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### Questionnaire Definition

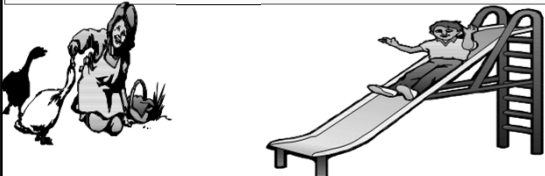
- A **questionnaire** is a formalized set of questions for obtaining information from respondents.

### Questionnaire Objectives

- It must translate the information needed into a set of specific questions that the respondents can and will answer.
- A questionnaire must uplift, motivate, and encourage the respondent to become involved in the interview, to cooperate, and to complete the interview.
- A questionnaire should minimize response error.


### Youth Research Achieves Questionnaire Objectives

Youth research (YR) of Brookfield, Connecticut, conducts an omnibus survey of children every quarter. Typically, YR interviews 150 boys and girls between ages 6 and 8, along with 150 boys and girls between ages 9 and 12. YR uses mall intercepts of mothers to recruit for its one-on-one interviews, which last eight minutes. The study obtains children's views on favorite snack foods, television shows, commercials, radio, magazines, buzzwords, and movies.



### Youth Research Achieves Questionnaire Objectives


YR intentionally keeps its questionnaire to eight minutes because of attention span limits of children. YR President Karen Forcade notes that some clients attempt to meet all their research objectives with one study, instead of surveying, fine-tuning objectives, and re-surveying. In doing so, these clients overlook attention limits of young respondents when developing questionnaires.



"The questionnaires keep going through the approval process and people keep adding questions, 'Well let's ask this question, let's add that question, and why don't we talk about this also,'" Forcade said. "And so you end up keeping children 25 minutes in a central location study and they get kind of itchy." The response error increases and the quality of data suffers.

### Youth Research Achieves Questionnaire Objectives

Forcade notes other lessons from interviewing children. When asking questions, interviewers should define the context to which the question refers. "It involves getting them to focus on things, putting them in a situation so that they can identify with it," Forcade said. "For example, when asking about their radio listening habits, we said, 'What about when you're in Mom's car, do you listen to the radio?' rather than, 'How often do you listen to the radio? More than once a day, once a day, more than once a week?' Those are kind of big questions for little children."



Questionnaires designed by Youth Research to obtain children's views on favorite snack foods, television shows, commercials, radio, magazines, buzzwords, and movies attempt to minimize response error.

### Questionnaire Design Process

- Specify the Information Needed
- ↓
- Specify the Type of Interviewing Method
- ↓
- Determine the Content of Individual Questions
- ↓
- Design the Question to Overcome the Respondent's Inability and Unwillingness to Answer
- ↓
- Decide the Question Structure
- ↓
- Determine the Question Wording
- ↓
- Arrange the Questions in Proper Order
- ↓
- Identify the Form and Layout
- ↓
- Reproduce the Questionnaire
- ↓
- Eliminate Bugs by Pre-testing

### Effect of Interviewing Method on Questionnaire Design

**Department Store Project**

**Mail Questionnaire**

- Please rank order the following department stores in order of your preference to shop at these stores. Begin by picking out the one store that you like most and assign it a number 1. Then find the second most preferred department store and assign it a number 2. Continue this procedure until you have ranked all the stores in order of preference. The least preferred store should be assigned a rank of 10. No two stores should receive the same rank number.

Store	Rank Order
1. Parisian	_____
2. Macy's	_____
.	_____
.	_____
10. Wal-Mart	_____

### Effect of Interviewing Method on Questionnaire Design

**Telephone Questionnaire**

- I will read to you the names of some department stores. Please rate them in terms of your preference to shop at these stores. Use a ten-point scale, where 1 denotes not so preferred and 10 denotes greatly preferred. Numbers between 1 and 10 reflect intermediate degrees of preference. Again, please remember that the higher the number, the greater the degree of preference. Now, please tell me your preference to shop at .....(READ ONE STORE AT A TIME)

Store	Not So Preferred	Greatly Preferred
1. Parisian	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10
2. Macy's	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10
.		
.		
10. Wal-Mart	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10

