

EXTRA STEP: Preparing for an in-depth INTERVIEW!

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RIDDLE: Imagine you arrived at home in the middle of the afternoon after being away for three days due to a work trip. Your partner (e.g. wife, husband, dog, PlayStation 4 or whatever you truly love and have a relationship with) is still at work. You walk in the flat with your suitcase, walk in the bedroom to change and have a shower and what do you see? A message written on the bathroom mirror saying “ (Your partner’s name), I love you and miss you already” and **YOU WEREN’T THE ONE THAT WROTE IT!** Conclusion? She/he/it must be **CHEATING** on you! Correct? Well, not exactly...

But your blood pressure is now high, you are sweating and on PANIC mode. So what do you DO? Jump out of the window? NO. Leave everything behind and run away with your attractive female neighbor? NO (By the way, stop thinking about her!).

You need to first RELAX and ASK QUESTIONS to your wife when your partner comes home! Maybe it was NOTHING. But which questions should you ask? The MOST ACCURATE ones: the ones that will lead you to the MOST PRECISE answers and that will allow you to draw IN-DEPTH CONCLUSIONS!

And here is where I will help you improve your “detective skills”.

In this document you will be able to strategically create appropriate QUESTIONS not only to find out if your partner is cheating on you, but, MOST IMPORTANTLY to address ANY INTERVIEW REGARDING ANY RESEARCH TOPIC!

(Ps: The solution for the riddle is in the end of the document).

LIST of HACKS

1. **MAKE A LIST OF WHICH TOPICS TO COVER.** When your partner comes home and you start asking her/him/it questions, **MOST LIKELY** it will end up on a **TWO** hour conversation! So

it is very easy for you to **get lost** in the conversation and forget to ask about relevant things!

- a. The same thing happens if you are interviewing an important person in your field, as the head of an important company or a politician! They probably only have a short time available for you and it must be your only opportunity. So remember: if you forgot to address an important topic, you may not have the opportunity to interview them again! So **BE PREPARED!**
- b. Also, suppose you are using **MIXED DESIGNS** approach (more than one research design on the same research project, for example, a causal and exploratory design). And suppose the first step is an **EXPERIMENT** and you are measuring specific constructs on **SCALES** (e.g. Purchase intention, quality, ease of use) after the experimental task and you follow it by conducting interviews with participants.

In this case, make sure to develop questions for each construct (e.g. Purchase intention, quality, ease of use), as the combination of qualitative and quantitative findings will support each other and will allow you to have VERY insightful conclusions!

- c. Also, **USUALLY** (Normalerweise in German or Normalmente in Portuguese), you should develop this list of topics to be covered **based on the main topics you have covered on your theoretical background!**
- d. But **CERTAINLY** (Auf jeden Fall in German or Certamente in Portuguese) you should develop the list of topics in a way that allows you to **FULLY** answer the main theoretical concepts of your **RESEARCH QUESTION (S)** or **HYPOTHESES!**

SO BEFORE DEVELOPING QUESTIONS DEFINE ALL TOPICS YOU INTENT TO COVER!

2. **CREATE QUESTIONS WISELY FOR EACH TOPIC.** Now that you have a list of topics to cover, one rule is clear here:

Superficial questions will lead to superficial answers!

So if you make the mistake of developing superficial questions you only have yourself and Scarlett Johansson to blame. I'm out of it, I told you **NOT** to make this mistake (And Scarlett Johansson, well, because she can be distracting). So here are some suggestions:

