

INTERVIEW 27 JULY 2018: SUBJECT: Interviewing methods

C= Researcher

M = Respondent

C	Hello, my name is Christine Bothma and I'd like to interview you today. Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this interview.
M	It's my pleasure Christine
C	Your name is Xxx.
M	Yes
C	[Umm] Tell me some more about yourself. Where do you work?
M	Oh [Umm] well I work at UNISA and I've been here for approximately 8 years already
C	And what does your job involve?
M	I do market research.
C	Oh Ok, so that involves a lot of interviewing as well?
M	I do a lot of interviews, I'm [Umm] do a lot of behavioural research so in-depth interviews is part of what I do.
C	OK, so you're the right person to ask about interviewing.
M	[UMM] most likely yes [laughs]
C	OK [Umm] the reason I chose to interview you is precisely that... because you have experience with interviewing and I want to find out more about particular types of interviewing
M	OK
C	[Umm] the reason I'm doing the interview in my research I'm doing a workshop on interviewing skills
M	OK
C	And [Umm] we are required to practise those interviewing skills
M	OK
C	And this seems to be a perfect opportunity
M	OK, well I'm hoping I can share something with you
C	I'm sure you can! [Umm] having said that, in my transcript after I've recorded you've

	already agreed that I may record...
M	Yes
C	I will not mention you by name
M	OK
C	I'll give you a pseudonym
M	OK
C	[Umm] What sort of interviews do you usually do? Do you have a general type of interview or...
M	[Aah] well we do numerous kinds of interviews [Umm] but the work that I do is on consumer behaviour mostly so we have structured and unstructured interviews that we do.
C	And what is the difference between structured and unstructured?
M	A structured interview is where you have predefined questions that you ask and very often you give the respondent or participant a list of possible answers to choose from so it's structured where an unstructured interview is where you ask more open-ended questions and [Umm] you don't necessarily follow a very strict order of questioning [ah] you make use of probing techniques based on what the participant tells you to gauge further and to understand - gain a deeper level of understanding
C	How did you acquire your skills? It can't be that easy to do an interview
M	Well you learn these things as part of your qualification but at the end of the day I suppose experience comes into play and the more you do it the easier it becomes
C	So it's practise
M	Yes
C	Practise makes you perfect!
M	Yes, because there's I think a level of confidence that needs to be applied
C	Of course
M	as well. if you feel uncertain and you don't feel confident it's going to come across in your interview and you're going to make your participant feel uncomfortable
C	[Mmm] that's a very good point. I'll remember that
M	Yes
C	[Umm], so it's pretty much [Umm] practise is what gives you confidence. Doing it over and over again in different situations

M	Yes, I would say so
C	Yea OK [Umm]. A while ago you told me about an interview technique that you used
M	Yes
C	Using 3 questions only
M	Yes
C	Can you tell me some more about that
M	[Umm] well, it seems very simplistic but it's actually a very [errr] in-depth type of interviewing technique. It's called a laddering interview [Umm] as it builds up into [mmm] mostly 3 steps - sometimes it would be a fourth question that you would ask. It's based on the means-end theory [Umm] and we use it very often in consumer behaviour for consumer research with regards to products or services. [Umm] where we would like to understand the underlying values of the person that drives his purchasing behaviour
C	OK
M	'Cause very often when you ask somebody why do they choose one product [err] instead of another they would give you a very superficial answer.
C	OK
M	And we need to understand what's the deeper lying reason for making that purchasing decision.
C	OK and that technique helps you to do that?
M	It most certainly does, yes
C	How does it do that?
M	Right so [Umm] if I can... say we're looking [Umm] at an interview or a product let's say we're testing milk or milk brands and I'm asking the respondent why [Umm] which brand of milk he uses and he would say Clover. But I'm interested in why not Parmalat or Dairy Belle or any of the others 'cos at the end of the day milk is milk I want to know why specifically the clover brand
C	the brand, yes
M	So I would ask him ... alright, so why do you prefer clover? and he would say... well, [Umm] it's a popular brand ... so it's a very superficial answer - it's a popular brand
C	[mmh] [mmh]
M	and then I would ask him... [Umm] why do you think it is a popular brand? ... so I would go one level deeper

