

Video 2 of 3: Obtaining Interviews

Phone Interviews and Interviewers



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MANNHEIM
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Nonresponse and Attrition

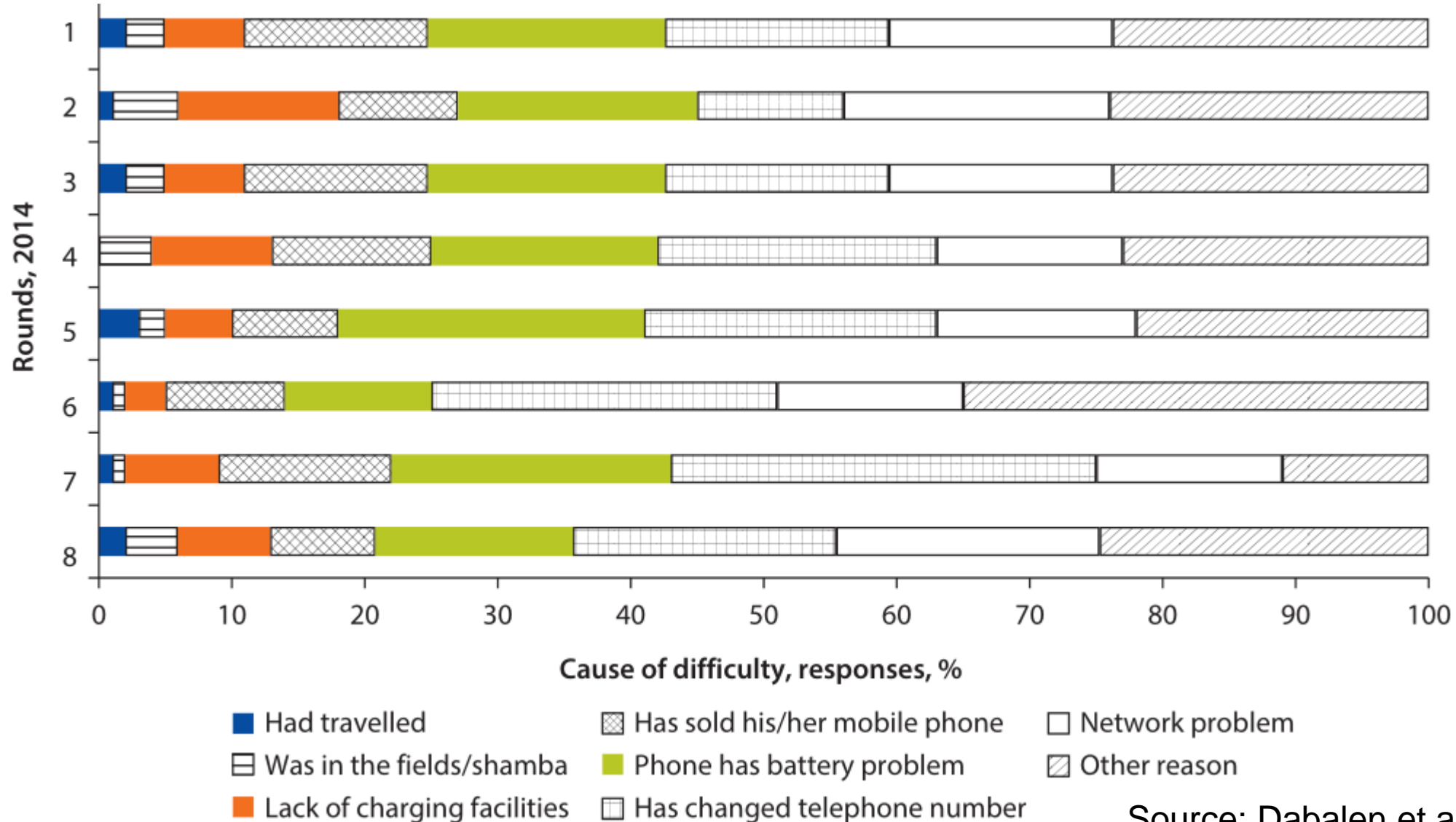
- *Nonresponse* arises when some sample units do not respond
- *Attrition* arises when some panel members drop out of a study
- Two main components
 - Noncontacts: sample unit cannot be contacted
 - Refusals: sample unit refuses to participate upon being contacted

Noncontacts

- May occur for many reasons
 - Respondent can't pick up (working, sleeping, etc.)
 - Phone is turned off
 - Lack of network coverage
 - Technical problems with phone
 - Lost or stolen phone
 - Lack of sufficient electricity/sunlight to recharge phone
 - Call screening – “soft” refusal

Adapted from Dabalen et al. (2018)

Example Reasons for Noncontact in Phone Surveys



Source: Dabalen et al. (2018)

