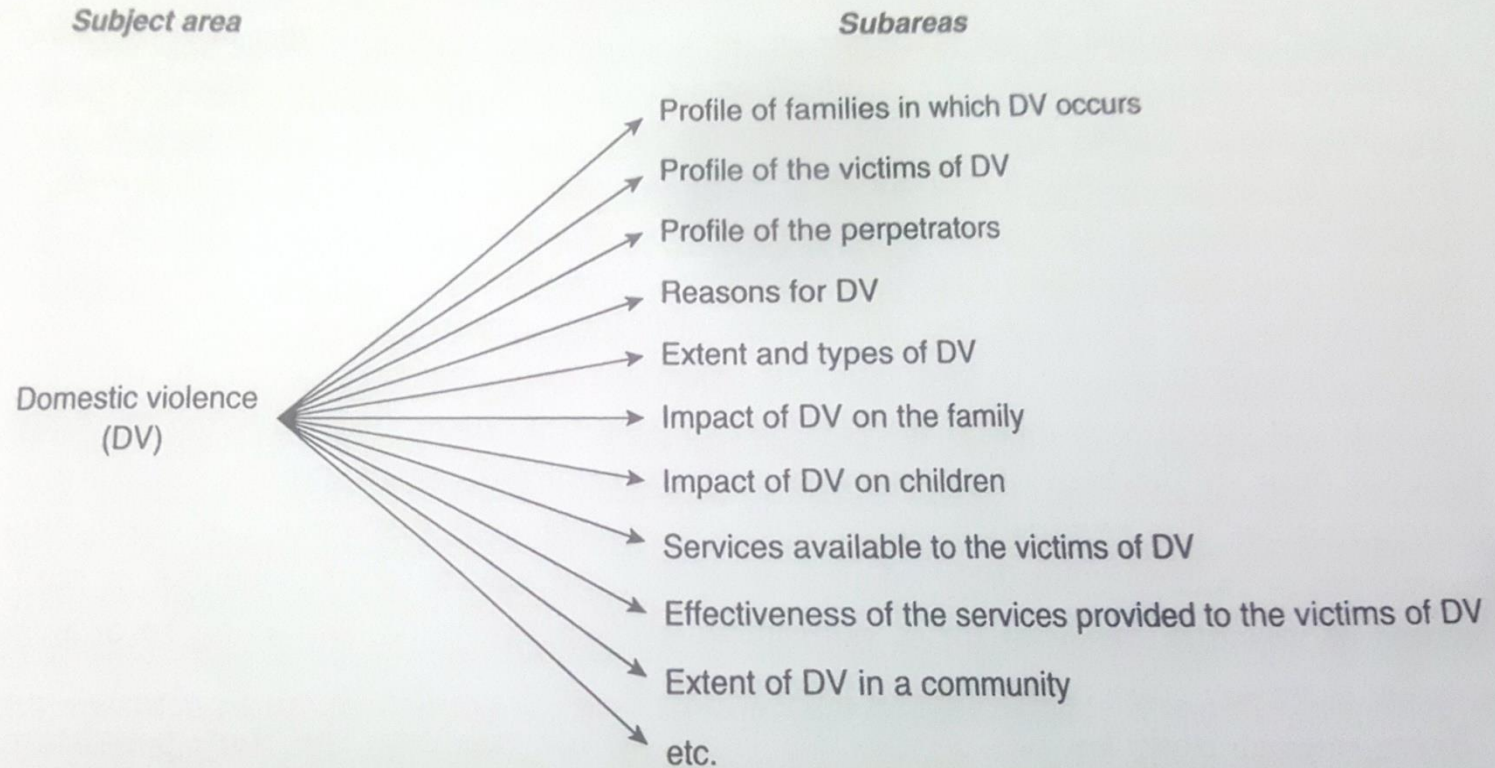


FIGURE 4.1 *Dissecting the subject area of domestic violence into subareas*

Impact de la violence domestique sur la femme

- Premier axe :
 - Détermination du temps, du lieu et de la durée de l'entretien.
 - Détermination du choix du cas.
 - Détermination des personnes qui nous ont conduit à ce cas.
 - Carte d'identité :- année du mariage, nombre d'enfants, les raisons du mariage : (amour, mariage arrangé)
 - age, niveau éducatif et professionnel de la femme.
 - age, niveau éducatif et professionnel de l'homme.

