

DOING INTERVIEWS



***Any questions on
the first assignment?***

*Thoughts on the
course reading?*

AGENDA

- 1. What are qualitative interviews about?**
- 2. How to craft an interview guide**
- 3. How to interview well**
- 4. Moving from interviews to analysis**

WHAT ARE QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS "ABOUT"?

- Qualitative research = understanding the qualities of something
- It **is not** about "get (right) answers" or "test hypotheses"
- An "insider confession" that illuminates a cultural context



THESIS TIP #8:

Your interview questions should be specifically designed to match gaps in literature or other study goals



TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Type of interview	Required skills / researcher – participant relation
Structured interview	Neutrality; no prompting; no improvisation; training to ensure consistency
Semi-structured interview	Some probing; rapport with the interviewee; understanding aims of the project
Open-ended or ethnographic interview	Flexibility; rapport with interviewee; active listening
Focus group	Facilitation skills; flexibility; ability to stand back from the discussion so that group dynamics can emerge

(NON-PARTICIPATORY)



(PARTICIPATORY)

THESIS TIP #9:

Vast majority of master's theses use semi-structured interviews.



DEPTH INTERVIEWS VS FOCUS GROUPS

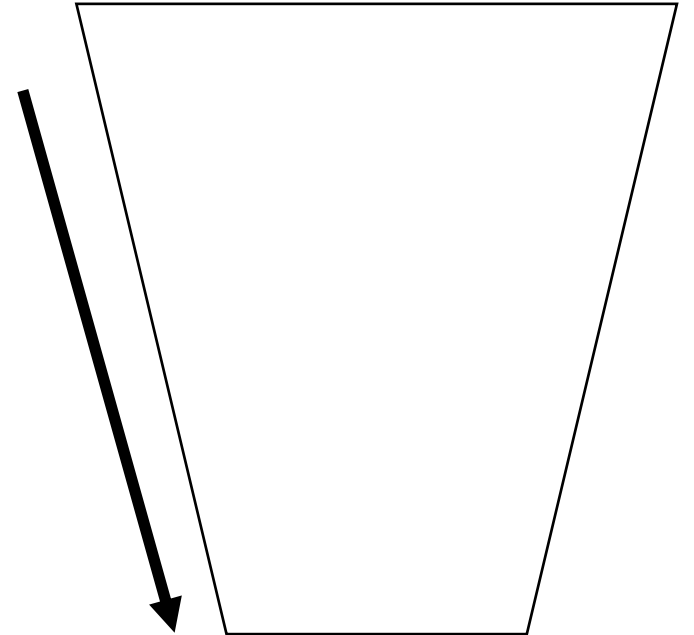
- FG – most common method in business
 - Quick, easy, cheap
 - Complicated, lack of depth
 - Not intimate, leads to group-think, moderator bias, dominant individuals, self-censorship.
- Useful for ad test, sensory test, pack design...
- Higher focus on the advertisement than usual



The Interview Guide

THE PURPOSE OF AN INTERVIEW GUIDE

- Not just a “list of questions”, but a funnel
- An interview guide...
 - ✓ Keeps you focused
 - ✓ Helps you cover all the relevant concepts
 - ✓ Helps you maintain control of the interview
 - ✓ Helps you connect “emic to etic” (Arsel 2017)
 - ✓ Allows you to get “back on track” if the conversation gets sidelined



PREPPING FOR AN INTERVIEW: UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

If you're *unfamiliar* with the phenomenon,

- Keep an open mind, not an empty head.

