

Interviewing

Interviewing has strong claims to be the 'queen' of research methods. It is used throughout the social sciences and is a core method. The ubiquity of this basic activity means that it should be no surprise that interviewing takes many forms and poses many challenges. These have been the subject of one of the most developed bodies of methodological literature having ramifications throughout the social sciences. Commentaries on interviewing began to emerge at the very birth of the social and behavioural sciences in the 19th century. There are now hundreds of articles on the subject. The aim of this collection is to bring together all of the key articles on interviewing which have been published in professional journals. It addresses the philosophy of interview methods and its epistemological foundations; the ethics of interview research; and the criteria for assessing interview based research. It covers both interviewing in quantitative research, such as the survey method, and qualitative research in all its many forms. The collection explores the principal types of interview (standardized, semi-standardized and non-standardized), and the different modes of interviewing (for example, telephone interviewing, life history interviews and focus groups). There is a section on formulating interview questions, a section on the practicalities of recording, transcribing and managing interview data, and several sections addressing power relations, the role of gender, interviewing on sensitive topics and interviewing special respondents such as elites, children and the vulnerable.

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