**Lecture : Questionnaire**

A **questionnaire** is a list of questions or items used to gather data from informants about their perceptions, experiences, or opinions. Questionnaires can be used to gather both [quantitative](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/quantitative-research/) and/or [qualitative](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/qualitative-research/) data.

**Questionnaires vs. surveys**

A [**survey**](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/survey-research/) is a research method where you gather and analyze data from a large group of people. A survey, then, could be any research instrument like a questionnaire or interview. A **questionnaire** is a specific tool or instrument for collecting the data.

Constructing a questionnaire means creating[valid and reliable](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/reliability-vs-validity/) questions that address your [research](https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/research-objectives/) problem, following principled criteria in terms of the type of questions and their order. Therefore, not anybody with good common sense could craft a good questionnaire.

**Questionnaire methods**

Questionnaires could be administered on the spot, online (such as in Google Form), or even via emails.

**Advantages of questionnaires**

* Cheap
* easy to implement for small and large groups
* anonymous and suitable for sensitive topics
* self-paced

But they may also be:

* unsuitable for people with limited literacy or verbal skills
* susceptible to a [nonresponse bias](https://www.scribbr.com/research-bias/nonresponse-bias/) (most people invited may not complete the questionnaire)
* biased towards people who [volunteer](https://catalogofbias.org/biases/volunteer-bias/) because impersonal survey requests often go ignored.

**Characteristics of a good questionnaire**

1. Collecting data from a large number of people or samples.
2. It is practical, easy to administer, easy to analyze.

**Guidelines for questionnaire design and implementation.**

1. The questionnaire should have clear instructions and items.

2. Avoid complex sentences.

3. Follow logical order.

4. Avoid vexing questions

. 5. Be succinct and objective. 6.

Relating items to research questions.

7. Piloting.

8. Reliability.

9. Interest.

10. Avoid irrelevant variables.

11. Avoid overloaded questions.

12. Add options of other.

**Different parts of a questionnaire.**

* 1. introduction. It provides context, explain purpose of the questionnaire.
  2. demographics. It's about age, gender, education, and so on.
  3. Main questions.
  4. Additional questions
  5. Conclusion and thinking.

**Questions**

**Open-ended vs. closed-ended questions**

Your questionnaire can include open-ended or closed-ended questions or a combination of both. Using closed-ended questions limits your responses, while open-ended questions enable a broad range of answers. You’ll need to balance these considerations with your available time and resources. Nevertheless, questionnaires are by their nature quantitative and one should avoid indulging in asking solely open-end questions.

**Closed-ended questions**

Closed-ended, or limited-choice, questions give informants a fixed set of options to choose from. Closed-ended questions are best for [gethering data](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/data-collection/) on categorical or quantitative variables. They can be yes/no questions, MCQs, or scaling questions.

**Examples of closed-ended questions for different variables**

[**Nominal variables**](https://www.scribbr.com/statistics/nominal-data/) include categories that can’t be ranked, such as race or ethnicity. This includes binary or dichotomous categories.It’s best to include categories that cover all possible answers and are mutually exclusive. There should be no overlap between response items. In binary or dichotomous questions, you’ll give respondents only two options to choose from.

Example: Nominal variables; What is your [race](https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html)?

 White  
 Black or African American  
 American Indian or Alaska Native  
 Asian  
 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Are you satisfied with the current work-from-home policies?  
 Yes  
 No

[**Ordinal variables**](https://www.scribbr.com/statistics/ordinal-data/) include categories that can be ranked. Consider how wide or narrow a range you’ll include in your response items, and [their](https://www.scribbr.com/commonly-confused-words/there-their-theyre/) relevance to your respondents.

Example: Ordinal variables; What is your age?

 15 or younger  
 16–35  
 36–60  
 61–75  
 76 or older

[**Likert scale**](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/likert-scale/) questions collect ordinal data using rating scales with 5 or 7 points.

Example: Likert-type questions

*How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your online shopping experience today?*

 Very dissatisfied  
 Somewhat dissatisfied  
 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied  
 Somewhat satisfied  
 Very satisfied

**Pros and cons of closed-ended questions**

Well-designed closed-ended questions are easy to understand and can be answered quickly. However, you might still miss important answers that are relevant to respondents. An incomplete set of response items may force some respondents to pick the closest alternative to their true answer. These types of questions may also miss out on valuable detail.To solve these problems, you can make questions partially closed-ended, and include an open-ended option where respondents can fill in their own answer.

**Open-ended questions**

Open-ended, or long-form, questions allow respondents to give answers in their own words. Because there are no restrictions on their choices, respondents can answer in ways that researchers may not have otherwise considered. For example, respondents may want to answer “multiracial” for the question on race rather than selecting from a restricted list.