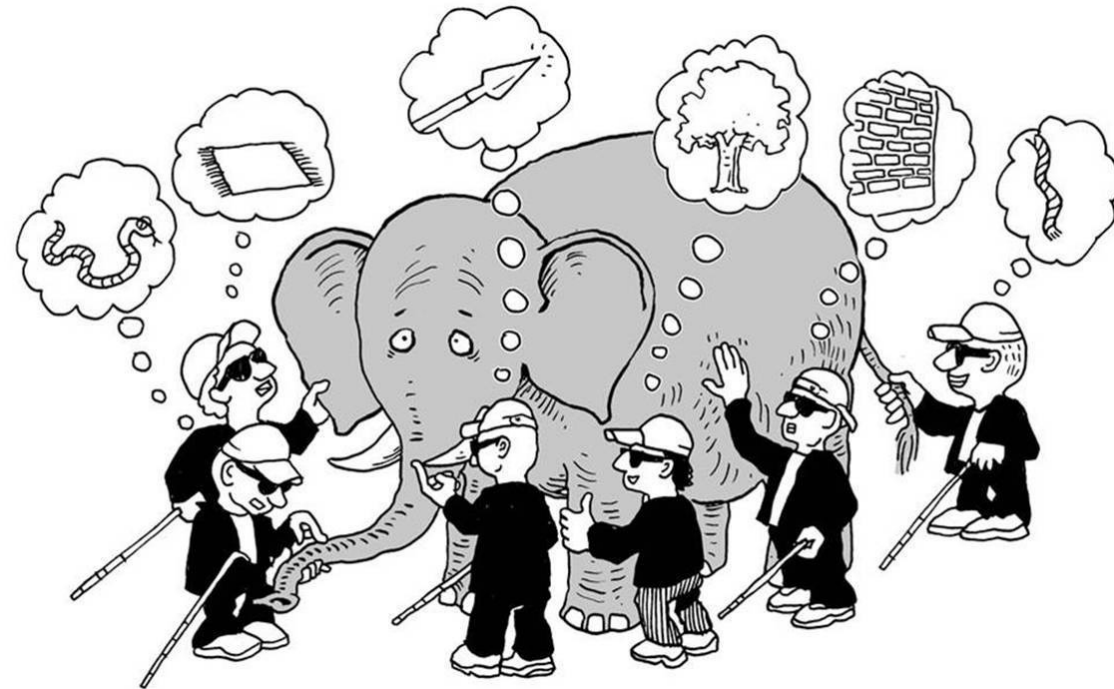
If you're *familiar* with the context,

- Gain distance and look with fresh eyes.



PREPPING FOR AN INTERVIEW: RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS

- There is no set rule for the amount of qualitative interviews
- For a master's thesis, 8-12 informants is generally sufficient
- Considerations depend on the research project.
 - Novices vs. experts
 - Gender and age balance
 - "Those that do and those that don't"
- Snowballing a good way to find informants



THESIS TIP #10:

Be prepared to put effort into finding the right informants rather than interviewing who is "conveniently" there



SETTING UP THE INTERVIEW

- Explain the process to your informant before starting to record
- A therapy session is a good metaphor for the “talker-listener” dynamic (Schouten 2014) → **emphasize anonymity**
- Selection of location helps: their home, a quiet café or Zoom
 - Zoom interviews tend to be shorter!



WARMING UP AND GETTING STARTED

- Important to set a conversational, informal tone
- Build rapport, trust, and induce humor (if it fits the topic) before turning on the recorder
- Give them a broad idea of your research, but be careful of revealing too much
- Emphasize that they can talk as much as they want!
- Active and empathic listening!



WARMING UP AND GETTING STARTED

- Gain an understanding of who this person is
 - "Tell me about yourself"
- It also primes the informant to think back, and helps set the tone for the interview
- Really probe deep to this question, "digging as deep as you can about background, family, education, and current lifestyle" (Arsel 2017)



DELVING INTO THE "ACTUAL" TOPIC

- You want your respondents to *describe* something in their own words → remove ALL jargon from questions
- Phrase your questions so that you get lengthy responses
 - "What is/was X like?"
 - "How long have you been doing X?"
 - "When was the last time when you x? How was it?"
 - "How did you get into X?"
 - "How do you feel when X?"
 - "What/who is a typical X?"
 - "Who is good/bad at X?"
 - "When do you usually X?"
 - "What do you need for X?"
 - "What is a good example of X? Or a bad example of X?"



Q: Do you find Iso Omena a fun place to shop?

A: Yes

Q: Can you find everything you need here?

A: Pretty much, sure

Q: Do you think Iso Omena is conveniently located?

A: I guess it is



Q: How do you feel about Iso Omena?

A: Well, I actually quite like it, especially that I can go everywhere with the baby trolleys. I mean the stores, the bathrooms, the elevator... can't really do that in Itäkeskus.

THE CURSE OF "WHY?"

- Don't ask why!
 - "Can you tell me a bit more?" is the key
- "Why?" questions elicit **rationalization** and **defensiveness**
- Easiest way to self-sabotage your own interview



DO NOT FEED CONCEPTS!

Interviewer: "What did you miss most about being away from your family?"

Respondent: "The family."

Interviewer: **"The love and warmth?"**

Respondent: "The togetherness and that sort of thing, and being able to talk to your family, talk more intimately. In the army the talk is more or less on a lower level."

Interviewer: **"Surface level?"**

Respondent: "Surface level ... I guess you could call it that."

