



**INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH
SURVEY RESEARCH CENTER**

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

**In-person Interview Privacy Practices, Perceptions,
and Preferences: Results from a Mixed Methods
Study**

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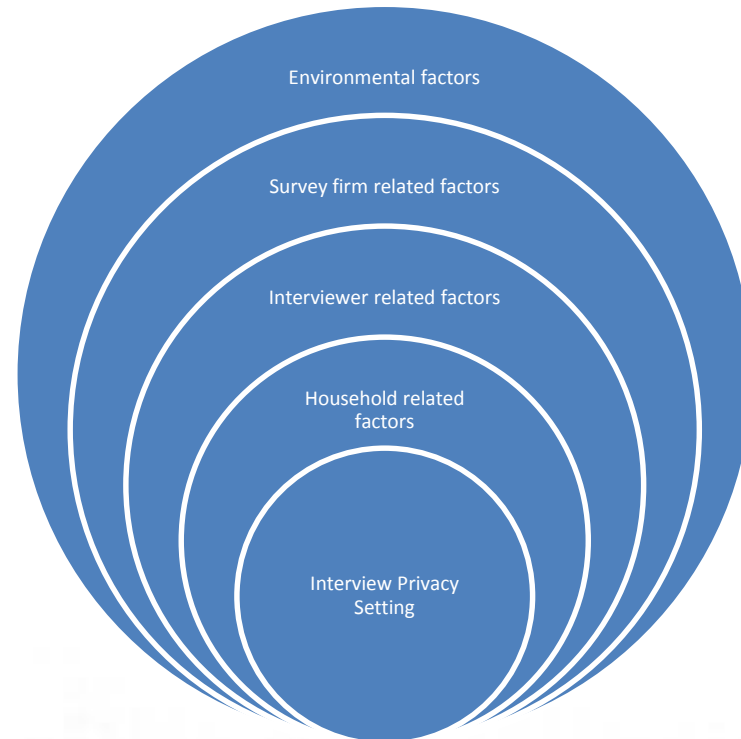


Introduction

- Renewed attention on interview privacy in the literature (Chadi 2013; Chauchard 2013; Mneimneh et al. 2015; Diop, Le, and Traugott 2015; Herrera et al. 2017; Lau et al. 2017)
- Most of the literature so far has focused on information management (i.e. information sharing) rather than interaction management (i.e. interpersonal interactions)
 - These two elements constitute the interpersonal dimension of one’s privacy beliefs (Laufer and Wolfe 1977).
- Interaction management depends on the respondent, the household members, the interviewer, the survey firm and the social milieu
 - i.e. myriad of contextual factors

Contextual Factors Affecting the Privacy Setting of an In-person Survey Interview

- Understanding contextual factors that affect the privacy setting of the interview is essential in 3MC studies



Research questions

Do firms usually request privacy in their surveys? Do they train their interviewers on requesting privacy?

How do interviewers perceive the request for private interviews? What techniques have interviewers used or would use to circumvent a non-private interview setting?

How do members of a household perceive requests for a private interview? What factors influence their perceptions and the ability to adhere to such a request?

Do firms usually request privacy in their surveys? Do they train their interviewers on requesting privacy?

