

Consultancy Project

**Primary Research Skills- Collecting Data:
Using Surveys/Questionnaires**



Last time



- To review the basics of research methodology
- To identify and evaluate different sampling techniques and strategies to choose the research respondents
- To acknowledge sampling requirements
- To identify and review the different sampling techniques and strategies and their appropriateness for different situations
- To highlight issues arising from sampling procedures
- To determine an appropriate strategy for the research project

Reminder – The Project's key stages

- Bid for work
- Ethical approval (Form E3)
- PID agreed (and signed)
- Feedback
- **Plan research methods in detail**
- Undertake research
- Analyse findings
- Brainstorm with client
- Present findings and informed ideas
- Report
- Action!
- Feedback/analysis
- Does the project achieve the PID goals?

Today's Objectives

<http://youtu.be/A-PWin2NCEk>



- To highlight when and how questionnaires may be used as a research tool
- To recognise the advantages and disadvantages of using questionnaires
- To explore key considerations in questionnaire design
- To identify key requirements in relation to questionnaire design
- To recognise the dangers associated with poor planning and design
- To acknowledge one's responsibilities as a researcher

Using questionnaires

‘Questionnaire surveys involve the gathering of information from individuals using a formally designed schedule of questions called a ***questionnaire*** or ***interview schedule***’

(Ref: Veal, 1994:p231)

Used:

- to gather data from a wide range of the population
- to facilitate comparisons between the characteristics of categories or groups within a population
- regularly by leisure, tourism, sport & recreational activity providers to assist decision making

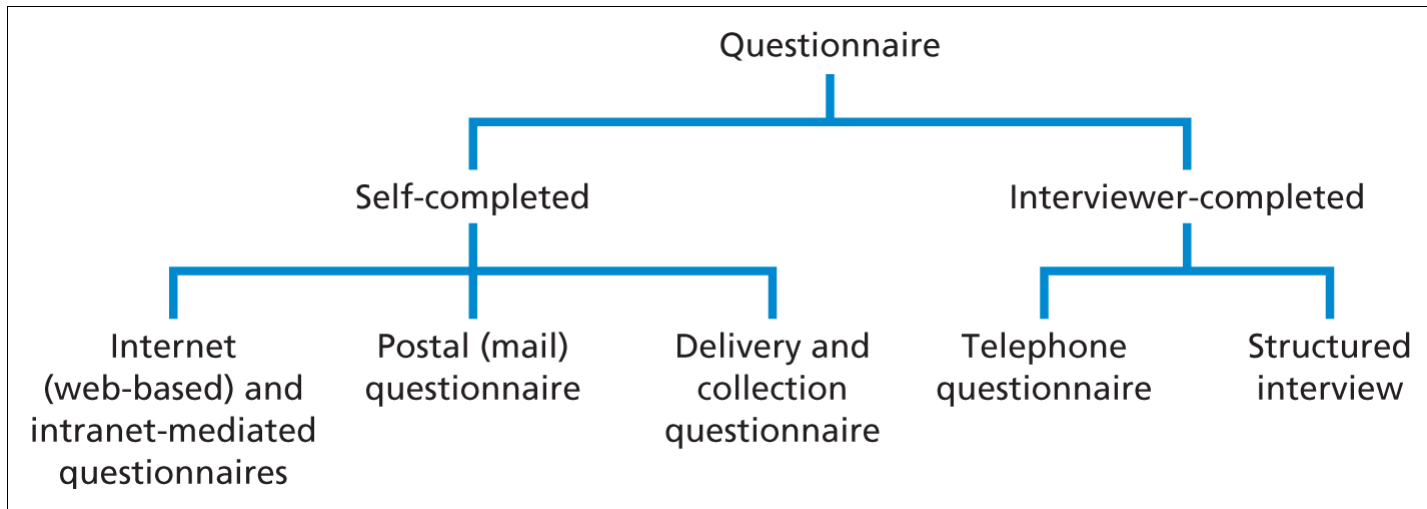
Questionnaire surveys:

- ‘usually involve substantial numbers of subjects’ (Ibid:232)
- involve a common format and consistency of approach
- usage depends on the nature of the approach to the research

Where and how?

Leisure, tourism, sport & recreational activity providers may use one or more of the following types of survey:

- Household
- Street
- Telephone
- Mail
- E-surveys
- User/on-site/visitor
- Captive group



Why is important to consider how the questionnaire is to be administered?