C	OK
M	And he would need to give me a [Umm] reason for his initial answer without very directly asking you know, for what reason would you say that, [Umm] it's a softer way of asking so for what reason do you think it is a more popular brand? and he would say ... well, [Umm] my mother always used to buy Clover and therefore I'm buying Clover ... [Umm] and then you would say ... well, why do you think your mother used to buy Clover instead of other brands... Well it tastes better ... [Umm] Why do you think it tastes better? ... [Umm] Because it's creamier ... and then ... why would you believe it is creamier? ... because it's a better quality. So quality would then be the underlying driving decision-making reason for choosing Clover above another brand because they believe the brand Clover has better quality
C	Has better quality - the value...
M	There's a deeper lying reason for them
C	Ooh that's very interesting
M	and the same with with packaging [Umm] so if we take milk again now let's say we're looking at packaging and you say alright so ... [Umm] what milk would you prefer if your decision resorts around the packaging of the milk and then they would say ... well I prefer [Umm] the boxed shape like the long-life milk
C	[Ahah]
M	[Umm] to a bottle of milk
C	Yea
M	OK why do you prefer a box shape ... Well it fits easier into my fridge ... and then I would ask ... alright why is it important that the fit in your fridge would be considered ... Because it is convenient to me that my things fit and I don't have a problem ...so convenience would then be the underlying value of choosing a box shape packaging compared to a bottle shape packaging
C	Oh, that's ...
M	So convenience
C	Yeah
M	is the driving behaviour
C	And that's based on the means-end theory you said
M	Means-end theory yes
C	I'll read up more on that it's very interesting
M	And that's the laddering technique

C	OK, do you use it often? Is it not something that's used often or ...
M	It is [Umm] I suppose it depends on the nature of the research that you are busy with what you would use but it is most certainly an interviewing technique that I would always consider with consumer behaviour
C	[Ahaaa]
M	Ok. How did you get to know about this laddering technique
C	[Umm] well I did hear about it during my studies and when I started working at XXX it was one of the techniques that my supervisor [Umm] had experience in and that is how I got to develop it further
M	Oh ok so it was introduced to you by your supervisor
C	Yes, ok but it sounds like a very difficult way of interviewing
M	It's it's not really difficult but it does require the interviewer to concentrate a lot on the actual words that the respondent is using [Umm] because you need to latch on to the exact words that they are using and try to create meaning for yourself
C	And understand their underlying meaning of the words they are using
M	Yea and trying to drive them towards the value instead of sticking to the attributes because usually the first question would give you an attributal or a [er] it would state an attribute. For example, in the case of the milk packaging example [Umm] the attribute would be a box shape. It's an attribute that the milk packaging gives. And to get to the underlying reasons [Umm] I need to get past the attribute, the physical shape and colour and wording on the packaging to get to reasons
C	Yea
M	And to get past reasons to get to why it is important to me really.
C	[Mmm]
M	Yes. So it it has If you do a lot of these interviews it becomes very tiring
C	I'm sure it does
M	Cos it's probing but it's not just generalised probing it's probing in a certain style So it does [Umm] require a lot of concentration
C	I'm sure it does, so you can't do many in a day?
M	[er] no...it would be quite exhausting [laughs]
C	Yea
M	Yes

