

Questionnaires Notes

Please remember these are only my notes and are not a substitute for your own reading.
The type of things to use questionnaires for include

What do people know?

What do people think?

What are people's attitudes?

What are people's tastes?

What are people's prejudices?

What are people's beliefs?

What are people's values?

Questionnaires

- Questionnaires are the most used type of survey
- They collect and analyse social, economic, psychological, technical and cultural data
- It asks people for information
- Assumed that the information obtained from a sample is valid

Kinds of survey

- Descriptive surveys and analytic surveys
- Descriptive – describe the population being studied and want to find out information such as age, gender, marital status, occupation, race, ethnicity, income and religion
- This information is related to opinions, beliefs and values
- Analytical survey wants to find out why people behave as they do
- The analytical surveys can be used to test hypothesis

They attempt to determine whether there are causal relations between various factors e.g. between television commercials and people buying a specific product

Hypothesis

- Hence you have to decide what are the important questions to ask and what kind of focus you want for the questionnaire.
- The hypothesis is based on previous reading, research and observation and then test that hypothesis

Methods of data collection

- self-administered questionnaires, face-to-face or even online through something like survey monkey (as long as you can ensure anonymity)
- There are a list of questions that people are asked to answer and are not structured so that subjects can be explored
- They are shorter than in-depth interviews, more structured and glean quantitative information
- You need to have a cover letter or note explaining why the respondent should fill it in as well as the consent form (see the end of these notes).

Advantages – both methods

Administering questionnaires face-to-face

- a. Can explain questions
- b. Spend time with respondents
- c. Know who is answering
- d. Higher response rate

Self-administered questionnaires

- e. Inexpensive
- f. No interviewer bias
- g. Ask complex, detailed questions

Disadvantages of both methods

Face-to-face questionnaires

- a. Intrusive
- b. Time consuming, expensive
- c. Hard to find people in sample
- d. People may be reluctant to answer questions

Self-administered questionnaires

- e. Misinterpret questions
- f. Low response rate
- g. Don't know who filled in the questionnaire
- h. Sampling errors

General disadvantages

1. People lie
2. Make mistakes
3. Refuse to participate
4. Small percentages answer the questions – how representative?
5. Difficult to write useful questions

Open-ended and closed ended survey questions

1. Open ended asks for an answer the respondent constructs themselves
2. Closed asks respondents to select from a list of answers

Multiple choice provides answers to choose from which can be either choosing just one response or that they rate all responses e.g. In preference .e.g. Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree – the Likert scale)

Writing survey questions

1. Clear unambiguous questions – avoid using jargon.
2. Do not use words such as popular culture or identity – instead think about what it is you want to know.
3. Keep the questions fairly short.
4. Use simple, easily understood language
5. Ask for one piece of information per questions
6. Avoid bias – avoid leading or loaded questions.
7. Don't ask questions they cannot answer
8. Logically group your questions as this will make it easier to follow.

9. If you are using scales – make it clear which is the positive and which is the negative response.

Pilots

1. Need to test the questions before you use them
2. Are the questions easily understood
3. Do they enable you to obtain the information you want
4. Are there questions you did not ask that should be asked
5. Are there questions you should not ask
6. Does the pilot suggest a different method for research

Samples

1. Population – all members of a group
2. A reliable sample must be representative and adequate in size – for Media and Culture we have agreed that to use percentages you need 25 responses. If you have less, then please don't use percentages (less does not invalidate your findings).
3. You could go for a quota sample e.g. students at UW, a set number of males and females, people in a particular area, people who use YouTube etc.

Random samples

1. Each member of the population being studied has an equal chance of being selected.
2. Obtain random sample by assigning sequential numbers to everyone in the population e.g. every 10th person is asked to complete the questionnaire

Stratified random samples

1. The population is subdivided into categories that are relevant - called strata
2. Then the random sample
3. E.g. choose all people who live in Worcester for past 5 consecutive years, and then choose the 10th person of that sample.

Clustered samples

Population is divided into clusters e.g. people living in Hereford, Worcester, London etc. or male and female, X-box players, people who watch a certain soap etc. and then sample from within each group.

Quota sampling

The researcher decides how many of each category of person should be included, and then goes out looking for the right number of people in each category until the quota is filled.

Multi-stage sampling

Drawing one sample from another e.g. national sample of e.g. parliamentary constituencies, polling districts, addresses, and individuals

Purposive sampling

Chooses a particular group or place to study because it is the type wanted e.g. I did a study on Facebook and language. So I had to find people who used Facebook.

Snowball

Asking respondents to suggest other respondents (e.g. asking is there anyone else you know who might complete a questionnaire)?

Stages in a questionnaire

1. Once the ethics forms have been completed
2. Choose the topic to be studied – this has to relate to Popular Cultures at some level
3. Reviewing the literature – for this assignment, you will need to have some ideas about the topic in relation to theory (for the interview this happens afterwards, but for the questionnaire you can do this at any stage).
4. Forming of hunches and hypotheses e.g. this could be something along the lines of people may have certain tastes of music depending on their age category?
5. Identifying the population to be surveyed
6. Drafting the questionnaire or interview schedule
7. Conducting a pilot survey
8. Finalising the questionnaire
9. Selecting a sample of the population
10. Collecting the data
11. Processing the data and analysing the results
12. Writing the assignment

Anonymity and confidentiality

1. If you are going to do your own questionnaire then you need to ensure the above two things.
2. Some topics - you might only get truthful answers if you ensure that names (or URLs) are not linked to respondents.

Processing the data and analysing the results

1. Having completed the questionnaires or interview schedules the data has to be processed and put into categories.
2. General patterns of responses have to be found and expressed in statistical terms, and qualitative terms.

Accuracy of surveys

1. Sample size – the larger the sample the more confidence that the findings will be accurate – up to a point.
2. For the purpose of this assignment, you will probably either use the number of people or percentages if you have 25 or more responses.

Problems with surveys

1. Have to define the topic very carefully
2. People may tell you what they think you want to hear
3. People may not tell the truth

Things to remember when constructing a survey

1. The order of the questions – interesting first, or social characteristics?
2. Logic of question order
3. How many to ask
4. The respondent's ability to answer – necessary information
5. Content of the questions – biased in some way?
6. Language used in the questions – worded clearly (avoid jargon).
7. Forms of the questions – which kinds to ask – open or closed or a mixture.
8. Purpose of the questions – measure intensity or not, how strongly people feel about issues (a scale of some kind is useful for this).
9. Clarity of questions – single answer. Don't ask two things in the same question as the respondents will not know which one to answer and it will lead to confusion.

Statement which must be included

You must complete the relevant ethics forms – including seeking ethical approval and also the consent form.

Online questionnaires

1. If you are doing an online questionnaire you still need to do a pilot with someone to ensure that your questions are clear, understandable and follow a logical order
2. The information given in these notes is relevant for your online questionnaire – make sure you include consent in the online version (see the ethics on my website for information on how to do this).

You can find these forms on my website including the consent form which needs to have 2 copies so that you can keep one and the respondents keep one.

<http://www.mediaandculturalstudies.co.uk/ethics/>

Writing the Essay

1. The questionnaire is different from the other methods as you already know the topic you will be focusing on, so you are already able to highlight how that particular popular culture relates to identity in the academic literature.
2. What you will need to do in the essay is to draw upon some of your findings from the questionnaire and to put forward possible suggestions for these.
3. Make sure your participants can still remain anonymous.
4. You can also investigate your findings in slightly more detail – e.g. are there different responses between different age groups or between males/females/non-binary genders?