

CHAPTER 8

Stage 1
Problem definition

Stage 2
Research approach developed

Stage 3
Research design developed

Stage 4
Fieldwork or data collection

Stage 5
Data preparation and analysis

Stage 6
Report preparation and presentation

Qualitative research: depth interviewing and projective techniques

Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- 1 understand why the depth interview is defined as a direct qualitative research technique and observation and projective techniques are defined as indirect techniques;
- 2 describe depth interview techniques in detail, citing their advantages, disadvantages and applications;
- 3 explain how theory may be used to create structure to questioning and analysis in depth interviewing by reference to the laddering technique and the repertory grid technique;
- 4 describe projective techniques in detail and compare association, completion, construction and expressive techniques;
- 5 understand the language problems that should be considered by international qualitative researchers;
- 6 understand the ethical dilemmas faced by qualitative research practitioners.



With no social pressure to conform to group responses, respondents can be questioned in-depth in a context that allows them to really express how they feel.

Overview

Having discussed qualitative research in terms of its nature and approach, and evaluated focus groups as the main marketing research technique, we now move on to describe and evaluate other qualitative techniques.

We start by describing and evaluating the procedure of depth interviewing. The role of the depth interviewer is described and the advantages and disadvantages of the technique are summarised. In the process of conducting depth interviews, the techniques of ‘laddering’ and ‘repertory grid’ can be applied to help to structure the elicitation and analysis process. Laddering and repertory grid techniques will be described and illustrated. The indirect qualitative association, completion, construction and expressive projective techniques are described and illustrated. The applications of these techniques are detailed, followed by an evaluation of their advantages and disadvantages. This is developed into an overall summary of the relative strengths and weaknesses of qualitative techniques under the headings of ‘focus groups’, ‘depth interviews’, ‘projective techniques’ and ‘ethnographic techniques’. The GlobalCash Project is used to illustrate why depth interviewing may be used in international marketing research, demonstrating some of the cultural issues of applying the technique. We summarise the relative gains that can be administered on a one-to-one basis, with an emphasis on techniques.

The following example illustrates a subject that for some individuals is difficult to discuss in a group: personal hygiene issues and even their fantasies when bathing. The subject requires a qualitative technique to generate data of a kind that will support creative advertising decisions. The subject matter, however, is ideal for the application of depth interviews and projective techniques where time can be spent to build trust and rapport between interviewer and respondent. Depth interviews allow respondents talking about bathing the time and space to express ideas about events that normally they just get on with and do not have to justify to anyone!

example

Soaps look for a fresh way to work consumers into a lather¹

In studies of bath soaps, respondents invariably say that a good soap makes them feel ‘clean and fresh’. However, they often have difficulty explaining what ‘clean and fresh’ means. Copywriters trying to find a new way to talk about freshness in their advertising do not find such results supportive or relevant to the decisions they have to take. Hence, respondents have been probed on a one-to-one basis through depth interviews, about all the things ‘clean and fresh’ meant to them: the times they felt this way, their mental pictures, the moods and feelings connected with it, what music and colours come to mind, and even what fantasies it evoked.

Escape from ordinary life was one of the main themes that emerged from the depth interviews – getting away from the cramped rushed city, to the free, relaxed, unhindered life, surrounded by nature, in the country. The words and images sparked by this theme offered new ideas for creative advertising ideas. ■

Depth interviews

Procedure

Like focus groups, depth interviews are an unstructured and direct way of obtaining information but, unlike focus groups, depth interviews are conducted on a one-on-one basis. A **depth interview** is an unstructured, direct, personal interview in which a single respondent is probed by an experienced interviewer to uncover underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes and feelings on a topic.²

Depth interview

An unstructured, direct, personal interview in which a single respondent is probed by an experienced interviewer to uncover underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes and feelings on a topic.

A depth interview may take from 30 minutes to over an hour. It may occur on a one-off basis or it may unfold over a number of meetings between an interviewer and a respondent. Once the interviewer has gained access to a potential respondent, the interviewer should begin by explaining the purpose of the interview, showing what the respondent will get out of taking part in the interview and explaining what the process will be like. To illustrate the technique in the context of the GlobalCash Project, beyond the introduction the interviewer may ask a Finance Director a general introductory question such as ‘Has your main bank helped you to prepare for the introduction of the euro?’ The interviewer then encourages the subject to talk freely about his or her attitudes towards different banks’ offerings. After asking the initial question, the interviewer uses an unstructured format, guided by a topic guide to remind them of important subject areas to cover. The subsequent direction of the interview is determined by the respondent’s initial reply, the interviewer’s probes for elaboration, and the respondent’s answers.

As with the focus group topic guide and the moderator managing that guide, spontaneity ensures that the process is creative and meaningful to the respondent. Suppose that the respondent replies to the initial question by saying ‘Bank X, our bank, has not been really helpful in developing our plans.’ The interviewer might then pose a question such as ‘Why do you think they have not been helpful?’ If the answer is not very revealing, e.g. ‘They are not customer orientated, never have been’, the interviewer may ask a probing question, such as ‘What would you see as being a customer orientated bank?’ This question could open up a whole series of issues such as ‘trust’, ‘relationship development’ or ‘technical support’, to name a few. Such an exchange of questions and answers could emerge from a heading of *Bank awareness of their customers’ needs* on their topic guide. The interviewer will keep an eye on their topic guide to ensure they tackle all the issues they feel to be important, but the specific wording of the questions and the order in which they are asked is influenced by the respondent’s replies.

Probing is of critical importance in obtaining meaningful responses and uncovering hidden issues. Probing can be done by asking general questions such as ‘Why do you say that?’, ‘That’s interesting, can you tell me more?’ or ‘Would you like to add anything else?’³ Probing can also be more specific, an example in the above scenario being ‘At what point do you feel your relationship with Bank X started to deteriorate?’ One of the main success factors of specific probing is that the researcher understands something about the nature of the subject they are researching. This means they appreciate the significance of particular revelations, understand the language (even technical language and jargon in certain areas, like banking) and have a credibility with the respondent that encourages them to open up with the interviewer.

