

Survey Says... Building Competencies for Survey Development

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Session Outcomes

- Articulate appropriate uses for surveys
- Articulate sources of error with survey research
- Evaluate and select an appropriate survey administration method
- Write effective survey questions
- Construct an effective questionnaire
- Choose an appropriate sample in both type and size
- Boost survey response rate

Survey Overview

- What do you want to know?
- Who do you want to know this from?
- How are you going to use the data?
- Why use a survey rather than another data collection method

Survey Overview

- Why use a survey rather than another data collection method?
 - Want to gather data from a lot of people quickly and easily
 - Have limited resources
 - Increase anonymity/confidentiality
 - Want to be able to generalize

Survey Topic

- Think of a topic you would want to create a survey for or consider a survey that you are familiar with.
- On your worksheet, answer these questions:
 - What
 - Who
 - How
 - Why

Sources of Error

- Sampling error: Sample size is too small
- Coverage error: Frame doesn't include entire population
- Measurement error: Answer is inaccurate
- Non-response error: A lot of people don't answer and are different from those that do answer.

Survey Administration

- Interview
 - Personal
 - Phone
- Paper
 - In person
 - Mail
- Electronic
 - Email
 - Internet

Survey Topic

- Which method would you choose for your survey and why?

Analyses

- Why is it important to consider analyses prior to developing a survey?

Writing Good Questions

- Consistent understanding
 - With surveyor
 - Across respondents
 - Across administration methods
- Respondents know which answer formats are acceptable and wanted
- Everyone can answer each question
- Everyone is willing to answer each question

Fowler, F., Jr. (1995). Improving survey questions: Design and evaluation. *Applied Social Research Methods Series, 38*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Pp. 2-3.

Writing Good Questions

- Keep the question simple and focused
- Ask one question per question
- Have mutually exclusive and exhaustive response options
- Use language everyone can understand
- Use precise quantifiers and time referents

Fowler, F., Jr. (1995). Improving survey questions: Design and evaluation. *Applied Social Research Methods Series, 38*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Writing Good Questions

- Use balanced scales
- Use both attitudes in the stem
- Don't have respondents make unnecessary calculations
- Avoid double-negatives
- Only ask a question that you will use

Fowler, F., Jr. (1995). Improving survey questions: Design and evaluation. *Applied Social Research Methods Series, 38*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Writing Good Questions

- Open-ended vs. close-ended
 - What information do you want?
 - Do you want a standardized response?
 - Do you want depth?
 - How will you analyze the data?
- Hybrid

Writing Good Questions

- Close-ended

The workshop provided information that will be useful to me.

Strongly Disagree 1 Disagree 2 Neutral 3 Agree 4 Strongly Agree 5

- Open-ended

What, if any, information from this workshop will be useful to you?

Writing Good Questions

- Hybrid

The workshop provided information that will be useful to me.

Strongly Disagree 1 Disagree 2 Neutral 3 Agree 4 Strongly Agree 5

Why or why not?

Survey Topic

- Practice writing a few questions for your survey.

Survey Construction

- Begin with a simple, but interesting question
 - Do not begin with a sensitive question
- Make sure navigation is clear
- Place instructions where they are needed
- Begin questions in upper left quadrant

Survey Construction

- Clearly identify the beginning of each question
 - Use numbers
- List answer options vertically
- Be consistent
 - Punctuation, verb tense, format, etc.
- Do not require answers before moving on

Dillman, D. A., (2000). *Mail and internet surveys: A tailored design method*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Sampling

- Why sample?
- Why is understanding sampling issues important?

Types of Sampling

- Probability sampling
 - Simple random sampling
 - Stratified random sampling
 - Systematic random sampling
 - Cluster random sampling
 - Multi-stage random sampling
- Non-probability sampling
 - Convenience sampling
 - Purposive sampling

www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/

Survey Topic

- Which type of sampling method would you use and why?

