

## **Research for Marketing Decisions**

**Vaibhav Chawla**

**Department of Management Studies**

**Indian Institute of Technology Madras**

**Week - 04**

**Lecture - 16**

### **Exploratory Research Techniques: Depth Interviews**

Good afternoon everybody, so today we are going to go ahead with another method in the qualitative research we were discussing qualitative research all this is exploratory research going on the different techniques of doing exploratory research focus group was disguised or non-disguised. Now we are going to start with another technique and we will try to cover whatever possible because this is not completely a qualitative research course so I would not go to the entire extent of explaining each and every technique but whatever minimum is possible for you to carry out such techniques we will be able to do that. Now focus group we have discussed what are in-depth interviews depth interviews they are also called in-depth interviews. What are in-depth interviews ? Ishita is saying these are semi-structured, open-ended, one-on-one interviews. So what are semi-structured? Okay, what she said is correct.

In-depth interviews They are like one-to-one interviews and they are like guided conversations. So in-depth interviews, they are guided conversations which means you guide the conversation on a topic but it has to remain like a conversation. So which means if there is a pathway you have to take the first you have to take the conversation keep the conversation on that pathway but you have to give most opportunity for the informant respondent to speak. Now the the the purpose of doing in-depth one-to-one interviews, one is we want to we want to go in depth into the reasons of why somebody does or does not do something.

You want to go into deeper motivations, their feelings, their reasons, their attitudes, which are very difficult in survey structured. When I say structured questionnaire, I say when the question is given and answer are given and somebody has to tick that is called structured questionnaire. Now in the in-depth interview, first of all it is one to one guided

conversations. The purpose is to get deeper ideas about a topic which you won't get through other methods. We use in-depth interviews many a times for sensitive topics

that cannot be discussed in focus group let's say somebody on so let's say there is a topic about anxiety so you would be discussing you will be having in-depth interview with the key informant for that particular topic. Key informant is a respondent who knows who knows better than others about anxiety or who might be on the medicines for anxiety so key so here in-depth interview you focus on key informants not the representative sample you look at the key informant who knows about that issue very well, you conduct in-depth interviews with them and the idea is not to when you conduct multiple in-depth interviews the idea is to get the breadth of ideas about a particular topic which means you want more and more ideas they may not be you may not put ideas of one person with the other person together but you look for variety of ideas in in-depth interview and then when you do analysis you see what is coming together and so on. But in focus groups as well as in in-depth interview you want variety of ideas to come and there is no right and wrong.

Both in focus groups and in-depth interview there is nothing right and wrong. It is what the informant or respondent feel does about a particular object or a topic. They are sharing their views, their opinions. Sensitive topics in one-to-one, in focus groups, people would not talk about sensitive topics socially because there are some socially accepted ways of performing or living, thinking. So if people do something which is not socially

appreciable then they don't discuss those topics in focus groups so in-depth interviews is another way by which you can extract a deeper level of ideas about a particular topic so what it is in-depth guided conversations on a set of you know open-ended questions , which means the answers to them can be in stories, paragraphs definitely in words so you have to ask open-ended questions and there is a interview guide. Interview guide means in that the questions would be some questions that you would definitely want to cover those would be written just to help you navigate guide the conversation but you may change the order of those questions depending upon the flow of conversation. You may ask some more questions related to a new topic, related to something that unearths during the conversation. You may ask more questions about that that is not originally in your interview guide. So all these things could happen in an in-depth interview.

So there is a purpose for in-depth interview. What it is we understood, what is an interview guide we understood. what uh type of questions we ask in a in-depth interview

that we know semi-structured open-ended and it is just a you know just a support for the interviewer. In order to make the conversation on the topic and there are questions and probes are also written. Probes are something that you could use to dig deeper into something which the respondent is saying. You change the question according to the response or you just go with the question. Sometimes you will have to change the question also as per the respondents response so that is all except that is why it is you know you keep certain tools certain questions to you know guide the conversation but if some something which you did not expect come out of that conversation and you do not have any question regarding that you can probe that further which might lead to some deeper insight which you don't have. There are many kinds of probes or probing tactics that are used as we discussed in the last class.

Somebody says an answer to your question, you can say, can you explain more? You can use it in different ways. Can you explain it more? That is very encouraging. What does it mean?

