

Developing a Questionnaire for Field Work

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Importance of a Good Questionnaire

- Conclusions in a study are only as good as the data that is collected.
- Data that is collected is only as good as the questionnaire that collects the data.
- A poorly designed questionnaire leads to bad data, which leads to bad conclusions.
- **Developing a good questionnaire is a key part of conducting a high quality study.**
- **Developing a good questionnaire takes a lot of time, thought, and preparation.**

Developing a Questionnaire

- A questionnaire is developed from the Research Questions
- For each Research Question, ask:
 - Who can give me the most accurate information about the question?
 - How can I most directly get information about the question?
 - *Avoid asking peoples' **beliefs** about the question*
- Giving the questionnaire to the wrong group of people leads to bad conclusions

Who Should Fill These Questionnaires?

1. How many university students engage in examination malpractice?
2. What are the differences between pastors with and without theological training in their biblical worldview?
3. How many churches have a trained children's ministry leader?
4. What evangelism strategies are used by the largest 10 denominations in Plateau State?
5. What child discipline practices are used by parents in ECWA church?
6. At high quality schools, what do administrators do to foster student success?

Questionnaires

- **Self-Report:** Participants are asked to report on their own demographic characteristics (biodata), attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, feelings, and behavior.
 - Self-report can be either a questionnaire or interview
 - Participants generally **cannot** report on the attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and feelings of **others**.

Face-to-Face Interview

- **Advantages:**
 - Gathers rich, in-depth information
 - Can ask participants to expand on unclear responses
 - Can be used with any participant (e.g., cannot read)
- **Disadvantages:**
 - Takes time
 - Data is more difficult to analyze
 - People may not be as honest on sensitive topics

Questionnaire

- **Advantages:**
 - Easy to collect data and analyse (close-ended items)
 - Can be administered to larger numbers of people
 - Can be anonymously so people may be more honest
- **Disadvantages:**
 - The data is typically not as in-depth as an interview
 - Can only be used with more educated individuals
 - Responses can be biased if items are poorly developed

Types of Items for Interviews and Questionnaires

- **Open-ended:** Participant gives their own response
- **Advantages:**
 - More in-depth information
 - Responses are less likely to be biased by a poorly written item
- **Disadvantages:**
 - Participants need to have good literacy skills
 - Data is more difficult to analyze
 - Participants' responses may not be understandable (Questionnaires)
 - Participants often skip these items on questionnaires

Types of Items for Interviews and Questionnaires

- **Close-ended:** Participants select their response from categories given by the researcher
- **Advantages:**
 - Easy to analyze data
 - Response is clear to the researcher
- **Disadvantages:**
 - Data may be biased by the researcher
 - Items take much more time and thought to develop

Open-Ended Sample Item

- *What are you most impressed with by this church?*
 - *Answer: By the words of the servant of God.*
 - In an interview, the researcher could follow-up with, “What do you mean?”
 - With a questionnaire, the researcher will have to make a guess or discard the response.

Close-Ended Item

- *What are you most impressed with by this church?*
(Please circle up to two.)
 - a) *Preaching*
 - b) *Healings, Signs and Wonders*
 - c) *Praise and Worship*
 - d) *Love and Care*
 - e) *Hope of Prosperity*
 - f) *Participatory Leadership Style*
 - g) *Promotion of Women in Ministry*
 - h) *The Youth Group*
 - i) *Other, Specify* _____

Parts of an Instrument

1. General Instructions
2. Personal Information
3. Body of the Questionnaire

Parts of an Instrument

- **Part 1: General Instructions**
 - Introduction of researcher
 - Name, Institution
 - Purpose of the instrument
 - Be honest, but do not bias their responses
 - Confidentiality Statement
 - Voluntary participation: Assure participants that they are free to participate or not
 - How to submit the questionnaire

General Instructions Example

Nigeria Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Centre (NPCRC) is collecting information about Pentecostal churchgoers across Nigeria to develop an accurate understanding of individuals who attend Pentecostal churches and ministries. This survey asks about your personal involvement in church activities. Please answer the questions to the best of your ability. Your participation is voluntary. If there are items you do not know the answer to or you do not want to answer, please skip them. The NPCRC Researchers will be the only people who see your responses. Your responses will be kept confidential. When you have finished this questionnaire, please return it to one of the ushers in the church.

Parts of an Instrument

- **Part 2: Personal Information**
 - Include items that will:
 - Help readers determine whether your sample is representative of the target population
 - Help you answer research questions (if necessary)
- Give instructions on how to complete the personal information section

Personal Information Example

BACKGROUND

Name of Church Attending Today _____

Please circle the appropriate response

1. **Age:** How old are you?

a) Under 18	b) 18-22	c) 23-27	d) 28-32	e) 33-37	f) 38-42
g) 43-47	j) 48-52	k) 53-57	l) 58-62	m) 63 or above	
2. **Sex:** What is your gender? a) Male b) Female
3. **Marital Status:** What is your marital status?

a) Married	b) Single	c) Divorced/Separated	d) Widowed
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4. **Educational background:** What is the last level of schooling that you *completed*?