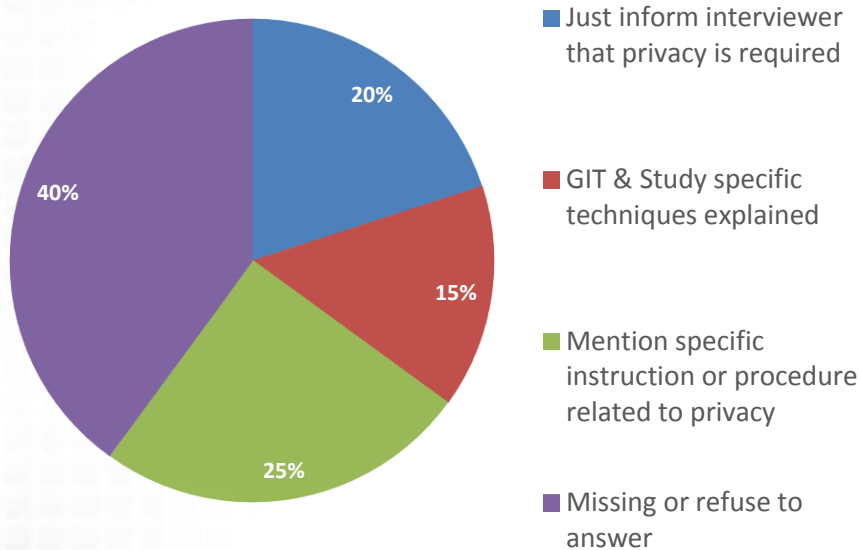
- Study 1: Establishment web survey
 - 124 firms from the MENA region
 - Fieldwork dates: 11/22/16 - 1/17/17
 - 25 firms answered most of the questions
 - Response Rate: 22.9%



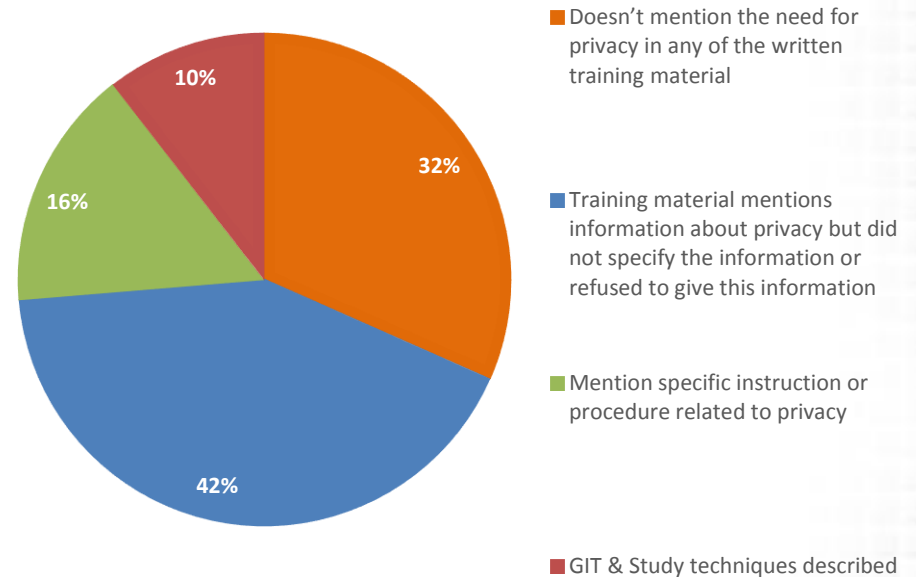
- Interview Privacy Practices
 - 80% indicated that at least some of their interviews required a private setting

Do firms usually request privacy in their surveys? Do they train their interviewers on requesting privacy?

Training Content that is Related to Privacy (N=20)



Content of Training Material (N=19)



How do interviewers perceive the request for private interviews? What techniques have interviewers used or would use to circumvent a non-private interview setting?

- Study 2: Focus groups (FG)
 - One FG with 8 interviewers (5 females and 3 males)
 - Recruited from active pool of interviewers at SESRI, Qatar University
 - Conducted in June 2017 in Arabic ; lasted for ~ 2 hours
 - Audio recorded and transcribed
 - Interviewer focus group guide explored the following topics:
 - definition of privacy in general
 - interviewers' experiences with conducting interviews in privacy
 - interviewers' concerns and challenges about such requests.
 - Transcriptions were analyzed using thematic analysis (Gibbs 2007)

Interviewer FG themes: privacy as a concept

- Information management emerged as the primary definition, and in particular, control over personal information.
- Interaction management was a secondary characterization for interviewers.
 - “People here don’t have control over their privacy”

Interviewer FG themes: barriers to achieving a private interview setting

- Gender mixing of Iwers and Rs was viewed as a major hindrance to a private interview.