The interviewer must be alert to the issues that they wish to go through but also the issues that the respondent is willing to talk about, and must listen carefully to and observe which issues fire enthusiasm in the respondent. The questions and probes they put to respondents should follow the interest and logic of the respondent, making them feel motivated to respond in a manner that suits them. As with a focus group discussion, the respondent should feel comfortable and relaxed, which could mean holding the interview in their office, their home, a bar, a sports club – any context in which the respondent will feel comfortable and more willing to be reflective, honest and open. Answering in a manner that suits the respondent helps to make the interview more comfortable and relaxed. For a great amount of business research, the depth interview is the best way to gain access and to talk to managers. Much of the interviewing takes place in their office at a time that is convenient to them. Researchers can also observe characteristics of the manager in his or her office environment that can be of help in their analyses. Examples of this could be levels of

formality in the workplace, reports and books that the manager has around them for reference, the manager's use of IT equipment, or the tidiness of the workplace. These observations would be entirely based upon the purpose of the study, but the context of the office can be of help to the manager and the researcher. In order to make the above process work, the interviewer should:

- 1 Do their utmost to develop an empathy with the respondent.
- 2 Make sure the respondent is relaxed and comfortable.
- 3 Be personable to encourage and motivate respondents.
- 4 Note issues that interest the respondent and develop questions around these issues.
- 5 Not be happy to accept brief 'yes' or 'no' answers.
- 6 Note where respondents have not explained clearly enough issues that need probing.

In marketing research that focuses upon managers or professionals as illustrated above, the context of the depth interview helps to set the frame of mind of the respondent. The context should also help the respondent and interviewer to relax, engendering an atmosphere to explore and develop issues that they feel to be relevant. The following arguments help to focus on the issues faced by the interviewer coping with managers and professionals, trying to find the right context to allow these respondents to express how they really feel.⁴ The depth interview helps to overcome:

- 1 *Hectic schedules.* The best respondents tend also to be the busiest and most successful people. They can make time for an interview, but are rarely able to spare the much greater time needed for them to come to a group discussion at some location away from their office. So groups exclude the best respondents.
- 2 *Heterogeneity.* Whereas mothers evaluating nappy ads, or beer drinkers the latest lager, have only their personal preferences to consider, it is very different for an executive evaluating copiers, airline advertisements or computer software. This is because their reactions are complicated by the type of job they do and who they work for. The group discussion is dependent on the group's composition being fairly homogeneous; the job backgrounds of business people make them too varied to be entirely comfortable in a group.
- 3 *Live context.* A lot of information comes from seeing the respondent at his or her desk, which is missed in a group discussion. Work schedules pinned to the wall, the working atmosphere, the freebies from suppliers on the desk, the way coffee is served, help fill out the picture.
- 4 *Interviewer reflection.* Groups do not allow the researcher enough thinking time. Two groups, each taking an hour and a half over successive evenings, do not even begin to compare with two or three full days of non-stop interviewing. Individual interviews give much more scope for experimentation. If one way does not work, it's only one respondent, not a whole group, that is affected.

Another major application of depth interviews where the context of the interview plays a major part is in the interviewing of children. Researchers into children and teenagers spend considerable time working out the best research approach. Debates proliferate on the most appropriate research designs and interviewing techniques: depth interviews versus group, mini groups versus standard groups, friendship pairs versus stranger groups, association projective techniques versus expressive and so on. These debates make researchers focus on the implications of how research is conducted and which technique provides the best results. One vital element is often overlooked, and that is the issue of context: in other words, the need to ensure that the situation in which children are interviewed is relevant to the research needs.

Like adults, children have multifaceted personalities. The same teenager can be sullen at home, obstructive in the classroom, but the life and soul of the peer group.

The essential difference between children and adults, however, is the extent to which different aspects of the persona can be accessed on one occasion and in one situation, the research setting. Adults have insight into the different roles and behaviour, which they adopt in different contexts, and can project other aspects of themselves which they bring into the research situation. Children and young teenagers, on the other hand, react to the moment and thus project only one aspect of themselves. They lack the maturity, experience and self-knowledge to draw on other parts of themselves and therefore find it almost impossible to know, let alone admit or explore, how they might behave in another circumstance.⁵

The above evaluation of the importance of context also shows that question formulation, the very heart of marketing research, can be more important in interviewing children than when dealing with adults. A straightforward 'What do you think about X?' may throw children into confusion. A formulation such as 'If you were to call your friend about this, what would you tell them?' would be more likely to produce illuminating responses.

An effective technique when working with children is the use of **friendship pairs** – interviewing two friends or classmates together. This helps to cut out lying because children are not alone with strangers and because if one tells a lie, the other tells on them. The ingrained honesty of children arguably makes them easier to research than adults, who of course are far more accomplished exponents of deception. Go to the Companion Website and read Professional Perspective 16 'Out of the mouths of babes' by Marsha Hemingway. Marsha describes many of the difficulties of researching children and many creative solutions to make interviewing fun and informative.

Friendship pair

A technique used to interview children as two friends or classmates together.



See **Professional Perspective 16**.

Advantages and challenges of depth interviews

Depth interviews have the following advantages. They can:

- 1 Uncover greater depth of insights than focus groups. This can happen through concentrating and developing an issue with the individual. In the group scenario, interesting and knowledgeable individuals cannot be solely concentrated upon.



Friendship pairs: helps to cut out lying, because if one tells a lie, the other tells on them.

- 2 Attribute the responses directly to the respondent, unlike focus groups where it is often difficult to determine which respondent made a particular response.
- 3 Result in a free exchange of information that may not be possible in focus groups because there is no social pressure to conform to group response. This makes them ideally suited to sensitive issues, especially commercially sensitive issues.
- 4 Be easier to arrange than the focus group as there are not so many individuals to coordinate and the interviewer can travel to the respondent.

The following are not necessarily disadvantages, but really the challenges that researchers face when using this very valuable technique:

- 1 The lack of structure makes the results susceptible to the interviewer's influence, and the quality and completeness of the results depend heavily on the interviewer's skills. As with all qualitative techniques, the interviewer needs to develop an awareness of the factors that make them 'see' in a particular way.
- 2 The length of the interview, combined with high costs, means that the number of depth interviews in a project tends to be few. If few depth interviews can be managed, the researcher should focus upon the quality of the whole research experience. 'Quality' in this context means the qualities that the respondent possesses in terms of richness of experience and how relevant their experiences are to the study; the quality of drawing out and getting respondents to express themselves clearly and honestly; and the quality of analysis in terms of interpretation of individual respondents and individual issues evaluated across all the interviews conducted.
- 3 The data obtained can be difficult to analyse and interpret. Many responses may not be taken at face value; there can be many hidden messages and interpretations in how respondents express themselves. The researcher needs a strong theoretical awareness to make sense of the data or the technical means to develop theory if using a grounded theory approach. As well as the transcripts of the interview, additional observations add to the richness and multifaceted analyses and potential interpretations.

