



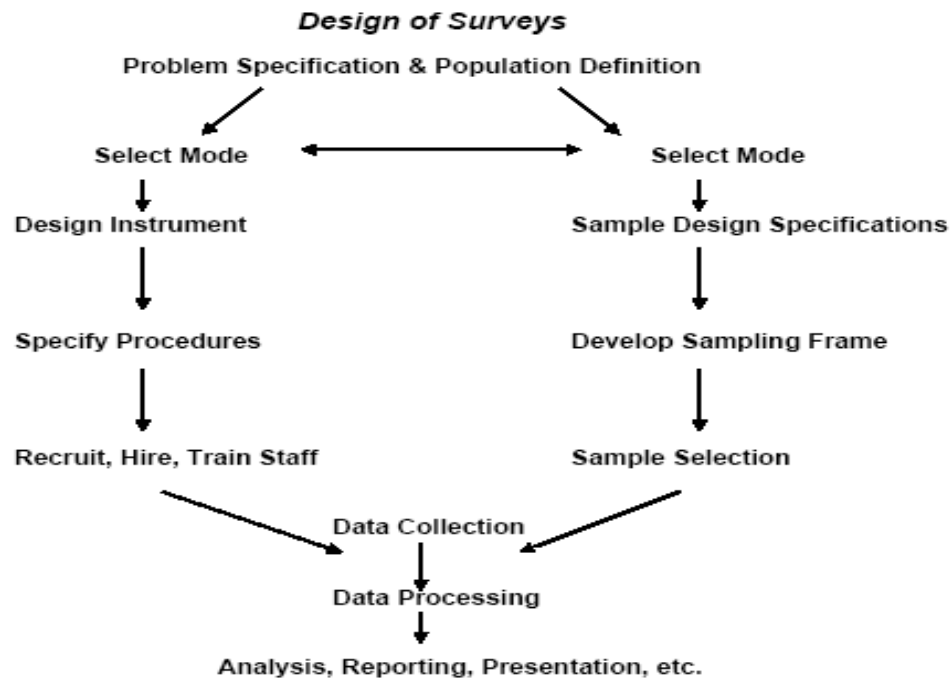
Harvard University Program on Survey Research

INTRODUCTION TO THE SURVEY PROCESS:

What is a Survey? Surveys have two distinct components:

Questions or measures

Sample of respondents



Note: Adapted from Groves (1989)

Good Measures:

Questions or measures impact your ability to study **concepts**

- Think carefully about the underlying concepts a survey is trying to measure. Do the survey questions do a good job of capturing this?
- The *PSR Tip Sheet on Questionnaire Design* contains good ideas on how to write survey questions.

Good Samples:

Samples give you the ability to **generalize** your findings

- Think carefully about the population you are trying to generalize your findings to. Does your sample design do a good job of representing these people?
- The *PSR Tip Sheet on Survey Sampling, Coverage, and Nonresponse* contains things to think about in designing or evaluating a sample.

Web Resources

The Harvard Program on Survey Research web site has two pages of resource links useful for Harvard students:

Specific Resources at Harvard: http://www.iq.harvard.edu/psr/harvard_survey_resources.html

General Resources: http://www.iq.harvard.edu/psr/survey_resources2.html

Books

Recommended Introductory Readings:

Fink, A., *The Survey Research Handbook - How to Conduct Surveys: A Step-by-Step Guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1983. A good hands-on introduction to designing surveys for beginners.

Fowler, Floyd J., Jr. *Survey Research Methods (2nd.)*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1993. A short introductory text.

Groves, R. M., Fowler, F. J., Couper, M. P., et. al. *Survey Methodology*. New York: Wiley Interscience 2004. A comprehensive introductory text.

Weisberg, Krosnick, Bowen. *An Introduction to Survey Research, Polling, and Data Analysis (3rd edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1996. A good introductory text.

Questionnaire Design:

Converse, J. M. and Presser, S. *Survey Questions: Handcrafting the Standardized Questionnaire*. Sage University Paper series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, No. 07-063. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1986. A good succinct introduction.

Fowler, F.J. Jr. *Improving Survey Questions: Design and Evaluation, Applied Social Research Methods Series Volume 38*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1995. A good introductory text that covers the basics and a bit more than Converse and Presser.

Sudman, S., & Bradburn, N. *Asking questions: A practical guide to questionnaire design*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1982. A larger book offering thorough treatment of most types of questions.

Survey Sampling/Survey Error

Henry, G. T. *Practical sampling*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1990. An introductory text that covers the basics, including both probability and non-probability sampling methods.

Fink, A. *How to sample in surveys*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1995. A how-to guide.

Kalton, G. *An Introduction to Survey Sampling*. SAGE Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA, 1983. A simple introduction to probability sampling.

Advising:

The Preceptor in Survey Research is available for individual advising on all aspects of the survey process for Harvard affiliates.

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