

WEEK 9 & 10

Introduction To Interviewing

1. An **interview** is a conversation between two or more people (the interviewer and the interviewee) where questions are asked by the interviewer to obtain information from the interviewee. Interviews can be divided into two basic types, interviews of assessment and interviews for information.

Research Interviews

A research interview is a structured social interaction between a researcher and a subject who is identified as a potential source of information.

Research interview is a well established research method that can take a variety of forms. There are many types of interview methods which can be used, but the most commonly used are structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Increasingly, researchers are exploring how these methods can be utilised online in the form of an online interview.

Structured interviews

A Structured Interview is essentially a questionnaire which is mediated or administered by a researcher. This type of interview is used for a variety of reasons but can often be used to increase response rates and the quality of answers for questionnaire style research. This kind of interview can be challenging as it requires a personal sensitivity and adaptability as well as the ability to stay within the bounds of the designed protocol.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured Interview is perhaps the most commonly used interview technique in qualitative social research where the researcher may want to know certain information which can be compared and contrasted with information from other interviews. The researcher may produce an interview schedule which is a list of questions the researcher will want to ask the interviewee.

Unstructured interviews

An Unstructured Interview is where the researcher asks as few questions as possible, permitting the interviewee to talk freely, intervening only to refocus the discussion or probe for additional insights into a key area. This technique enables the interviewee to re-establish the parameters of the discussion, a process which itself reveals what is important to the interviewee. This type of interview is also known as Life History Interview (see oral history for more information on this kind of interview). It attempts to achieve a holistic understanding of the interviewee's perspective and understanding of events and is the favoured approach in historical research, especially oral histories.