The following technique illustrates how a theoretical awareness can help to develop structure, elicit or draw more out of respondents and help to make sense of the data they generate. It is an illustration of how the three challenges outlined above can be overcome.

The laddering technique

The depth interview can be driven by topic guide, made up of a just a few topics covering a very broad range of issues. From these few topics, the nature of questions, the order of questions and the nature of probes can be driven by the interviewer's perception of what will draw the best out of respondents. Alternatively, a depth interview can be semi-structured where parts of the interview use consistent and highly structured questions, with set response categories, interspersed with open-ended questions involving probes that again suit the nature of the respondent. There are other variations on the technique that can help the interviewer and respondent to apply useful structure to issues that can be very 'messy' and unstructured. One of the most popular techniques to apply structure is called **laddering**.

The laddering technique is made up of a linking or ladder of elements that represent the link between products and the consumer's perception process. It enables an understanding of how consumers translate product attributes, through personal meanings associated with them.⁶ Theories of consumer behaviour act as a foundation to this approach, based on the contention that consumption acts produce consequences for the consumer. Consumers learn to associate these consequences to

Laddering

A technique for conducting depth interviews in which a line of questioning proceeds from product characteristics to user characteristics.



Laddering techniques should release respondents from fixed attitudes, perceptions and values.

specific product attributes. These associations are reinforced through consumers' buying behaviour and, as a result, they learn to choose products that have certain attributes in order to obtain the consequences they desire. There are two features of this theory that the researcher using laddering technique will focus upon:

- 1 *Motivation.* The laddering technique focuses upon generating insight to the motives behind consumption of certain products. It represents a more contemporary approach to classical motivation research.⁷ The laddering technique aims to stimulate respondents to reflect upon their buying behaviour in a way unconnected from their usual behaviour.
- 2 *Cognitive structure.* This feature is also a development of theory, in this case Means-End-Chain (MEC), developed by Guttman.⁸ MEC starts from a point of consumer motivation. It contends that motivation leading towards a form of behaviour is derived from the connection between tangible product attributes and more abstract cognitive structures that involve the physical and emotional consequences derived from these attributes. At a more abstract level, the consequences lead to values held by the consumer.

The laddering technique is therefore designed to identify and follow the chain of:

Attributes > Consequences > Values (A – C – V)

The depth interview using the laddering technique is based on comparisons of the consumer's choice alternatives. These can include, for example, different products used for the same purpose, such as an electric toothbrush and a conventional toothbrush, and/or varieties in a product line such as full-fat and skimmed milk, and/or product brands such as Heineken and Amstel beer, and/or kinds of packaging such as wine in bottles and in cartons. Other elements that can affect consumer choices can be added to the above list. In making the comparisons, the interviewer poses a question that hopes to encourage the respondent to put aside their established rationale and reflect upon their consumption behaviour, in ways that they would not normally do. In other words, questions are posed that make respondents think about consump-

tion from other points of view to try to release respondents from fixed attitudes, perceptions and values. The interviewer's role is to build up a rapport with respondents and get them to relax and feel comfortable to respond with whatever comes to mind. The interview revolves around three basic questions based on the A – C – V chain. The questions posed would be:

- 1 *Values*: How important is this for you? (e.g. health)
- 2 *Consequences*: What does this difference mean? (e.g. not fattening)
- 3 *Attributes*: What is different about these alternatives? (e.g. low calories)

From the attribute of 'low calories' in comparing different product varieties in a product line such as full-fat and skimmed milk, a further and negative consequence of 'watery taste' could be elicited, followed by the values of 'unnatural'. The interviewer aims to build a great repertoire of chains through these levels spontaneously, with the interviewer choosing the right comparisons to draw out the next link in the chain. The resulting responses are analysed to establish possible categories of attributes, consequences and values. The categories are then organised according to the qualitative comments made between the relationship of an attribute, its consequence and value. The result is an association matrix that graphically displays the categories and the connections that have emerged.

Laddering requires an interviewer with experience of depth interviewing, with a realisation of what will relax a respondent and get them in a frame of mind to 'play' with the associations sought. The interviewer needs to appreciate the theoretical foundations to the technique,⁹ not only to help them determine what they should aim to elicit from respondents but also to help generate sound and meaningful analyses.

The repertory grid technique

Another widely used technique that applies structure to qualitative depth interviewing is the repertory grid technique (RGT). This technique was originally developed by George Kelly in 1955¹⁰ to explore the meanings that people attach to the world around them, that they find particularly hard to articulate. As with the laddering technique, there is a theoretical underpinning, personal construct psychology.¹¹ Given the debate around this theory, there are a number of variations of the technique and arguments about whether it should be implemented and analysed in a positivist or interpretivist manner,¹² but in essence the stages involved in the repertory grid technique are:

- 1 Element selection
- 2 Construct elicitation
- 3 Element comparisons
- 4 Data analysis

Element selection. The elements selected will depend upon the nature of consumer behaviour that the interviewer wishes to examine. In a study that wished to understand '*broad-based patterns of consumer behaviour*'¹³ the elements chosen included 30 generic products and services such as newspapers, holidays, chocolate bars, eggs, alcoholic drinks, shoes, toothpaste, savings accounts, restaurant meals and shampoo. In another study that wished to understand '*the process of effective new product development*'¹⁴ the elements chosen included 30 successful new products and services such as Slim Fast, Pull Ups, Loed Tea, Ultraglide, Baby Jogger, Gourmet Coffee, Zantac, Paragliders, MTV and Carmen Soft. These elements should be chosen by the respondents, not just chosen and presented by the interviewer. There should be some homogeneity in the elements in the sense that the respondent sees the elements relating to and representative of the behaviour being studied.

Construct elicitation. Having selected elements that the respondent believes to encapsulate the behaviour being studied, the interviewer now seeks to understand what connects them together. The first stage of this involves the interviewer selecting three of the chosen elements at random and then presenting to the respondent small cards with a summary of these elements. The respondent is then asked to describe how they see two of the three to be alike and how the third may be different. The researcher selects different ‘triads’ to the point where all the elements have been contrasted or the respondent cannot describe further ‘similarities’ or ‘differences’. Construct elicitation therefore draws out the respondents’ perspective of the important features that encapsulate a particular form of consumer behaviour.

