

## Questionnaire: An Overview

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### ABSTRACT

A questionnaire is an important instrument in research studies to help the researcher collect relevant data about the research topic. An important and effective technique for collecting primary data is the questionnaire. This technique is very important for collecting data from a representative sample unit, which is usually a large population. This paper aims to review the main design steps. The process of introducing the questionnaire begins with defining the information needed for a study, then continues with identifying question types, writing questions, and constructing questionnaires.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A questionnaire forms the core of a survey, serving as a set of questions designed to gather information from respondents. These questions are tailored to obtain the specific data needed by researchers for their study, and the answers provided by respondents help address these research needs. The questionnaire is a widely used and essential method for collecting data in research. According to this method, a researcher sends certain questions according to the topic of his research to some selected people in printed letters or typed or written in beautiful style on paper. This questionnaire is sent face-to-face directly to the respondent and the remote respondent by mail. The answers to all the questions are written on the paper and sent back to the researcher. The researcher of that question after analyzing the answers or data, he/she came to his/her conclusion.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ❖ Getting an idea about the questions.
- ❖ To gain knowledge about the types of questionnaires.
- ❖ To know about the steps of preparing the questionnaires.
- ❖ To acquire correct knowledge about the questionnaires.

### **III. PURPOSE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

- ❖ The main purpose of the questionnaire is to collect information from the respondents. questionnaires are to collect reliable data, provide important insights, and facilitate decision-making processes.
- ❖ It is an economical, expedient, and successful approach to collect a substantial volume of data, even in the absence of researchers physically collecting the responses.
- ❖ They play a vital role in minimizing errors in data collecting by ensuring that questions are clear and can be understood and answered accurately by respondents
- ❖ . Questionnaires are employed by corporations, institutions, and researchers to evaluate many aspects such as things, products, staff satisfaction, and consumer satisfaction.
- ❖ They can be utilized to create databases of publicly available data, enabling professionals and researchers to examine findings, introduce new inquiries, or discover problematic inquiries.

### **IV. CONCEPT AND MEANING OF QUESTIONNAIRE**

A questionnaire is a structured set of questions designed to gather specific information from respondents. Researchers use questionnaires to collect data and draw conclusions based on the responses. In social research, researchers identify variables related to their objectives and create questionnaires to gather information from participants. After collecting the responses, researchers analyze the data to conclude. The questionnaire method plays a crucial role in social research.

. According to Wallace & Wallace, the questionnaire is a method of data collection in which the respondent fills in some printed questions.

According to Goode and Hatt, a questionnaire is a tool that seeks answers through a structured set of questions that are answered by the respondents.

According to Bogardus, a questionnaire is a list of standardized questions sent to individuals to obtain statistically tabulated results.

So, it can be said that a questionnaire is a process that consists of a list of multiple questions aimed at gathering relevant information.

## **V. CHARECTERISTICS OF QUESTIONNIARE**

- I. Structured questions
- II. Open-ends are composed of closed ends or mixed questions
- III. Simple wording is written so that the respondent can understand the meaning of the question
- IV. Direct questions
- V. suitable questions to be sent by post or email
- VI. Specific objectives
- VII. Suitable questions to be sent by post or email
- VIII. Selection questions that require information
- IX. Question papers will always be in short form
- X. Questionnaires will always have a specific objective
- XI. Question papers should look beautiful and elegant
- XII. Questions should always be answered in a way that is understandable to him
- XIII. Question papers should always have multiple-choice questions

## **VI. ADVANTAGES OF QUESTIONNIARE**

- I. Information can be collected from many people at once
- II. It is reliable as the answerer personally writes the answer to the question
- III. The answerer can answer freely as the questioner has no direct influence while answering.
- IV. As this method allows to get answers from people far away i.e. wide geographical area can be covered by this method.
- V. In this manner their opinions are known from many persons scattered about.
- VI. In this method a respondent is not likely to be influenced because the questioner is not in front of the respondent when he is answering so he is not influenced by the questioner.
- VII. Personal information can be collected directly by questionnaires.
- VIII. It is less stressful for the respondents in terms of immediate response. Planned, prepared and implemented questionnaires have great potential as a means of data collection if used appropriately.