Strategies for Making Contact

- Call at the time that each respondent prefers to be called (if known from a baseline interview)
- Stagger the timing of subsequent calls (morning, evening, on weekends)
- Send an SMS text message before a call attempt to alert the sample unit (for example, to go to locations with better signal strength)
- Call alternative phone numbers for the respondent (if known from a baseline interview)
 - Examples: family members, neighbors, community leaders

Sources: Kulka and Weeks (1988); Dabalen et al. (2018)

Refusals

- Individuals may decide whether to participate by weighing costs and benefits
 - Potential costs: time, effort, privacy concerns
 - Potential benefits: incentive, voice is heard, contributing to research
- Interviewers actions have an impact on this decision

Introduction Read to Sample Units: General Recommendations

- Keep it short rather than lengthy
- Make it sound natural rather than scripted
- Start with a polite greeting (“Greetings!”) and interviewer identification (“My name is...”)
- Then request to speak to sample unit
- Emphasize that information will be kept confidential and only used for statistical purposes

Sources: Groves et al. (2008); Schaeffer et al. (2013)

Example Introduction

- World Bank's high frequency phone survey

Greetings! My name is_____. I am working for the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). We are currently doing a nationwide survey to examine the impact of and responses to the coronavirus in the country. Who am I speaking to please?

This interview will take around 25 minutes. Any information you share with us will be kept strictly confidential and only be used for statistical purposes but will not be used to determine if your household is eligible to receive any assistance from the government. If at any point there are any questions you do not feel comfortable answering, you can choose not to answer them. You can also choose to stop the interview at any point. This call will not cost you any airtime. To thank you for your participation, we will also transfer airtime to your phone. Are you willing to participate?

Reducing Reluctance to Participate

- Individuals have different concerns about participating
 - Bad timing; burden; confidentiality; privacy
- Interviewers are most effective when they:
 - Make an effort to continue an interaction when a refusal seems imminent
 - Use active listening and identify any specific concerns
 - **Tailor** their responses to quickly address those concerns in culturally appropriate way

Practical Tip

- ❑ To keep the conversation going, don't ask a question that can be answered with "No" such as "Is this a good time for you?" Better wording: "I was hoping that now would be a convenient time."

Source: Groves and McGonagle (2001)

Training on these Techniques

- Consider training interviewers to use a tailored approach until they prove competent
- This may involve role play sessions
 - Trainers play role of respondents and express different types of concerns
 - Interviewers try to quickly give appropriate responses

Example Role Play

R: This takes 25 minutes? I just don't have that kind of time.

I: It depends on your answers. As I said, I am very familiar with the interview – I am sure we can get through it very smoothly.

In-Video Exercise

- Try to identify the type of concern. Then think of an appropriate response.
 1. We're in the middle of dinner.
 2. I just got in, I'm tired.
 3. I don't have time for this.
 4. Nobody keeps anything confidential.
 5. I don't want to talk with strangers about this.

Answers

1-2: Bad timing; 3: Burden; 4. Confidentiality; 5. Privacy

Improving Response Rates in Panel Surveys: General recommendations

- First phone contact
 - Start calling respondents soon after the initial visit
- Subsequent contacts
 - Assign the same interviewer to a given respondent to foster familiarity and rapport
 - Speak politely and appreciatively to respondent to promote continued participation

Adapted from Dabalen et al. (2018)

Incentives

- Evidence from phone surveys in Latin American and Africa:
 - incentives promote response rates (Ballivian et al. 2015; Leo et al. 2015)
 - larger incentive not necessarily more effective than smaller incentive (Hoogeveen et al. 2014)
- Types of incentives
 - phone airtime credit transferred to a phone account
 - making communication between interviewers and respondents free to respondents
 - mobile money transferred to a phone account (less common)

From the Field

- In the World Bank phone surveys, airtime credits typically range from \$0.50 to \$3.00 USD per interview (Dabalen et al. 2018)

Recording Outcomes

- Interviewers should record the outcome of each call attempt
- Example outcomes:
 - Respondent is not reached
 - Respondent is reached, but refused to complete interview
 - Respondent is reached, but did not complete interview for reasons other than refusal
 - Interview is completed
- Panel surveys may have other outcomes:
 - Respondent is not reached directly, but through an alternative number
 - The respondent drops out of the panel (attrition)
- Outcomes should be assigned at the level of the sample unit when they are known
 - Example: maximum number of unsuccessful call attempts have been made -> noncontact

Useful Notation for Calculating Response Rates

I = number of completed cases

R = number of eligible refused cases

NC = number of noncontacted sample units known to be eligible

O = number of eligible sample units not responding for reasons other than refusal

- Response rate (RR) is the share of the eligible sample that participates

$$RR = \frac{I}{(I + R + NC + O)}$$

In-Video Exercise

You have been given a file containing final outcome codes for a household phone survey. According to the information you have, the number of cases in each of the categories you have been provided is as follows:

500 Completed interviews

800 Eligible cases without a completed interview

400 Not eligible

What is the response rate in this sample?

Answer: $500/(500+800) = 38.5\%$

END OF VIDEO 2