

GENERAL GUIDELINES ON THE PREPARATION OF A QUESTIONNAIRE

Data collection forms are important tools of the researcher. All three communication media in questionnaire (i.e., personal, telephone, mail interview) need a questionnaire.

I. Definition

The questionnaire is a standardized list of questions to be asked of respondents provided with spaces to record answers. Each question is worded exactly as it should be asked, and the questions are listed in an established (logical and psychological) sequence.

Before: informal

Present: years of experience of research practitioners resulted to more formality, do's and don'ts in questionnaire design

II. Parts of a questionnaire

- A. Identification Data – research agency or interviewing organization, address, questionnaire number, project title, date, time of interview
- B. Request for Cooperation – includes opening statement designed to solicit the cooperation of the respondents; purpose is mentioned, if mailed
- C. Instructions – how to use the questionnaire (addressed to the respondents), especially essential to mailed survey, e.g. write all answers in print, do not leave any space blank, etc
- D. Information Sought – body of the questionnaire, major portion of the questionnaire, can be translated, if needed
- E. Classification Data – demographic data (sex, education, occupation, economic class, household characteristics), can be placed at the start or at the end, some questions may be asked at the start, e.g. age, education and occupation to determine whether the respondent is a qualified respondent or not

III. Questionnaire Construction

- A. Reviewing Preliminary Consideration – should consider type of research design, sources of data, target population, sampling plan, measurement scales, data processing/analysis; the more heterogeneous the group is, the more difficult it is for the researcher to design a single questionnaire for everyone.
- B. Decide on Question Content – consider your objectives; three factors to consider why respondents may not give answers: (1) interview situation is not appropriate for disclosing information, (2) embarrassing questions and (3) threat to the respondent's prestige/ego
- C. Decide on Response Format – three types of questions:

- (1) Open-ended – What is your reaction to Echegaray’s execution?
- (2) Multiple choice – From whom do you get advice if you have a marital problem?
 _parents _friends _priest _marriage counselor
- (3) Dichotomous questions – queries requiring only two answers, e.g. yes/no, male/female

D. Decide on Question Writing

- (1) Use simple words – vocabulary of respondents
- (2) Use clear words – avoid words with double meanings (though difficult esp. with Filipinos’ “medyo” or “enjoined”)
- (3) Avoid leading questions – “Pinanonood mo ba ang walang kwentang Esperanza?”
- (4) Avoid biased questions – “Don’t you agree with the sentiments of the majority of people that Echegaray should pay for his crime and therefore should die?”
- (5) Avoid estimates of unimaginable degree – “How many cups of rice do you consume in one year?”
- (6) Avoid double-barreled questions – “What is your evaluation of former President Ramos and President Erap’s style of leadership?”

E. Decide on Question Sequence – flow of questions; use simple and interesting opening questions to capture the interest and cooperation of the respondents; ask general questions first; place embarrassing, sensitive questions later; arrange questions in logical sequence

F. Physical Characteristics – quality of paper; printing; interviewing agency should be known beforehand; preferably numbered serially; enough spaces in between questions for additional notes or for open-ended questions; not too thick; paper size is standard

G. Pretest, Revisions and Final draft – initial testing for comprehensibility and workability; pretest by interview so that reactions can be noted and observed; small sample; result of the pretest may lead to additional questions or deletion of some, revision or retention of question sequence