

Semi-structured Interview with central questions with professional experts and group discussions with young (participant) experts

The project Peer think has chosen semi-structured interview as one qualitative technique/method of evaluation in order to provide additional data related to the intersection of categories like gender, migration social class in peer violence prevention

What qualitative research can offer is an understanding of peoples 'lifeworlds', trying to understand the situation from the perspective of those being researched. While there are important differences in the conceptual derivations and background, all methods of qualitative research share the view that it is the task of research to uncover the nature of the social world through an interpretative and empathetic understanding of how people act and give meaning to their own life. Using this perspective it therefore becomes essential to gather statements made by participants with a view to examining the various dimensions of the situation that they construct. It is also important to focus upon ongoing patterns of interaction.

The method of semi-structured interview within the project Peer Think

The interviews were done with professional experts (1) and with participants as experts for their own lives (2).

For an interview it is important to introduce into the context of the interview from the beginning or in other words to clarify the context.

1. The semi-structured interview with central questions

This type of interview does not ask for concrete information like the number of participants in a seminar. It is more interested in narratives and ideas like about the concept of violence prevention in the work.

Interviews with central questions are useful when theories and every day ideas of the speaker should be reconstructed. The interviewer has the chance to structure the talk of the interviewee by questions. (Helfferich 2005, p. 159)

The attitude of the interviewer is to be open to listen, to not interpret during the communication, for different meanings. The interviewer accepts a role of the listener. (ibid, p. 10)

The semi-structured interview follows some principles (ibid, p. 22)

- The signification of the narrative results out of the communication setting.
- The interviewee should develop the significance of the narrative. Therefore he/her needs an open space. (openness)
- The interviewer and the interviewee may have different understandings. To accept this difference is called strangeness and intimacy (Fremdheit und Vertrauen).
- The interviewer needs competences in active understanding as well as reconstructive comprehension. (reflexivity)

The guideline

- The guideline may not have too much questions. The interviewee must have enough time to develop the narrative.
- The questionnaire should be good structured in order that the interviewer can concentrate onto the communication.

- The guideline should follow a “natural” flow of argumentation and memory. Big skips should be avoided. The interview should stimulate long narratives.
- The questions may not be read off. If the interviewer is insecure about the questionnaire he or she should have a look into the guideline when the interview is finish.
- The guideline should not limit the flow of the communication. Spontaneous narratives have priority.

To generate the questions

- The collection of questions has no limitation.
 - What is my interest?
- To verify which questions are useful we work through if it possible to get the information on another way than the interview. The questions must be opener.
 - The number of questions must be reduced.
 - Which questions serve only affirmation of already known? What do we know already? We skip these questions.
 - What is our real interest? What would be a surprise?
- Sorting.
 - The questions should be sorted according to the chronically order of the interview.
 - The sorting should result in one to four packets of questions.
- Subsume
 - Each packet has one central question.
 - The other questions are subsumed under the central question.
 - The central question should be useful to activate a longer narrative?
 - The order of questions is: first level is the central question, the level of question are catchwords. These catchwords are useful as memos to not forget important issues. The third level is for obligatory question for each interview and the is for questions of controlling and motivation.

Schedule for interviews with central questions we already did with professional experts

Central questions	Catch-words (controlling, memo)	Questions should be asked in the interview	Question for controlling and flow of the interview
How does your work with youngsters look like?	Consideration about social categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender - Social class - Ethnicity - Does the work have preventive character 		

<p>What is the background? (theory and experiences)</p>	<p>References on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theory - Experiences - Discussions with colleagues 	<p>How does the consideration of different social categories affect the work with the youngsters</p>	
<p>What is your favorite methods/approach and why?</p>	<p>Are there any favorite methods or special approaches do you like in particular? Could you describe why?</p>		
			<p>Do you have anything you want to say what isn't said already?</p>

2. Group-discussions with the youngsters/participants; open space

Group discussions are useful for:

- To find out ideas, attitudes, collective or individual meanings,
- To explore group specific behaviours and group specific processes which result in meanings normally
- To explore collective orientations (praktisches Bewusstsein – every day awareness)

Group discussion roles are:

- Addressing the entire group
- Introduction of the question/theme like motivation
- No order of the comments
- The discussion is recorded
- Transcription
- Analysis (cp.: Bohnsack 2003, 380ff)

General role: reserved-nondirective behaviour by the interviewer.

Does violence play a role in your group? Did change something?



References

cp. http://www.lrz-muenchen.de/~Reflexive_Sozialpsychologie/pdf/bildenfolien.pdf
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Helferich, Cornelia (2004): Die Qualität qualitativer Daten. Manual für die Durchführung qualitativer Interviews. Wiesbaden