C	OK [Umm] what else... Is there anything else that you want to add because I'm going to... we're 13 minutes now. I said 10 minutes.
M	[Umm] OK On the laddering style interview not really [Umm] It's [eh] the nice thing with a laddering style interview as with other qualitative research techniques is that your themes when you do your thematic analysis
C	[aaha]
M	really stands out very nicely, you don't have to delve too deeply to find your themes 'cos you've actually created you themes already as part of the laddering interview
C	Oh OK
M	but your values become your themes So if you interview a couple of respondents [Umm] your main decision-making themes if we do consumer behaviour interviews would stand out for example quality or [eh] convenience or [Umm] [Umm] cost you know if it's a financial decision
C	[aahah]
M	why I choose a cheaper product above a more expensive product so it stands out nicely
C	Oh so it's quite useful...
M	So your effort goes into the interview but your analysis then becomes easier whereas with other qualitative interviews your your great effort actually comes in the analysis
C	Ya I can understand that so it's actually a technique that's worth looking into
M	Definitely Yea
C	And I think it can also be used in more than just consumer [Umm]
M	Yes
C	research
M	Most definitely You can even [Umm] use it in a business set-up [er] for example if you do ... If you're busy with a staff morale survey and as part of your survey which is quantitative you might [Umm] ask a number of respondents if you may do an interview with them [Umm] to understand the deeper lying reasons for feeling in a certain way So your laddering interview really shares the underlying emotion
C	[Mmm]
M	that is connected to what is important to them 'cos at the end of the day emotion drives behaviour
C	Yea

M	And I'm a very firm believer of that
C	Yes
M	So you can use it in in any set-up where emotion would be involved So anything where decision is involved, emotion would be involved so that's basically anything 'cos even [Umm] your most analytical people that don't want to admit that they are driven by emotion ... they are driven by emotion [laughs]
C	They're human!
M	Yes. So you can actually apply this technique in a variety
C	variety
M	variety of environments yes
C	But that was very, very interesting thank you very much. You described the laddering technique for every nicely and it's certainly a technique that I'm going to look further into
M	Yes, IT'S MY PLEASURE
C	It sounds very interesting. [Umm] thank you very much for the interview. I really appreciate it at such short notice and [Umm] there's anything you think of that you still want to tell me you've got my email address
M	Sure, thankyou Christine, I'll do that and enjoy the experimenting
C	Thankyou

SECOND PART OF INTERVIEW AS I WAS WALKING OUT THE DOOR...

M	So [Umm] to add on to the laddering interview that I forgot [Umm] sometimes even with all the probing in the world, the respondent gets stuck on the attribute and you don't get past and they would mention other attributes of the product or the service or the situation and you can't get past the underlying reasons ... to the underlying reasons and then you would actually then start probing in reverse [Umm] so you would actually ask them [Umm] say you get stuck [Umm] let's go back to the milk packaging
C	[Ahah]
M	example that we used earlier so he would say ... ya I like long-life milk like the box shape or I like the colour or I like the lid the way it opens there's not [er] then you would keep probing but he would keep to the ... he would stick to the attributes of the product he would say ... Some other brands you still have to pull open an extra

	thing underneath the cap and I don't like that ... so he doesn't get past that
C	[mmm]
M	and then you would start probing in reverse or laddering in reverse where you would say alright so ... What would the consequence be if [Umm] you couldn't open it in the easy way that you prefer to open it ... and that very often then nudges him to get past that
C	Oh ok - that's clever
M	and then you prober in the normal way again on that reason so the moment you ask it in reverse what would the consequence be if that could not happen or if that was not the case you get him past that point
C	OK
M	and then say you would say ... ok then because it's inconvenient ... ok there's my value - convenience
C	That's a very clever way
M	or he would say [Umm] [er] let's take it one step back well [er] [Umm] ... if I had to always still pull open another foil lid underneath the initial cap it would frustrate the hell out of me ... and then you would ask ... but then why would that frustrate you? ... because it's inconvenient.
C	Ok. So you still get to the same conclusion but you've gone a different route
M	Yea, just by asking him ok but what would the consequences be if you could not have that or do it or if that didn't work or
C	[mmmm]
M	and then you force him to think of the alternative
C	You see, that sort of thing comes with experience
M	So yea. So because if they keep stuck on a certain thing and you then that interview is of no use, so you need to get past that
C	Yea ok That was very useful
M	Short and sweet but it helps
C	Thank you
M	It's my pleasure