- a. **Avoid questions that can lead to YES or NO answers.** If you ask questions such as: “Do you like...?” or “Have you ever..?” You run the risk of the respondent simply saying “Yes” or “No”. And then what? What can you derive from these answers? NOT MUCH.
- So for example, the case above of “**Do you like...?**” You could ask, “**How would you describe your taste for..?**”. If the person doesn’t like (Whatever you are talking about, hopefully something legal and socially acceptable) they will say so, but explaining with MORE DETAILS. AND THIS IS WHAT YOU HAVE TO STRIVE FOR!
 - For the example above of “**Have you ever..?**” you could ask it as “**How frequently have you..?**”. Again, you are addressing the same question but in a way that you will have much from the answer of your RESPONDENT! So use this logic for ALL your questions.
 - Final suggestion here is: once you have finished all of your questions (for ALL topics) go through them again and again thinking: HOW CAN I MAKE THESE QUESTIONS GIVE MORE IN-DEPTH ANSWERS? Now that’s the attitude!
- b. **What is the RIGHT amount of questions per topic?** Sorry, but this answer does not exist. It is **NOT** about **quantity**, it is about **QUALITY** (Just like with 4 Cheese Pizzas). And most importantly, about **FULLY** answering the **RESEARCH QUESTION (S)** or **HYPOTHESES of your study!**
- The best thing is to remember to discuss it with your supervisor during supervision meetings. This is a VERY important preparation part. And don’t forget to be nice to him/her. Supervisors are always good people (Some students would disagree) and like receiving presents at any time.
- c. Think of the **LOGICAL SEQUENCING** of the **topics** and the **questions per topic!**
- Structure it from the **broadest** topic to the **most specific**.
 - Also, **AVOID AT ALL COSTS** starting with the most sensitive topics or questions.
 - **Start with the most generic and build on it to the most specific.** Just like when you are getting to know a gorgeous girl. Remember **Joey** from the series “**Friends**”? (If you call me old I will never help you again. I swear). Anyway, he had a famous pick-up line that was “**How youuuu doing?**” **EXACTLY!** Joey never approached a girl saying “**How concerned are you**

with the currency fluctuations in emerging markets due to their constant political instability?”

- By **starting** with more **generic** questions you build a “relationship” with the respondent, build **trust** and slowly you start addressing more complex issues. EXACTLY LIKE YOU DO IN A PUB while meeting a cute girl.

3. **CREATE A TABLE WITH TOPICS AND QUESTIONS.** So now that you have your topics and questions, sketch them on a 2x2 table (Topics *versus* questions).

a. Once the table is done and you can **VISUALIZE** all questions according to the topics, **MAKE IMPROVEMENTS!** Check-list:

- Are there repetitive questions? If so, **delete them**. The last thing you want from a respondent is he/she says to your face “I’ve already answered that”.
- Do I have too many questions for one topic and almost none for other?
- Do the questions I have address each topic **FULLY**? If not, **write more!**

b. **Include the table you created on the Appendix of your thesis. This will make you look smart and impress your supervisors! Trust me.**

I am such a nice individual that I have included in the appendix a DRAFT of what the table COULD look like! (But it’s ONLY to give you an idea. CREATE YOUR OWN!)

4. **RUN PRE-TESTS.** This way you can simulate what kind of answers you might have after the interview. Are they deep enough? Will they address your topic?

- The pre-test do NOT have to be necessarily with someone from your sample. Remember, the aim to check which kind of answers you MIGHT get from the questions and improve their wording, validity and structuring!
- Mothers are great for this. I suggest you first hug and kiss them, saying how much you missed them and how beautiful they look that day. They will be super happy. Then, ask them to answer some questions. They will love it! Just don’t call your ex for it. They don’t want to talk to you anyway, they haven’t been replying your texts and running pre-tests with them would be a bad idea and would not make you get back together. **So, honestly don’t do it. Put the phone down!**

By the way, **ALWAYS** be kind to your mom, no matter if you are doing research or not. Speaking of which, when was the last time you called her just to ask her how she was?



Solution of the Riddle: Where has TRUST gone? Honestly... What happened was that your partner's father came for a visit to help, by looking after his grandson (YOUR SON!) while you were gone and left a goodbye message for his daughter. Now stop doubting you're her/him/it and be thankful for the great father in law you have! Shame on you!

APPENDIX: Preparation sheet for an in-depth INTERVIEW!

Research Topics	Set of Questions
1.	1. 2. 3. 4.
2.	1. 2. 3. 4.
3.	1. 2. 3. 4.
4.	1. 2. 3. 4.