L'homme violent est : un ancien enfant battu, un drogué, un alcoolique, a un problème psychique, perd son contrôle, stressé au travail, provient d'un milieu défavorisé, sa relation avec ses parents...

- Deuxième axe :
 - les causes qui mènent à la violence : les derniers excès de violence en détail.
 - Les types de violences qu'elle subit. Jusqu'où peut-elle supporter le cycle de la violence ?

1- Les violences physiques :

2- Les violences psychologiques :

3- Violences sexuelles, ou violences sexuées :

4- Les Violences verbales :

6- La violence contre les enfants :

- Troisième axe :
 - La réaction de la femme face à la violence : se tait, le provoque, quitte la maison (puis revient), n'accepte plus de faire une relation sexuelle avec son mari. Fais-t-on entrer un tiers dans le conflit : les parents, le prêtre, le cheikh, les avocats, les assistantes sociales...
 - Le rôle des proches dans le genre de solution retrouvée : la femme doit obéir à son mari, l'homme ne doit pas battre quelqu'un de plus faible que lui, c'est à l'homme de comprendre la femme car il est plus intelligent.
 - La réaction de l'homme face à la violence : il regrette, il pleure, promet de ne plus recommencer, fait vivre sa femme une nouvelle lune de miel, en étant attentionné aux désirs de sa femme, en lui apportant un cadeau.
 - Quand est-ce que l'homme redevient violent ?
 - Comment voit-elle l'homme après son acte de violence ?

How to conduct the interview guide?

- ***Specific ‘Why’ and prompt questions***

It is very rare in semi-structured interviews that you will ask one question, get a response, and then move on to the next topic. Firstly you will need to provide some structure for the participant, so they are not expected (or encouraged) to recite their whole life story. But on the other level, you will usually want to probe more about specific issues or conditions. That is where the flexible approach comes in. Someone might reveal something that you are interested in, and is relevant to the research project. So ask more! It's often useful in the guide to list a series of prompt words that remind you of more areas of detail that might be covered. For example, the question “When did you first visit the doctor?” might be annotated with optional prompts such as “Why did you go then?”, “Were you afraid?” or “Did anyone go with you?”. Prompt words might reduce this to ‘Why THEN / afraid / with someone’.

(Turner, qualitat...)

<https://www.quirkos.com/.../semi-structured-interview-guide>

How to conduct the interview guide?

- ***Be flexible with order***

“Generally, an interview guide will be grouped into several topics, each with a few questions. One of the most difficult skills is how to segue from one topic or question to the next, while still seeming like a normal conversation. The best way to manage this is to make sure that you are always listening to the interviewee, and thinking at the same time about how what they are saying links to other discussion topics. If someone starts talking about how they felt isolated visiting the doctor, and one of your topics is about their experience with their doctor, you can ask ‘Did your doctor make you feel less isolated?’. You might then be asking about topic 4, when you are only on topic 1, but you now have a logical link to ask the more general written question ‘Did you feel the doctor supported you?’. The ability to flow from topic to topic as the conversation evolves (while still covering everything on the interview guide) is tricky, and requires you to”. (Turner, <https://www.quirkos.com/.../semi-structured-interview-guide-qualitat...>)

How to conduct the interview guide?