Sample Size

- Appropriate sample size
 - Depends on population size
 - Depends on sampling error
 - Depends on time and money
 - Depends on analyses
- 100 for descriptive study
- 50 for correlational study
- 30 for experimental study

Fraenkal & Wallen. (2003). *How to design and evaluate research in education (5th ed.)*. New York: McGraw-Hill. P. 109.

- www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm

Pre-testing

- Why pre-test?

Pre-testing

- Dillman 4-stage pre-testing process
 - Stage 1: Review by knowledgeable colleagues and analysts
 - Have I included all necessary questions?
 - Can I eliminate some questions?
 - Can I compare responses to other surveys?
 - What are pros/cons of modernizing categories?

Pre-testing

- Dillman 4-stage pre-testing process
 - Stage 2: Interviews to evaluate cognitive and motivational qualities
 - Are all words understood?
 - Are all questions interpreted similarly?
 - Is there an answer for every respondent?
 - Is each respondent likely to read and answer each question?

Pre-testing

- Dillman 4-stage pre-testing process
 - Stage 3: Small pilot study
 - Are answers distributed across options?
 - Are scale items correlated?
 - Are any items too highly correlated?
 - Are any items generating high non-response?
 - Are sections being skipped?
 - Are open-ended questions providing useful data?

Pre-testing

- Dillman 4-stage pre-testing process
 - Stage 4: Final check
 - Did we do anything silly?

Survey Response Theory

- Reasoned approach: Social exchange theory (Dillman)
 - Rewards
 - Costs
 - Trust

Survey Response Theory

- Psychological approach: “Rules of thumb” (Groves)
 - Norm of reciprocity
 - Helping tendencies
 - Compliance with legitimate authority
 - Perceptions of scarcity

Porter, S. R. (Ed.). (2004). Raising response rates: What works. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 121, pp. 7-8.

Response Rates

- Typical response rates
 - Preferred: 100%
 - Typical: 25%-30%
- Want responses to be representative of the sample (which should be representative of the population)

Boosting Response Rates

- High yield
 - Multiple contacts
 - 8%-29% ↑
 - pre-notice, invite, 2 reminders, thank you
 - Incentives
 - 12%-24% ↑
 - should be pre-paid
 - post-paid should be enticing

Boosting Response Rates

- Moderate yield
 - Survey should be salient
 - 12%-24% ↑
 - Requests for help
 - 18% ↑
 - Official sponsorship
 - 9%-14% ↑
- Low yield
 - Keep it short
 - 5% ↑

Boosting Response Rates

- Mixed yield
 - Provide explicit deadlines
 - Personal correspondence
- Unknown yield
 - Confidentiality

Boosting Response Rates

- What steps would you use to boost response rates and why?

Human Subjects Review

- Federal mandate
- “Human subjects research”
- Assessment vs. generalizable research

- Human subjects review boards (IRBs)
 - Exempt
 - Expedited
 - Full review

Ethical Assessment

- Informed consent
- Voluntary participation
 - may be reason to mandate
- No repercussions for non-participation
- Confidentiality
- Minimization of risk

Conclusion

- Final questions, comments?

Web Resources

- Dillman's papers
 - <http://survey.sesrc.wsu.edu/dillman/papers.htm>
- Online survey tools
 - www.myacpa.org/comm/assessment and click on "Commission Resources -> "Assessment Instruments"
- Sample size calculator
 - www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm

Web Resources

- Survey design
 - www.statpac.com/surveys
- Writing survey questions
 - www.ryerson.ca/~mjoppe/ResearchProcess/WriteBetterQuestion.htm
 - www.accesscable.net/~infopoll/tips.htm
 - www.custominsight.com/articles/effective-survey-questions.asp
 - www.statpac.com/surveys/question-qualities.htm

Print Resources

- Crawford, S. D., Couper, M. P. & Lamais, M. J. (2001). Web surveys: Perceptions of burden. *Social Science Computer Review*, 19(2), 146-162.
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Print Resources

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