### Effect of Interviewing Method on Questionnaire Design

**Personal Questionnaire**

- (HAND DEPARTMENT STORE CARDS TO THE RESPONDENT). Here is a set of department store names, each written on a separate card. Please examine these cards carefully. (GIVE RESPONDENT TIME). Now, please examine these cards again and pull out that card which has the name of the store you like the most, i.e., your most preferred store for shopping. (RECORD THE STORE NAME AND KEEP THIS CARD WITH YOU). Now, please examine the remaining nine cards. Of these remaining nine stores, what is your most preferred store for shopping? (REPEAT THIS PROCEDURE SEQUENTIALLY UNTIL THE RESPONDENT HAS ONLY ONE CARD LEFT)

Store Rank	Name of the Store
1. <u>  1  </u>	_____
2. <u>  2  </u>	_____
.	_____
10. <u> 10 </u>	_____

### Effect of Interviewing Method on Questionnaire Design

**Electronic Questionnaire**

- This question for e-mail and Internet questionnaires will be very similar to that for the mail questionnaire.
- In all these methods, the questionnaire is self-administered by the respondent.

### Individual Question Content Is the Question Necessary?

- If there is no satisfactory use for the data resulting from a question, that question should be eliminated.

### Individual Question Content – Are Several Questions Needed Instead of One?

- Sometimes, several questions are needed to obtain the required information in an unambiguous manner. Consider the question:
 

"Do you think Coca-Cola is a tasty and refreshing soft drink?" (Incorrect)
- Such a question is called a **double-barreled question**, because two or more questions are combined into one. To obtain the required information, two distinct questions should be asked:
 

"Do you think Coca-Cola is a tasty soft drink?" and  
"Do you think Coca-Cola is a refreshing soft drink?" (Correct)

**Overcoming Inability To Answer – Is the Respondent Informed?**

- In situations where not all respondents are likely to be informed about the topic of interest, **filter questions** that measure familiarity and past experience should be asked before questions about the topics themselves.
- A “don't know” option appears to reduce uninformed responses without reducing the response rate.

**Overcoming Inability To Answer – Can the Respondent Remember?**

How many gallons of soft drinks did you consume during the last four weeks?  
(Incorrect)

How often do you consume soft drinks in a typical week?  
(Correct)

1.  Less than once a week
2.  1 to 3 times per week
3.  4 to 6 times per week
4.  7 or more times per week

**Overcoming Inability To Answer – Can the Respondent Articulate?**

- Respondents may be unable to articulate certain types of responses, e.g., describe the atmosphere of a department store.
- Respondents should be given aids, such as pictures, maps, and descriptions to help them articulate their responses.

**Overcoming Unwillingness To Answer – Effort Required of the Respondents**

- Most respondents are unwilling to devote a lot of effort to provide information.

**Overcoming Unwillingness To Answer**

Please list all the departments from which you purchased merchandise on your most recent shopping trip to a department store.  
(Incorrect)

In the list that follows, please check all the departments from which you purchased merchandise on your most recent shopping trip to a department store.

1. Women's dresses
2. Men's apparel
3. Children's apparel
4. Cosmetics
- .
- .
16. Jewelry
17. Other (please specify)  (Correct)

**Overcoming Unwillingness To Answer**

**Context**

- Respondents are unwilling to respond to questions which they consider to be inappropriate for the given context.
- The researcher should manipulate the context so that the request for information seems appropriate.

**Legitimate Purpose**

- Explaining why the data are needed can make the request for the information seem legitimate and increase the respondents' willingness to answer.

**Sensitive Information**

- Respondents are unwilling to disclose, at least accurately, sensitive information because this may cause embarrassment or threaten the respondent's prestige or self-image.

**Overcoming Unwillingness To Answer – Increasing the Willingness of Respondents**

- Place sensitive topics at the end of the questionnaire.
- Preface the question with a statement that the behavior of interest is common.
- Ask the question using the third-person technique (phrase the question as if it referred to other people).
- Hide the question in a group of other questions which respondents are willing to answer. The entire list of questions can then be asked quickly.
- Provide response categories rather than asking for specific figures.
- Use randomized techniques.

**Choosing Question Structure – Unstructured Questions**

- **Unstructured questions** are open-ended questions that respondents answer in their own words.

What is your occupation?  
 Who is your favorite actor?  
 What do you think about people who shop at high-end department stores?

**Choosing Question Structure – Structured Questions**

- **Structured questions** specify the set of response alternatives and the response format. A structured question may be multiple-choice, dichotomous, or a scale.

