

LECTURE 14 SCHEDULES AND QUESTIONNAIRE

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QUESTIONNAIRE AND SCHEDULE CONSTRUCTION

QUESTIONNAIRE

A **questionnaire** is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. Although they are often designed for statistical analysis of the responses, this is not always the case. The questionnaire was invented by Sir Francis Galton. Questionnaires have advantages over some other types of surveys in that they are cheap, do not require as much effort from the questioner as verbal or telephone surveys, and often have standardized answers that make it simple to compile data.

However, such standardized answers may frustrate users. Questionnaires are also sharply limited by the fact that respondents must be able to read the questions and respond to them. Thus, for some demographic groups conducting a survey by questionnaire may not be practical. As a type of survey, questionnaires also have many of the same problems relating to question construction and wording that exist in other types of opinion polls.

Question Sequence: In general, questions should flow logically from one to the next. To achieve the best response rates, questions should flow from the least sensitive to the most sensitive, from the factual and behavioural to the attitudinal, and from the more general to the more specific. There typically is a flow that should be followed when constructing a questionnaire in regards to the order that the questions are asked. The order is as follows:

1. Screens
2. Warm-ups
3. Transitions
4. Skips
5. Difficult

6. Classification

Screens are used as a screening method to find out early whether or not someone should complete the questionnaire. **Warm-ups** are simple to answer, help capture interest in the survey, and may not even pertain to research objectives. **Transition** questions are used to make different areas flow well together. **Skips** include questions similar to "If yes, then answer question 3. If no, then continue to question 5." **Difficult** questions are towards the end because the respondent is in "response mode." Also, when completing an online questionnaire, the progress bars let the respondent know that they are almost done so they are more willing to answer more difficult questions. **Classification**, or demographic, question should be at the end because typically they can feel like personal questions which will make respondents uncomfortable and not willing to finish survey.

SCHEDULE

This method of data collection is very much like the collection of data through questionnaire with little difference which lies in the fact that schedules are being filled in by enumerators who are specially appointed for this purpose. These enumerators along with schedules go to respondents, put to them the questions from the performer in the order questions are listed and record the reply in the space meant for the same Performer. This method requires the selection and training of enumerators to fill up the schedules and they should be carefully selected. Enumerators should be intelligent and must be able to find out the truth. The enumerators should be honest sincere and hard working. This method is very useful because it yields good results. Population censuses all over the world are conducted through this method.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SCHEDULE AND QUESTIONNAIRE

1. The Questionnaire is generally sent through mail to informants. The schedule is generally filled by the research worker.
2. To collect data through questionnaire is relatively cheap. To collect data through schedule is relatively more expensive.
3. Non-response is high in case of questionnaire whereas in schedule response is very high.
4. In Questionnaire there is no personal contact. But in a schedule there is a face-to-face contact.
5. The questionnaire method is used only when respondents are literate.

6. Along with schedules observation methods can be also used.

BASIC RULES FOR QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM CONSTRUCTION

- Use statements which are interpreted in the same way by members of different subpopulations of the population of interest.
- Use statements where persons that have different opinions or traits will give different answers.
- Think of having an "open" answer category after a list of possible answers.
- Use only one aspect of the construct you are interested in per item.
- Use positive statements and avoid negatives or double negatives.
- Do not make assumptions about the respondent.
- Use clear and comprehensible wording, easily understandable for all educational levels
- Use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Avoid items that contain more than one question per item (e.g. Do you like strawberries and potatoes?).

Concerns with questionnaires

While questionnaires are inexpensive, quick, and easy to analyze, often the questionnaire can have more problems than benefits. For example, unlike interviews, the people conducting the research may never know if the respondent understood the question that was being asked. Also, because the questions are so specific to what the researchers are asking, the information gained can be minimal.

Often, questionnaires such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, give too few options to answer; respondents can answer either option but must choose only one response. Questionnaires also produce very low return rates, whether they are mail or online questionnaires. The other problem associated with return rates is that often the people that do return the questionnaire are those that have a really positive or a really negative viewpoint and want their opinion heard. The people that are most likely unbiased either way typically don't respond because it is not worth their time.