Element comparisons. The constructs elicited from respondents are now turned into bipolar descriptions in a manner similar to the semantic differential scale described and illustrated in Chapter 12, page 305. For example, suppose that in a study of ‘*the process of effective new product development*’, three elements were compared: MTV, Gourmet Coffee and Paragliders. The respondent may say that MTV and Gourmet Coffee are alike in that there are many similar competitive products that they can be compared with, whereas the Paraglider is different in that there are few competitive ‘personal’ means to fly long distances. Whether this is factually correct or whether the interviewer agrees with this is immaterial; it is how the respondent sees it that is important. Such a belief could be turned into a bipolar scale as illustrated below:



Other scales would be constructed to cover the ways that respondents compared the chosen elements, i.e. the constructs elicited would be turned into a series of bipolar scales. Respondents would then be expected to evaluate all the original elements using these scales. If they felt that Gourmet Coffee has many competitors they could tick a line at the (6) or (7) point. So, if there were 30 elements that encapsulate the behaviour under study and 20 constructs elicited to evaluate these elements, a total of 30 × 20 or 600 ratings would need to be performed.

Data analysis. A grid can be assembled for each respondent to represent in the above example, the 30 × 20 ratings. Again, an illustration of this comes from a small extract of the ‘*the process of effective new product development*’ study. The following represents an extract of the total response from one respondent.

Construct	MTV	Gourmet Coffee	Paraglider
Market newness	6	6	2
Company newness	3	7	1
Technology newness	2	4	6

With a number of these completed grids, factor analysis (Chapter 22) can be performed to discover the important underlying factors or dimensions that encapsulate a particular form of behaviour.¹⁵ The analysis can continue by performing cluster analysis (Chapter 23) to explore patterns of similarity or dissimilarity in different types of respondent, i.e. to discover and describe groups of respondents who may view particular forms of behaviour in similar ways.

The above process can take a great deal of time to select the elements, to elicit the means to compare the elements and to evaluate them. It requires an amount of rapport

between the interviewer and the respondent and patience in working through the stages. All of the stages may not be completed in one interview. It may require the interviewer to return to the respondent to develop the next stage, especially in transferring the elicited elements to bipolar descriptions to allow all the elements to be evaluated.

Applications of depth interviews

Applying depth interviews, with high or low levels of structure, with a strong theoretical foundation such as the laddering or repertory grid technique, or with the desire to generate grounded theory, presents challenges but also many rewards. There are many marketing decisions that can be made with support from marketing researchers using the broad array of techniques under the heading of 'depth interviews'. The following summarises the applications.¹⁶

- 1 Interviews with professional people (e.g. finance directors using banking services).
- 2 Interviews with children (e.g. attitudes towards a theme park).
- 3 Detailed probing of the respondent (e.g. new product development for cars).
- 4 Discussion of confidential, sensitive or embarrassing topics (e.g. personal hygiene issues).
- 5 Situations where strong social norms exist and where the respondent may be easily swayed by group response (e.g. attitudes of university students towards sports).
- 6 Detailed understanding of complicated behaviour (e.g. the purchase of fashion or 'high-status' goods).
- 7 Interviews with competitors, who are unlikely to reveal the information in a group setting (e.g. travel agents' perceptions of airline travel packages).
- 8 Situations where the product consumption experience is sensory in nature, affecting mood states and emotions (e.g. perfumes, bath soap).

In the application of depth interviews, the researcher can use other techniques to help maintain the interest of respondents, to make the experience more enjoyable for the respondent and themselves alike, and ultimately to draw out the true feelings of respondents. A set of techniques that helps to achieve all this, that have been applied with great success over many years, are the body of indirect techniques called 'projective techniques'.

Projective techniques

Both focus groups and depth interviews are direct approaches in which the true purpose of the research can be disclosed to the respondents or is otherwise obvious to them. **Projective techniques** are different from these techniques in that they attempt to totally disguise the purpose of the research. A projective technique is an unstructured, indirect form of questioning that encourages respondents to project their underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes or feelings regarding the issues of concern.¹⁷ In projective techniques, respondents are asked to interpret the behaviour of others rather than to describe their own behaviour. In interpreting the behaviour of others, it is contended that respondents indirectly project their own motivations, beliefs, attitudes or feelings into the situation. Thus, the respondent's attitudes are uncovered by analysing their responses to scenarios that are deliberately unstructured, vague and ambiguous. The more ambiguous the situation, the more respondents project their emotions, needs, motives, attitudes and values, as demonstrated by work in clinical psychology on which projective techniques are based.¹⁸ As in psychology, these techniques are classified as association, completion, construction and expressive. Each of these classifications is discussed below.¹⁹

Projective technique

An unstructured and indirect form of questioning that encourages respondents to project their underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes or feelings regarding the issues of concern.

Association techniques

Association techniques

A type of projective technique in which respondents are presented with a stimulus and are asked to respond with the first thing that comes to mind.

Word association

A projective technique in which respondents are presented with a list of words, one at a time. After each word, they are asked to give the first word that comes to mind.

In **association techniques**, an individual is presented with a stimulus and asked to respond with the first thing that comes to mind. Word association is the best known of these techniques. In **word association**, respondents are presented with a list of words, one at a time, and are asked to respond to each with the first word that comes to mind. The words of interest, called test words, are interspersed throughout the list, which also contains some neutral, or filler, words to disguise the purpose of the study. For example, in the GlobalCash study, individual banks may be examined with test words such as location, speed, error, quality and price. The subject’s response to each word is recorded verbatim and responses are timed so that respondents who hesitate or reason out (defined as taking longer than three seconds to reply) can be identified. The interviewer, not the respondent, records the responses.

The underlying assumption of this technique is that association allows respondents to reveal their inner feelings about the topic of interest. Responses are analysed by calculating:

- 1 The frequency with which any word is given as a response.
- 2 The amount of time that elapses before a response is given.
- 3 The number of respondents who do not respond at all to a test word within a reasonable period.

Those who do not respond at all are judged to have an emotional involvement so high that it blocks a response. It is often possible to classify the associations as favourable, unfavourable or neutral. An individual’s pattern of responses and the details of the response are used to determine the person’s underlying attitudes or feelings on the topic of interest, as shown in the following example.

example

Dealing with dirt

Word association was used to study women’s attitudes towards detergents. Below is a list of stimulus words used and the responses of two women of similar age and household status. The sets of responses are quite different, suggesting that the women differ in personality and in their attitudes towards housekeeping. Ms M’s associations suggest that she is resigned to dirt. She sees dirt as inevitable and does not do much about it. She does not do hard cleaning, nor does she get much pleasure from her family. Ms C sees dirt too, but is energetic, factual-minded and less emotional. She is actively ready to combat dirt, and she uses soap and water as her weapons.²⁰

Stimulus	Ms M	Ms C
Washday	Everyday	Ironing
Fresh	And sweet	Clean
Pure	Air	Soiled
Scrub	Does not; husband does	Clean
Filth	This neighbourhood	Dirt
Bubbles	Bath	Soap and water
Family	Squabbles	Children
Towels	Dirty	Wash

These findings suggest that the market for detergents could be segmented based on attitudes. Firms (such as Procter & Gamble) that market several different brands of washing powders and detergents could benefit from positioning different brands for different attitudinal segments. ■



Mrs C sees dirt, perhaps too much. She is energetic, factual-minded and less emotional. She is actively ready to combat dirt.

