

SURVEY BASICS

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Today's Agenda

- When to use surveys
- Advantages of surveys
- The relationship between focus groups and surveys
- Research questions inform your project
- Types of survey
- Other important concepts in social science research

When To Do a Survey

- A survey is not appropriate when:
 - Asking in-depth questions
 - We don't know much about the topic
 - The population studied is a small group of people
- A survey is a good idea:
 - If the topic is sensitive
 - If you need to collect a lot of data at once
 - If time is a factor (doing surveys correctly, however, requires more time and effort than you may think)

(Schuh and Upcraft, 2001 as cited in Newhart, 2011)

Advantages and Disadvantages of Surveys

- Advantages:
 - Can portray the distribution of certain characteristics of a group
 - May find or predict connections between variables (cssl.osu.edu)
 - Less intrusive than an interview or focus group
 - Can achieve unbiased representation of population with the right sampling technique
- Disadvantages
 - Unable to probe deeply into questions

Focus Groups and Surveys

- Focus groups often inform surveys; we learn about the topic at hand in order to compose good survey questions later on.
- Conversely, we can also use focus groups after the administration of surveys to better understand our results.

Setting Research Questions

- Your entire project is aimed at addressing the research question.
- Once you know exactly what you want to know, you can:
 - Investigate what's already in the literature on that topic.
 - Explore using a focus group.
 - Explore using a survey.
 - Contribute to knowledge about the subject.

Types of Surveys

- Face-to-face, mail, telephone, online, etc.
- Closed (choose one) vs. open-ended (fill-in)
- Checklists (check all that apply or rank order)
- Likert-style questions

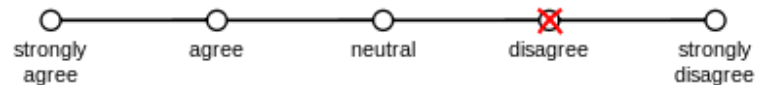
What browser do you use? *

- Internet Explorer
- Firefox
- Google Chrome
- Safari
- Netscape
- AOL Explorer
- Opera
- Other

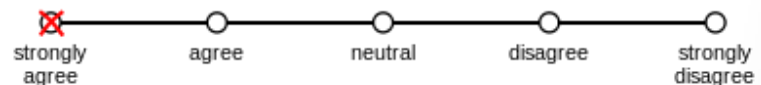
If other, please specify

Adapted from <http://www.123contactform.com/online-survey-tool/>

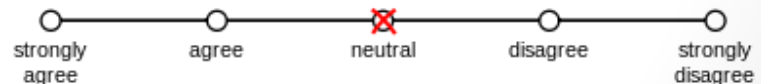
3. Wikipedia pages generally have good images.



4. Wikipedia allows users to upload pictures easily.



5. Wikipedia has a pleasing color scheme.



Adapted from

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Example_Likert_Scale.svg

Important concepts

- Sampling
 - Stratified vs. other kinds
 - Population
 - Randomization
- Response rates
 - Not as important as representation
 - Tips to improve response rate

Important Concepts

- Validity is a measure of methodological soundness:
 - Internal: Reducing error in the responses given to the extent possible
 - Cognitive interviewing
 - External: how much our results apply to the “real world”
 - Construct: theoretical framework of research is well-supported and clear (Graziano & Raulin, 2000).
- Reliability: instrument gathers accurate results each time (inter-rater, test-retest)

Advanced Survey Writing

- Cognitive load
- Items
- Scales

Q4. How do you rate the following?



Please rate this employee's communication skills:

- Extraordinary
- Strong
- Average
- Weak
- In Need of Serious Help

Adapted from <http://www.snapsurveys.com/blog/using-image-maps-in-your-online-surveys/>

Adapted from <http://survey.cvent.com/blog/online-survey-experts-2/a-better-approach-to-performance-reviews>

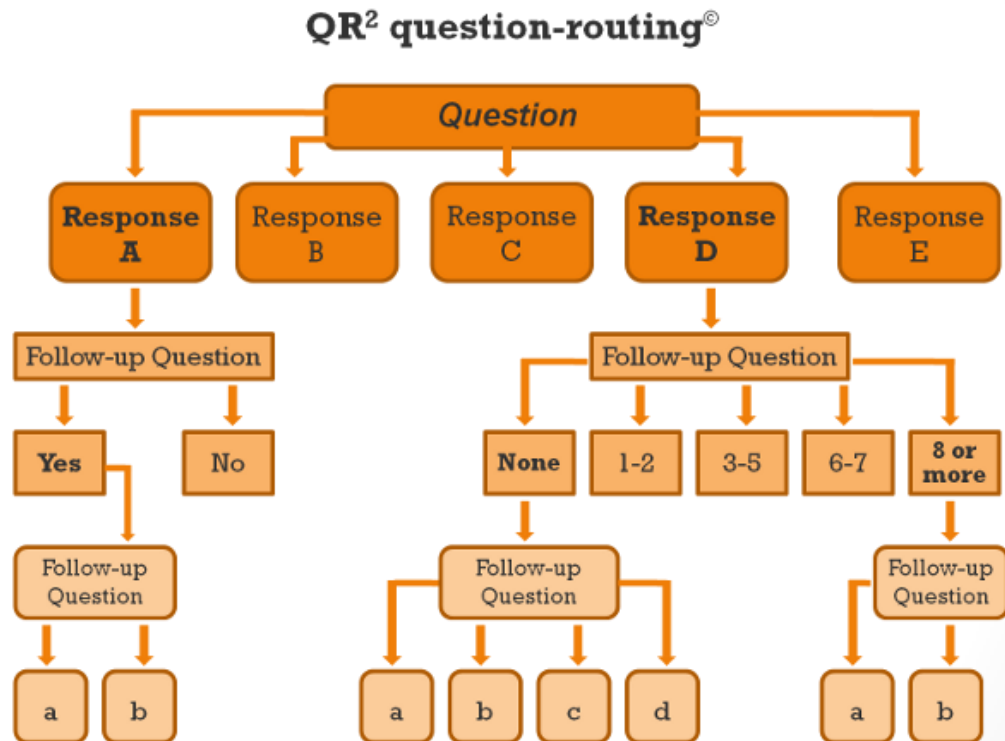
Advanced Survey Writing (cont'd)

- Operationalizing Constructs

- Formatting

- Intentionality

- Routing



Adapted from <http://www.preventionsurveysystems.com/personal-touch>

Thank you!

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