

Analyzing & Reporting Techniques: When Key Informant Interviews Include Survey-type Questions

Typically key informant interviews consist of a series of open-ended questions that produce narrative answers—qualitative data that needs to be content analyzed for key themes and illustrative quotes that represent a particular point of view or insight voiced by informants. Sometimes, though, it may be expedient to include a few survey-type questions in the interview. When that is the case, the activity write-up can require a special approach, especially if you are comparing data from several waves of data collection. You'll need to analyze and report on quantitative survey data as well as qualitative comments that describe informants' perceptions, attitudes, concerns and rationale.

Like any evaluation activity summary, your key informant interview write-up should include an explanation of data collection methods, results and implications. What follows are some examples of how you might report blended key informant interview-survey results. Note that the samples are incomplete snippets that don't represent what a full evaluation activity report would consist of.

METHODS

Start the write-up with a description about the evaluation activity—its purpose, how and when data was collected, and by whom. If there were multiple waves of data collection, state that—for example, “this was the second of three waves of interviews”. Indicate how many open-ended vs. survey questions were asked, summarize the topics covered, and note any changes to the instrument between the two rounds of data collection. Describe the sample size and makeup (types of informants) and whether they were the same informants as those interviewed in previous rounds. Using a table to present the information makes it easy to understand the differences in opinion among the informants.

Example 1

As part of the statewide Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community initiative, project staff conducted a second wave of key informant interviews with decisionmakers and retail-related stakeholders in Bear City (the target jurisdiction) in August-September 2016 to assess policy options for the retail environment. Key informants were asked a total of 14 questions related to the retail environment (plus 8 demographic questions). Four questions were open-ended; 10 were yes/no or multiple choice paired with follow up questions designed to assess support/opposition for a variety of policies e.g., tobacco retail licensing or banning the sale of tobacco in pharmacies. The instrument was developed by the Tobacco Control Evaluation Center and modified slightly in 2016 to include two questions about healthy retailer program components. A combination of content analysis and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the interviews for common themes across open-ended questions and yes/no questions.

Key informants consisted of the mayor, five city council members, the city manager and two retailers in Bear City. While three of the policy makers were different than in the baseline round, the breakdown of informants in 2016 was consistent with the 2014 key informant interviews.

RESULTS

Typically, analysis of key informant interview data can be done thematically by identifying clusters of comments on key topics. However, when data includes both qualitative and quantitative results and compares data from different waves, it may be helpful to report findings in a question-by-question summary format first and then summarize overall themes and opportunities toward the end. (This is particularly true for HSHC evaluation activities so that the Tobacco Control Evaluation Center can use your data to compile statewide reports!) When presenting the results, provide qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions as well as descriptive statistics for the yes/no and support/opposition types of questions. Include direct quotes that represent the various perspectives voiced by informants. Be sure to identify how different types of informants (e.g., policymakers, policy enforcers, retailers and other community members) responded to the same question. Note where results were similar or different between the two time periods. Include interpretation of the results by providing needed context and explaining what is noteworthy, surprising, impactful, or actionable.

Example 2

What follows is a question-by-question summary, comparing the 2016 data to 2014 (where 2014 data is available). Characteristic quotes from the 2016 key informants are also provided.

4b. Would you support or oppose a law to prevent stores near schools from selling tobacco products?

Q4b	2014 (n=8)			2016 (n=9)		
	Support	Oppose	Don't Know	Support	Oppose	Don't Know
Policyholders	3	3	-	5	2	-
Retailers	0	2	-	1	1	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	3	5	-	6	3	-

An increasing number of policymakers and retailers were willing to consider a law to restrict where tobacco products could be sold in order to reduce youth access and uptake. A majority, however, favored grandfathering in existing retailers and preventing only new retailers from establishing a business near schools or other youth-centered areas. Comments indicated that strong public opinion about the issue was the determining factor in the shift in their position since 2014. This suggests that the project should engage in more community involvement and media activity to publicize public support for measures that protect youth from tobacco product exposure when advocating for related policies.

