



INTERVIEWS

**An introduction
to a Social Research
Method**





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Chapter one





Introduction

Interviews in social research are conversations to collect rich and in-depth data on participants' experiences, opinions, and perspectives. They are flexible and allow for in-depth exploration, but can be time-consuming and susceptible to bias.





1 - Research

Is a systematic inquiry aiming at the creation of knowledge by discovering through exploration. It is an evaluation and critic of existing theories and knowledge within a collaborative effort and effective communication. Its final goal is to impact positively the society and improve the human condition in real life challenges.





2 -Research Methods

Are procedures, techniques or strategies, helping the researcher to collect, analyze, and interpret his study data. They may vary, relying on the research question or hypothesis, the discipline and resources.





2 -Research Methods

2.1. Quantitative

Collects and analyzes numerical data

2.2. Qualitative

Collects and analyzes textual, audio or visual data

2.3. Key features of both methods

Combines both quantitative and qualitative methods





The choice of research method depends on the specific research question and goals, as each method offers unique strengths and weaknesses. Research methods share key characteristics like objectivity, reliability, validity, and ethical considerations. These characteristics are crucial for conducting rigorous and reliable research that contributes to knowledge in any field.





3 - Social (society)

Is a complex group of people connected by different relations sharing and agreeing on norms and cooperating to fulfill the same needs. This constantly active system develops through interaction and interdependence of individuals, in a way to shape their lives.



Chapter two





1- Interviews

1.1. Definition

Interviews are a popular research method in social sciences, ranging from informal chats to formal, structured ones. Different types elicit different information. As an interviewer, be aware of your own biases and respect boundaries.





1.2. Styles of interviews

Interviews are qualitative methods of research that usually collect people's thoughts on topics. The key issue is to decide who to talk to and how to conduct the interview.

We can clearly identify three types of interviews:

- Structured, semi structured and unstructured.





- **Structured**, is used in order to collect data where directly comparable answers are provided.
- **Semi-structured**, combines a framework with flexibility. They follow key themes, but allow the researcher to adapt questions based on the interviewee's answers, deepening exploration as needed.
- **Unstructured**, lacks a set structure, allowing the conversation to organically explore the topic's full breadth.





1.3. Types of interviews

Here are some types of interviews:

- Fact finder
- Idea generator
- Exploratory
- Experiential





1.4. Pros and Cons

	Pros	Cons
Face to Face	People can be very generous with their time and expertise	Appropriateness of setting
	Interpersonal dynamics and establishing trust may yield insights	Balance responsibility to your interviewees and needs of investigation
Telephone	In-depth examination of topic possible	Can be time intensive
	Can do more without travel-time, from your desk	Less opportunity to establish rapport





2- When to use this method?

Interviews offer in-depth understanding of individuals' unique perspectives, valuable for sensitive topics, through flexible exploration and capturing non-verbal cues, which wouldn't be possible in a group setting.





3- What data is produced?

Interview data varies depending on type and researcher preference. Some prefer notes, others verbatim transcripts, reflecting individual choice.





4- How to analyze its data?

Interview data can be used for two main purposes: identifying common themes across interviews and directly quoting participants. Quotes need proper referencing, often using the interviewee's title. Confidentiality is critical; if information is sensitive, only mention the broad theme without revealing the source.



**Thank you for your time
and attention**