
A Workshop in Survey Design

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BACKGROUND

- Ph.D. in Public Policy from the University of Chicago
- M.A. in Arts Management/Public Affairs from American University
- B.F.A. in Musical Theater from the University of Windsor (Canada)

- Taught Survey Methodology and Survey Questionnaire Design at the University of Chicago
- Advisor Norman Bradburn – helped create the field of Survey Methodology
- Worked at NORC/Urban Institute

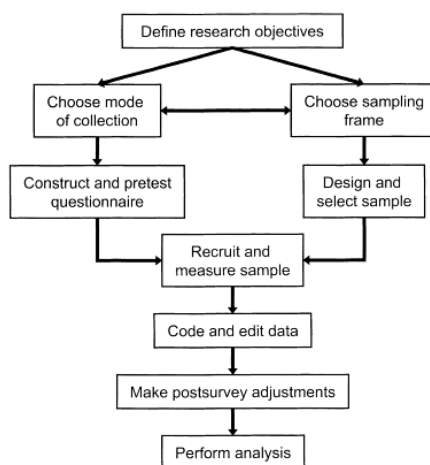
- Worked at the National Endowment for the Arts, Department of Cultural Affairs, Arts and Business Council (Chicago)

SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP

By the end of this workshop you should be able to ...

- Start becoming familiar with the survey “lingo”
- Describe the process of conducting a survey
- Understand the difference between a “sample” and a “population”
- Identify sources of bias in making estimates from a sample
- Identify methods of sampling
- Know the different forms surveys can take
- Identify research objectives
- Know the fundamentals of questionnaire design
- Practice cognitive pretesting

THE SURVEY PROCESS



SAMPLING

Definitions

- (Target) Population: the set of people to be studied (or for whom studying is feasible)
- Sample: a subset of the population for which measurements are sought
- Sampling frame: a listing of all units in the target population
- Some examples of populations and samples: Decennial Census (U.S. adult population); Cultural facility project (Arts Organizations in the U.S. that had a cultural facility project between 1994-2008 vs. 56 arts organizations in the U.S. that had a cultural facility project between 1994-2008); Audience surveys (all audiences at an arts organization vs. a subset of audience members)

SAMPLING

The goal of sampling is to select a group of people who when surveyed on average are identical to the population. Deviations from this can lead to bias.

Some sources of survey bias (Be on the lookout!)

- Construct validity: the extent to which the measure is related to the underlying construct
- Measurement error: a departure from the true value of the measurement as applied to a sample unit and the value provided
- Coverage error: bias resulting from the difference between the covered and noncovered population
- Nonresponse error: bias that results from not all sample members being successfully measured in a survey
- Sampling error, Adjustment error, Processing error ...

SAMPLING

Methods of Sampling

- Probability sampling: each unit in the sampling frame has some chance of being selected into the sample
- Non-probability sampling: units in the sampling frame are selected non-randomly

Convenience sampling: Units are selected as a matter of convenience

Purposive sampling: Units are selected for a particular purpose (e.g., expert sampling, snowball sampling, etc.)

MAJOR SURVEY TYPES (MODES OF DATA COLLECTION)

- Mail
Email/Web, Snail-mail
- Telephone
Computer assisted technology
- Face-to-face
Paper questionnaires, interviews
- Considerations in mode selection
Degree of interviewer involvement, degree of interaction with the respondent, degree of privacy, channels of communication, technology use, cost

DEFINING RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Research objective(s) should guide and center your survey research
- They should be clear and focused
- Example (be specific!):
 - Why do people attend the arts?
 - Why do 18-24 year olds attend the arts?
 - Why do 18-24 year olds attend theater performances?
 - Why do 18-24 year olds living in Chicagoland attend my theater?
- The more specific, the more useful your survey data will be and the easier it will be to design the questionnaire

EXAMPLE

Arts and Humanities Survey at Indiana University

- Purpose: to create an inventory of arts and humanities (A&H) assets on the campus of Indiana University in Bloomington (IUB) that will help guide IU's programming in A&H.
- Research Question: What are the A&H events, programs, institutions, and organizations at IUB?
- Population: all members of the IU community (i.e., students, faculty, staff)
- Target population: IU community members with contact info
- Sampling frame: list of email addresses of IU community members
- Sample: IU community members that receive the survey questionnaire
- Sampling method: Mix of purposive sampling with probability sampling
- Survey type: Web self-administered questionnaire

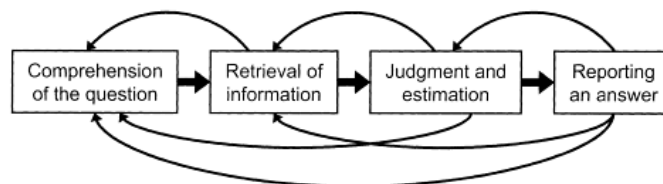
EXAMPLE

Take 3-5 minutes to identify the following for a survey you'd like to conduct for your organization

- Purpose:
- Research Question:
- Population:
- Target population:
- Sampling frame:
- Sample:
- Sampling method:
- Survey type:

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

A model of the response process



QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

Problems in answering survey questions

- Failure to encode the information sought
- Misinterpretation of the questions
- Forgetting and other memory problems
- Flawed judgment or estimation strategies
- Problems in formatting an answer
- More or less deliberate misreporting
- Failure to follow instructions

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

Response formats

- Open-ended questions that call for numerical answers
How many times have you attended a museum in the past 12 months?
- Closed questions with ordered response scales
How would you describe your level of participation in the arts?
a. Very involved b. Somewhat involved c. Not involved
- Closed questions with categorical response options
How you would characterize your participation in the arts?
a. I participate mostly for leisure
b. I participate mostly for my [studies/research]
c. I participate mostly for my job

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

Guidelines for writing good questions

- With closed questions, include all reasonable possibilities as explicit response options
- Make the questions as specific as possible
- Use words that virtually all respondents will understand

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

More guidelines for writing good questions

- Place demographic questions at the end of the questionnaire (e.g., income, age)
- Avoid double-barreled questions
- Carefully consider whether to include “no response” or “middle” options such as “Neither agree nor disagree”
- Avoid check-all-that apply items
- Ranked lists (if long) exceed the cognitive capacity of many respondents
- Used closed-ended questions for attitudes
- Ask general questions before specific ones

QUESTIONNAIRE PRETESTING

- Expert review (for content and design)
- Focus group discussions
- Cognitive testing
- Field pretests

QUESTIONNAIRE PRETESTING

Cognitive testing

- Concurrent think-alouds
- Retrospective think-alouds
- Confidence ratings
- Paraphrasing
- Definitions
- Probes

EXAMPLE
Arts and Humanities Survey at Indiana University

- Research Question: What are the A&H events, programs, institutions, and organizations at IUB?
- 2.2. What campus A&H programs, series, and events have you attended? (i.e. concerts, lecture series, exhibits, etc.)
 - 2.2.1. Which of these programs, series, and events do you find most enjoyable/memorable?
- 2.3. Are you involved in any campus groups or organizations related to A&H? (i.e. reading or study groups, outreach programs, special interest groups, etc.)
 - a. Yes
 - b. No [SKIP TO 2.4]
- 2.3.1. Please describe: [WRITE IN]

EXAMPLE

Take 3-5 minutes to write 2-3 questions designed to answer your research question.

Pair up with a neighbor and cognitively pretest your questions using the methods discussed below (5 minutes)

- Concurrent think-alouds
- Retrospective think-alouds
- Confidence ratings
- Paraphrasing
- Definitions
- Probes

What did you learn? How would you re-write your question?

Thank you.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

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