**Example**: **Open-ended questions**

1. How do you feel about open science?
2. How would you describe your personality?
3. In your opinion, what is the biggest obstacle for productivity in remote work?

Open-ended questions have a few downsides.

They require more time and effort from respondents, which may deter them from completing the questionnaire.

For researchers, understanding and summarizing responses to these questions can take a lot of time and resources. You’ll need to develop a systematic coding scheme to categorize answers (use themes to analyse data).

**Question wording**

Question wording can influence your respondents’ answers, especially if the language is unclear, ambiguous, or biased. Good questions need to be understood by all respondents in the same way ([reliable](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/types-of-reliability/)) and measure exactly what you’re interested in ([valid](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/types-of-validity/)).

**Use clear language**

You should design questions with your target audience in mind. Consider their familiarity with your questionnaire topics and language and tailor your questions to them. For readability and clarity, avoid jargon or overly complex language.

**Use balanced framing**

Respondents often answer in different ways depending on the question framing. Positive frames are interpreted as more neutral than negative frames and may encourage more socially desirable answers.

Example: Positive vs negative frames

| **Positive frame** | **Negative frame** |
| --- | --- |
| Should protests of pandemic-related restrictions be allowed? | Should protests of pandemic-related restrictions be forbidden? |

Use a mix of both positive and negative frames to avoid [research bias](https://www.scribbr.com/faq-category/research-bias/), and ensure that your question wording is balanced wherever possible.

Unbalanced questions focus on only one side of an argument. Respondents may be less likely to oppose the question if it is framed in a particular direction. It’s best practice to provide a counter argument within the question as well.

Example: Unbalanced vs balanced frames

| **Unbalanced** | **Balanced** |
| --- | --- |
| Do you favor…? | Do you favor or oppose…? |
| Do you agree that…? | Do you agree or disagree that…? |

**Avoid leading questions**

Leading questions guide respondents towards answering in specific ways, even if that’s not how they truly feel, by explicitly or implicitly providing them with extra information. It’s best to keep your questions short and specific to your topic of interest.

**Example: Leading questions**

1. The [average daily work commute](https://www.thebalance.com/how-much-does-commuting-cost-the-average-american-4175825) in the US takes 54.2 minutes and costs $29 per day. Since 2020, working from home has saved many employees time and money. Do you favor flexible work-from-home policies even after it’s safe to return to offices?

**Keep your questions focused**

Ask about only one idea at a time and avoid double-barreled questions. Double-barreled questions ask about more than one item at a time, which can confuse respondents.

Example: Double-barreled question

*Do you agree or disagree that the government should be responsible for providing clean drinking water and high-speed internet to everyone?*

 Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Undecided  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

This question could be difficult to answer for respondents who feel strongly about the right to clean drinking water but not high-speed internet. They might only answer about the topic they feel passionate about or provide a neutral answer instead – but neither of these options capture their true answers.

Instead, you should ask two separate questions to gauge respondents’ opinions.

**Question order**

You can organize the questions logically, with a clear progression from simple to complex. Alternatively, you can randomize the question order between respondents.

**Logical flow**

Using a logical flow to your question order means starting with simple questions, such as behavioral or opinion questions, and ending with more complex, sensitive, or controversial questions.

The question order that you use can significantly affect the responses by priming them in specific directions. Question order effects, or context effects, occur when earlier questions influence the responses to later questions, reducing the validity of your questionnaire. While demographic questions are usually unaffected by order effects, questions about opinions and attitudes are more susceptible to them.

**Example**: Order effects Presidential approval ratings are often influenced by any related previous questions or references to political situations. These ratings are lower if they follow relevant questions.

1. How knowledgeable are you about Joe Biden’s executive orders in his first 100 days?
2. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way Joe Biden is managing the economy?
3. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Joe Biden is handling his job as president?

For this reason, presidential approval ratings questions are asked at the start of surveys to measure opinions more accurately.

It’s important to minimize order effects because they can be a source of [systematic error](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/random-vs-systematic-error/) or bias in your study.

**Randomization**

Randomization involves presenting individual respondents with the same questionnaire but with different question orders.

When you use randomization, order effects will be minimized in your dataset. But a randomized order may also make it harder for respondents to process your questionnaire. Some questions may need more cognitive effort, while others are easier to answer, so a random order could require more time or mental capacity for respondents to switch between questions.

**Step-by-step guide to design**

**Step 1: Define your goals and objectives**

The first step of designing a questionnaire is determining your aims.

* What topics or experiences are you studying?
* What specifically do you want to find out?
* Is the questionnaire an appropriate tool for investigating this topic?

Once you’ve specified your research aims, you can [operationalize](https://www.scribbr.com/?p=161967) your variables of interest into questionnaire items. Operationalizing concepts means turning them from abstract ideas into concrete measurements. Every question needs to address a defined need and have a clear purpose.

