

Having experts talk: Generating questions & interviewing techniques

Interviewing experts is an important and powerful means of obtaining valuable data in sociology, political science, media studies, economics and many other research disciplines. Interviewing experts can provide researchers with valuable insider information, and expert interviews promise insights into processes of decision-making in institutions, communities, and organizations; this also makes the expert interview a powerful tool for organizational supervision and consulting.

This 2-day introductory workshop aims at the practice of interviewing experts: The participants practice how to conduct qualitative interviews with experts, how to prepare them, and how to generate interview questions. Throughout the workshop, the basics of qualitative research are introduced and discussed; especially two means of ensuring quality in qualitative research - openness and reflexivity - are practiced. In addition, special focus will be on organizational issues (sampling strategies, establishing & maintaining contact, transcription & postscripts), on research ethics, and on issues concerning power, assumed roles and interaction in interviews with experts.

The goal of the workshop is to provide the participants with the tools and knowledge needed in their fieldwork. Throughout the workshop, individual questions are discussed and answered.

Day 1

9.00 – 9.15	Introduction
9.15 – 10.15	The main challenges of qualitative interview research: other-awareness & indexicality (<i>input & plenary discussion</i>)
10.15 – 10.30	Break
10.30 – 11.15	Differences between interviews & every day conversation (<i>input & plenary discussion</i>)
11.15 – 11.30	Break
11.30 – 12.30	How (not) to ask questions in the interview, Part I (<i>practice activity</i>)
12.30 – 13.45	Lunch Break
13.45 – 14.45	How (not) to ask questions in the interview, Part 2 (<i>practice activity</i>)
14.45 – 15.00	Break
15.00 – 16.00	What are experts – and what are special issues when interviewing them? (<i>input & plenary discussion</i>)
16.00 – 16.15	Break
16.15 – 17.30	Dealing with roles, expectations & power in expert Interviews (<i>input, plenary discussion & practice activity</i>)

Day 2

9.00 – 10.15	How to (re)act in the interview situation (<i>practice activity</i>)
10.15 – 10.30	Break
10.30 – 11.30	Before & after the interview situation: Organizational & methodological frameworks (<i>input</i>)
11.30 – 11.45	Break
11.45 – 12.30	Research ethics (<i>input & plenary discussion</i>)
12.30 – 13.45	Lunch Break
13.45 – 14.45	The researcher's research expectations (<i>practice activity</i>)
14.45 – 15.00	Break
15.00 – 17.15	From the research question to the interview guide (<i>practice activity</i>)
17.15 – 18.00	Q & A, workshop evaluation