

The Survey Method and the Questionnaire

Pre-Research Phase/Surveys

- A Survey is:
"a research technique that uses a standardized questionnaire to collect information about attitudes, opinions, behaviors and background and lifestyle characteristics from a sample of respondents" (p.25).

General Kinds of Surveys

- Telephone surveys
 - Shortest period of time but most expensive
- Mail
 - Cheapest and small staff, yet longest and low response rate.
- Face to face
 - Rare due to cost, safety issues and low response rates
- Online
 - Gaining popularity but still limited audience

The Questionnaire

- ❑ The instrument: A collection of questions used to gather information from respondents

The Questionnaire

- ❑ Four Sections in a Questionnaire:
 - Record-keeping
 - Introduction
 - Questions
 - Closing

The Questionnaire

- ❑ Four Sections in a Questionnaire:
 - **Record-keeping**
 - Introduction
 - Questions
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The Questionnaire: Record-keeping

- Record-keeping Information
 - ID number (questionnaire)
 - Name and ID of interviewer
 - Phone number called (or other contact info)
 - Date/time of interview
 - Comments
 - Other

This section is important for keeping record of your data after uploading it to computer

The Questionnaire

- Four Sections in a Questionnaire:
 - Record-keeping
 - **Introduction**
 - Questions
 - Closing

The Questionnaire: Introduction

- Introduction Section
 - Introduce participants to the study
 - State the purpose
 - State sponsors
 - State selection process for the study
 - State confidentiality commitment
 - Note: Permission is implicit; don't ask explicitly
 - Brief, clear and conversational

The Questionnaire

- ❑ Four Sections in a Questionnaire:
 - Record-keeping
 - Introduction
 - **Questions**
 - Closing

The Questionnaire: Questions

- ❑ General Principles of Valid Survey Questions
 - **Validity:** asking the right questions. (Lit Review)
 - ❑ Are you affected by Violence on TV?
 - ❑ How often do you watch violent TV programs?
 - **Reliability:** consistency and accuracy.
 - ❑ Questions should be asked word-for-word... in the same order...
 - **Form:** Open-ended and Closed-ended Questions

The Questionnaire: Questions

- ❑ General Principles of Valid Survey Questions
 - **Mutually Exclusive and Exhaustive Response Choices.**

What is your income?

1	2	3	4	5
Less than 20K	\$20K - \$50K	\$50K - \$100K	\$100K - 1M	More than 1M

1	2	3	4	5
1K - 20K	\$20,001 - \$50,000	\$50,001 - \$100,000	\$100,001 - \$999,999	1M - 2M

1	2	3	4	5
Less than 20K	\$20,001 - \$50,000	\$50,001 - \$100,000	\$100,001 - \$1M	More than 1M

The Questionnaire: Questions

- Level of Precision:
 - Nominal:
 - Gender:
 - (1) male (2) female
 - Ordinal:
 - How much TV do you watch every week?
 - (1)none (2) some (3) a lot
 - Interval:
 - Rank this ad on a scale of 0-10, (0=hate, 10=love)?
 - 0-1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
 - Ratio:
 - How many days per week do you exercise?
 - 0-1-2-3-4-5-6-7

Survey questions must... (see notes!)

- Clear, specific, short and to the point (questions)
- Simple and uncomplicated responses
- Clarify unfamiliar concepts
- Unbiased/objective (not leading questions)

Survey questions must... (see notes)

- One Question one topic.
 - Don't ask two questions in one ("double barreled question")
- Use Neutral language. Avoid emotional language.
 - Anti-Abortion, Pro-Abortion...
- Responses should match tone and style of question
 - Do you agree or Disagree with the message of this Ad?
 - BAD: (1) Hate (2) Neutral (3) Love
 - BETTER: (1) Agree (2) Neutral (3) Disagree

Survey questions must...(see notes)

- Avoid using "not" (it is confusing)
 - Doesn't this newscast show that FoxNews is not biased?
- Keep it conversational: average Joe/Jane language.
 - Unless targeting a specific audience...

The Questionnaire: Questions

- Seven Types of Questions:
 - **Behavioral:**
 - Ex: How many times do you...?
 - **Attitude:**
 - Ex: How do you feel about...?
 - **Motivational:**
 - Ex: What is the main reason you watch...?
 - **Sources:**
 - Ex: What is your primary sources of information...?

The Questionnaire: Questions

- Seven Types of Questions:
 - **Social grouping:**
 - How many of your friends listen to...?
 - Which of your parents smoke tobacco?
 - **Demographics and background:**
 - Gender, race, age...
 - **Psychographics (lifestyle): (not behavioral)**
 - Beliefs, aspirations, hobbies...
 - Religious beliefs/practice (not religion: demog)
 - Political activeness (not political party)

The Questionnaire: Questions

□ Issues that influence the Questionnaire's Validity and Organization

■ The First question

- Interesting and easy to answer
- NOT offensive, sensitive, private, etc...
- Rule of thumb: if you have to ask offensive, private or sensitive questions, keep them till the end.
- Questions to avoid Fig 4.1, P. 60

The Questionnaire: Questions

□ Issues that influence the Questionnaire's Validity and Organization

■ Socially Desirable Questions

- Be aware that respondents tend to respond in a socially desirable way.
- Also, they tend to answer what they think you want to hear.
 - Phrase questions in a non-judgmental way.
 - Use words like seldom or never, little or none.
 - Add introductions to ease the questions
 - Remind them of the importance of honest answers and of you privacy commitment.