**Choosing Question Structure – Multiple-Choice Questions**

- In **multiple-choice questions**, the researcher provides a choice of answers and respondents are asked to select one or more of the alternatives given.

Do you intend to buy a new car within the next six months?

\_\_\_ Definitely will not buy  
 \_\_\_ Probably will not buy  
 \_\_\_ Undecided  
 \_\_\_ Probably will buy  
 \_\_\_ Definitely will buy  
 \_\_\_ Other (please specify)

**Choosing Question Structure – Dichotomous Questions**

- A **dichotomous question** has only two response alternatives: yes or no, agree or disagree, and so on.
- Often, the two alternatives of interest are supplemented by a neutral alternative, such as “no opinion,” “don't know,” “both,” or “none.”

Do you intend to buy a new car within the next six months?

\_\_\_ Yes  
 \_\_\_ No  
 \_\_\_ Don't know

**Choosing Question Structure – Scales**

- **Scales** were discussed in detail in Chapters 8 and 9:

Do you intend to buy a new car within the next six months?

Definitely will not buy	Probably will not buy	Undecided	Probably will buy	Definitely will buy
1	2	3	4	5

**Choosing Question Wording – Define the Issue**

- Define the issue in terms of who, what, when, where, why, and way (the six Ws). Who, what, when, and where are particularly important.

Which brand of shampoo do you use?  
(Incorrect)

Which brand or brands of shampoo have you personally used at home during the last month?  
In case of more than one brand, please list all the brands that apply. (Correct)

**Choosing Question Wording**

The W's	Defining the Question
<b>Who</b>	<b>The Respondent</b> It is not clear whether this question relates to the individual respondent or the respondent's total household.
<b>What</b>	<b>The Brand of Shampoo</b> It is unclear how the respondent is to answer this question if more than one brand is used.
<b>When</b>	<b>Unclear</b> The time frame is not specified in this question. The respondent could interpret it as meaning the shampoo used this morning, this week, or over the past year.
<b>Where</b>	At home, at the gym, on the road?

**Choosing Question Wording – Use Ordinary Words**

"Do you think the distribution of soft drinks is adequate?" (Incorrect)

"Do you think soft drinks are readily available when you want to buy them?" (Correct)

**Choosing Question Wording – Use Unambiguous Words**

In a typical month, how often do you shop in department stores?  
 Never  
 Occasionally  
 Sometimes  
 Often  
 Regularly (Incorrect)

In a typical month, how often do you shop in department stores?  
 Less than once  
 1 or 2 times  
 3 or 4 times  
 More than 4 times (Correct)

**Choosing Question Wording – Avoid Leading or Biasing Questions**

- A **leading question** is one that clues the respondent to what the answer should be, as in the following:

Do you think that patriotic Americans should buy imported automobiles when that would put American labor out of work?  
 Yes  
 No  
 Don't know (Incorrect)

Do you think that Americans should buy imported automobiles?  
 Yes  
 No  
 Don't know (Correct)

**Choosing Question Wording – Avoid Implicit Alternatives**

- An alternative that is not explicitly expressed in the options is an **implicit alternative**.

1. Do you like to fly when traveling short distances? (Incorrect)

2. Do you like to fly when traveling short distances, or would you rather drive? (Correct)

**Choosing Question Wording – Avoid Implicit Assumptions**

- Questions should not be worded so that the answer is dependent upon **implicit assumptions** about what will happen as a consequence.

1. Are you in favor of a balanced budget?  
(Incorrect)
2. Are you in favor of a balanced budget if it would result in an increase in the personal income tax?  
(Correct)

**Choosing Question Wording – Avoid Generalizations and Estimates**

"What is the annual per capita expenditure on groceries in your household?"  
(Incorrect)

"What is the monthly (or weekly) expenditure on groceries in your household?"

*and*

"How many members are there in your household?"  
(Correct)

**Choosing Question Wording Dual Statements: Positive and Negative**

- Questions that are in the form of statements should be worded both positively and negatively.

**Determining the Order of Questions**

Opening Questions

- The opening questions should be interesting, simple, and non-threatening.

Type of Information

- As a general guideline, basic information should be obtained first, followed by classification, and, finally, identification information.

Difficult Questions

- Difficult questions or questions which are sensitive, embarrassing, complex, or dull, should be placed late in the sequence.