♦ Support

- *“As public servants, we [council members] have a responsibility to protect young people from the encroachments from aggressive tobacco marketing aimed at getting them to buy and use habit-forming products.” (policymaker)*

- *“People don’t want their kids exposed to tobacco products...It is entirely reasonable to use zoning regulations to prevent new tobacco retailers from establishing businesses in close proximity to schools, parks and other youth-centered locations.” (policymaker)*
- *“I would support such a provision only if existing tobacco retailers were grandfathered in and allowed to continue to sell tobacco products. Otherwise it would be unfair unless there was a very long lead time before implementation.” (retailer)*

◆ *Oppose*

- *“I’m not sure how this would work with retailers already located near schools. How could you suddenly disallow a major portion of their income stream? That seems like a hugely disruptive imposition they did not bargain for when they created their business plan and invested capital to set up shop in that location.” (retailer)*
- *“This would signal a business unfriendly climate in our city and disastrously affect our business corridor tax base.” (policymaker)*

4c. Would you support or oppose a law requiring store owners to buy a local license to sell tobacco? The license fees would cover the cost of checking whether stores follow tobacco laws, including that they don’t sell to minors.

Q4c	2014 (n=8)			2016 (n=9)		
	Support	Oppose	Don’t Know	Support	Oppose	Don’t Know
Policymakers	5	1	-	3	4	-
Retailers	1	1	-	1	1	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	6	2	-	4	5	-

Since 2014, policymaker opposition to tobacco retail licensing has increased although, interestingly, the opinion of retailers has not changed. Informants’ responses indicated that the present decline in support is because of funding issues the City is experiencing. As a result, the City is having difficulty providing/maintaining municipal services. Therefore, this might not be an ideal time to advocate for a TRL unless decisionmakers saw that fees could constitute a needed revenue stream that would more than cover enforcement costs.

◆ *Support*

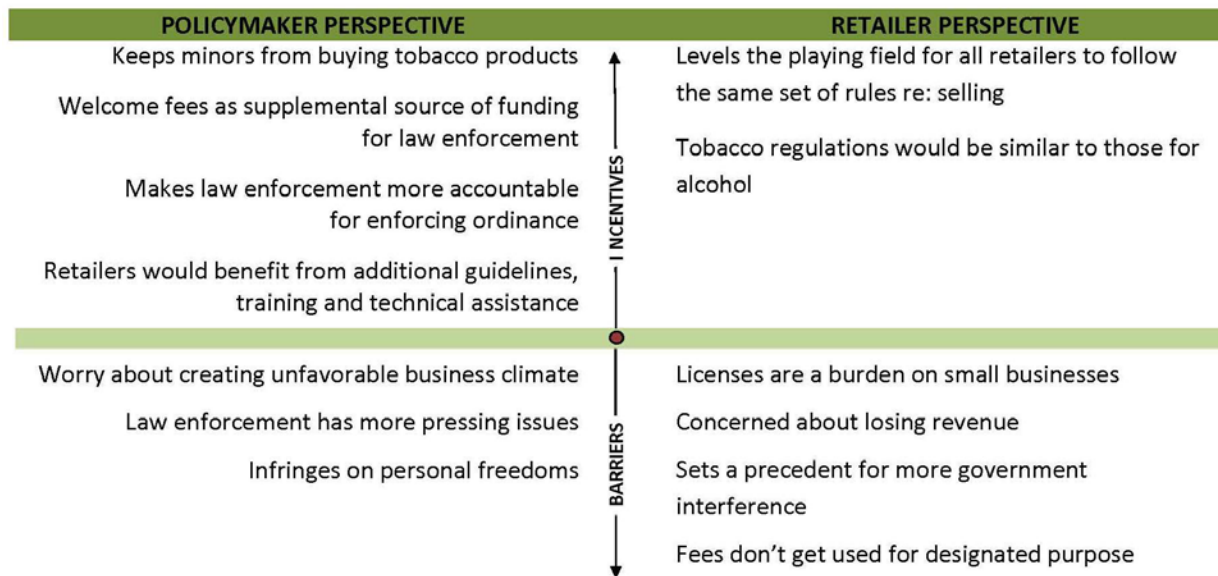
- *“If we are going to regulate something there will be a cost associated with it, and those people that are profiting from it should pay the cost of regulation.” (policymaker)*
- *“If the fee is reasonable, if it is less than \$50, I could agree with it. The stores have a hard enough time making it as it is.” (retailer)*