**Step 2: Use questions that are suitable for your sample**

Create appropriate questions by taking the perspective of your respondents. Consider their language proficiency and available time and energy when designing your questionnaire.

* Are the respondents familiar with the language and terms used in your questions?
* Would any of the questions insult, confuse, or embarrass them?
* Do the response items for any closed-ended questions capture all possible answers?
* Are the response items mutually exclusive?
* Do the respondents have time to respond to open-ended questions?

Consider all possible options for responses to closed-ended questions. From a respondent’s perspective, a lack of response options reflecting their point of view or true answer may make them feel alienated or excluded. In turn, they’ll become disengaged or inattentive to the rest of the questionnaire.

**Step 3: Decide on your questionnaire length and question order**

Once you have your questions, make sure that the length and order of your questions are appropriate for your sample.

If respondents are not being incentivized or compensated, keep your questionnaire short and easy to answer. Otherwise, your sample may be biased with only highly motivated respondents completing the questionnaire.

Decide on your question order based on your aims and resources. Use a logical flow if your respondents have limited time or if you cannot randomize questions. Randomizing questions helps you avoid bias, but it can take more complex statistical analysis to interpret your data.

**Step 4: Pretest your questionnaire**

When you have a complete list of questions, you’ll need to pretest it to make sure what you’re asking is always clear and unambiguous. Pretesting helps you catch any errors or points of confusion before performing your study.

Ask friends, classmates, or members of your target audience to complete your questionnaire using the same method you’ll use for your research. Find out if any questions were particularly difficult to answer or if the directions were unclear or inconsistent, and make changes as necessary.

If you have the resources, running a pilot study will help you test the validity and reliability of your questionnaire. A pilot study is a practice run of the full study, and it includes sampling, [data collection](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/data-collection/), and analysis. You can find out whether your procedures are unfeasible or susceptible to bias and make changes in time, but you can’t test a hypothesis with this type of study because it’s usually [statistically underpowered](https://www.scribbr.com/statistics/statistical-power/).

**Lecture: Interviews**

An interview is another kind of survey. It is similar to the questionnaire in that it asks oral questions rather than written ones. It is somehow less popular than the questionnaire because it is less practical and difficult to implement; but when it comes to quality data, the interview method procures richer and deeper understanding of the research phenomenon. Additionally, the interview is by its nature qualitative research technique, though it can be quantitative in the case of structured questionnaires.

**Characteristics of standardized interviews:**

* + Questions and options are red to the respondents
  + Close ended questions
  + A few open-ended questions
  + In quantitative interviews, interview schedule is used to guide the researcher as he poses questions and options.
  + Questions and order is important ( pose them in the same to many respondents).
  + It includes a large sample.
  + Writing notes is better than recording.
  + Phone can be used, but it has concerns.The respondents could be; Less cooperative, less engaged, and more likely to complain of length of interviews.
  + Respondents might present themselves in a socially desirable manner.
  + The online format is becoming more popular.
  + Types of questions, yes-no questions, MCQs, rating scales.

**Interview types**

[**Structured interviews**](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/structured-interview/) have predetermined questions in a set order. They are often closed-ended, featuring dichotomous (yes/no) or multiple-choice questions. While open-ended structured interviews exist, they are much less common. The types of questions asked make structured interviews a predominantly [quantitative](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/quantitative-research/) tool.

Asking set questions in a set order can help you see patterns among responses, and it allows you to easily compare responses between participants while keeping other factors constant. This can mitigate  [research biases](https://www.scribbr.com/faq-category/research-bias/) and lead to higher reliability and validity. However, structured interviews can be overly formal, as well as limited in scope and flexibility.

**Semi-structured interviews**

[**Semi-structured interviews**](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/semi-structured-interview/) are a mix of structured and unstructured interviews. While the interviewer has a general guide for what they want to ask, the questions do not have to follow a particular phrasing or order. Additionally, the questions are followed by prompts.

Semi-structured interviews are often open-ended, allowing for flexibility, but follow a predetermined thematic framework, giving a sense of order. For this reason, they are often considered “the best of both worlds.”

However, if the questions differ substantially between participants, it can be challenging to look for patterns, lessening the [generalizability](https://www.scribbr.com/research-bias/generalizability/) and [validity](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/types-of-validity/) of your results.

**What is an unstructured interview?**

An [**unstructured interview**](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/unstructured-interview/) is the most flexible type of interview. The questions and the order in which they are asked are not set. Instead, the interview can proceed more spontaneously, based on the participant’s previous answers.

Unstructured interviews are by definition open-ended. This flexibility can help you gather detailed information on your topic, while still allowing you to observe patterns between participants.

However, so much flexibility means that they can be very challenging to conduct properly. You must be very careful not to ask leading questions, as biased responses can lead to lower [reliability](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/types-of-reliability/) or even invalidate your research.