**Determining the Order of Questions**

**Effect on Subsequent Questions**

- General questions should precede the specific questions (funnel approach).

Q1: "What considerations are important to you in selecting a department store?"

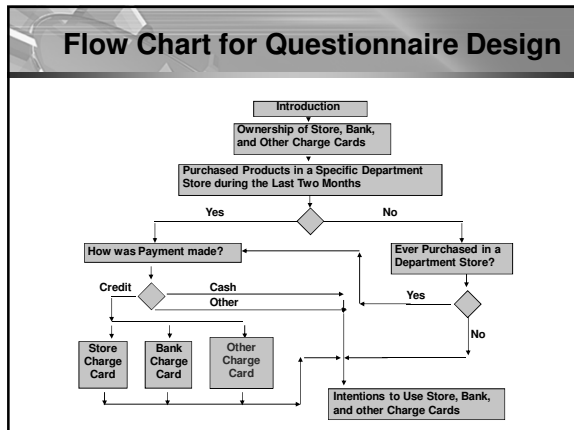
Q2: "In selecting a department store, how important is convenience of location?"  
(Correct)

**Determining the Order of Questions**

**Logical Order**

The following guidelines should be followed for branching questions:

- The question being branched (the one to which the respondent is being directed) should be placed as close as possible to the question causing the branching.
- The branching questions should be ordered so that the respondents cannot anticipate what additional information will be required.



### Form and Layout

- Divide a questionnaire into several parts.
- The questions in each part should be numbered, particularly when branching questions are used.
- The questionnaires should preferably be precoded.
- The questionnaires themselves should be numbered serially.

### Reproduction of the Questionnaire

- The questionnaire should be reproduced on good-quality paper and have a professional appearance.
- Questionnaires should take the form of a booklet rather than a number of sheets of paper clipped or stapled together.
- Each question should be reproduced on a single page (or double-page spread).
- Vertical response columns should be used for individual questions.
- Grids are useful when there are a number of related questions they use the same set of response categories.
- The tendency to crowd questions together to make the questionnaire look shorter should be avoided.
- Directions or instructions for individual questions should be placed as close to the questions as possible.

### Pretesting

**Pretesting** refers to the testing of the questionnaire on a small sample of respondents to identify and eliminate potential problems.

- A questionnaire should not be used in the field survey without adequate pretesting.
- All aspects of the questionnaire should be tested, including question content, wording, sequence, form and layout, question difficulty, and instructions.
- The respondents for the pretest and for the actual survey should be drawn from the same population.
- Pretests are best done by personal interviews, even if the actual survey is to be conducted by mail, telephone, or electronic means, because interviewers can observe respondents' reactions and attitudes.

### Pretesting

- After the necessary changes have been made, another pretest could be conducted by mail, telephone, or electronic means if those methods are to be used in the actual survey.
- A variety of interviewers should be used for pretests.
- The pretest sample size varies from 15 to 30 respondents for each wave.
- Protocol analysis and debriefing are two commonly used procedures in pretesting.
- Finally, the responses obtained from the pretest should be coded and analyzed.

### Observational Forms

- **Who:** Purchasers, browsers, males, females, parents with children, or children alone.
- **What:** Products/brands considered, products/brands purchased, size, price of package inspected, or influence of children or other family members.
- **When:** Day, hour, date of observation.
- **Where:** Inside the store, checkout counter, or type of department within the store.
- **Why:** Influence of price, brand name, package size, promotion, or family members on the purchase.
- **Way:** Personal observer disguised as sales clerk, undisguised personal observer, hidden camera, or obtrusive mechanical device.



### Questionnaire Design Checklist

**Step 1. Specify the Information Needed**

1. Ensure that the information obtained fully addresses all the components of the problem. Review components of the problem and the approach, particularly the research questions, hypotheses, and specification of information needed.
2. Prepare a set of dummy tables.
3. Have a clear idea of the target population.


**Step 2. Type of Interviewing Method**

1. Review the type of interviewing method determined based on considerations discussed in Chapter 6.

### Questionnaire Design Checklist

**Step 3. Individual Question Content**

1. Is the question necessary?
2. Are several questions needed instead of one to obtain the required information in an unambiguous manner?
3. Do not use double-barreled questions.