◆ *Oppose*

- *“In our city we can’t afford to provide the services we are supposed to and can barely enforce 10-15% of the laws that are now in placeWe can’t even provide our municipal services Even with the license fees, I would still be opposed to it because there are more important issues to address – property and violent crime, as two examples.” (policymaker)*
- *“I think there are already enough regulations in place.” (retailer)*

Another way to summarize key comments is in a data visualization like the one below which makes it easy for readers to understand the perspectives of different types of stakeholders at a glance. This should be accompanied by a narrative that provides more detail about the number of informants who felt one way or another (e.g., “4 of 5 policymakers voiced concerns about...”). Information like this is useful for determining how intervention and educational activities could be tailored to various audiences going forward in order to emphasize incentives and counter likely arguments.

Policymakers and retailers have mixed feelings about tobacco retail licensing.



IMPLICATIONS

The final part of your activity report should include a summary of key findings, recapping major themes and making recommendations for future efforts and/or next steps. Which policy options are likely to get the most support from policymakers and/or retailers? What do informants see as the main concerns/motivators surrounding the issue(s)? How do they frame the problem? What wording do they use? What incentives appeal to them? Which approaches seem more acceptable to them? What insights did your project gain from the interviews? Include ways that your project could utilize this information.

A sample summary of key findings follows.

Example 3

The most significant facilitators to policies in the retail environment included the following:

- *A belief that government has a role especially when it comes to the availability of tobacco products near schools. By framing our healthy stores initiative in terms of preventing tobacco use among youth, we can capitalize on this belief. Involving the community and youth in data collection and reporting gives the findings more weight in the eyes of policymakers. In future we should step up our efforts to make public opinion results more visible through use of data visualizations, fact sheets, social + traditional media, and youth participation in meetings with policymakers.*

The most significant barriers to policies in the retail environment included the following:

- *A belief that there is a connection between the health crises and food, beverage, alcohol, and tobacco products that are being sold in stores (six of nine respondents), but that retailers should be able to sell what they want as long as they are selling products that are legal. We need to educate the policy makers on the cost to society and the health impacts—e.g., compile fact sheet with local county expenditures on emergency care for uninsured residents, county worker sick days, etc.*
- *Although the majority of informants thought government should play a role in making stores healthier (five of nine respondents), when it came to specific policies within the retail environment, most informants were opposed to further regulation. What this means for us is that we need to do more educational outreach to these policymakers and show them why this issue should be the province of local government. Perhaps look at surrounding counties with policies.*
- *Most informants indicated that they believed the problem was not that unhealthy products are being sold, but that the products are being purchased (there is a demand). A two-pronged approach of educating policymakers about unfair marketing practices and the general public about unhealthy and healthy choices in the retail environment (e.g., a PSA campaign, a community youth PhotoVoice project, media outreach, bus advertising, etc.) could make the difference.*

Before Finalizing Your 2016 KII Report

You may want to provide a draft to your project team then discuss and interpret the data together before finishing the write-up. After the discussion, you can go back and plug in more interpretation.

Last But Not Least!

Be sure to upload the full key informant interview summary report into OTIS as a completed tracking measure and extract excerpts from the report to complete the narrative fields for the evaluation activity.

If you have any questions, please contact TCEC for assistance at tobaccoeval@ucdavis.edu. Also check out our website for other resources on qualitative analysis and reporting.

<http://programeval.ucdavis.edu/analysis-reporting/AnalyzingData.html>

<http://programeval.ucdavis.edu/files/ReadyTalk/progressRpts/lib/playback.html>