

Chapter 9

Survey Research

Topics Appropriate to Survey Research

- Descriptive
- Exploratory
- Explanatory

Getting data from real people

- Questionnaires- self-reports
- Survey-large number of respondents
- Answering questions is a social act-we are all influenced by the surrounding culture.
 - Atmosphere
 - Location
 - time

Acceptable Response Rates

- 50% - adequate for analysis and reporting
- 60% - good
- 70% - very good
- Response rate –contacted and agree to participate
- Nonresponse errors- errors that result from the differences between those who respond and those who do not

Response Rates

- Rise in non-contact
- Rise in refusals
- Due to what?
 - Cell phones/unlisted numbers
 - Over researched?
 - Mistrust of authority
 - Mistrust of research

Forms of delivery

- In-person interview (differs from qualitative interview)
- Self-administered
- Group questionnaire
- Mail survey
- Telephone survey
- Internet/web survey

Constructing questions

- Open ended questions?
 - How do you feel about the new proposed Vikings stadium?
- Close ended questions?
 - Do the Vikings need a new stadium?
 - Yes
 - No
 - I don't know
- Contingency questions?- not everyone answers
- Probes?- help respondents understand the question

Guidelines for Asking Questions

- Choose appropriate question forms.
- Make items clear.
- Avoid double-barreled questions.
- Respondents must be competent to answer.

Guidelines for Asking Questions

- Respondents must be willing to answer.
- Questions should be relevant.
- Short items are best.
- Avoid negative items.
- Avoid biased items and terms.

Guidelines for Questionnaire Construction

- One question per line.
- Use contingency questions when necessary.
- Format matrix questions so they are easily answered.

10. Here are some things the government might do for the economy. Circle one number for each action to show whether you are in favor of it or against it.

1. Strongly in favor of
2. In favor of
3. Neither in favor of nor against
4. Against
5. Strongly disagree

PLEASE CIRCLE A NUMBER

a. Control of wages by legislation	1	2	3	4	5	28/
b. Control of prices by legislation	1	2	3	4	5	29/
c. Cuts in government spending	1	2	3	4	5	30/
d. Government financing of projects to create new jobs	1	2	3	4	5	31/
e. Less government regulation of business ...	1	2	3	4	5	32/
f. Support for industry to develop new products and technology	1	2	3	4	5	33/
g. Supporting declining industries to protect jobs	1	2	3	4	5	34/
h. Reducing the work week to create more jobs	1	2	3	4	5	35/

Guidelines for Questionnaire Construction

- Be aware of issues with ordering items.
- Include instructions for the questionnaire.
- Pretest all or part of the questionnaire.

Interviewing

- Interview schedule- list of questions in the order you will ask all respondents.
- Interviewer effect-race, class, gender may impact answers we receive.
- Rapport- in person interviews allow the interviewer to make personal connection with respondent in a way that other indirect forms of questioning may not achieve.

Guidelines for Survey Interviewing

- Dress in a similar manner to the people who will be interviewed.
- Arrive on time/early.
- Make sure your tape recorder works and that you have back-up tapes and batteries.
- Study and become familiar with the questionnaire.
- Follow question wording exactly.
- Record responses exactly.
- Probe for responses when necessary.

Phone surveys

- Computer assisted dialing
- Reach large numbers of respondents
- Train a number of researchers to complete a very large study

Telephone Surveys

Advantages:

- Money and time.
- Control over data collection.

Disadvantages:

- Surveys that are really ad campaigns.
- Answering machines.
- People do not like telemarketers.

Strengths of Survey Research

- Useful in describing the characteristics of a large population.
- Make large samples feasible.
- Flexible - many questions can be asked on a given topic.

Weaknesses of Survey Research

- Can seldom deal with the context of social life.
- Inflexible in some ways.
- Subject to artificiality.
- Weak on validity.

Asking subjects "Did your children go to high school?" after they told you that they have no children violates which of the following criteria in question construction?

1. Avoid double-barreled questions.
2. Questions should be relevant.
3. Avoid biased items.
4. Avoid negative items.
5. Questions should be open-ended.

The primary function of the probe is to ?

1. loosen up the respondent
2. get the correct answer from the respondent
3. get the respondent to answer a question more fully
4. indicate an understanding and interest in the respondent
5. all of these choices

Which guideline does the following questionnaire item violate—"Which is not a serious problem in the U.S. today, anomie or the socialization of the young?"

1. Avoid double-barreled questions.
2. Avoid short items.
3. Avoid leading the respondent.
4. Avoid meaningful questions.
5. Avoid negative items.

Revision

- Problem Statement should be revised.
- PS is a new paper, held to a new standard-free of grammar, structure, concept, spelling errors.
- Spell-check is not enough.
- Fixing only the errors we note is not enough.
- Should be reworked and expanded as you learn-fit with Lit Review

Revision

- Good writing is a process.
- Failure is a part of the writing process.
- All writing is experimental.
 - Donald Murray

Examples

- Examples are not a template to be followed step by step.
- Most examples have bad parts.
- http://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/20070515025950_667.pdf

Back statements with evidence

- Maureen is a good storyteller (Adler 1999, Clark 2008, Marx (1883)).