## **VII. LIMITATIONS**

- I. There is no guarantee that the Respondent will respond in time.
- II. If the questions are not understood correctly, the respondent's answer is less likely to be accurate
- III. Interview-like questions do not have scope to modify according to environmental conditions
- IV. Sending questions may be futile if the respondent does not know the study
- V. The answer to the questionnaire is uncertain. Because in many cases it is seen that sixty per cent of the answers are not available. The number of questionnaires sent by post and email, google form etc. is not more than 20%.
- VI. Responses, gestures, appeal feelings etc. of the respondents are not known
- VII. Reliability and accuracy are low because of the lack of primary sources in data collection and are used as sexual sources

### **VIII. TYPES OF QUESTIONNAIRES**

Based on different criteria, social scientists have divided questionnaires in different ways. Eminent social scientist **P.V Young** has divided questionnaires into two categories:

1) Structured Questionnaire 2) Unstructured Questionnaire

**B.N. Ghosh** in his book “Scientific Method and Social Research” mentions the following types of Questionnaires: 1) Open-ended questions; 2) Closed-ended questions 3) Pictorial Questions; 4) Dichotomous Questions 5) Leading Questions; 6) Mixed questions 7) Ambiguous Question

**Nachmias** and **Nachmias** divided the questionnaire into four parts based on structure

1) Open-ended Question 2) Closed-ended Question 3) Contingency Question 4) Matrix Question

#### **1) Structured Questionnaire:**

In structured questions, certain questions are predetermined. Its questions are arranged in certain tables. All aspects are carefully checked before sending such questions. These questions give more importance to relevance. According to P.V. Young., questions that consist of specific factual and pre-determined questions are called structured questions. For example: Question: Have you voted before? Answer: Yes/No.

#### **2) Unstructured Questionnaire**

Such questionnaires do not provide specific guidance. Respondents are allowed to answer as they wish. Generally, these questions are used to achieve objectives of a very general and somewhat natural nature about specific topics or areas. Flexibility is one of the characteristics of these questionnaires. A general

instruction is given to the interviewer about what to do. In a word, in this case, the respondent gets enough freedom. These questionnaires vary considerably. These questionnaires are not organized.

## **Types of Questions**

### **1. Open-ended question**

The questions that the respondent has the opportunity to answer with an open mind are allowed to say more without limiting the answer. It is called open-ended questions. Example: Question: What is your opinion about AIDS? Answer: .....

### **2. Closed-ended question:**

In this case, there is no specific space open for answering the questions. Here, the number of possible answers for each question is given below the question beforehand. The answer that the respondent thinks is correct and relevant. He just marked the answer. For example, the question: Where do you like to live? Answer: Village/City/Suburban.

### **3. Pictorial Question:**

Generally, all the questions which are presented through pictures are called pictorial questions. These question papers are used in certain cases. In the case of completely illiterate or newly literate children, provision is made to answer such questions through specific pictures.

### **4. Dichotomous Question**

When a question in the question list has only two answers out of which one is positive and the other is negative and one of the answers has to be chosen, then it is called a Dichotomous Question. For example, whether the respondent knows English.... Yes or no questions are two answer questions.

### **5. Leading Questions:**

Leading questions are those questions that prompt the respondent to provide a specific answer or lead the respondent to a specific goal to answer. For example, you want to buy a new car, right?

### **6. Mixed question:**

When questions are structured with fixed possible answers and open answers, they are called mixed questions. Questions such as: What is your profession? Answer: Agriculture/ Business/Job/Teaching/Labour/ Daily Labourer/ Others.

### **7. Ambiguous Question**

Ambiguous questions are those questions where the question is ambiguous and its meaning is different for different people. That is, it can be said very simply that this type of ambiguous question can have more than one meaning which is interpreted differently by different respondents. For example, the question can be: Do you like to live in a small house? Here the meaning of the words 'small house' and 'choice' is quite ambiguous.