Task

List the main advantages and disadvantages of using questionnaires to collect data in primary research



Advantages of using questionnaires

- supports decision making by relevant organisations because allows access to large numbers quickly and cheaply
- procedural transparency – clear to see how info was collected, analysed & interpreted
- effective way of recording a ‘range of activities, with a range of characteristics frequency, duration, type of expenditure, location, level of enjoyment.’ (Ref: Veal, 2006:233)
- ‘provide the means to gather and record simple information on the incidence of attitudes, meanings and perceptions.....’
- respondent anonymity and time for reflection
- interviewer bias eliminated
- software for analysis – Excel, SPSS, Survey Monkey

Disadvantages of using questionnaires

- needs care and skill when designing the instrument. Poor design may result in respondent confusion and incomplete or inappropriate data collection
- reliant on respondent returns – disinterest, lack of time etc may result in poor response rate
- validity and accuracy of responses may be questionable – affected by exaggeration, lack of honesty, power of recall, helpfulness (or otherwise) of respondent
- limited to smaller number of questions and completion time
- IT skills in using relevant software for analysis and interpretation

Good questions get good data
= Meaningful analysis

Task

What makes a 'good' questionnaire?

How can you (the researcher) maximise the chances of getting other to complete your questionnaire:

- 1) Before you distribute it
- 2) After it has been distributed

Encouraging others to complete your questionnaire

Poor response rates are a concern for researchers.

What can be done to encourage a good return?

Before distribution:

- ❖ design the instrument carefully. What are you trying to find out?
- ❖ Is it user friendly, simple, easy to understand? Are the completion instructions clear?
- ❖ check it's free of jargon, ambiguity and leading questions
- ❖ ensure it's easy to complete e.g. tick lists etc, not too much writing
- ❖ pilot it to iron out problems
- ❖ contact your target group if possible, explain the purpose of the survey and get their support

During the survey:

- ❖ offer incentives to respondents e.g. raffle – ticket to Alton Towers
- ❖ does it generate sufficient interest to keep people going to the end?
- ❖ have a good introduction and variety of question formats/sections
- ❖ issue reminders to non-respondents

Task

Outline the different types of question you could ask in a questionnaire

What would be the advantages/disadvantages of each type?

Types of questions:

Closed/pre-coded

Responses restricted to pre-coded categories

Suggested answers provided for respondents

Questions may take various forms including: List, Category, Ranking, Rating, Quality & Grid (Saunders et al, 2003)

Simpler and faster to complete so respondents may be more receptive to questioning

Easier to analyse collected material

Open ended

Mainly used in semi-structured interviews but invites more detail in structured questionnaires

No prior list of suggested responses

Answer not influenced by interviewer or wording of question

Replies are more varied, richer and informative

Provides greater flexibility during analysis

Analysis of verbatim responses is laborious

Respondents may be too busy/lazy to provide written responses

Examples of different question types

1. List

Q. How are you coping with the work on your course?

Tick the symptoms which currently apply to you:

Difficulty concentrating

Loss of appetite

Irritability

Panic attacks

Poor memory

Difficulty in sleeping

None

How might this be coded and analysed?

2. Category

Tick the programme that you are following

Events

MTour

ITTM

Tourism

3. Ranking

Q. How well are coping with the work on your course?

Rank the following symptoms in order of the degree to which they currently affect you

(1 = most significant, 6 = least significant)

Difficulty concentrating

Rank

—

Loss of appetite

—

Irritability

—

Panic Attacks

—

Poor memory

—

Difficulty in sleeping

—

4. Rating (ring the relevant statements)

I have difficulty concentrating

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree*

I have a poor appetite

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree*

Is this similar to the example on the next slide?

* In this example **Likert scales** are being used to encourage respondents to indicate the level, or degree, of agreement or disagreement they feel about particular statements

5. Quantity

Are you feeling coping with the work on your course?

Indicate on a scale of 1- 4 how strongly you agree with the statements (1 = strongly agree, 4 = strongly disagree)

	Circle the relevant numbers				Response
I have difficulty concentrating	1	2	3	4	2
I have a poor appetite	1	2	3	4	4
I am irritable	1	2	3	4	2
I suffer frequent panic attacks	1	2	3	4	2
I have a poor memory	1	2	3	4	2
I have difficulty in sleeping	1	2	3	4	4

Total score = $16/6 = 2.67$

How useful is this information?

