

Wiki Activity: Questionnaires

Introduction

For this activity, I will analyse and critique the Census 2021 Household Questionnaire from the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2021). The six specific questions I will focus on are:

1. *What is your date of birth?*
2. *What is your sex?*
3. *How would you describe your ethnic group?*
4. *Do you have any long-term health conditions or disabilities?*
5. *What is your current employment status?*
6. *How many people live in your household, and what is their relationship to you?*

Format and Structure Analysis

Overall, the questionnaire is clear and straightforward, using categorized sections to group similar questions effectively. However, its length may overwhelm some respondents, potentially affecting completion rates.

Question Analysis

While collecting respondents' dates of birth provides valuable demographic data, this question may cause discomfort for individuals who prefer not to share their age. Additionally, the variation in date formats across countries could confuse respondents whose primary nationality is not English. To address these issues, I recommend requesting respondents' age range instead. This would provide the necessary data without causing confusion or discomfort.

Although asking about sex is a reasonable question, the limited response options may exclude or offend individuals in the LGBTQIA+ community. A lack of inclusivity can lead to feelings of marginalization. To avoid this, I suggest expanding the response options to include categories such as "Non-binary," "Prefer not to say," or an open-text option to reflect modern societal diversity.

The question on ethnicity is important for collecting data on diversity. However, the response categories are often broad and may not adequately represent all ethnic groups. This lack of specificity could lead to confusion or frustration among respondents unsure of which category applies to them. Adding more granular options or an open-text field for "Other" would enhance inclusivity and accuracy.

The question, on long term health conditions and disabilities is limited to "Yes" or "No" responses, as such it is overly simplistic. It misses the opportunity to gather detailed data about the nature of respondents' conditions or disabilities. A follow-up question allowing respondents to specify the type of condition would provide more meaningful insights.

Whilst understanding employment status is essential for analysing labour market trends the limited response options exclude less common forms of work, such as gig economy roles or unpaid caregiving. This question could be improved by offering a broader range of employment categories or an open-text option.

The question about household composition requires respondents to categorize relationships into predefined roles, which may not reflect modern family dynamics. Adding an "Other" option or allowing respondents to specify relationships would accommodate diverse household arrangements.

Conclusion

While the Census questionnaire is a valuable tool for collecting demographic and household data in England and Wales, several questions lack inclusivity and flexibility. Expanding response options to reflect modern societal diversity, including a section for participant feedback, and incorporating follow-up questions where necessary would enhance the quality and completeness of the data collected.

References

Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2021. *Census 2021: Household Questionnaire (England)*. [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census> [Accessed 29 November 2024].