**Steps for conducting interviews**

* + Identify objectives
  + Select appropriate interview format
  + Organize the necessary materials
  + Understand the questions to be addressed
  + Analyse demographics of the intyerviewee
  + Select the interviewees
  + Explain the purpose of the interview

**Considerations for Research Interviews**

* + Interview bias
  + Sampling
  + Ethics (consent and confidentiality)
  + Respecting differences

**Analysis of interviews**

There are two types of interview procedure analysis. One is thematic analysis. This involves content analysis in which the researcher gets rid of bias and preconceived ideas. Also, the researcher identifies common themes. The second type is deductive analysis. Here, the researcher builds categories in advance. Then, he tries to make connections between the data and the preconceived or predetermined categories.

Different types, parts of a questionnaire. One, introduction. It provides context, explain purpose of the questionnaire. Two, demographics. It's about age, gender, education, and so on. Three, main questions. Four, additional questions. And five, conclusion and thinking.

**Lecture: Focus group**

**Focus Group: general characteristics**

*It is a group interview and it is semi-structured.*

*It is moderated by a neutral individual with the presence of the observer.*

*Collection of information on a limited number of topics.*

*It appeared in the United States.*

*It relies on group dynamics in accordance to Carl Rogers' psychology.*

*It explores different opinions.*

*Exchanges favor the emergence of a consensus.*

*The researcher is the explorer who can explore new facets of the problem*

*. It is a collective interview that favors criticism.*

*Explore new fields.*

*Identify and deeply understand the problem.*

*Identify expectations and solutions.*

**Limits of Focus Group**

shyness and reticence of participants in public.

The leader can hinder discussions.

Tension can create problems.

It is not easy to implement (the availability of these people at the same time).

**Definition**

Focus group is a group of people with certain characteristics gathered to generate data in a focused discussion. The interaction and group dynamics are essential. They can widen the individual's opinions when hearing experiences from different perspectives. Also, focus group can activate details. For example, when hearing someone telling a story. We can remember similar events.

Usefulness of focus group:It is important because it allows sharing and comparing, that is, people share their opinions and their perspectives, attitudes, perceptions, and they compare them to other people. Thus, focus group reveals how people talk about the issue, and finally focus group explores sensitive topics.

**Designing a focus group discussion:**

**-** Usually, we should have 5 to 10 participants. Fewer than 5 participants would make group dynamics meager, and more than 10 participants will make the discussion less focused.

- Number of focus groups per strata: Usually, we should have 3 to 5 focus groups.

- Avoid power differential: Avoid having people who are, for example, socially superior to others. This could influence the type of discussion and that we will get.

- Pay attention to homogeneity and heterogeneity: Consider whether you want to have a homogeneous group or a heterogeneous group when you are selecting your participants.

- Strangers versus acquaintances: Also pay attention to this dichotomy of whether you want to have strangers discussing a topic or only people who know each other who will be involved in the discussion.

- Expert versus novice: You will decide on whether you want to have experts discussing or only novice or you mix and merge the two.

- Specifying salient characteristics: Consider whether you want to select your data according to certain characteristics.

**Data collection**

You should have first discussion guide.

The number of questions should be between 8 to 12 questions, but several is better.

- You should allocate 5 minutes for each question.

- You should order and sequence the questions

. - You should first have open questions, which should be based on facts and should be quickly answered.

- Then you should have introductory questions that would foster interaction and focus the group.

- After that, you should have transition questions that will link introduction questions to the key topics

- And, finally, you should have the key questions, which are the core questions of the discussion.

**Discussion guide**

**-The moderator should have conversational language**

**- It should be clear and simple language.**

**-Open-ended questions should be used.**

- Why questions should be avoided, maybe it's better to use ‘How’ questions because *how* questions could make the participants at the defensive. .

- Equally, it should be avoided asking participants to give examples.

- Finally, the moderator should be aware of participants limits in terms of time, (how much time they can stay in the discussion), their attention span (how much they can be focused on the discussion), their language capacities, their cultural specificities , and their communication skills.

**Moderator skills**

Of course, a focus group moderator needs to practice, but we have certain characteristics that a he/she pay attention to.

A. Moderator should have strong interviewing techniques, that is, asking open questions and listening acutely or actively looking for opportunities to seek deeper understanding.

B. Being keen on observation skills: The moderator should pay attention to who is speaking more, who is reticent and who is drawing back.

C. Ability to control and guide the discussion. A good moderator should display the ability of guiding the discussion and controlling the group.

D. Ability to suppress our personal views: we tend to have our personal views about our topic that we could try to impose on the discussion; consequently, it advisable to suppress our own views and be open to new patterns that could emerge from discussions.

F. Show respect for individuals: we need to listen to everyone actively, use eye contact, and display concern for the physical comfort of the participants.