

CHAPTER 11

USING INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this chapter the student should be able to:

- Decide on the most appropriate use and design of interviews and/or focus groups for particular research projects.
- Use interviews and/or focus groups in their own research and design and develop appropriate interview and focus group schedules for their own research.
- Critique the use of interviews and focus groups in research.

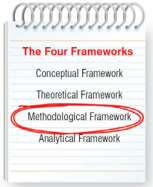
RESEARCH SKILLS

At the end of this chapter the student should, using the exercises on the accompanying online platform, be able to:

- Decide when to use interviews and when to use focus groups to gather data.
- Design an interview schedule and a focus group schedule for a sample project.
- Critique the design of a proposed interview and focus group.

The aim of this chapter is to introduce and explain two data collection methods, interviews and focus groups. In the chapter, the ways in which to structure and carry out interviews and focus groups are explained. Both this face-to-face COMP (F2F) focus groups and interviews, and focus groups and interviews conducted using computer mediated communication (CMC) are explored. The different types of interviews, one-to-one interviews, in-depth interviews, telephone interviews, group interviews and online interviews and their relative advantages and disadvantages are described.

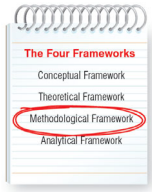
RESEARCH DIARY ACTIVITIES



ACTIVITY 11.1

In your research diary detail and explain the data gathering exercises you will engage in while carrying out your research.

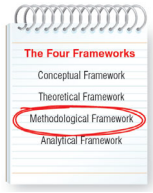
ANSWER:



ACTIVITY 11.2

In your research diary, draw up a plan for the data gathering you intend to undertake for your research project. Make a note in the diary of all of the issues and potential problems you see in your data gathering as you develop this plan. Propose in the diary how you intend to resolve these issues and deal with these problems.

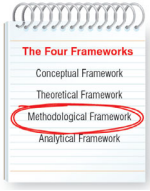
ANSWER:



ACTIVITY 11.3

In your research diary explain what an audit trail is (see Chapter 11, page 307) and explain how you would keep an audit trail in your research diary.

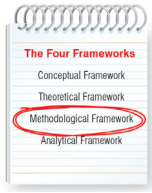
ANSWER:



ACTIVITY 11.4

There are, as you know, substantial differences in quantitative and qualitative research. This issue is considered again in the Real World Research textbox on page 308. Read through the textbox and then carry out the research diary exercise outlined at the end of the textbox.

ANSWER:

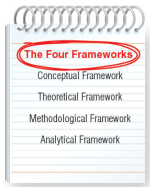


ACTIVITY 11.5

Read the research detailed in the Real World Research textbox on page 309 of the textbook. The title of the journal article detailing the research is 'Getting the picture: Programme awareness amongst film festival customers'. When you have read the synopsis in the textbox, source and read the entire article.

In your research diary, write a critique of the interview and the focus group method used in the research. Then design a new interview schedule and a new focus group schedule for the research. Briefly explain in your research diary the advantages of the new schedules.

ANSWER:



YOUR RESEARCH DIARY

Please use this section to start your own Research Diary and keep accurate records of your research as it progresses

DATE:

RESEARCH ELEMENT/ASPECT:

Detail the topic or section of research being undertaken

SOURCE:

Record website addresses, book citations, library references, contact details etc.

SUMMARY:

Reflect on your experiences, thoughts, ideas and developments

NOTES:

Make general notes on your research, for example questions for further reflection and/or investigation, your thoughts, your observations and plans for future research.