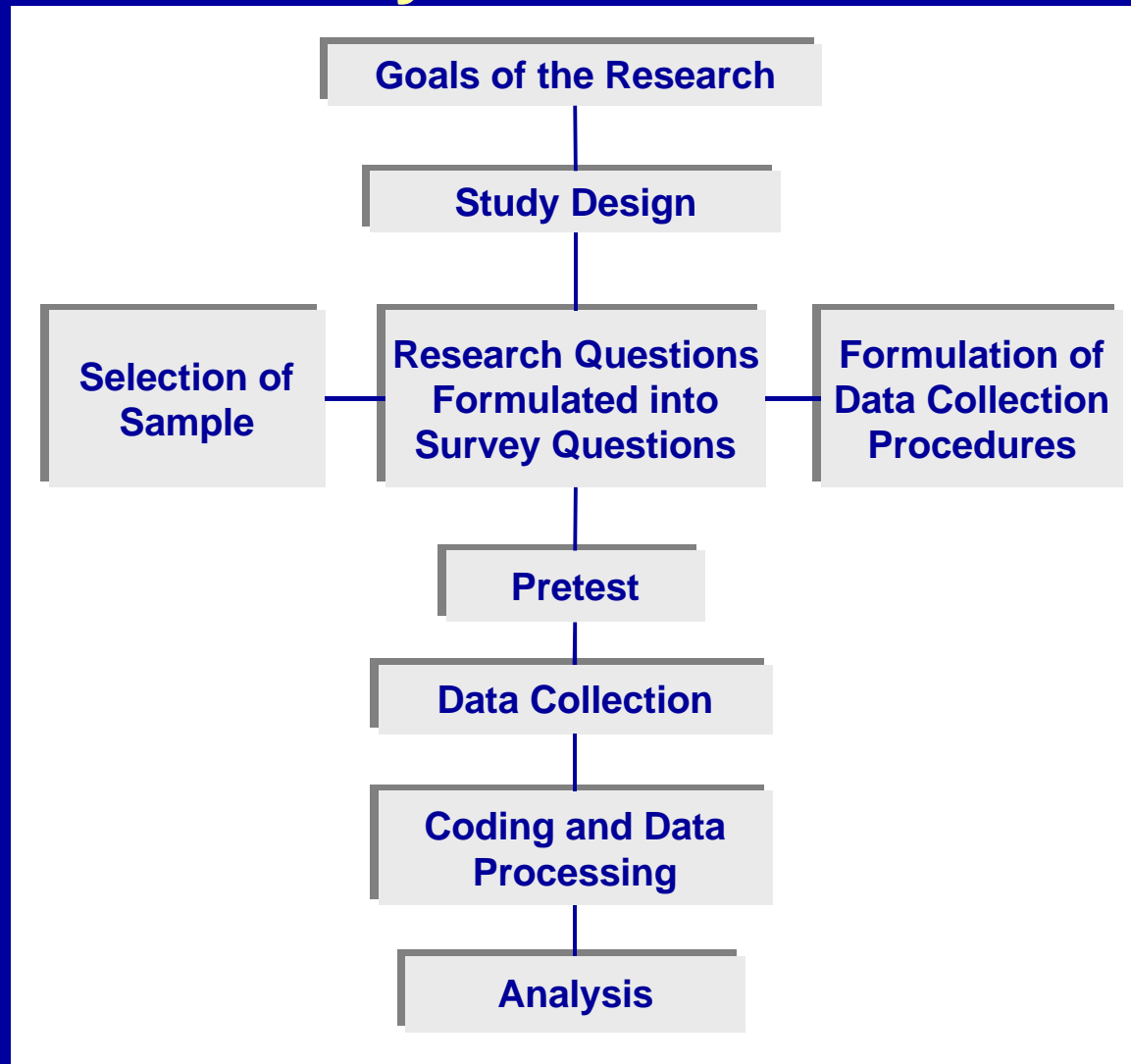


Introduction to Survey Interviewing

Cayge Clements

The Survey Research Process



Sampling

- **Time and cost don't allow for census**
- **Scientifically selected subgroup of population**
- **Each person selected intended to represent many others**
- **Types:**
 - List
 - Probability