Can you explain it more? What does it mean? But just be silent. Can you speak a little bit more about that? So one has to use a lot of probing tactics.

As I said in the last class, it can be neutral where you say without in not so encouraging or discouraging tone, just saying, can you please talk a little bit more about what you said? Can you elaborate more? I want to know more about it. So this is just maintaining a neutral tone and asking. You can be encouraging as well.

Oh, Can we talk a little bit more about that? But all these all these cues you have to be very intelligent during the conversation that you do not lead the respondent to answer in a certain way. Which means you do not make the respondents bias in their answers. So let's say

if I am doing an interview about your college experience of students and the student is sharing that every Friday we bunk classes let's say and I say oho that is so then it could happen that the other person you know might think that this is something which which might not be a acceptable sort of behavior so he would do certain sort of accounting what is accounting accounting means he would tell that thing in such a way that he would not completely reveal the reality right ? He would shape up in he will he will account, account means he will take out those aspects which he thinks are you know not socially acceptable and give you the good part. So that could also happen in the interview. So one

has to speak minimum while conducting the interview, give more chance for the interviewee to speak, listen carefully and then guide the conversation.

Now one view of interview is interview as a tunnel where you use the answers and the content of the interview, whatever is being spoken as a way of looking into the customer's mind. There is another view of interview where interview as a topic. When you look interview as a tunnel, there are certain problems. Certain criticisms of interview as a tunnel that people do not always speak truth they might discount certain behaviors that they think would not be acceptable, so they might hide certain things so that and they might say something completely different than what they do.

That is also possible. And how do you note down all that? By looking at their expressions, tone, how they say what they say. Now when we take interview as a topic, we also note down these behaviors, not only the content being spoken, but also how it is spoken. The behavior during interviews also we note down.

The behavior during interview also we note down. So we do not only, so interview as a topic, we analyze the content of the interview. And interview as a topic, we analyze the behavior during the interview. And when we consider interview both as a topic and a tunnel, we interpret both the content and the actions and the behaviors of the customer. Because certain points where let's say they are hiding something, you might get a signal by noting down their behaviors while they speak.

Now here there are certain ways given by which you can use or which you can use during the in-depth interview in addition to the way you normally get into conversations. One is that in every interview you first have to ask questions that could make the respondent comfortable and then you start going towards the questions that would require little bit of thinking and reflecting. Now laddering is one of the technique which is used in in-depth interview. The laddering means from you know you have to climb the ladder which means from the first answer that is spoken you will go to the deeper motivation of doing something like in this case a question was asked to the executives who choose to travel through certain type of aircrafts. So they were asked why do you travel through this particular aircraft?

They said because it has a wide body aircraft. Then you have to probe further. How does wide body aircraft benefit you ? Then I can get more work done because it's spacious.

I can open my laptop interview, laptop and iPad or something. I can get more work done. You dig deeper. Okay, so you can get more work done. You seem to be a very busy person.

What would happen if you are able to, let's say, get more work done during your flight? I accomplish more. What would happen because of that? I feel good about myself the deeper motivation from the characteristic product characteristic people don't buy a product for their characteristic they buy for certain terminal value that they achieve through that. when somebody drinks low-fat milk what is the terminal value ? Slim, that is the benefit but, what is the value ? You will either feel good about yourself or you will look attractive to opposite gender.

There could be more motivations. But there is some economic value. There is some terminal value. In this case, psychological value. So people purchase things not for the characteristic, not for the benefit but for achieving certain value which could be psychological or economic value.

This we teach in marketing first class. That features, benefits and value. One should speak more about value than feature and benefits. So this laddering is doing that, it is moving the customer's answer from the product characteristic to the deeper motivation of doing certain things. There is another way, there is another method, hidden issue questioning where one questions people about their dreams, fascinations.

hopes, fears, that is called hidden issue questioning where you questions about that and use the answers in promoting certain products to them. For example, you could ask to the senior executives of different companies, one could ask, what did you want to become when you were young? Let's say they say I wanted to become like Sachin or Virat or something. So which means that was their aspiration. Right ?