(McCracken 1988, Long Interview)



PROBING AND REACTING

- Important to recognize probing opportunities → **however, absolutely no interrupting!**
 - Interviewee mentions X → "Can you tell me about a time when X happened?"
 - You can also gently probe "why" questions
 - "A while ago, you mentioned X. Can you tell me a bit more about that?"
 - "How does that differ from what you said earlier?"
 - (Playing dumb) "Just to make sure I understood you, can you tell me a bit more about X?"
 - "How do you see that being in the future?"
- **Feel free to keep notes (words, ideas, or moments you find intriguing)**



USING ELICITATION MATERIALS

- Props, pictures, samples, videos, collages, websites, artifacts that are helpful in stimulating conversation
 - "Can you describe this?"
 - "What do you do with this?"
 - "Can I see you do X and tell me what you are doing?"

- If interview takes place at home
 - "Can you give me a grand tour?"



PATIENCE AND LETTING THEM TALK

Researcher: What do you recommend instead? Where should people get their music?

Jack: There are several alternatives. You can go with CDs. You can hack DRM if you know where to get the software. But of course, until they stop DRM, regular p2p is the way to go if you ask me.

Researcher: (Strategic pause.)

Jack: Honestly, I know that people say it's not better, but I have to say, if there isn't a good market solution, what choice do consumers have but to take action in order to get what they're entitled to?

(Giesler 2008, Marketplace Drama)

CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

- Let them talk, but be mindful of time
- Take advantage of the end of the interview
 - "Is there anything else you feel that we should talk about?"
 - "How did the interview go, in your opinion?"
 - "Can you help me find the next person to interview?"
- Reveal your research interest from a more academic perspective and ask for feedback
- If some things have been stubbornly avoided, you can ask them point-blank → careful! this can be weak data

REVISING THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

- The guide is a **living document**
- Some themes may turn up to be dead ends, others turn out to be gold mines
- The interviews are "done" when you feel all the interviews are repeating the same things → data saturation

TRANSCRIBING

- Recoding the interview on tape is a **MUST**
- A good transcript is verbatim, every word, break, and utterance!
- Transcription takes time



EXAMPLE

Q: How did you sort of, um, decide on the character?

A: Um, I guess it was watching Game of Thrones, I've always liked to cosplay people that I look more like. So when she was finally introduced I was like 'oh, there's actually a character that I kind of look like that I could kind of cosplay', yeah.

Q: Okay, so looks came first?

A: Yeah, looks definitely came first [laughs]. Unfortunately for me, because you want to, you know, you don't want to look poor when you're cosplaying or 'that person looks nothing like that', so... But then it really helped that I liked her character and I was like 'yeah, I really like you now'... and Natalie Dormer is gorgeous! So it was like [gasps], 'she's on screen all the time!' [laughs].



Play at Any Cost: How Cosplayers Produce and Sustain Their Ludic Communal Consumption Experiences

ANASTASIA SEREGINA
HENRI A. WEIJO

Communal consumption is often described as inherently playful; previous research focuses mainly on successful ludic communal experiences and largely disregards their potential pitfalls. Moreover, the marketer is usually seen as the primary facilitator of ludic experiences, which has marginalized the role of the consumer. This article explores how consumers produce and sustain ludic consumption community experiences in the face of growing instrumental costs. It assumes a practice theory lens and is based on an ethnographic inquiry into cosplay, a time- and resource-intensive form of pop culture masquerade and craft consumption. Prolonged engagement in the cosplay community leads to growing emotional, material, temporal, and competence-related costs, which hinder playful experiences. Consumers practice modularization, reinforcement, and collaboration to overcome these costs and maintain the important ludic sensations that co-

Tips for transcribing

Interview Guide TEMPLATE

1. Background Information

1. "Could you tell me a little bit about yourself?"

- i. Basic info like age
- ii. "Life story" (e.g., where did they grow up)
- iii. What's your job or occupation?
- iv. What's your family like?
- v. Parents: What do they do and what is their educational background?

2. Overall questions about consumption lifestyle

1. What is a typical day for you? And week?
2. What do you like to do? / What are you into? / What kinds of things do you like?
 1. Probes: How long have you been doing X?
 2. What is X like?
 3. Can you recall a memorable incident with X?
3. How would you describe yourself?
4. How do you think others would describe you?

3. HERE BEGIN THE QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE RESEARCH PROJECT ITSELF

4. Suggestions for interviewees

- . Xxx
- a. Xxx
- b. Xxx

It's time to work on your interview guide!

Download the template on [MyCourses](#)

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