

FIELDWORK

Fieldworker



Fieldworker

- ▶ An individual responsible for gathering data in the field. Could be:
- ▶ A personal interviewer
- ▶ A telephone interviewer calling from central location
- ▶ An observer counting pedestrians in a shopping mall.
- ▶ Others involved in data collection process
- ▶ Cornerstone of fieldwork is the interviewer.
- ▶ *Here focus shall be on personal interviewers*

Interviewers

- ▶ In-house interviewers: hired by the researcher
- ▶ Field Interviewing Service: A research supplier that specializes in gathering data. Trained interviewers, and supervisors. Edit questionnaires in the field. Certify how the data were collected.
- ▶ Interviewers need to be healthy, outgoing, and of pleasing appearance i.e. well groomed and well dressed.

Role of interviewer

- ▶ The survey interview is a social relationship.
- ▶ It is a short term secondary social interaction between two strangers with the explicit purpose.
- ▶ Interviewer - Interviewee/respondent.
- ▶ Structured conversation – interviewer asks prearranged questions and records answers.
- ▶ The role of interviewer is difficult. They obtain cooperation and build rapport, yet remain neutral and objective.

STAGES OF AN INTERVIEW

Making initial contact -- Rapport

- ▶ Convince the respondent
- ▶ Asslaam-o-Alaykum. My name is _____ and I am working for National Survey Co. We are conducting a survey concerning “women empowerment.” I would like to get a few of your ideas.
- ▶ Long distance call makes a difference.
- ▶ Personal interviewer must carry a letter of authority.

Asking the questions

- ▶ Ask the questions exactly as they are worded.
- ▶ Read each question very slowly.
- ▶ Ask the question in the order in which they are presented in questionnaire.
- ▶ Repeat questions that are misunderstood or misinterpreted.
- ▶ Information volunteered earlier than the actual question. Record at proper place. But do ask this question.

Probing

- ▶ Verbal prompts made by the fieldworker.
- ▶ Probing needed in 2 types of situations:
 - ▶ 1. When the respondent is to be motivated to enlarge on, to clarify, or explain the answer.
 - ▶ 2. When there is rambling.

Probing tactics

- ▶ Repetition of the question.
- ▶ An expectant pause.
- ▶ Repetition of the respondent's reply.
- ▶ Neutral questions or comments.

Recording the responses

- ▶ Closed ended questions. Tick or circle
- ▶ Open ended:
 - ▶ - Record responses during interview
 - ▶ - Use the respondent's own words. Verbatim
 - ▶ - Do not summarize or paraphrase.
 - ▶ - Include everything that pertain to question objectives.
 - ▶ - Include all your probes.

Terminating the interview

- ▶ No hasty departure. Secure information.
- ▶ Respondent's spontaneous comments at the end.
- ▶ Answer any question by the respondents.
- ▶ Leave by observing local customs. "Don't burn your bridges"
- ▶ Thank for the cooperation.
- ▶ Find a place to edit. Record information on face page.

Principles of interviewing

Have integrity and be honest

- ▶ **Cornerstone of professional inquiry, regardless of its purpose.**

Have patience and tact.

- ▶ Apply all rules of human relations –
patience, tact, courtesy.

Have attention to accuracy and detail

- ▶ Inaccuracy and superficiality are 'sins.'
- ▶ Fully understand the answer then record.
- ▶ Probe if necessary.

Exhibit a real interest in the inquiry at hand, but keep your opinions to yourself

▶ Impartiality is imperative.

Be a good listener

- ▶ **Don't be too talkative. Let the respondent talk.**

Maintain confidentiality

- ▶ **Never quote one respondent's opinion to another.**

Respect other's rights

- ▶ It is the goodwill of other to provide information. Applying any coercion is unethical. Cooperation is important and valuable.

Interview Bias

- ▶ Information should be free of bias
- ▶ Bias could be introduced by the interviewer, interviewee, or the situation.

Interviewer bias

- ▶ **Poor rapport. Errors made by respondent**
- ▶ **Unintentional errors or sloppiness.**
- ▶ **Intentional subversion. Alteration of answers, omission/alteration of questions**
- ▶ **Respondents appearance, living situation can influences interviewer's expectations**
- ▶ **Failure to probe properly.**
- ▶ **Interviewer's appearance, tone, attitude, reactions could influence the answers**

Interviewee bias

- ▶ Errors made by the respondent –

1. Interviewees can bias the data when they do not come out with their true opinion but provide information that they think what the interviewer expects of them or would like to hear.
2. They do not understand the question, they may feel difficult or hesitant to clarify.
3. Some interviewees may be turned off because of the personal liking, or the dress of the interviewer, or the manner in which questions are put. So they may not provide truthful answers.
4. Some may provide socially undesirable answers.

Situational bias

- ▶ Situational biases in terms of:
 1. Non-participants – Unwillingness or inability to participate. Bias the sample.
 2. Trust levels and rapport established by different interviewers. Elicit answers of different degrees of openness.
 3. The physical setting of the interview. Respondent may not feel comfortable to be interviewed at work.