Difference between an Interrogation and an Interview

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Explain the Difference between an Interrogation and an Interview

Abstract

The current term paper aimed to discuss the difference between an interview and an interrogation. How was each conducted? What were the desired results of each process? Both interviews and interrogations yielded similar outcomes; however, they differed on the approach used to obtain the information. For instance, interviews were used to collect information for general use such as data for research purposes, stories for the mainstream media or the information on potential employees. It was noted that interviews provided a platform for the interviewer to determine the credibility of the information provided by the interviewee. The interrogation approach was one of the tools employed by law enforcement agencies to obtain covert information or confessions from crime suspects. Besides, interrogation adopted both violent and non-violent approaches while interviews were non-violent and were based on mutual respect and consent between the two parties.

Literature Review

Interviews and interrogations were techniques employed in information gathering. The interviewees participated in meetings out of their volition while suspects were coerced or intimidated into participating in interrogation sessions (Coulthard & Johnson, 2010). On the one hand, interviews were conducted in diverse settings such as workplaces, newsrooms, open natural spaces, hospitals, and educational facilities among others. On the other hand, interrogations were conducted in confined spaces such as interrogation rooms or torture chambers when there was a need to obtain particular information from a suspect (Carlsmith & Sood, 2009). For instance, once a suspect had been arrested, the police and other law enforcement agencies employed different interrogation techniques to ensure that the suspect confessed to the alleged crime.

Nonetheless, it is worthy to note that interviews and interrogations were impeded by the ability of the interviewer and interrogator to differentiate non-factual information from the absolute truth. Hartwig et al. (2006) noted that humans were devoid of the capacity to distinguish deceptive statements from lies in most cases. The same applied to judges, police officers and other persons who relied on witness testimonies to make critical decisions. Therefore, the desired outcomes from the interviews and interrogations might be compromised given that the ability to detect deception varied from one person to the other (Hartwig, Granhag, Strömwall, & Kronkvist, 2006). The accurate interpretation of nonverbal behavior in interviews and interrogations was presumed to be key in deconstructing non-factual information (Strömwall, Hartwig, & Granhag, 2006).

Interviews

Interviews were classified into six different categories namely structured and unstructured interviews, stress interviews, research interviews, behavioral interviews and panel interviews (Drexel University, 2017). The type of interview adopted determined how the discussion would be conducted; and the desired outcome from the process. For instance, structured interviews were primarily conducted when there was a need to obtain specific information from a person. For instance, a structured interview was conducted in a formal setting by one or more interviewers. A panel interview was a structured interview conducted by multiple interviewers. Such interviews were characterized by icebreaker questions (Drexel University, 2017), intended to ease the tensions in the room and act as a precursor to more serious questions. In a structured interview, the course of the interview was primarily directed by the interviewer. On the other hand, unstructured interviews were fundamentally informal and they were characterized by a relaxed environment. Besides, such interviews were more of conversations rather than question and answer sessions. The primary goal of unstructured interviews was to gain a better understanding of the interviewee. For instance, employers

used unstructured interviews to understand the social life of a potential employee. Stress interviews were primarily conducted in stressful working environments such as healthcare or manufacturing facilities. It was presumed that the accuracy of the information provided by the interviewee could be judged based on the ability of the subject to maintain eye contact and other body cues.

Research interviews were designed to collect both qualitative and quantitative information from the respondents. Besides, the research interviews were conducted using a questionnaire or any other tool of data collection deemed appropriate by the interviewer. The researcher interviewed respondents selected from a sample population. In most circumstances, the researchers interviewed individual respondents using pre-defined questions outlined in the questionnaire then they filled in the responses in the document. The complexity of the research interviews was determined by the research protocol adopted in the research and the level of experience of the researcher (Turner, 2010). It is worthy to note that in most cases research interviews were coupled with other forms of data collection.