Questionnaire design and distribution: practicalities and potential problems



Types of information

The information collected from questionnaire surveys can be divided into different categories

Veal (2006) identifies 3:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Respondent characteristics | Who? |
| 2. Activities/behaviour | What? |
| 3. Attitudes/motivation | Why? |

In comparison Dillman(1978) cited in Saunders et al (2015) identifies 4:

- i. Attitudes i.e. what they feel
- ii. Beliefs i.e. what they think is true or false
- iii. Behaviour i.e. what they do/engage in
- iv. Attributes - same as 1 in Veal's categorisation

Question types: a reminder

Closed/pre-coded:

- also known as Structured Qs
- often more difficult to construct
- answers limited to set responses
- easier to analyse
- limited opportunity for additional feedback from respondent

Open ended:

- information collected more varied and detailed
- more difficult and time consuming to analyse
- data not easily coded for analysis
- comparisons more difficult

Preparing the questions: simple dos and don'ts

Do ask:

- yourself what you want to know
- the right questions – focus on your aim
- enough questions to enable you to enable you to gather sufficient data

Don't ask:

- questions simply because they 'feel right'
- unnecessary questions

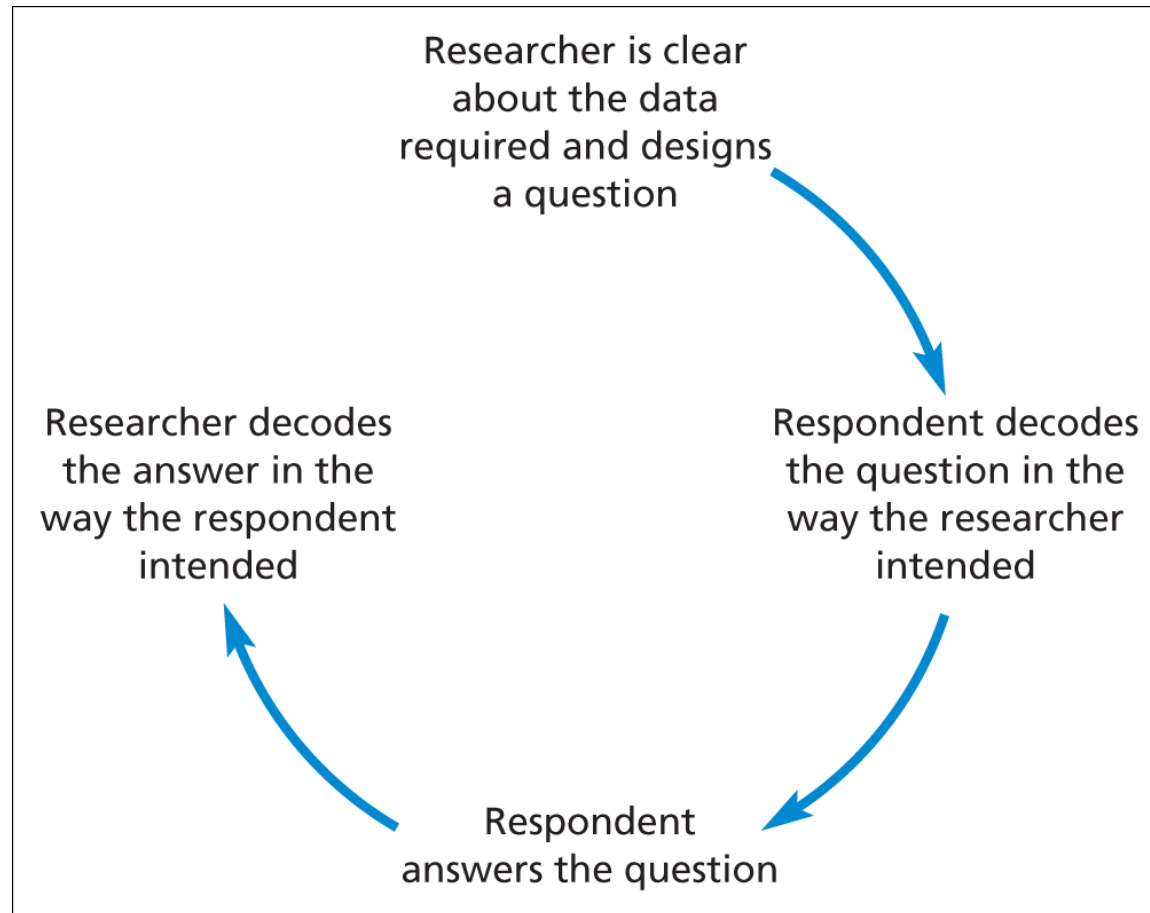


Figure 11.2 Stages that must occur if a question is to be valid and reliable

Source: Developed from Foddy (1994) *Constructing Questions from Interviews and Questionnaires*. Reproduced with permission from Cambridge University Press

Questionnaire presentation: the practicalities

Would you be happy to complete a questionnaire which:

- doesn't clearly identify it's purpose?
- lacks simple and/or clear instructions?
- is difficult to read and/or understand?
- is disjointed and doesn't flow effectively?
- is too long and lacks focus?
- seems as though it's been put together in a hurry and without too much thought?
- is poorly presented?

Would you think:

- if s/he can't be bothered why should I?
- 'blow this!' and bin it without even trying to complete it?

Presentation: hints and tips

A well presented and clearly laid out instrument is *essential* for encouraging a good response rate. If it's not user friendly then potential respondents will probably ignore it.

‘ I have just thrown in the bin a questionnaire asking me about my car. I started out with good intentions because, as a researcher, I feel an obligation, and in any case, I wanted to explain my reservations.

But eventually I gave up because I felt they were taking me for a ride and pushing my goodwill too far.

