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| **METHOD - DEFINITION** | **ADVANTAGES/****SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH METHODS – SUMMARY TABLE****USES** | **DISADVANTAGES/****LIMITATIONS** | **EXAMPLES****EDUCATION** | **MiC** **ISSUES** |
|  **Social Surveys / Self Report** | **INTERVIEWS** | Differ from questionnaires in that they involve some form of social interaction, depending on type:ethnic variation. |
| **STRUCTURED**Similar to Qaire but Qs (usually closed/pre-coded filled in by interviewer | * Preferred by positivists
* Easy to train interviewers
* Fairly quick & cheap – larger scale.
* Higher response rate
* Opportunity for clarification
* Can include responses from those who can’t read and write.
* Comparable/quantifiable data
* Formal enough to reduce interviewer bias / effects
* Easy to replicate
 | * More expensive / time-consuming than Qaires
* Interviewer bias – effects of age, gender, personality
* Demand characteristics – social desirability, screw you effect.
* Closed Qs - limited opportunities for original responses – less valid.
* Interpretivist/feminist critique – meanings imposed rather than understanding subjective experience in a broader social context.
 | * **Beron et al** (2001) US Study – vocabulary tests for 3-14 yrs
 | * Age group – verbal/linguistic skill (tho usually better verbally than literacy), attention spa, focus ,suggestibility – importance of body language – kids more alert to non-verbal cues and give time to think – can consider alternatives e.g. using pictures
* Interviewers need special training and skills.
* School ’grapevine’ – increase demand characteristics & undermine validity
* Dangers of formality – associated with teachers & authority – reduce validity.
* Schools are hierarchical – influences interaction and validity
* Gatekeepers – permission from e.g. head LEA, parents etc – may increase or decrease access, depending on topic
 |
| **SEMI-STRUCTURED** | * Similar to structured approach
* More opportunities to probe, clarify, develop etc
* More depth, detail.
 | * Loss of standardisation
* Loss of comparability
 | * **Becker** (1977) \_Teacher perceptions of the ‘Ideal Pupil
* **Mirza** (1992) with black girls
* **Sue Sharpe** (1976 & 1990)
 |
| **UN-STRUCTURED**Informal open-ended. May have a genera topic-driven interview schedule but more like a conversation. | * Preferred by interpretivists
* Rapport – more in-depth info esp on sensitive topics.
* Interviewer free to take direction from interviewee.
* More flexible
* Fresh insights/unfamiliar topics
* More opportunities to clarify
 | * Time-consuming/expensive
* More training & skills
* Smaller scale – less representative
* Difficult to replicate
* Difficult to quantify, analyse, compare, establish causal relationships
* More interviewer bias / effects
* Demand characteristics – social desirability.
 | * **Gerwitz et al** (1995) – Parental interviews on school transfer
* **Labov** – Black kids informal cpd formal setting
* **Lacey** (1970) Informal conversations with staff & pupils
 |
| **GROUP**Typically 8-10. Asked Qs in turn or focus group – guided discussions. | * More like real world – most opinions manifested in gp contexts
* Richer data if more informal.
* Restores power imbalance between interviewees and interviewer.
* Ideas stimulated by interaction
* Opportunities to observe group dynamics.
 | * Group may be dominated by a few eg most confident/articulate.
* Difficult to keep focus
* Effects of peer group pressure affect validity.
* Harder to analyse data
 | * **Willis** (1976)– Anti-school subculture
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