There are several variations to the standard word association procedure illustrated here. Respondents may be asked to give the first two, three or four words that come to mind rather than only the first word. This technique can also be used in controlled tests, as contrasted with free association. In controlled tests, respondents might be asked ‘What banks come to mind first when I mention ‘hi-tech’?’ More detailed information can be obtained from completion techniques, which are a natural extension of association techniques.

Completion technique

A projective technique that requires respondents to complete an incomplete stimulus situation.

Sentence completion

A projective technique in which respondents are presented with a number of incomplete sentences and are asked to complete them.

Completion techniques

In **completion techniques**, respondents are asked to complete an incomplete stimulus situation. Common completion techniques in marketing research are sentence completion and story completion.

Sentence completion is similar to word association. Respondents are given incomplete sentences and are asked to complete them. Generally, they are asked to use the first word or phrase that comes to mind, as illustrated in the GlobalCash Project.

example

GlobalCash Project

Sentence completion

In the context of the launch of the euro, the following incomplete sentences may be used.

A manager who does not plan to track their company's transactions using the Internet is

.....

A manager who selects a new bank based on the lowest price is

.....

ABN AMRO is most preferred by

.....

When I think of dividing business between banks, I

.....

This example illustrates one advantage of sentence completion over word association: respondents can be provided with a more directed stimulus. Sentence completion may provide more information about the subjects' feelings than word association. Sentence completion is not as disguised as word association, however, and many respondents may be able to guess the purpose of the study. A variation of sentence completion is paragraph completion, in which the respondent completes a paragraph beginning with the stimulus phrase. A further expanded version of sentence completion and paragraph completion is story completion.

Story completion

A projective technique in which respondents are provided with part of a story and are required to give the conclusion in their own words.

In **story completion**, respondents are given part of a story, enough to direct attention to a particular topic but not to hint at the ending. They are required to give the conclusion in their own words, as in the following example.

e x a m p l e
GlobalCash Project

Story completion

A finance director had been conducting business with a leading Norwegian bank for over 10 years. Her company was planning to make more use of the Internet to manage transactions. The manager that was her main contact at the bank knew little of the applications and benefits of the Internet for her business. So, she spent three months in talks with a variety of software suppliers, primarily trying to get over the problem of integrating new software with the systems she already had. After going through a major selection process and being at the point where she was about to commit her company, another department of the bank contacts her with an Internet solution that solves her integration problems at a much cheaper price compared with her selection process.

What is the finance director's response?

Why?

The respondent's completion of this story will reveal characteristics of the relationship she 'enjoys' with the bank. Why, after such a lengthy relationship, may the bank take the business for granted? What role is expected of the bank manager? What must happen in a relationship to get it to the point when switching to another bank is inevitable, whatever the costs? ■

Construction techniques

Construction techniques are closely related to completion techniques. Construction techniques require the respondents to construct a response in the form of a story, dialogue or description. In a construction technique, the researcher provides less initial structure to the respondents than in a completion technique. The two main construction techniques are picture response techniques and cartoon tests.

Construction technique

A projective technique in which respondents are required to construct a response in the form of a story, dialogue or description.

The roots of **picture response techniques** can be traced to the thematic apperception test (TAT), which consists of a series of pictures of ordinary as well as unusual events. In some of these pictures, the persons or objects are clearly depicted, while in others they are relatively vague. The respondent is asked to tell stories about these pictures. The respondent's interpretation of the pictures gives indications of that individual's personality. For example, an individual may be characterised as impulsive, creative, unimaginative, and so on. The term thematic apperception test is used because themes are elicited based on the subject's perceptual interpretation (apperception) of pictures.

Picture response technique

A projective technique in which respondents are shown a picture and are asked to tell a story describing it.

In **cartoon tests**, cartoon characters are shown in a specific situation related to the problem. Respondents are asked to indicate what one cartoon character might say in response to the comments of another character. The responses indicate the respondents' feelings, beliefs and attitudes towards the situation. Cartoon tests are simpler to administer and analyse than picture response techniques.

Cartoon tests

Cartoon characters are shown in a specific situation related to the problem. Respondents are asked to indicate the dialogue that one cartoon character might make in response to the comment(s) of another character.

Expressive techniques

Projective techniques in which respondents are presented with a verbal or visual situation and are asked to relate the feelings and attitudes of other people to the situation.

Role playing

Respondents are asked to assume the behaviour of someone else or a specific object.

Expressive techniques

In **expressive techniques**, respondents are presented with a verbal or visual situation and asked to relate the feelings and attitudes of other people to the situation. The respondents express not their own feelings or attitudes, but those of others. The two main expressive techniques are role playing and third-person technique.

In **role playing**, respondents are asked to play the role or to assume the behaviour of someone else. The researcher assumes that the respondents will project their own feelings into the role.²¹ A major use of role playing is in uncovering the nature of a brand personality. The following example shows why the brand personality is of importance to the marketer and how an understanding of personality may be used in advertising.

example**It's a bit of an animal²²****Brand personality**

A brand has a man-made personality and it can survive only if those responsible for it think long term, safeguard its consistency, and ensure its adherence to and compatibility with the needs and attitudes of those for whom it caters. The brand's personality is sacrosanct. Its owners need to guard against squatters, parallel traders, plagiarists and the threat of the brand becoming generic. Above all, they must guard against inconsistency.²³

The oddball snack product Peperami, strongly flavoured and meat based, in a world where sweet confectionery snacks are the norm, has been an enormous success. Advertising for the product could not be developed without first obtaining real insights into how consumers related to Peperami. Research revealed that there was a widespread view of the brand's personality. Children and adults alike referred to it as bizarre, mischievous, anarchic, impulsive, rebellious and manic. More than 50 rough advertising concepts were then tested to establish how the brand personality could be expressed, from mere eccentricity to naked aggression. What emerged was a swaggering character with a mischievous desire to shock. All the ingredients were there for the advertising solution – the manic, animated Peperami, and the pay-off line, 'It's a bit of an animal'. ■

Brand personality can be uncovered using role playing. In a group discussion scenario, participants may be asked to play out the personality of a brand. In the Peperami example, the setting could be a cocktail bar after work on a Friday evening, with individuals acting out a Peperami brand, Pringles, a Snickers Bar, and a Lidl (store) branded packet of salted peanuts. What the individuals as a brand do, what they say, how they interact with each other in the cocktail scenario, allow an expression of personality that straight questioning may not reveal. Video recording of the event, played back to the group, acts as a means to discuss and elicit further meaning of a brand's personality, highlighting any positive and negative associations of the brand.