### **8. Matrix Question:**

When the answers to multiple questions used in the study are of the same format, the answers are collected using a specific table to provide the answers. A series of questions formed to collect answers to multiple questions using this specific table is called a metric question. For example, the same question collects different ideas from different people. Question: Do you like to watch movies? Answer: I like very much / I like / I dislike / I dislike very much.

### **9. Contingency Question**

The question that is dependent on another question is called a Contingency question, that is, this type of question is determined by the previous answer. In this case, there are two parts of the question. Usually, if many questions are asked on a subject, such questions are used, such as: Do you like tea? Answer: If yes -Next Question: How many cups of tea do you take in a day?

### **10. Multiple-choice questions**

In the case of multiple-choice questions, the questionnaire has three to five possible answers, each of which counts as the next answer. The respondent has to choose any one of the answers.

## **IX. IMPORTANCE OF QUESTIONNAIRE**

In this method, the researcher does not have to go to the respondent to collect the data. In this method, the respondent can keep his identity confidential.

- a) Scientific method can be used in this method.

- b) Current new technology can be used in this way.
- c) This method uses less labour in data collection
- d) In this method the respondent has more freedom

## **X. SOME IMPORTANT POINTS IN PREPARING QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **a) Length:**

A specification regarding the length of the questionnaire should be included. After receiving the questionnaire, the respondent first looks at its length. If the length is too long, it may cause irritation or reluctance. The questioner should keep this aspect in mind. Generally, a questionnaire should be such that one respondent can complete it within 30 to 40 minutes.

### **b) Printing:**

It is better if the questions in the question paper are printed in nice letters so that it adds to the cleanliness. If not read properly, the respondent can skip the question without answering it.

### **c) The language:**

The language of the question should be simple. Many may not answer the question because of the complexity of language comprehension. The questioner must remember that not all of his respondents are equally educated. Moreover, his need or purpose and opinion is not a test of the extent of the respondent's knowledge.

### **d) Information about respondents:**

Each questionnaire first asks some questions related to the respondents such as name, age, address etc. of the respondents.

### **e) General Form:**

Question papers can be structured or unstructured. Structured questions ask predetermined questions about the research topic. Questions can be structured (yes or no questions) or open (free response). Unstructured questions do not have predetermined questions.

### **f) Item:**

The questions in the paper should be such that information is sought regarding a topic in a question. If a question includes more than one topic, the answering of the respondents takes the form of complexity, and the respondents get confused.

### **g) Sequence of Item**

The questionnaire is a collection of questions related to multiple research topics. The sequence of these questions needs to be well-planned in formulating the questionnaire. The question paper will be clear and clean. The sequential relationship between one question and the next should be properly prepared in advance.

### **h) Formulation of Item**

The researcher should formulate the question in such a way. So that there is no ambiguity in the respondents' understanding of the question. Questions will be topic-specific and specific.

### **i) Word Selection**

The wording of questions is very important in constructing the question paper. Because the use of clear and simple words has a special effect on getting answers. The wording of questions should be clear and concise. If you don't use multiple words, you need to convey the main point in a few words. Words are especially important. Words should be used that can be understood by all educated and uneducated people.

**j) Relevance:** The questioner should select questions according to his research topic. Avoid irrelevant questions as much as possible. If not, it will take more time. Also, his /her thoughts may be scattered, but the main purpose will be disturbed.

### **k) Shortness of question**

The questions should be as short as possible so that the respondent can read and understand them quickly.

**l) Use of Scales:** When a closed-ended question cannot be satisfied with a yes or no answer, the interviewer uses a three-four- or five-point scale.

## **XI. CONCLUSION**

A questionnaire is a crucial part of a survey that can directly impact the results. Several key points should be considered in this important process. This paper aims to explore how to design an effective questionnaire for a study. The primary step to maximize the quality of a questionnaire is to shape it



based on the objectives of the research process. The key focus of this step is the design process, types, and steps that can significantly influence the overall results of your study.

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