I was being asked for huge quantities of extraneous data and not being allowed to convey the messages I wanted.’

Ref: Long (2007:58) Researching Leisure, Sport & Tourism, Sage, London

Some essentials:

- ✓ **think about the layout and questions before starting**
- ✓ **stay focused on the research requirements**
- ✓ **explain the purpose of the study (briefly)**
- ✓ **provide clear instructions on how to answer questions**
- ✓ **order the questions carefully, start with the easy, general and/or descriptive ones, end with the more personal or complex ones**
- ✓ **use sections if appropriate, briefly explain the focus of each**
- ✓ **take care when using filter questions, provide clear guidance – text or graphical**
- ✓ **align response boxes, normally on right hand side of page**

Long (2007:58) also argues that researchers must also consider:

1. Where they are
2. How motivated the respondents are likely to
3. How good/efficient the interviewer is

Pre-testing and Piloting

Pre-testing the questionnaire or instrument is important to check:

- ❖ Instructions, questions, rankings etc are clear and understandable
- ❖ information gathered is appropriate to your needs
- ✓ Use a small group similar to the target group
- ✓ Obtain feedback – were all the questions answered, interpreted in the way you intended, did the pre-testers encounter problems?

Piloting is different to pre-testing. It is:

- ❖ ***the ‘small scale administration of the survey procedure’***
- ❖ unnecessary if you’ve covered everything but how do you know unless you do a trial run?

Don't forget the essentials!

- ✓ **P**lanning
- ✓ **P**reparation
- ✓ **P**resentation
- ✓ **P**re-testing
- ✓ **P**iloting
- ✓ **P**articipants

and remember respondents are doing you a favour

- don't waste their time – or yours!
- do make sure your questionnaire is easily understood!

Summary: Questionnaires (positivistic)

- ✓ Efficient for a *large sample* of people (same set of questions).
 - ✓ *Standardised* questions
 - ✓ Require *less skill* and sensitivity to administer than interviews.
 - ✓ *Quantitative* data, so *easy to analyse*
 - ✓ Reduce possibility of *bias*.
 - ✓ *Cheap* to administer.
-
- × Good *questionnaire design* is crucial to avoid ambiguity & bias.
 - × Development requires considerable *skill and time*.
 - × Not suitable for large numbers of *open questions*.
 - × It is not possible to '*probe*' interesting responses.
 - × *Response rates* can be low

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<http://youtu.be/53mASVzGRF4>



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<http://youtu.be/3mrt15qOZ0Q>

<http://youtu.be/ZP4qe-ggsAI>

Next:

**Primary Data Collection
Techniques-
Interviews**