“I was interviewing a young man between the ages of 25-30 and the mother came and asked what we were doing. I explained we are from University of Qatar. She expelled us from the house and when the son objected, she asked him to be quiet...She humiliated us and did not respect her son’s opinion.”
- Differences in citizenship status between Qataris and non- Qataris would increase the likelihood of a non-private interview.
- The pressure to achieve high response rates was viewed as more important than obtaining a private interview.

“If people are persuaded to do our interviews...if the survey firm announces the survey in a media station or newspaper... privacy is not an issue.”

Interviewer FG themes: suggestions for increasing chance of private interview

- Emphasize or introduce fieldwork protocols that would empower interviewers to secure a private interview.
- Have the interviewer tailor his or her approach to the particular respondent and household situation.

How do members of a household perceive requests for a private interview? What factors influence their perceptions and the ability to adhere to such a request?

- Study 2: Focus groups (FG)
 - Four FGs with household members in Qatar (April – May, 2017)
 - Participants were recruited based on citizenship status, language and gender: One mixed gender (non-Qatari, English), One females only (non-Qatari, Arabic), one females only (Qatari, Arabic), one males only (Qatari, Arabic) ; lasted on average ~2 hours
 - Audio recorded and transcribed
 - Household member FG guide explored the following topics:
 - General thoughts and perceptions about privacy
 - Views on physical privacy at home
 - Views on privacy of in-person interviews

Household member FG themes: privacy as a concept

- Views related to information management, particularly in regard to personal and family related information, were prevalent across groups
 - Discussion focused especially on the negative repercussions on the respondent and the third party.
- Qatari household members focused more on the physical constraints related to privacy at home and aspects of interaction management.



Household member FG themes: factors that affect willingness to do a private interview

- Cultural influences related to gender mixing and citizenship status.
- Socio-physical barriers related to dwelling size (for non-Qataris), gender-specific guest areas (for Qataris).
- Survey design features including interview length and time of day.
- An interviewer's approach and sensitivity to cultural norms were discussed by *Qatari citizens*; whereas, interviewer personality and trustworthiness came to mind for *non-Qataris*.



Household member FG themes: reactions to an interviewer's request for privacy

- Differed by gender and citizenship status:
 - Qatari males were more open to request than Qatari females conditional on the rationale for privacy.
 - Qatari females were not open to the request and will intentionally seek out non-private settings
 - “The interview has to be in the middle of the house with all my family and siblings”
- *Non-Qatari* males and females were receptive to the request conditional on the topic of the survey, gender of the interviewer, and presence of others at home but in a different room.

Discussion

- An essential step to minimize sharing information with individuals who might not otherwise have access to it is managing the interaction with others during the interview.
 - Both information management and interaction management are critical to understanding the interpersonal dynamics regarding privacy
- Environmental factors, the survey firm, the interviewer, and the household structure shape views regarding the private setting of the interview
- Cultural influences were the focus of both interviewers and household members e.g., social norms or customs about gender, citizenship, and the role of authority figures in the family

Discussion

- The difficulty of having a private setting at home is particularly important for female respondents in Qatar
- Only a few firms detailed certain protocols in training sessions to enhance privacy or to handle the presence of a third person.
- A smaller number of firms reported any training material content directed at equipping the interviewer with ways of requesting privacy.
- Reasons :
 - Perceived difficulty to ask for privacy in this culture (?)
 - Lack of understanding of the prevalence and factors affecting privacy (?)
 - Non-response pressure (?)

Discussion

- Interviewers recognize the need to tailor request depending on respondent but in reality they don't feel empowered to ask for privacy
 - Conduct interview at doorstep or ask for a quiet corner in the presence of others instead of a private setting
- How to empower interviewers ?
 - Certain design protocols : gender matching (if needed and possible), taking an appointment, using more self-administration, emphasizing confidentiality and the need for respondents to freely express their opinions, and allowing interviewers to pause the interview if a third party interrupts
 - Training procedures: tailoring requests that are culturally appropriate

Thank you!

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