In the **third-person technique**, respondents are presented with a verbal or visual situation and are asked to relate the beliefs and attitudes of a third person rather than directly expressing personal beliefs and attitudes. This third person may be a friend, a neighbour, a colleague, or any person that the researcher chooses. Again, the researcher assumes that the respondents will reveal personal beliefs and attitudes while describing the reactions of a third party. Asking an individual to respond in the third person reduces the social pressure to give an acceptable answer.

Third-person technique

A projective technique in which respondents are presented with a verbal or visual situation and are asked to relate the beliefs and attitudes of a third person in that situation.

Advantages and disadvantages of projective techniques

Projective techniques have a major advantage over the unstructured direct techniques (focus groups and depth interviews): they may elicit responses that subjects would be unwilling or unable to give if they knew the purpose of the study. At times, in direct questioning, the respondent may intentionally or unintentionally misunderstand, misinterpret or mislead the researcher. In these cases, projective techniques can

increase the validity of responses by disguising the purpose. This is particularly true when the issues to be addressed are personal, sensitive or subject to strong social norms. Projective techniques are also helpful when underlying motivations, beliefs and attitudes are operating at a subconscious level.²⁴

Projective techniques suffer from many of the disadvantages of unstructured direct techniques, but to a greater extent. These techniques generally require personal interviews with individuals who are experienced interviewers and interpreters, hence they tend to be expensive. Furthermore, as in all qualitative techniques, there is the risk of interpretation bias. With the exception of word association, all are open-ended techniques, making the analysis and interpretation more problematic.

Some projective techniques such as role playing require respondents to engage in what may seem to be unusual behaviour. Certain respondents may not have the self-confidence or the ability to fully express themselves with these techniques. In role playing, for example, the skills of acting may make one respondent more articulate at expressing their feelings compared with others. The same may be said of techniques where pictures and cartoons are put together and interpreted, in that distinctive skills may make certain respondents more adept and comfortable in expressing themselves. To counter this, one could argue that there is a great amount of skill required in expressing oneself in an open-ended depth interview. One could point to fiction writers or poets who are able to encapsulate particular feelings most clearly and succinctly, which again is enormously skilful.

With such skill requirements, the disadvantage of the technique lies in the nature of the respondents who agree to participate, and how characteristic they are of distinct target markets.

Applications of projective techniques

Projective techniques are used less frequently than unstructured direct methods (focus groups and depth interviews). A possible exception may be word association, which is commonly used to test brand names and occasionally to measure attitudes about particular products, brands, packages or advertisements. As the examples have shown, projective techniques can be used in a variety of situations.²⁵ The usefulness of these techniques is enhanced when the following guidelines are observed. Projective techniques should be used:

- 1 Because the required information cannot be accurately obtained by direct questioning.
- 2 In an exploratory manner to elicit issues that respondents find difficult to conceive and express.
- 3 To engage respondents in the subject, by having fun in expressing themselves in interesting and novel ways.

Comparison between qualitative techniques

To summarise comparisons between qualitative techniques, Table 8.1 gives a relative comparison of focus groups, depth interviews, projective techniques and ethnographic approaches (qualitative observation).

The nature of qualitative research is such that, within the broad categories above, there are numerous variations of the techniques with distinct strengths and weaknesses in eliciting and representing consumer feelings. Really, it is not possible to say that one technique is better or worse than the other. Faced with a given problem, it would seem to be the case of deciding which technique is the most appropriate to represent consumers.²⁶ What may affect this choice is the confidence that marketing

Table 8.1 A comparison of focus groups, depth interviews, projective techniques and ethnographic techniques

Criteria	Focus groups	Depth interviews	Projective techniques	Ethnographic techniques
Degree of structure	Can vary from highly to loosely structured	Can vary from highly to loosely structured	Tends to be loosely structured	Loosely structured, though can have a framework to guide observation
Probing of individual respondents	Low	High	Medium	None when used in isolation and in a covert manner
Moderator bias	Medium	Relatively high	Low to high	None when used in isolation and in a covert manner
Uncovering subconscious information	Low	Medium to high	High	High
Discovering innovative information	High	Medium	Low	Medium
Obtaining sensitive information	Low	Medium	High	High
Involving unusual behaviour or questioning	No	To a limited extent	Yes	Perhaps on the part of the observer

decision-makers may have in particular techniques. Thus, for example, any number of arguments may be made for the use of a projective technique as being the best way to indirectly tackle a sensitive issue. If the marketer who has to use the research findings does not believe it to be a trustworthy technique, then other, perhaps less appropriate, techniques may have to be used.



International marketing research

One of the major contributors to the success of depth interviews and projective techniques is getting the context of questioning right. The context of questioning can have two key components.

The first component is the actual location, such as an office, hotel room or even a bar. Given the issues that are to be tackled and the characteristics of the target respondents, the location plays a significant role in helping the respondent to relax and feel comfortable about responding in a manner that the interviewer is looking for. For some respondents, e.g. a young graduate manager, being questioned about issues relating to 'night life and entertainment', talking in a noisy, smoky bar may be far more natural than talking in a hotel room. The same respondents being questioned about cleaning their homes may be far more comfortable in a quiet 'home' environment, though perhaps not their own home. The interviewer has to work out what location will work best for their target respondents and the issues that will be discussed. They have to appreciate that this location may change between different respondents and may also change as they discover what effect location has on getting the most out of respondents.

The second component of the context of questioning is the protocol of conducting the interview. The protocol can include the clothes the interviewer wears, the manner in which they greet respondents, introduce the interview, conduct the interview and terminate it. This means that, even if an interviewer is technically adept at questioning, they may still not get the most out of respondents. For example, an interviewer who dresses formally when the respondent sees themselves 'off duty' may result in an interview that is tense and lacking in spontaneity.