- ***Know your guide backwards - literally***

“I almost never went into an interview without a printed copy of the interview guide in front of me, but it was kind of like Dumbo’s magic feather: it made me feel safe, but I didn’t really need it. You should know everything on your interview guide off by heart, and in any sequence. Since things will crop up in unpredictable ways, you should be comfortable asking questions in different orders to help the conversational flow. Still, it’s always good to have the interview guide in front of you; it lets you tick off questions as they are asked (so you can see what hasn’t been covered), is space to write notes, and also can be less intimidating for the interviewee, as you can look at your notes occasionally rather than staring them in the eye all the time.” (Turner, <https://www.quirkos.com/.../semi-structured-interview-guide-qualitat...>)

Particular type of semi-structured interview: the biographical narrative interview

- Origin of biographical methods: Chicago School of Sociology
- Since 1990s biographical research has been based on the acceptance that biography is a social construct

The biographical narrative interview: Definition

- A specific type of qualitative research “which uses stories of individuals and other “personal materials” to understand the individual life within its social context” (Roberts 2002:3, in Breen, 2009)
- Recognizes that “what we capture [in stories] is a mediation between the personal voice and wider cultural imperatives” (goodson & Sikes 2001, in Breen 2009)

Parts of the biographical narrative interview guide:

Based around your area of research but generally include topics such as:

- Initial question
- Early life history & family of origin
- Education
- Community and class
- Employment
- Leisure/courting
- Marriage and children
- Later life
- Turning points

(Breen, 2009)

Particular type of semi-structured interview: the recruitment interview

- What is your vision of your role in the dairy industry in 5 years?
- What are the most interesting aspects of your career in the dairy industry?
- What do you believe are the most valuable skills that you could bring to this role?
- Can you tell us about any involvement you have had with industry people outside the immediate farm environment?
- Give an example of a service provider you have used who has been a help to you in your role in previous positions.
- Are there any physical constraints that we need to be aware of in your capacity to carry out the requirements of this role?
- Give an example of when you have completed a task outside of your work role.
- Can you briefly outline a time when you were required to work under pressure.
- What aspect of dairy farming do you enjoy the least?
- What sources of information do you use to keep your skills updated and relevant?

Particular type of semi-structured interview: the recruitment interview

- This position requires some commitment of time outside of the standard hours. Is there anything that would prevent you from being available at these irregular times?
- Can you outline a time when you have introduced a new idea or method to the workplace?
- Give an example of when you have experienced conflict with your manager/boss and what you did to manage this situation.
- Tell us about a time when you have needed to address an issue with a staff member who continually defied the code of conduct on the farm. For example, not arriving on time for the start of their shift.
- ***Technical competencies***
- Tell us about your skills in maintaining farm machinery.
- If you had a situation where cell counts were rising dramatically, describe the steps you would take to manage that problem.
- What experience have you had with herd management recording programs?
- Which dairy software programs are you familiar with and able to use?
- Give an example of how you have dealt with a high cell count in previous jobs.
- How have you addressed the problem of a lame cow in the herd in the past?
- Tell us about what you have used to manage pastures in a wet winter.

Particular type of semi-structured interview: the evaluation interview

Name of interviewer:

Name of interviewee:

Place of interview:

Date of interview:

Questions:

- What do you see as your most important responsibilities and tasks?
- Can you tell me the things you like most about your work?
- Do you find some things difficult about your work? Can you tell me about them?
- What important achievements have you accomplished since beginning work here?
- Do you feel that you receive encouragement from your supervisors and co-workers?
- How satisfied are you with the supervision you receive?
- How well do you and your supervisor communicate?
- How well do you and your co-workers communicate?
- How well do you think people in the project cooperate with one another?
- Do you feel safe working in this environment? If not, can you tell me why?
- How involved are you in planning the work you actually do?
- Do you feel your comments and suggestions about the project are understood and appreciated?
- How much influence do you think street children have over what happens in the project?
- Have any obstacles prevented you from accomplishing your work tasks? Can you tell me about them?
- Do you feel you need additional training to do this work? If so, in what areas?
- Do you feel you have an opportunity to use fully your knowledge and skills in the project? If not, can you tell me about this?
- How well do you think this project meets the needs of street children?

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