Research interviews were further grouped into three classes namely standardized open-ended interviews, general interview guide approach, and informal, conversational interviews (Turner, 2010). The primary goal of informal, conversational interviews was to obtain information through a process of natural interaction with the respondent (Turner, 2010). Such interviews were primarily conducted during field visits. Given that the interview was informal, the researcher was not required to use structured questions. However, the general interview guide approach adopted a more structured approach albeit with some flexibility. The general interview guide approach used a set of pre-defined questions, whose sequence was altered in the course of the interview. The success of the general interview guide approach was determined by the ability of the researcher to ensure that all information that was of interest to the research had been successfully collected. Therefore, the main

difference between the general interview and the informal interview was that the former employed a more structured approach while the latter was flexible.

Interrogation

As indicated in the previous section, interrogation was an approach employed by law enforcement agencies such as the police or the intelligence services. Considering that, the desired outcome from the interrogation was a confession; various approaches were developed to ensure that a confession was obtained regardless of the cost and harm to the suspect. Bergen et al. (2008) observed that given the complexity and frequency of recent crimes, police were necessitated to employ different interrogation protocols. The interrogation approaches included the presentation of false evidence, torture, and intriguing questions (Van Bergen, Jelicic, & Merckelbach, 2008). The CIA exposed suspects to intense psychological torture during the interrogations. For instance, suspects were exposed to attack dogs, freezing temperature, waterboarding, denial of food and other necessities, electric shocks, asphyxiation, mock executions and sexual humiliation among others (Carlsmith & Sood, 2009).

The Reid approach was one of the common interrogation techniques employed by the police in recent times. The approach was made up of nine different steps that were solely aimed at deriving a confession with little regard to the harm inflicted on the subject. Some of the common interrogation techniques included false testimonies from witnesses who witnessed the subject committing the crime; planting of evidence such as the fingerprints of the subject at the place where the crime was committed. However, such approaches were found to yield false confessions from the subject due to the fear of sustained physical harm (Van Bergen et al., 2008). Given that torture often resulted in false confessions, law enforcement agencies had adopted other non-violent approaches such as active persuasion

during interrogations (Van Bergen et al., 2008). Active persuasion involved convincing the suspect that there was ample proof that he or she was guilty; and therefore, the suspect was obliged to confess. It is worthy to note that progressive (active) persuasion often yielded true confessions. Carlsmith and Sood (2009) also noted that severe interrogation techniques were in most cases not successful (Carlsmith & Sood, 2009). Other non-violent interrogation techniques included minimization, which was an approach that was used to convince the subject that crimes committed could be easily remedied in law and the suspect should not be concerned with the legal repercussions. The maximization approach motivated the suspect to confess to the crime because he or she believed that the crime that was committed was trivial. Some interrogators also induced doubt on the suspect's memories, thus convincing the suspect that he or she may have committed the crime despite the fact that they could not remember. Nonetheless, it was observed that such severe forms of punishment and retributive justice were adopted because the suspect was considered to have committed offenses that affected multiple persons and the broader society as well (Carlsmith & Sood, 2009). For instance, terror suspects committed crimes that inflict both physical and psychological pain on the community.

Conclusion

The fundamental differences between interrogations and interviews were outlined in the preceding sections. It was noted that interviews were primarily conducted to obtain information that was of particular interest to the interviewer. For instance, interviewers conducted interviews out of the need to gather specific scientific information, acquaint themselves with potential employees, or obtain certain information that was of interest to the society. On the other hand, interrogations were primarily motivated by the need to derive covert information or confessions from crime suspects. Interviews were conducted in diverse settings such as workplaces, newsrooms, open natural spaces, hospitals, and educational

facilities. Interrogations were conducted in confined spaces such as interrogation rooms or torture chambers. Besides, most of the interrogation sessions were conducted in a manner that resulted in bodily harm to the suspect. Therefore, both interrogation and interviews were approaches used to obtain information; however, the tools used to obtain the information were markedly different.

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