

INTERVIEWING: ANALYZING & INTEGRATING INTERVIEWS

Interviewing

The goal of interviewing is to obtain on-the-ground information within a specific context in the research area of focus. Using these interviews (primary sources) together with information you obtained from articles and research papers (secondary sources) helps to strengthen your overall findings or conclusions by verifying them through different research methods (AKA triangulation).

Analyzing and Synthesizing Interviews

Taken together, your interview responses can yield some interesting findings, but to do so they will have to be analyzed. Here are a few guidelines and questions to consider when analyzing your interview responses:

- If you did open-ended interviews (semi-structured or unstructured)...
 - ...generalize and categorize: What are your overall impressions from the responses? Can you divide your responses into categories or subcategories?
 - ...summarize these responses into your own words.
 - ...highlight any particularly interesting or insightful quotes to use in your paper
- If you did closed-response interviews (structured)...
 - ...group all the responses based on the questions that you asked.
 - ...summarize these responses into your own words.
 - ...divide the responses into themes or categories.

Integrating the interview responses into your paper

Now that you have analyzed and synthesized your interview responses, use your themes and summaries in your paper.

DOs

- Report your responses as summaries
- Quote especially interesting or insightful responses
- Explain the significance and relevance of the response(s)

DON'Ts

- Quote mundane or uninteresting responses (obvious, right? 😊). For example, "Rick Jones said, "I use Facebook very often."

FAQs

Q: Do I have to include my interviews in my Works Cited page?

N: No. For this project (in my class), your interviews qualify as "data" and as such need not be cited the same way your secondary sources are. If you were to interview a specialist, however, this would be different as a specialist is similar to an academic journal article in scope.

ORGANIZING YOUR PAPER WITH INTERVIEWS

Once you have made sense of your interview responses and organized your main points, it is important to consider how to incorporate them. Although there are many different organization possibilities, here are two main options:

1. **Conversation among sources:** *Group responses (primary sources) with your other sources*

In this organization scheme, your responses are incorporated as a response to the information you learned from the article sources. As such this organization lends itself to being a “conversation” in which your interview responses are juxtaposed with the information from your articles.

Article J and K claim...
↓
Interview respondents held similar views in that...
↓
Article L and M argue that...
↓
In contrast, interview respondents reported...

2. **Interview response section:** *Group responses as a separate section after your discussion of your main sources*

In this organization scheme, your interview responses are organized by theme in a separate section that follows your discussion of information from your articles.