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INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES

Interviewing techniques are a system of professional methods used to obtain reliable, complete, and relevant information from a person during a structured conversation. Interviews are widely applied in journalism, sociology, psychology, human resource management, law enforcement, education, medicine, and academic research. The effectiveness of an interview depends not only on the questions asked but also on the interviewer's ability to establish contact, listen actively, observe non-verbal behavior, maintain neutrality, and adapt the conversation to the respondent's answers. Therefore, interviewing should be understood not as a simple exchange of questions and answers, but as a complex communicative process aimed at collecting meaningful information while respecting ethical standards.

One of the most important techniques in interviewing is preparation. Before conducting an interview, the interviewer must clearly define the purpose of the conversation, the expected type of information, and the structure of the interview. For example, in a job interview, the main purpose is to assess the candidate's qualifications, professional skills, motivation, and suitability for the position. In sociological research, the purpose may be to understand people's attitudes, values, or social experiences. Preparation includes studying the topic, developing a list of questions, choosing the appropriate interview format, and considering possible difficulties. A well-prepared interviewer is able to control the direction of the conversation and avoid superficial or irrelevant answers. A key interviewing technique is the use of open-ended questions. These questions encourage the respondent to give detailed answers instead of simply saying "yes" or "no." For example, instead of asking, "Did you like your previous job?", the interviewer may ask, "What did you find most valuable in your previous professional experience?" Such questions allow the respondent to explain motives, feelings, opinions, and personal experience. Open-ended questions are especially useful in academic and qualitative research because they help reveal deeper meanings and individual perspectives. However, they require careful listening and further clarification from the interviewer. Another important technique is the use of closed-ended questions, which are useful when the interviewer needs specific factual information. For example, questions such as "How many years of experience do you have?" or "Did you participate in this project?" help clarify concrete facts. Closed-ended questions are effective when time is limited or when the interviewer needs to compare answers between different respondents. However, excessive use of closed-

ended questions may make the interview too formal and limit the respondent's ability to provide additional important information. Therefore, a balanced combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions is considered the most effective approach [1, p. 670].

A particularly valuable interviewing technique is probing, which means asking additional questions to clarify or deepen the respondent's answer. Probing questions may include phrases such as "Could you explain that in more detail?", "What do you mean by that?", "Can you give an example?", or "Why was this situation important to you?" This technique helps the interviewer avoid vague answers and obtain more precise information. For instance, if a respondent says, "The working conditions were difficult," the interviewer should not stop there but ask what exactly made them difficult: workload, schedule, communication problems, lack of resources, or management style. Probing allows the interviewer to move from general statements to concrete facts and examples. Active listening is also one of the central techniques of a successful interview. It involves full concentration on the respondent's words, tone, emotions, and logic of explanation. Active listening includes maintaining eye contact, nodding, using short verbal signals such as "I see" or "Please continue," and summarizing the respondent's statements to confirm understanding. For example, the interviewer may say, "So, as I understand, the main difficulty was not the task itself but the lack of communication in the team." This technique shows respect for the respondent and helps build trust. It also reduces the risk of misunderstanding or misinterpreting the answer [2, p. 210].

The technique of neutrality is essential, especially in research, journalism, and legal or investigative interviews. The interviewer should avoid expressing personal opinions, approval, disapproval, surprise, or judgment. Leading questions such as "Don't you think this decision was wrong?" can influence the respondent and distort the results of the interview. A neutral form would be: "How do you evaluate this decision?" Neutrality helps ensure that the information obtained reflects the respondent's actual views rather than the expectations or pressure of the interviewer. This is particularly important when the interview concerns sensitive, controversial, or emotionally significant topics.

Another significant element is question sequencing. A professional interview usually begins with simple, general, and non-threatening questions that help create a comfortable atmosphere. More complex, analytical, or sensitive questions are introduced later, when trust has been established. For example, in a research interview, the interviewer may first ask about the respondent's general experience and only later move to personal evaluations or difficult situations. This structure reduces tension and increases the likelihood of honest and detailed answers. The final part of the interview should usually include summarizing questions and an opportunity for the respondent to add anything important. The interviewer must also pay attention to non-verbal communication. Facial expressions, gestures, posture, pauses, tone of voice, and emotional reactions can provide additional information about the respondent's attitude and level of confidence. For example, hesitation before answering may indicate uncertainty, discomfort, or the need to think more carefully. However, non-verbal

signals should not be interpreted mechanically or without context. The same gesture may have different meanings depending on personality, culture, emotional state, or situation. Therefore, non-verbal observation should be used as an additional source of information, not as the only basis for conclusions [3, p. 86].

The contemporary preparation of aspiring police personnel necessitates nurturing more than just specialized expertise; emotional intelligence is equally vital, as it directly impacts how effectively they communicate and make choices when facing intricate scenarios. The instruction of modern languages for these cadets ought to contribute to fostering empathy, self-control, and relational proficiencies, thereby guaranteeing their vocational preparedness for both international partnerships and engagement within varied cultural settings. Scholars Dekusar G., Pakulova T., and Andrasya Isa A. have stated that cultivating emotional intelligence forms an integral element in the curriculum for future law enforcement officers within today's educational framework [4].

In professional interviewing, ethical principles are extremely important. The respondent should understand the purpose of the interview, how the information will be used, and whether their answers will remain confidential. In academic research, informed consent is a necessary condition. The interviewer must not manipulate the respondent, violate privacy, or use psychological pressure. Ethical interviewing also means respecting the respondent's right not to answer certain questions or to stop the interview. These principles are especially important when the conversation concerns personal experience, social problems, health, family, work conflicts, or traumatic events.

In conclusion, interviewing techniques are a complex set of communicative, analytical, psychological, and ethical skills. A successful interview requires preparation, clear goals, appropriate questions, active listening, neutrality, probing, ethical awareness, and the ability to analyze both verbal and non-verbal information. The quality of the interview directly influences the reliability and usefulness of the collected data. Therefore, interviewing should be regarded as a professional method of obtaining information, not as an informal conversation. The more carefully the interviewer applies these techniques, the more accurate, complete, and meaningful the results of the interview will be.

References

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