

Survey Research

RHS 481

Lecture **6**

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Survey

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graph TD; Survey[Survey] --- Descriptive[Descriptive survey]; Survey --- Longitudinal[Longitudinal survey];
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Descriptive survey

Longitudinal survey

Survey

- **Descriptive surveys:**
 - used to describe certain phenomenon within a population of interest
 - cross-sectional sample
 - describe a population at one point in time

Survey

- **Longitudinal surveys:**
 - used to investigate causal association between variables
 - each participant will complete the survey on more than one occasion (sometimes over a period of years)
 - analyze the phenomenon of interest at more than one point in time

Questionnaires

- Before making a new questionnaire



Check if there is an existing questionnaire that you can use

Questionnaire

Should be:

Valid:

Measures what
it is supposed
to measure

Reliable:

Produces the same
score if used
with the same
group of people
under the
same conditions

Questionnaires

- Not all questionnaires described in research articles have been tested for validity and reliability
- Identify articles describing the *developing* of the questionnaire and the *degree of reliability and validity* obtained

Questionnaires

- It is permissible to include additional questions either at the start or at the end of a standardized questionnaire
(if the standardized questionnaire does not include all the issues of relevance)

Questionnaires

- You should not omit questions or change the wording, ordering, or formatting of a standardized questionnaire
(because you would be changing the established validity and reliability of the questionnaire)

Basic principles of questionnaire design

- Use simple and unambiguous language
- Every question should have a purpose
(to ensure that the questionnaire remains focused on the research question)

Types of questions asked

- **Open questions:**

- enable respondent to provide their own answer (opinion)
- has the advantage of finding out the person's experience of the phenomenon being assessed
- more demanding for the person completing the questionnaire

Types of questions asked

- **Closed questions:**

- provide a predefined list of responses, and ask the respondent to choose one or more answers (e.g., questions asking the respondents to rank a number of choices)
- impose a structure for the respondents who have to choose a response that best reflects their experiences

Response options in closed questions

- **Dichotomous:** enable a respondent to choose between *2 answers* (e.g., yes / no)
- **Multiple choice (scale):** provide a respondent with *number of choices* (e.g., rate your satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5)


Questionnaires

- Some questionnaires use mixture of *open* and *closed* questions
(e.g., starting with a closed question and then asking the respondent to explain the answer)

Questionnaires

- It is normal to produce several drafts of a questionnaire before employing it
- Think about every question
- Make sure that each question answers an aspect of the research original question

Formatting a questionnaire

- The appearance of a questionnaire influences a person's decision as to whether or not to complete it
- If a questionnaire is long, confusing, full of spelling mistakes  people will be hesitant to fill it

Formatting a questionnaire

- Do not compromise the ***font size*** for the sake of keeping the questionnaire length to minimum

Formatting a questionnaire

- Once you produce the questionnaire, seek the opinion of others about:
 - The clarity and understanding of the questions
 - The clarity of instructions
 - The contents of the questionnaire
 - The time needed to complete the questionnaire
 - Whether enough response categories have been provided

Methods of questionnaire administration

1. By post
2. Face to face
3. Over the phone

Preparing questionnaire data for analysis

- **Coding:**
allocate numeric values to answers

Coding **closed** questions

- Easy to develop coding while the questionnaire is being developed
- **Dichotomous** questions may be coded as 1 and 2 (e.g., yes / no; males / females)
- **Scale** questions may be coded from 1-5 (e.g., 1 = extremely satisfied, 2 = moderately satisfied, etc)

Coding **open** questions

- Involves grouping together all of the answers for *the same question* and identifying the core themes contained within the answers
- Depends on whether the data is quantitative or qualitative