There are no firm rules about the balance of respondent characteristics, related to issues to be questioned and the context of questioning. The interviewer has to be aware of the balance, and make adjustments as they learn of what works well in drawing out a quality response. Much of what works in a particular context is culturally bound. There can be striking differences between countries in how comfortable respondents may feel talking about issues in their home, for example. There can be striking differences in the protocol of clothing, greeting people, questioning in a direct manner and giving 'gifts' as a reward for taking part in an interview. The problem of 'context' was paramount in the following example. This example illustrates a case in which depth interviews helped to probe in detail the views of professionals, which given the detail of banking relationships could be deemed as highly complex and sensitive.

example

GlobalCash Project

Why are you going to make more use of electronic banking?

The issues tackled in the GlobalCash Project were guided by major pan-European banks from Britain, Finland, France, Germany, Norway, Spain and the USA. These banks formed a steering committee for the project that helped shape the research design. Each bank had different information requirements to support their marketing strategies, which meant that there was a big demand for a wide array of questions to be asked. This was achieved to a great extent but it did not allow great depth to be achieved in many question areas. For example, the questionnaire asked companies what plans they were making to change in particular activities. An example of a response to this question was 'to make greater use of electronic banking'. Statistical analyses could reveal the proportion who were to make greater use of electronic banking, the types of industry they operated in, the types of existing system they had and the banks they worked with. However, the questionnaire could not question *why* they were going to make more use of electronic banking.

Depth interviews were of great importance in probing the reasons behind this planned behaviour. A small sample of the questions and probes included the following questions: Was the greater use driven by new services offered by different banks? What role did the euro play in this decision? Did they foresee any integration between their old systems and new systems? Would additional hardware or software be purchased?

The whole GlobalCash questionnaire had many superficial questions that subsequently could be probed in depth. When around 50% of the responses to the postal survey were received, an interim report was presented to the steering committee. The issues that they deemed the most important to probe formed a topic guide for depth interviews.

With the completed questionnaires, profiles of the respondents could be analysed and those with behaviour relevant to the issues that needed to be explored in depth could be contacted. For example, 'sophisticated' users of cash management services could be profiled. These 'sophisticated' users were then contacted and invited to take part in a depth interview. Around 60 depth interviews were conducted, with a minimum of two interviews in any one country. ■

In the above example, each interview had the same interviewer who ensured a degree of consistency in the approach. This required the interviewer to visit 20 countries in order to conduct the 60 interviews. This interviewer had to have a

strong awareness of the technical issues of cash management banking in order to be seen as credible by the respondents, to be able to question and probe, and to appreciate the relevance of the responses elicited. He had to be aware of the context of interviewing in each of the target countries in order to get the most out of respondents. The first component of context, the actual location for the interviews, was consistent throughout each country. The interviews were held in the offices of the Finance Directors of Europe's largest companies, who made up his respondents. This was an environment where the respondents are naturally used to thinking and talking about the issues under question. It was also an environment where they could talk uninterrupted; the respondent was in control of the interview space and would relax. The second component of context, i.e. the protocol of the interview, was where the interviewer needed local support. Most of the technical language and terms used in cash management banking are 'American'. Many Finance Directors speak English, but some did not, and even if they did, at times they needed to express a view in their native tongue. To understand the protocol and language issues, the interviewer was supported by another interviewer in each country, drawn from local business schools. This interviewer helped to explain the protocol of individual countries, the peculiarities of greeting respondents, posing questions in particular ways and closing an interview. They could help with the translation of questions and responses and ultimately in interpreting the findings. Using one main interviewer allowed a full understanding of the interplay between the respondent, the issues and the context of interview. Using a fellow interviewer in individual countries allowed for the subtle characteristics of protocol and language to be incorporated into the whole process.

Understanding the interplay of respondent, issue and context is vital to the success of depth interviewing and projective techniques. Working in alien cultures in international markets makes this understanding more difficult. Investing in the time and means to develop this understanding ensures that the interviewer generates quality information, getting to really reflect what international respondents feel.



Ethics in marketing research

The essence of qualitative research is that consumers are examined in great depth. They may be questioned and probed in depth about subjects they hardly reflect upon on a day-to-day basis, never mind talk to strangers about. Great care must be taken not to upset or disturb respondents through such intensive questioning. In survey work, reassuring respondents that their responses will be confidential can work if there is a demonstrable link between their responses to questions and a means of aggregating all of the findings – making the individual response 'hidden'. In qualitative research, the process is far more intimate and the link between the response and the respondent is far more difficult to break. This is illustrated in the following example.

example

Just how 'anonymous' is a quali respondent?²⁷

From both a practical and a methodological perspective, 'confidentiality' in qualitative research is a different concept from confidentiality as applied to survey work. In survey work the emphasis is upon anonymity, i.e. the identity of individual respondents should not be revealed. This creates two problems for qualitative research.

- 1 Anonymity cannot be promised in qualitative research, especially in the light of current practices where it is increasingly common for clients and others to come to groups, or hear audiotapes, see videotapes and other primary data. This issue further demands consideration of the question: where does the identity reside? In a name, a face, the voice, a turn of phrase, maybe? It is of course also pertinent to ask: do respondents actually care if their identity is revealed?
- 2 In quantitative research, respondent identity is generally unimportant. The very essence of sampling theory is that a sufficiently large and randomly chosen sample will represent the views, behaviour or attitudes of any known population as a whole. As such, the identity of any one individual is irrelevant to quantitative findings. In sharp contrast, in qualitative research the relationship between the specific individuals and their views is at the heart of analysis and interpretation. You cannot reach qualitative findings without having 'revealed' the individual as part of the research process. Therefore, confidentiality through anonymity is a methodologically untenable concept wherever anyone other than the interviewer is privy to any part of the research process. Yet at the same time, more clients attend groups and more groups take place in viewing facilities. ■

At the end of the second point above comes the reason why the marketing research industry is so concerned about how qualitative research respondents are handled. More consumers are being questioned in both domestic and business scenarios. If they are to 'open up' and reveal deeply held feelings, perhaps in front of a group of strangers, or if they are to take part in projective techniques that they may see as being unorthodox, they have to be reassured of how the data captured will be used. As well as the ethical questions of potentially damaging respondents come the problems of respondents either not willing to take part or, if they do, being very guarded with their responses.

