

Chapter 9

Survey Research

What are the things to avoid in writing questions?

- Too many!
- The language is simple and short?
- The question is not leading?
- The question is not negative?
- The respondent has enough knowledge to answer without trouble?
- The words have the same meaning for every respondent?

Continued...

- The question is clear (not ambiguous)?
- The questionnaire frame is clear enough?
- The question is not double-barreled?
- And so forth...

The major problem with closed-ended questions is:

- 1) The number of items
- 2) The order of answer options
- 3) The structuring of responses
- 4) TA did not tell about that

Dr. Parker wants to add 3 questions only if those respondents that have been active in a political organization in the previous year. What would you use for this purpose?

- 1) Matrix questions
- 2) Different response sets
- 3) Cognitive design
- 4) Contingency questions

A disadvantage of an open-ended question is:

- A. it is looking for a specific answer
- B. hard to summarize and interpret information concisely
- C. forces people to choose from a response set
- D. allows respondents to express their feelings

Identify the problem(s) with the following question: "Don't you think that the federal government should not spend more money on trying to halt the rising crime rate and to build more nuclear weapons?"

- A. It is an example of a double-barreled question
- B. It is an example of a potentially biased question
- C. It is an example of a question which uses negation
- D. all of the above
- E. only a and c

If you asked, "All politicians are crooked. How crooked do you feel your own representatives are?," what flaw would you have?

- A. Biased question
- B. Too short
- C. Contains negative items
- D. Irrelevant question

Chris used “What do you think about the conflict?” as a question. What seems to be the most serious problem?

- A. Too short
- B. Double-barreled
- C. Negative item
- D. Unclear

Martini used this question: "Are you satisfied with your grade in your SOC4 class and the amount of homework?" What problem does this have?

- A. Unclear
- B. Double-barreled
- C. Respondents are not competent to answer
- D. Biased
- E. Ethical issues included

“What will be your Social Security benefit amount upon retirement?”
Why is this not a good question?

- A. double-barreled
- B. Biased
- C. Too long
- D. Respondents are not competent to answer

Advantages and Disadvantages of Survey Methods

Mail questionnaires

- Advantages
 - 1) The cost is low compared to other methods.
 - 2) Bias error is reduced since respondents are not influenced by interviewer (characteristics or techniques)
 - 3) High degree of anonymity for respondents. Suitable for sensitive issues.
 - 4) Provides wide access to geographically dispersed samples at low cost.

Mail questionnaires

- Disadvantages
 - 1) Requires simple, easily understood questions and instructions
 - 2) Do not offer researchers the opportunity to probe for additional information or to clarify answers.
 - 3) Cannot control who fills out the questionnaire.
 - 4) Response rate is low.

Personal interview

- Advantages
 - 1) Flexibility in the questioning process.
 - 2) Control of interview situation.
 - 3) High response rate
 - 4) Fuller information (can collect supplementary information from respondents)

Personal interview

- Disadvantages
 - 1) Higher cost (esp. when respondents are widely dispersed geographically)
 - 2) Interview bias
 - 3) Lack of anonymity. (sometimes respondents might feel threatened or intimidated)

Telephone survey

- Advantages
 - 1) Moderate cost.
 - 2) Interviewers can reach a large number of respondents in a short time.
 - 3) High response rate.
 - 4) High-quality data can be gathered when interviewers are centrally located and supervisors can ensure that questions are being asked correctly and answers recorded properly.

Telephone survey

- Disadvantages
 - 1) Reluctance to discuss sensitive topics over the phone.
 - 2) Respondents can terminate the interview before it is completed.
 - 3) Interviewers cannot provide supplementary information about the respondents' characteristics of environment.

Summary

	Personal interview	Mail	Telephone
Cost	high	low	Moderate
Response rate	high	low	High
Control of situation	high	low	Moderate
Applicability to large population	moderate	high	moderate
Detailed information	high	moderate	moderate
Speed	low	low	High

Which one of the following is not a strength of survey?

- A. They are particularly useful in describing in detail the behaviors of a small population
- B. They make large samples feasible
- C. They are flexible
- D. They enhance reliability by asking the same questions in the same way

Surveys are particularly appropriate to:

- A. Study a small group of church members
- B. Use in an experiment in the lab
- C. Collect original data to describe a large population
- D. Conduct analyses of people in observation studies

The chief advantage of telephone surveys over those conducted face-to-face center primarily on:

- A. Greater response rates
- B. More complete responses given by respondents
- C. Time and money
- D. Better sampling techniques

Which one of the following is not an advantage of interviews over questionnaires?

- A. Bias is reduced by the presence of an interviewer
- B. The number of "don't know" will decrease.
- C. Higher response rates
- D. Can clarify confusing items

According to your textbook, 60% return rate is considered as:

- 1) Excellent
- 2) Very good
- 3) Good
- 4) Adequate
- 5) Poor

Which one of the following is not an advantage of interviews over questionnaire?

- 1) Increased response rate
- 2) Safeguard against confusing items
- 3) Lower number of “don’t know”
- 4) Increased reliability
- 5) All are advantages

The major problem with secondary analysis pertains to:

- 1) Theory
- 2) Hypothesis
- 3) Validity
- 4) Sampling
- 5) Empirical generalization