

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

SURVEY METHODS

- TIME 'Snapshot' - single measure of the situation NOW
 longitudinal - series of measures over time
- cohort
 - panel

- DATA COLLECTION
- Interview - personal
 - self-completion - postal
 - administered
 - telephone
 - diary/time budget
 - Non-interview
 - documentary sources (desk research)
 - observation - participant
 - non participant
 - distribution checks
 - retail audits
 - point of sale
 - television meters
 - larder checks
 - dustbin checks

INTERVIEW METHODS

- qualitative
 - group discussions
 - depth interviews
 - semi-structured interviews
- quantitative
 - structured interviews
- qualitative
 - small scale
 - unstructured
 - depth
 - range, not prevalence of views

- quantitative
 - large samples
 - structured
 - breadth rather than depth

- advantages of quantitative
 - prevalence of views
 - representative
 - can disaggregate
 - statistical reliability

STAGES OF A SURVEY

- Problem definition
- Concept definition
- Hypothesis formulation
- Sample design
- Questionnaire design
- Data collection
- Data preparation
- Analysis
- Reporting
- Application

but the stages are not always this clearly-defined.

FIRST STAGE OF DESIGN

- Background reading (topic in general)
- Literature search (previous questionnaire)
- Development work - qualitative
 - piloting

CONSIDERING QUESTIONNAIRE FRAMEWORK

- Coverage
- Priorities and objectives
- Structure and flow
- Length
 - interest
 - fatigue
 - cost
- analysis requirements
- cost constraints
- time constraints

CRITERIA FOR QUESTIONS

- Valid
- Reliable
- Askable
- Comprehensible
- Recordable
- Analysable

TYPES OF QUESTION

- Factual
- Behavioural
- Knowledge
- Attitude/Opinion
- Motivation/Reason
- Preference
- Judgement/Perceptual

FACTUAL/BEHAVIOURAL QUESTIONS

- How factual are they?
 - strain on memory
 - 'acceptable' answers
 - attitudes pretending to be facts
 - distinguish between the general and the particular.

- Need for precision
 - 'Do you have a car?'
 - 'Is there a car or van available for private use by you or a member of your household?'
 - 'How old are you?'
 - 'What was your age last birthday?'
 - 'What papers do you read?'
 - ever? regularly? (define) read or just look at? Does it include free papers?

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- The question can considerably affect the answer - question form
 - question wording
 - question order

QUESTION FORM

- Open - 'Why did you decide to do that?'
 Closed - 'Which of the statements on this card best describes your reasons for deciding to do that?'
 Open - Can cover all possible answers
 - Can take account of events between questionnaire design and fieldwork
 - Less risk of bias caused by restrictive framework imposed by the researcher
 - Good if respondent has not fully formulated his/her views
 Closed - Standard form of reference for all respondents
 - Less risk of bias from interviewer
 - Reduces coding problems
 - Quicker, so more questions in given length of time
 - No coding cost (through 'open' questions can also be pre-coded)

RANGE OF QUESTION FORMS

- Fully closed - all options shown to respondent, no alternatives
 Partially closed - options shown to respondent, 'other answers' option allowed.
 Open/Field coded - respondent not offered options but they are all listed on questionnaire, so interviewer rings relevant code.
 Open/Office coded - No options offered, interviewer writes down respondent's answer verbatim, coded by office coding team later.
 Can mix office and field coding - interviewer tries to fit answer to precodes on questionnaires but if necessary writes 'other answers' down in full for office coding.

EFFECT OF DIFFERENT FORMS

'What is the most important problem facing the country? (Schuman and Presser)

Most popular answers

	Closed (showcard) %	Open %
Unemployment	20	19
Crime and violence	35	16
Inflation	13	13
Decreased trust in government	10	3

Does the showcard tell people that 'crime and violence' is an acceptable answer within the framework of the question, when they might not otherwise have thought so?

QUESTION WORDING

- Mass of literature on wording experiments, e.g. - presenting one or both sides of a case
 - middle response category
 - 'no opinion' category

ONE OR BOTH SIDES OF CASE

- a) 'Are you in favour of giving special priority to buses in the rush hour?'
 b) 'Are you in favour of giving special priority to buses in the rush hour or should cars have just as much priority as buses?' (SCPR)

	<u>No alternative</u>	<u>Alternative</u>
In favour of priority for buses	69%	55%

- Offering no alternative can increase support for the case offered, and so a balanced presentation is usually recommended but - a single alternative cannot always be identified
 - evidence is not conclusive
 - token alternative (e.g. 'or not?') seldom makes a difference

MIDDLE RESPONSE

- a) 'In your opinion, should the penalties for using marijuana be more or less strict than they are now?'
- b) 'In your opinion, should the penalties for using marijuana be strict, less strict, or about the same as they are now?' (Schuman and Presser).

	No middle response	Middle response
	%	%
More strict	49	42
Less strict	42	31
About the same	6	26
Don't know	3	2

Adding a middle option does not generally affect the relative balance between the substantive options.

- Which to choose? - no middle option - tells you which way people lean
- middle option - tells you people's convictions

NO OPINION

- a) 'The Arabs are trying to work for a real peace with Israel. Do you agree or disagree?'
- b) The Arabs are trying to work for a real peace with Israel. Do you have an opinion on this? IF YES: 'Do you agree or disagree?' (Schuman and Presser)

	a)	b)
	%	%
Agree	17	10
Disagree	60	45
No opinion/ don't know	23	45

As with the middle response, adding a don't know does not usually affect the substantive options, and which you use depends on whether you want leanings or convictions.

ORDER EFFECTS

'Order effects are not pervasive in a typical attitude survey' (Schuman and Presser) BUT they can have a very great impact on the results.

- a) 'Should journalists from Communist countries be allowed to travel freely in the US?'
- b) 'Should journalists from the US be allowed to travel freely in Communist countries?'

Asked in order a/b and then in order b/a

	a/b	b/a
Communist journalists travel freely	36.5	73.1
US journalists travel freely	65.6	89.8

The answer to the second question is constrained by the answer to the first - there is a normative effect. This only occurs if there is a normative relationship between the two questions e.g. asking about higher pay for a) doctors and b) lawyers is not affected by order