Ethical questions also arise when videotaping sessions with the respondents. Some of the pertinent questions are how much to tell respondents and when the clients should be allowed access. When videotaping respondents, regardless of whether or not they were aware of the camera during the meeting, at the end of the meeting they should be asked to sign a written declaration conveying their permission to use the recording. This declaration should disclose the full purpose of the video, including who will be able to view it. If any respondent refuses, the tape should be either destroyed or edited to omit that respondent's identity and comments completely. The researcher should be sensitive to the comfort level of the respondents, and respect for the respondents should warrant restraint. When a respondent feels uncomfortable and does not wish to go on, the researcher should not aggressively probe or confront any further. It has also been suggested that respondents should be allowed to reflect on all they have said at the end of the interview and should be given the opportunity to ask questions. This may help return the respondents to their pre-interview emotional state.



Internet and computer applications

The Internet has opened up many possibilities to marketing researchers who wish to use depth interviews and projective techniques. Through the use of email, interviewers can reach and question respondents from all over the world. To be able to track down and talk to individuals with the desired qualities for a particular study, without the time and cost implications of travelling, presents a significant benefit of the Internet.

Being able to track down and talk to respondents, i.e. gaining access to qualitative respondents, is vital, but the quality of the discussion with these respondents should be considered.²⁸ In the case of depth interviews, a full dialogue can develop between an interviewer and respondent, either in real-time or in non-real-time, i.e. a series of emails over a period of time. The discussion, questions and probes can be tailored to specific respondents, allowing them time to reflect upon the issues and express their views in their own manner. The interviewer can present stimuli in terms of images or audio recordings that may help to elicit more from the respondent. It is possible to use Webcams to be able to observe respondents and for respondents to view interviewers, provided of course that both parties have this technology.

However, even with the use of Webcams, much of the non-verbal communication that makes depth interviews work is lost. Subtle changes in facial expression and body language may be missed. These non-verbal forms of communication are important in developing a rapport between interviewer and respondent and are vital in the development of dialogue and the analysis of data. The limitation of visual interaction can make projective techniques difficult to implement. For certain projective techniques such as the array of Completion and Construction techniques, the anonymity afforded by the distance between interviewer and respondent can be a positive feature. Some respondents may find the presence of an interviewer inhibiting when they are trying to think of and present a story completion. Where respondents feel inhibited, working through a response in their own space and time may be the ideal context in which to tackle particular issues.

In evaluating the worth of the Internet in depth interviewing and projective techniques we can return to the GlobalCash example in the International Marketing Research section. Meeting respondents face to face allowed a great richness of dialogue and understanding to be built up. There was no question about how successful the interviews were in understanding *why* respondents behaved in particular ways. However, consider the travel and other costs involved. Consider the time involved in conducting the interviews and just typing up the transcripts of the interviews. Compare the cost and timing requirements of meeting face to face in an international setting with a dialogue by email. The process could have been conducted by email much more quickly and cheaply. The dilemma faced is whether the respondents would have allowed such a dialogue in the first place and how much they would open up and develop a dialogue.

Go to the Companion Website and read Professional Perspective 20 'Live talk on the Web' by Tim Macer. He reviews a software package, Survey Guardian. This package allows for a real-time, 'chat style' on-screen interview.



See Professional Perspective 20.

Summary

The direct qualitative technique of depth interviewing allows researchers to focus upon individuals with the qualities they deem to be important to their research objectives. With a 'quality individual' the researcher can question and probe to great depth and elicit a quality understanding of that individual's behaviour or feelings. The technique is well suited to tackling commercially and personally sensitive issues. It is also well suited to interviewing children. There are many types of interview that can be applied under the term 'depth interview'. They can range from the very open and unstructured to semi-structured exchanges. The application of structure in a depth interview can be founded on a theoretical underpinning of how individuals should be questioned and probed. Two relevant and widely used examples of depth interviews using a theoretical underpinning are laddering and repertory grid techniques. Laddering seeks to reveal chains of attributes, consequences and values that respondents associate with products. The repertory grid seeks to elicit the underlying elements and the connection of those elements, related to a particular form of consumer behaviour.

Indirect projective techniques aim to project the respondent's motivations, beliefs, attitudes and feelings on to ambiguous situations. Projective techniques may be classified as association (word association), completion (sentence completion, story completion), construction (picture response, cartoon tests) and expressive (role playing, third-person) techniques. Projective techniques are particularly useful when respondents are unwilling or unable to provide the required information by direct methods.

The qualitative researcher needs to develop an understanding of the interplay between characteristics of their target respondents, the issues they will be questioned about and the context in which they will be questioned. The context can be broken down into the physical location of the interview and the protocol of starting, running and terminating the interview. Building up this understanding is vital to the success of conducting depth interviews and projective techniques in international markets.

The marketing research industry is concerned about how qualitative research respondents are handled in interviews and observations. More consumers are being questioned in both domestic and business scenarios. If they are to 'open up' and reveal deeply held feelings, perhaps in front of a group of strangers, or if they are to take part in projective techniques that they may see as being unorthodox, they have to be reassured of how the data captured will be used.

The Internet has opened up many possibilities to conduct depth interviews and use projective techniques on a global basis. A rich dialogue between an interviewer and a respondent can be developed and recorded with much lower cost and time demands when compared with meeting face to face. A loss of the subtle eye contact and body language can be a price to pay for the savings afforded by using the Internet.

Questions



- 1 What is a depth interview? Summarise the process of administering a depth interview.
- 2 What are the major advantages of depth interviews?
- 3 What are the requirements of the researcher undertaking depth interviews? Why are these requirements particularly important when conducting interviews with managers?
- 4 Why may a structure be applied to the depth interview in the form of a laddering or repertory grid technique?

- 5 Describe the process of administering the repertory grid technique.
- 6 Evaluate the context and timing requirements that you think would be needed to make the repertory grid technique work.
- 7 Choose any particular application of a depth interview and present a case for why you think the technique may work much better than a focus group.
- 8 What are projective techniques? Under what circumstances should projective techniques be used?
- 9 Describe the word association technique. Give an example of a situation in which this technique is especially useful.
- 10 Describe the story completion technique. Give an example of the type of respondent and the context in which such a technique would work.
- 11 Describe the criteria by which marketing researchers may evaluate the relative worth of qualitative techniques.
- 12 Why is the context of questioning particularly important when conducting depth interviews in international marketing research?
- 13 Why may depth interviews or projective techniques upset or disturb respondents?
- 14 Describe a projective technique that you feel would work particularly well by email – without the use of Webcams.
- 15 What limitations are there to conducting depth interviews by email, compared with meeting respondents face to face?

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