So one way is then whenever you are going into promotion, promotions to doing promotions to such groups, you could have you know. A storyline or a celebrity character in those promotions, whatever they say in their answers, then you can in hidden issue questioning, you also ask about their fears, their hopes, their anxieties, their fascinations. For example, in one of the interviews to the executives of company, they were asked about their fantasies, work lives and social lives and it came out the finding was that they fantasize themselves to be somebody who is elite, historic, masculine, camaraderie, doing competitive activities.

They daydream about this, executives. So use these things in the promotion while selling to them. The next one is symbolic analysis where you say, again it is an in-depth interview technique where you say that what if this product does not exist what will happen ? And then you will get to know why people use certain thing why it is important. So that is the idea behind symbolic analysis these are just three techniques but there are many more. Women generally they are very good in conversations right ? So I was watching a serial where the husband and one husband and wife, they were visiting another husband and wife.

And they were neighbors. And the wife, she came to take sugar because that family shifted newly to that particular building. And so when the family which shifted new, they rang the bell and came in so she took the sugar and the conversation started where are so the conversation between the woman started and with the males it was they were just looking hie so they were then 5 minutes silence and it was going like that. So the ideal female are very good in conversations so they might know more techniques of conducting interviews in depth interviews which are guided conversations than what are what I am going to tell you in the class. So we can just look at some of the probing tactics.

There is a video, there is a detailed course on in-depth interview. There some probing tactics are given. So we can look at the first part of it. And there is a huge range of different probing techniques. What is also important is the tactic you use while probing

and there hasn't been much written about it, except for people writing, well, I did it my way, and my way was the best way. And we could pose a question with that. Because this reflection is really worthy in your own research, but it's not so worthy in a how-to-interview book. Because, well, maybe my way is not your way.

So, we should think about what does work. And in many how-to interview books, people write about rapport. And there's quite well established notion that rapport is good. And I think, I truly believe that you need rapport, otherwise an interview won't work. And you need techniques.

You need... Because there can be huge differences in different stance papers. And how does it work? So, what probing tactics did I distinguish? I distinguished three different probing tactics. And the first is the accommodating tactic.

The accommodating tactic is the tactic that is usually trained to know wise interviewers. I was trained in the accommodating tactic while studying. And what is this accommodating tactic? It tells what you do not show. You're very implicit on whether you accept or not accept the answer of a respondent.

You let that in the vague. What you show is that you want more information. And you show some neutrality. You show that you accommodate the informant, the interviewee, the respondent to talk freely. Tell me your story and I don't judge.

That's what you show. The second tactic is a more smiling tactic. You see, the first had a neutral face, the second tactic had a more smiling face, because this is what people usually do. Many interviewers, they watch Oprah Winfrey, so they act like Oprah Winfrey. So what they do is they start encouraging people, saying, oh, that's very interesting.

Oh, could you continue about that? Can you explain it? Oh, wow, cool! And so on and so forth. So people are very

using the rapport, but also using the rapport in probing, using a varied personal style that I call encouraging. Then you take the answer for granted, and you're pretty explicit about it. Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. Oh, that must have been terrible for you guys. Stuff like that.

The third tactic is a little different. The third tactic you know from news interviews. Because, this might look a bit sad, but it's more a challenging tactic. In this challenging tactic, you do not take the answer for granted. But you probe.

And you challenge. And you explicitly show that you don't take it for granted. Simply. You just continue questioning the respondent. For instance, you just told me something else.

Wait a second. First you said this, and now you say that. Could you explain it to me? Why? What do you mean with this?

I don't get it. When you use sentences like this, you show that you Take the answer serious, but not the wrong answer. And that's the third tactic I'm going to take. These interviews were about social categorization.

So they were about categories people use. Categories on Amsterdammers, categories of friends, friendship and friends and acquaintances, and categories, well, schematically it

looks like this. What are the effects of probing tactics on quality and content? And how did I research this? Well, I did this using this experiment.

I trained 12... So this was, he also explained about the, you know, three probing tactics better than how I explained because he had more examples to share. And he is an expert in in-depth interviews so I also watch his videos he has a entire course on in-depth interviews and so on so why pressure group influence like focus group it is minus and depth interview it is plus. So it is written what are the advantages of one over the other so I hope this method of in-depth interview is clear to you to some extent when you will carry it out actually you will you will you know face certain unique situations where you will have to let's say a person starts speaking about something else which you do not want him or her to speak then you will have to bring them back to the topic of conversation.