

Collecting primary data using questionnaires

Use of questionnaires (1)

Definition of Questionnaires

Techniques of data collection in which each person is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a predetermined order

Adapted from deVaus (2002)

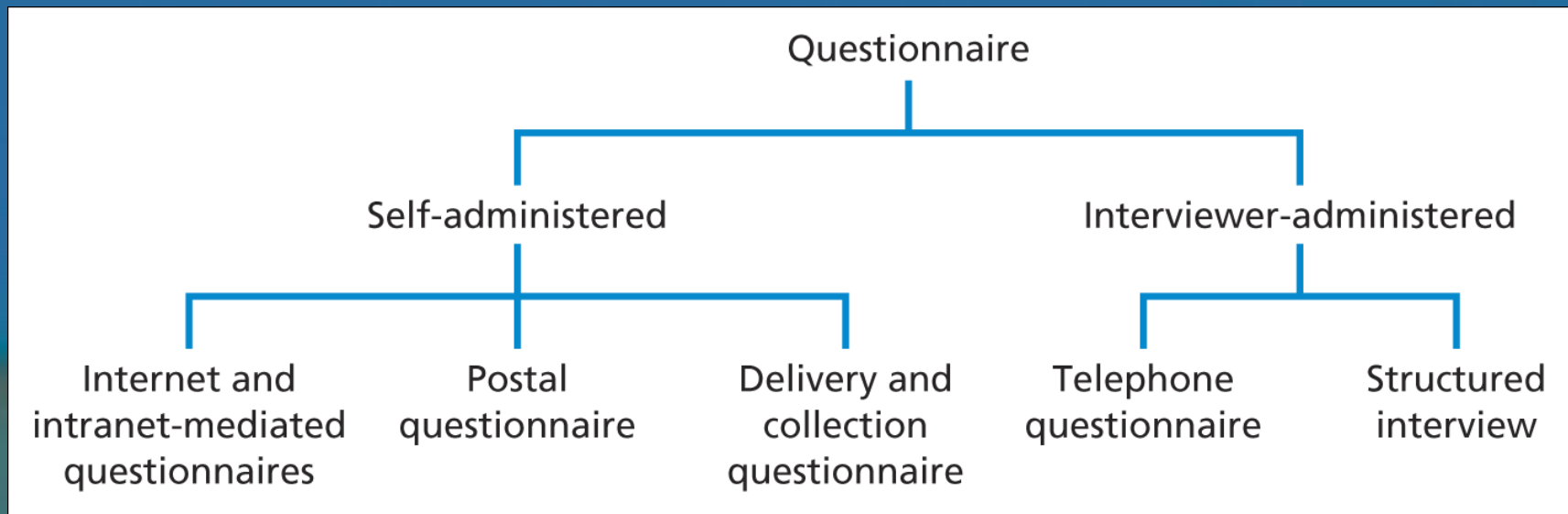
Use of questionnaires (2)

When to use questionnaires

- For explanatory or descriptive research
- Linked with other methods in a multiple-methods research design
- To collect responses from a large sample prior to quantitative analysis

Use of questionnaires (3)

Types of questionnaire



Saunders *et al.* (2009)

Figure 11.1 Types of questionnaire

Types of questionnaire

- The design of a questionnaire differs according to how it is administered and in particular, the amount of contact you have with respondents [Figure 11.1]. Self-administered questionnaires are usually completed by respondents. Such questionnaires are administered electronically using the internet [Internet-mediated questionnaires] or intranet [intranet-mediated questionnaires], posted to respondents who return them by post after completion [postal or mail questionnaire], or delivered by hand to each respondent and collected later [delivery and collection questionnaire].

-

Continued

- Responses to interviewer-administered questionnaires are recorded by the interviewer on the basis of each respondent's answers. Questionnaires administered using the telephone are known as telephone questionnaires. The final category, structured interviews [sometimes known as interview schedules], refers to those questionnaires where interviewers physically meet respondents and ask the question face to face. These differ from semi-structured and unstructured [in-depth] interviews [Section 10.2], as there is a defined schedule of questions, from which interviewers should not deviate.

Choice of questionnaire

Related factors

- Characteristics of the respondents and access
- Respondents answers not being contaminated or distorted
- Size of sample required for analysis
- Type and number of questions required
- Available resources including use of computer software

Data collection

Key factors

- Precisely defined questions
- Representative and accurate sampling
- An understanding of the organisational context
- Relationships between variables – dependent, independent and extraneous
- Types of variable

Ensuring essential data are collected

Data requirements table

Research question/objective:

Type of research:

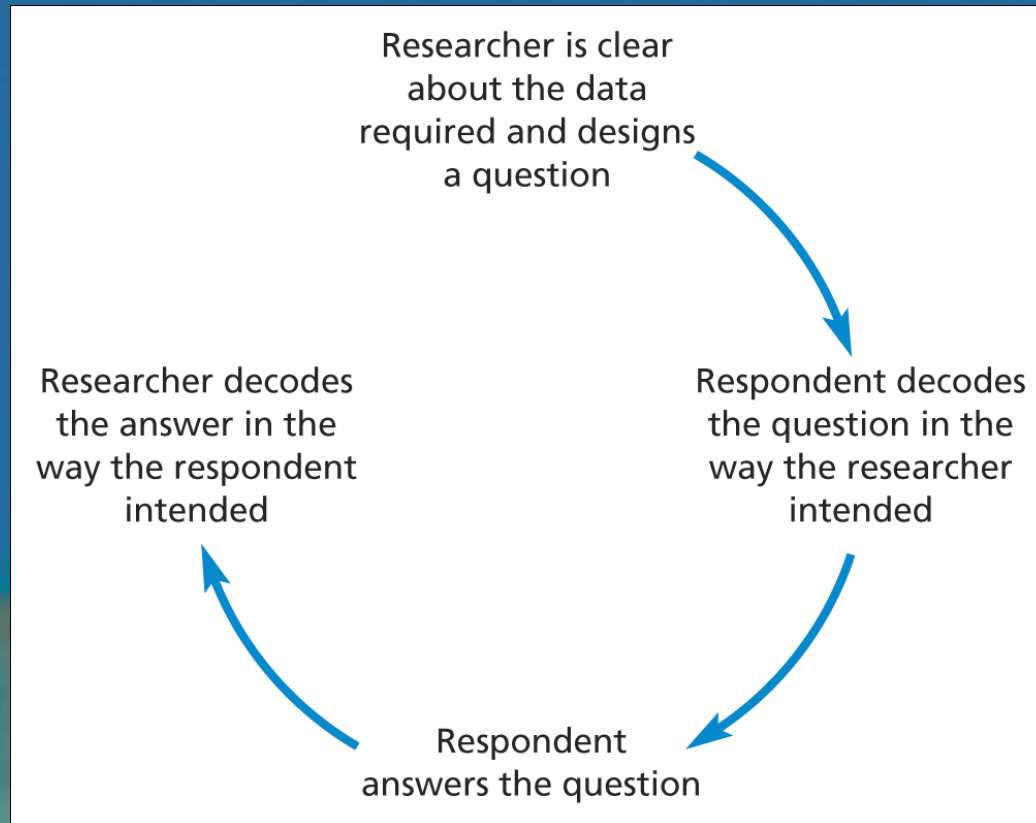
Investigative questions	Variable(s) required	Detail in which data measured	Check measurement question included in questionnaire ✓

Saunders *et al.* (2009)

Table 11.2 Data requirements table

Designing the questionnaire (1)

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



Source: developed from Foddy (1994)

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

Designing the questionnaire (2)

Assessing validity

- Internal – how good of a job your study does to collect data which support cause and effect as presented in the research proposal.
- Content – is your questionnaire, as an overall measure and the various questions in it, capture all aspects of the areas examined
- Construct – similar to content but looks at each construct in the study.

Designing the questionnaire (3)

Testing for reliability- ensuring the questionnaire gets consistent results

- Test re-test
- Internal consistency
- Alternative form

Mitchell (1996)

Examples of question types (1)

Open questions

6 Please list up to three things you like about your job

1.....

2.....

3.....

Saunders *et al.* (2009)

Examples of question types (2)

List questions

7 What is your religion?

Please tick ✓ the appropriate box

Buddhist	☐	None	☐
Christian	☐	Other	☐
Hindu	☐		
Jewish	☐		
Muslim	☐		
Sikh	☐		

Saunders *et al.* (2009)

Examples of question types (3)

Category questions

8 How often do you visit the shopping centre?

Interviewer: listen to the respondent's answer and tick ✓ as appropriate

- ☐ First visit
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Less than fortnightly to once a month
- ☐ 2 or more times a week
- ☐ Less than once a week to fortnightly
- ☐ Less often

Saunders *et al.* (2009)

Examples of question types (4)

Ranking questions

- 9 Please number each of the factors listed below in order of importance to you in choosing a new car. Number the most important 1, the next 2 and so on. If a factor has no importance at all, please leave blank.

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Importance</i>
<i>Carbon dioxide emissions</i>	[]
<i>Boot size</i>	[]
<i>Depreciation</i>	[]
<i>Price</i>	[]

Adapted from Saunders *et al.* (2009)

Examples of question types (5)

Rating questions

10 For the following statement please tick the box that matches your view most closely

Agree Tend to agree Tend to disagree Disagree

I feel employees' views have influenced the decisions taken by management

☐☐☐☐

Saunders *et al.* (2009)

Examples of question types (6)

Quantity questions

14 What is your year of birth?

1	9		
----------	----------	--	--

(For example, for 1988 write:)

1	9	8	8
----------	----------	----------	----------

Saunders *et al.* (2009)

Designing individual questions (1)

Other considerations

- Adopting or adapting existing questions – remember to check copyright
- Question wording
- Translating questions into other languages
- Question coding

Constructing the questionnaire

Main considerations

- Order and flow of questions
- Questionnaire layout

Explaining the purpose and testing

Key points

- The covering letter
- Introducing and closing the questionnaire
- Pilot testing and assessing validity

Administering the questionnaire

Points to consider

- Internet and intranet-mediated responses
- Postal questionnaires
- Delivery and Collection
- Telephone questionnaires
- Structured interviews

Summary

- Questionnaires are often used to collect descriptive and explanatory data
- Five main types of questionnaire are Internet- or intra-net mediated, postal, delivery and collection, telephone and interview schedule
- Precise data that meet the research objectives can be produced by using a data requirements table

Summary

- Data validity and reliability and response rate depend on design, structure and rigorous pilot testing
- Wording and order of questions and question types are important considerations
- Closed questions should be pre-coded to facilitate data input and analysis

Summary

- Important design features are a clear layout, a logical order and flow of questions and easily completed responses
- Questionnaires should be carefully introduced and pilot tested prior to administration
- Administration needs to be appropriate to the type of questionnaire