

Unit 5 - Questionnaires:

Customer satisfaction questionnaires are essential tools for businesses to assess consumer perceptions, identify areas for improvement, and maintain competitive advantage. The Saelzer Electric Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire (Saelzer Electric, n. d.) aims to collect feedback regarding various aspects of its services, products, and customer interactions. This critique evaluates the design, structure, and question formulation of the questionnaire, focusing on the appropriateness, clarity, and potential improvements to enhance data reliability and validity.

The questionnaire is divided into several sections, each addressing different facets of customer satisfaction. It begins with a voluntary declaration section that captures demographic information such as company, position, name, and contact details. The core of the questionnaire consists of closed-ended questions using a Likert scale ranging from "Very satisfied" to "Very dissatisfied," with an additional "No comment" option (León-Mantero et al., 2020; Sullivan and Artino Jr., 2013). The questions are categorised into themes such as quotation and order confirmation, order processing, product quality, customer service, technical consulting, future usage intention, and competitor comparison. Each section includes an open-ended comment field for qualitative feedback.

To provide a comprehensive analysis, the content can be clustered into four overarching topics: Product and Service Quality, Order Processing, Customer Service, and Competitive Comparison. Product and Service Quality questions, such as those about technical properties and economic lifetime, are included to gauge

long-term customer satisfaction and product reliability (Malhotra, 2020; Saunders et al., 2019; Churchill and Iacobucci, 2018). The Likert scale format is appropriate as it allows respondents to express varying levels of satisfaction. Order Processing questions, including lead time and complaint handling, assess operational efficiency and responsiveness, which are critical for maintaining customer trust (Dillman et al., 2014; Bryman, 2016; Malhotra, 2020). Although the closed-ended format ensures structured data collection, it may limit respondents from elaborating on unique experiences. Customer Service questions evaluate support quality, speed of response, and staff knowledge, all essential for fostering customer loyalty (Saunders et al., 2019; Dillman et al., 2014; Churchill and Iacobucci, 2018). The phrasing of these questions is mostly clear, yet more specific wording could help avoid ambiguity. While the general categories that are included in the questionnaire help keep it measurable and comparable, different respondents could have varying interpretations of the questions when general phrases like “packaging” or “staff’s capacity” are used. The Competitive Comparison section, with questions like supplier rating and overall satisfaction, provides benchmarking insights to identify competitive advantages and areas needing improvement (Bryman, 2016; Malhotra, 2020; Saunders et al., 2019). However, comparing competitors using broad categories may oversimplify complex differences. Overall, while the form of the questions is suitable for obtaining structured data, greater flexibility in response options and clearer phrasing could enhance data accuracy and depth.

One of the primary strengths of the questionnaire’s overall design is its structured format, which facilitates ease of completion and standardisation of responses, enhancing data comparability (Saunders et al., 2019; Bryman, 2016; Malhotra, 2020).

The use of Likert scales allows for quantifiable data that can be statistically analysed, providing insights into customer satisfaction levels. Customer satisfaction scores can be calculated and, e.g., compared over time. Including specific categories such as product quality, service speed, and complaint handling enables targeted feedback collection, aligning with best practices in service quality measurement (Dillman et al., 2014; Saunders et al., 2019). Additionally, the open-ended comment fields offer respondents the opportunity to elaborate on their experiences, adding qualitative depth to the quantitative data.

Despite its strengths, the questionnaire has several design weaknesses. Firstly, the demographic section requests personal information such as name and contact details, which may compromise anonymity and prevent open responses (Saunders et al., 2019; Bryman, 2016). Secondly, the use of closed-ended questions with limited response options may restrict respondents' ability to fully express their views, potentially leading to response bias (Malhotra, 2020; Churchill and Iacobucci, 2018). While the comment field that is included in each question and gives respondents the opportunity to add their personal thoughts about the questions helps add depth to the responses, it could be presented more eye-catching. Currently, the comment field could be overseen by some respondents. This could be improved by printing the comment field in bold letters and changing the design slightly to differentiate it from the way in which the question itself is presented. Furthermore, the questionnaire's manual submission via fax is outdated and may reduce response rates, as digital submission methods are more accessible and convenient (Dillman et al., 2014; Saunders et al., 2019).

In summary, the Saelzer Electric Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire is well-structured and uses standardised Likert scales to gather quantifiable feedback. Its strengths lie in its targeted categories and inclusion of open-ended comments, which provide both quantitative and qualitative insights. However, improvements are needed to ensure greater anonymity, offer more flexible response options, and modernise the submission process. While all included questions are necessary and create a value for the company when analysing the responses, some of them could be formulated more clearly to prevent misunderstandings that could lead to less valuable results. By addressing these weaknesses, the questionnaire can enhance response rates, data accuracy, and the overall reliability of customer feedback.

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