### Questionnaire Design Checklist

**Step 4. Overcoming Inability and Unwillingness to Answer**

1. Is the respondent informed?
2. If respondents are not likely to be informed, filter questions that measure familiarity, product use, and past experience should be asked before questions about the topics themselves.
3. Can the respondent remember?
4. Avoid errors of omission, telescoping, and creation.
5. Questions which do not provide the respondent with cues can underestimate the actual occurrence of an event.
6. Can the respondent articulate?

### Questionnaire Design Checklist

**Step 4. Overcoming Inability and Unwillingness to Answer**

7. Minimize the effort required of the respondents.
8. Is the context in which the questions are asked appropriate?
9. Make the request for information seem legitimate.
10. If the information is sensitive:
  - a. Place sensitive topics at the end of the questionnaire.
  - b. Preface the question with a statement that the behavior of interest is common.
  - c. Ask the question using the third-person technique.
  - d. Hide the question in a group of other questions which respondents are willing to answer.
  - e. Provide response categories rather than asking for specific figures.
  - f. Use randomized techniques, if appropriate.

### Questionnaire Design Checklist

**Step 5. Choosing Question Structure**

1. Open-ended questions are useful in exploratory research and as opening questions.
2. Use structured questions whenever possible.
3. In multiple-choice questions, the response alternatives should include the set of all possible choices and should be mutually exclusive.
4. In a dichotomous question, if a substantial proportion of the respondents can be expected to be neutral, include a neutral alternative.
5. Consider the use of the split ballot technique to reduce order bias in dichotomous and multiple-choice questions.
6. If the response alternatives are numerous, consider using more than one question to reduce the information processing demands on the respondents.

### Questionnaire Design Checklist

**Step 6. Choosing Question Wording**

1. Define the issue in terms of who, what, when, where, why, and way (the six Ws).
2. Use ordinary words. Words should match the vocabulary level of the respondents.
3. Avoid ambiguous words: usually, normally, frequently, often, regularly, occasionally, sometimes, etc.
4. Avoid leading questions that clue the respondent to what the answer should be.
5. Avoid implicit alternatives that are not explicitly expressed in the options.
6. Avoid implicit assumptions.
7. Respondent should not have to make generalizations or compute estimates.
8. Use positive and negative statements.

### Questionnaire Design Checklist

**Step 7. Determine the Order of Questions**

1. The opening questions should be interesting, simple, and non-threatening.
2. Qualifying questions should serve as the opening questions.
3. Basic information should be obtained first, followed by classification, and, finally, identification information.
4. Difficult, sensitive, or complex questions should be placed late in the sequence.
5. General questions should precede the specific questions.
6. Questions should be asked in a logical order.
7. Branching questions should be designed carefully to cover all possible contingencies.
8. The question being branched should be placed as close as possible to the question causing the branching, and (2) the branching questions should be ordered so that the respondents cannot anticipate what additional information will be required.

### Questionnaire Design Checklist

**Step 8. Form and Layout**

1. Divide a questionnaire into several parts.
2. Questions in each part should be numbered.
3. The questionnaire should be pre-coded.
4. The questionnaires themselves should be numbered serially.

### Questionnaire Design Checklist

**Step 9. Reproduction of the Questionnaire**

1. The questionnaire should have a professional appearance.
2. Booklet format should be used for long questionnaires.
3. Each question should be reproduced on a single page (or double-page spread).
4. Vertical response columns should be used.
5. Grids are useful when there are a number of related questions which use the same set of response categories.
6. The tendency to crowd questions to make the questionnaire look shorter should be avoided.
7. Directions or instructions for individual questions should be placed as close to the questions as possible.

### Questionnaire Design Checklist

**Step 10. Pretesting**

1. Pretesting should be done always.
2. All aspects of the questionnaire should be tested, including question content, wording, sequence, form and layout, question difficulty, and instructions.
3. The respondents in the pretest should be similar to those who will be included in the actual survey.
4. Begin the pretest by using personal interviews.
5. Pretest should also be conducted by mail or telephone if those methods are to be used in the actual survey.
6. A variety of interviewers should be used for pretests.
7. The pretest sample size is small, varying from 15 to 30 respondents for the initial testing.
8. Use protocol analysis and debriefing to identify problems.
9. After each significant revision of the questionnaire, another pretest should be conducted, using a different sample of respondents.
10. The responses obtained from the pretest should be coded and analyzed.