The Questionnaire: Questions

□ Issues That Affect Response Choices and Validity

- Which measurement scale?
- Consistency between choices and how people think about them (especially behavior questions).
 - How many minutes do you watch sports shows per year?
 - Rate how good your math skills are on a scale of A to J.
 - A - B - C - D - E - F - G - H - I - J
 - Lit review helps here (Use other studies' questions).

The Questionnaire: Questions

□ Issues That Affect Response Choices and Validity

- Response Choices in Ordinal/Interval Scales that Measure Attitudes. Use:
 - Commonly used scales (Likert-type scales)
 - Semantic differential scales: a point on a conceptual scale

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Refer to (p. 63-65, fig 4.4) for more examples

The Questionnaire: Questions

□ Issues That Affect Response Choices and Validity

- Response Choices in Ordinal/interval Scales that Measure Attitudes
 - Avoid bias, keep answers balanced and Objective
 - Equal responses – both positive and negative
 - Mix responses – positive and negative

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree

The Questionnaire: Questions

□ Don't Know, Undecided, No Opinion, Neutral

- Cannot use for (past) behaviors or background info
- OK for questions on knowledge, attitudes, opinions, and future behaviors
- May be included without asking the respondent (phone interviews).

□ Refused

- Don't reveal this answer if you want to use it

The Questionnaire: Questions

Format Issues:

Matrix Format

- If several questions have the same response categories then create a table in stead of repeating the question over and over (p. 65, 72)

For each of the following features, please, indicate their importance to you and your satisfaction with them.

	Importance					Satisfaction	Comments
	1	2	3	4	5		
Questionnaire Design	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Functionality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Database Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Ease of Design	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Reporting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

The Questionnaire: Questions

Format Issues:

Qualifying and Contingency Questions or Filter questions (p. 69, 71)

- Do you have Cable TV or Dish at Home?
 - Yes
 - No (If no, skip to question 11)

Pre-coding

- Assignment of value labels to responses (close ended questions only)
- Open-ended questions will have to be "post-coded"

The Questionnaire

Four Sections in a Questionnaire:

- Record-keeping
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- Questions
- Closing

The Questionnaire: Closing

- Layout and Style:
 - Questionnaire Closing
 - Thank you...
 - Any incentives given?

Minorities Issues



Researching Racial and Ethnic Minorities

- **The Questionnaire**
 - Name for Racial or Ethnic Groups
 - "Politically correct:"
 - Black vs African-American,
 - Hispanic vs. Latino,
 - other, open ended...
 - Translating the Questionnaire
 - Translation's threat to validity and "reverse translation"

The Questionnaire

- Four Sections in a Questionnaire:
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What Next?

The Questionnaire: What Next?

- **Check: Grammar, Spelling, Tone and Style!!**
- **Pre-test questionnaire**
 - Very important to Identify problems before it's too late
 - Ask other experts to proof-read the questionnaire
 - Pretest on various people (gender, income, age...)
 - Simulate real interview situation
 - Run initial statistics
- **Fix problems and revise/re-test**

Surveys Interviewer Training

- **Interviewers Play an Important Role in Surveys**
 - Characteristics of Effective Interviewers (p100)
- **The Training Session**
 - Very important and difficult
 - Needs careful organizing
 - The goal is to achieve consistency and efficiency

Surveys Interviewer Training

- **Conducting a Training Session (p101)**
 - Describe goals and timetable
 - Familiarize interviewers with instrument
 - Techniques and ethics
 - Inform about sample, callbacks and record keeping
 - Show how to use special equipment

Surveys Interviewer Training

- **Rules for Calling the Sample of Respondents**
 - Who Should be Called?
 - When Calls Should be Made?
 - M-F: 5:30 to 9:00 PM
 - S-S: 11:00 AM to 9:00PM
- **Callbacks**
 - If unable to reach who was randomly selected
 - How many times to call? (consistency/reliability)
 - Keeping a Record of the number of Calls (p. 104)

Surveys Interviewer Training

- **Rules for Interviewing (p. 106)**
- **Discuss these rules during Demo/training**
 - Follow the Wording and Order of Questions
 - Be Conversational, "Objective", and Accurate
 - Be familiar with the instrument
 - Stay neutral, respect respondent, ethics...

Surveys Interviewer Training

- ▣ **Strategies to Encourage Participation (p.109)**
- ▣ **When the Interviewer is Assisted by Computer**
- ▣ **Fieldwork Must be Monitored for Valid Results**
- ▣ **Mail Surveys Have Special Requirements**
