

Interviewing: Interviewing Techniques Pitfalls, Different Types of and Forms of Interview

Difference Between (a) Interviewer

(b) Interviewee

What is Interview?

It is a powerful instrument of obtaining
information.

What is Interviewer's Bias?

The possibility of creeping the likes and dislikes of
the interviewer into the research.

What is Insight?

Some of the individuals in a social group seem to
understand the dislikes and likes of the rest better
than others.

Several studies have indicated that a greater range and intensity of attitudes are more likely to be expressed when the interviewer is closer to the class and ethnic position of the respondent.

This is most especially true, of course, when the opinions to be expressed are somewhat opposed to general public opinion.

Example:

What interviewers would have a more difficult time in obtaining a true set of attitudes from Negro respondent than would Negro interviewers.

If an interviewer wants to interview a person in a particular family, then he must also introduce himself to the family members before he/she actually interviews the respondent.

Rapport should be there between the (a) the interviewer and (b) the respondent.

When does a respondent respond wholeheartedly?

When interviewer asks questions regarding:

- (a) The feelings
- (b) The attitudes
- (c) The ideas
- (d) The life of the respondent himself
- (e) Sympathetic interest in the problems of the person himself.

When the subject matter is taboo, the interviewer will of course give assurances that the answers will be kept confidential.

In addition , however, it may be necessary to make certain the respondent knows that the interviewer himself is not going to be embarrassed by anything which may be said.

Each interviewer must carry some official card or letter which will satisfy the suspicious interviewee that his mission is a scientific one but not the detective one.

In any event, the types of interviews to used in social research may vary from extremely lengthy and intensive interviews, which probe into the most intimate aspects of the respondent's life , to the voting poll which merely obtains information about social class, sex, age and political-party affiliation, along with voting preference.

Interviews are of two kinds:

- (a) Intensive Interview.
- (b) Simple Interview.

Intensive interview probes into the most intimate aspects of the respondent's life.

The example for simple interview is voting polls which merely obtains information about social class, sex, age and political party affiliation, along with voting preference.

Dos and Don'ts for an Interviewer:

- (a) He should not read questions quickly.
- (b) He should pause between questions
- (c) He should not cut off the answers as soon as the respondent is speaking.
- (d) He should make transition between different subject matters.

(e) He should not end the interview with further comment when the last question has been answered.

There are good reasons for placing a strong emphasis on “emotional satisfaction” in a research interview.

Social research in a broad sense depends upon the good impression which the interviewer makes on his respondents.

This is obviously true when a study is being conducted in a small community in which news of the interviews will be carried from neighbour to neighbour in a short while.

However, the same processes are to be found in any large city.

Caution for the Interviewer:

Interview is not to be an exchange of information, but the obtaining of information.

The interviewer must avoid the temptation to express his own views, even if given the opportunity.

If a large number of respondents are saying “ I don't know”, then it is important to rephrase the question so as to make it comprehensible.

Recording Interview:

It is the most obvious common sense to state that the interview must be recorded adequately.

In the interesting task of asking questions and trying to understand answers, the interviewer is likely to believe that the answers have been recorded.

It is therefore useful to have another person check the interviews even in a relatively small research project so that all the questions are answered for each respondent.

As an additional aid to complete reporting, the interviewer may make it a practice to go directly from the interview to a typewriter or desk, in order to write out the details which the materials are still fresh in his mind.

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