Screening

- **Random selection of respondent**
- **Establish eligibility for survey**
- **Confirm eligibility for survey**
- **Always screen with an adult member of household**
- **Once selected, only that respondent can be interviewed**

Neutrality

- **Avoid communicating own opinions and beliefs**
- **Do not judge respondent's answers**
- **Never interview friends, relatives, neighbors**
- **Keep interaction professional**

Confidentiality

- **No names or other identifying information associated with data**
- **Data reported in summary form**
- **Interviewers do not discuss answers with others**
- **Interviewers sign confidentiality agreements**
- **Written copies of Confidentiality Assurance provided to respondent**

Gaining Cooperation

- **Use first and last name**
- **Show ID card immediately**
- **Be confident & positive—assume respondent wants to cooperate**
- **Don't be too specific in introductions**
- **Use only information approved by researchers to answer questions**

Commonly Asked Questions

- **How did you pick me? Where did you get my name?**
- **I don't know anything about that. Ask someone who knows more.**
- **What is the purpose of this study?**
- **Who will see my answers?**
- **What good will this do? How do I benefit?**
- **How long will this take?**

Reading Questions

- **Read exactly as worded**
- **Read slowly and clearly**
- **Read entire question**
- **Ask every question unless instructed to skip**
- **Read in conversational tone**
- **Emphasize words that are in bold or underlined**
- **Don't define words or phrases unless definition provided**

Probing

- **Used when R does not give a direct answer to question or does not choose a specific answer category**
- **Purpose: to obtain specific, complete, and relevant answers from R**
- **Difficult skill to learn (easy to lead R, change context of question)**
- **Requires active listening on part of interviewer**

Reasons for “Don’t Know” Responses & Suggestions for Probing Them

- R is in a hurry, doesn’t want to think about question, OR never has thought about the subject before:

PROBE: “Please take a moment to think about it.”

- R doesn’t feel he is expert or knowledgeable enough to answer correctly:

PROBE: “There are no right or wrong answers. Please just base your answer on anything you may have seen, read, or heard.”

- R really has no idea how to answer:

PROBE: “Your best estimate (or impression) will do.”

Probing Numbers, Amounts, Dates

Q: “How many times have you seen a doctor this year?”

R: “2 or 3 times.”

I: “I need to record one number. Was it more likely 2 or 3?”

Q: “How many times have you seen a doctor this year?”

R: “Somewhere between 5 and 10 times.”

I: “What number from 5 to 10 is most accurate?”

Q: “How much money did you spend on prescriptions?”

R: “Around \$200.”

I: “I need to record an exact figure if possible.”

Q: “How much money did you spend on prescriptions?”

R: “I don’t really remember.”

I: “What would be your best estimate?”

Probing Precoded Questions

Q: “Would you say your health is...
Excellent,
Very Good,
Good,
Fair, or
Poor?”

A: “It’s outstanding!”

I: “Which one of these answers would you say best describes your health...(REPEAT ANSWER CATEGORIES)?”

A: “It depends on the time of year.”

I: “In general would you say excellent, very good...”

Probing Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions have no precoded answer categories. Rs are allowed to answer in their own words:

Q: “Why did you choose to live in this location?”

R: “It’s convenient and I like the neighborhood.”

I: “In what way is it convenient?”

R: “It’s close to my job and there are plenty of restaurants and grocery stores within walking distance.”

I: “And what specifically do you like about the neighborhood?”

R: “The homes are well-kept, the public schools are excellent, and there is very little crime.”

I: “Why else did you choose to live in this location?”

R: “That’s it.”

Probing for Occupation

Collection of occupation information should include:

- Type of company or industry (specific company not necessary)
- Respondent's job title and department
- Respondent's most important job duties

Job titles that need further clarification:

Teacher: What level, what subject, public or private?

Supervisor: Who or what does the R supervise?

Salesman: Retail, wholesale? What product?

Machine operator: What kind of machine, what type of company?

Truck driver: Does R sell goods along way?

Restaurant worker: What specifically does R do there?