

Questionnaire Development

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Survey questionnaires are typically used for feedback research to determine the current status or "situation," or to estimate the distribution of characteristics in a population. Writing a survey questionnaire is one of the most critical stages in the survey development process.

Questionnaires are designed to elicit information from the respondents through direct or indirect (even telephonic or mailing) probing. The data collected through such a survey should be adjusted for non-sampling errors, depending upon their type and magnitude. Relevant estimates are then developed allowing for standard errors.

Development of the Questionnaires

Based upon the objectives and the hypotheses, questionnaires are developed after choosing appropriate sampling design.

Points to be considered while framing the questionnaires:

- extent of variability
- nature of the characteristics to be studied
- expected outcomes.

Essentials of Questionnaire Development

- Clarity and un-ambiguity of objectives
- relevance of the hypotheses particularly in respect of set objectives
- choice of survey design
- clarity and coverage of questionnaires
- data cleaning/handling and choice of analytical techniques for obtaining valid and efficient estimates

Question types

Select only one	Single select questions with responses shown vertically, horizontally, in columns, or in a pull-down menu.
Select all that apply	Multiple select questions where users may select several different responses to a specific question.
Open Ended	Limited: 1 to 250 characters long. Unlimited: respondents may enter as much text as they want.
Numeric value	Requires respondents to enter a numeric value within a range you specify.
Rank order	Place in order of importance items from a defined list. You can specify the number of rank options.

Flaws

- **Lengthy and Clumsy-** containing unnecessary questions not relevant to the study
 - increases the cost of the survey makes –
 - makes management, supervision, editing and cleaning of data much more cumbersome
- **Too short-** failure to collect some vital information
 - insufficient coverage
 - loss in efficiency.

Pre-Testing

Pre-testing of the tools (questionnaires) is the most important step towards taking corrective measures. Effective pre-testing, follow-up checks and corrective measures go a long way in improving not only the quality of data generated but also making the resulting estimates much more relevant to the objectives. However, this aspect is usually neglected and taken rather casually in most of the surveys conducted in our country.

General Guidelines

- Each question should relate directly to survey questionnaire objectives.
- Every respondent should be able to answer every question (unless instructed otherwise).
- Each question should be phrased so that all respondents interpret it the same way.
- Each question should provide answers to what you need to know, not what would be nice to know.

Tips for writing an effective survey questionnaire

- Be brief
- Use plain language
- Include simple instructions
- Start with non-threatening questions
- Put important questions first
- Ask only one question at a time
- Use open-ended questions only when the responses add value to the survey research
- Provide space where required
- Avoid agreement bias
- Avoid the response option "other"

Thank

You