a) None	b) Primary	c) Secondary	d) Tertiary	e) Postgraduate
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Potential Personal Information Items

- Always include gender and age
- Additional possible items (not exhaustive):
 - Marital status
 - Education completed
 - Theological training completed
 - Years involved in the ministry
 - Type of ministry involved in
 - Denomination

Parts of an Instrument

- **Part 3: Body**
 - Develop items that directly answer the research questions
 - Only include items that directly answer the research questions
 - Consider whether the item is better as an open-ended or close-ended item
 - If there are a limited number of options, use a close-ended item (e.g., gender)
 - If you know the specific answers you want participants to choose from, use a close-ended item

Translating Items from Research Questions to Interview Questions

- Research Questions are abstract and general:
 - RQ: How many churches have a trained children's ministry leader?
 - RQ: What evangelism strategies are used by the largest 10 denominations in Plateau State?
- Interview Questions are asked directly to participants (using second person):
 - IQ: Does your church have a trained ministry leader?
 - IQ: What evangelism strategies does your denomination use?

Translating Items from Research Questions to Interview Questions

- RQ: What evangelism strategies are used by the largest 10 denominations in Plateau State?
 - IQ: Which evangelism strategies does your denomination use?
 - Street preaching
 - Distributing tracts
 - Train our members to witness in their workplaces
- RQ: At high quality schools, what do administrators do to foster student success?
 - IQ: How do you foster student success in your school?

Translating Items from Research Questions to Interview Questions

- RQ: How many university students engage in examination malpractice?
 - IQ: Which types of behaviors have you engaged in during the past two years?
 - Looked at a colleague's answer script
 - Brought a piece of paper with answers into the examination hall
 - Asked someone else to write an exam for me

Translating Items from Research Questions to Interview Questions

- RQ: What child discipline practices are used by parents in ECWA church?
 - IQ: How do you discipline your child?
- RQ: What are the differences between pastors with and without theological training in their biblical worldview?
 - Items are needed to measure biblical worldview
 - First, define what is meant by "biblical worldview"
 - *The Bible is the final authority in every situation*
 - *The standards in the Bible help one to have a good life.*

Avoid Items that Assess *Belief* about the Research Question

1. RQ: How many university students engage in examination malpractice?
 - Bad IQ: How many university students engage in exam malpractice? A) A lot, B) Some, C) Few, D) None
2. RQ: What are the differences between pastors with and without theological training in their biblical worldview?
 - Bad IQ: What are differences between pastors with and without theological training?
3. RQ: How many churches have a trained children's ministry leader?
 - Bad IQ: How many churches have a trained children's ministry leader? A) All, B) Most, C) About Half, D) Less than half, E) None

Avoid Items that Assess *Belief* about the Research Question

4. RQ: What evangelism strategies are used by the largest 10 denominations in Plateau State?
 - Bad IQ: What evangelism strategies are used by the biggest denominations in Plateau State?
5. RQ: What child discipline practices are used by parents in ECWA church?
 - Bad IQ: What child discipline practices are used by parents in ECWA church?
6. RQ: At high quality schools, what do administrators do to foster student success?
 - Bad IQ: What do good administrators do to foster student success?

Identify the Problem with these Items

1. *Where are you from?*
2. *I teach all of my required lectures. A) Yes; B) No*
3. *What are the problems associated with a seminary education?*
4. *What is your theological explanation for the proliferation of glossolalia?*
5. *I enjoy school because the teachers are nice. A) Agree; B) Disagree*
6. *What welfare does your church offer? (Questionnaire to church attendees)*

Developing Good Items

1. The item must be clear and specific so it is not misunderstood
2. Consider whether the participant can and/or will answer the question honestly.
3. Ensure the item is not biased or leading toward a specific response.
4. Ensure that the question is worded in a way that is understandable to the participants.
5. Avoid double-barreled questions that have multiple points in the same item.
6. Choose the best participants to provide the most accurate information

Identify the Problem with these Items

1. *What church did you attend before the current church?*
A. Catholic B. ECWA C. None
2. *What is your age?*
A. Below 20 B. 20-25 C. 25-30 D. 30 or above
3. *What is your level of education?*
A. High B. Medium C. Low
4. *What is your parents' level of education?*
A. Illiterate B. Literate

Close-Ended Items

1. All possible responses are given
– “Other” option is sometimes useful
2. There should be one and only one place for participants to tick (with only a few exceptions)
3. Response categories should be specific so all participants will clearly understand which category they fall into
4. Use un-biased language

Which item is better?

- A. *What are the problems associated with the prosperity gospel in Pentecostal churches?*
- B. *What do you think about the prosperity gospel preached in Pentecostal churches?*

Which item is better?

- *How many times did you revise your thesis?*
 - *Very many*
 - *Many*
 - *Few*
 - *Very few*
- *How many times did you revise your thesis?*

a) 0	f) 7-8
b) 1-2	g) 9-10
c) 3-4	h) 11-12
d) 5-6	i) 13-14
e) 7-8	j) 15+

Developing a Questionnaire

	SA	A	D	SD
1. I like Pentecostals.		X		
2. Pentecostals are nice people.		X	X	
3. Pentecostals are friendly.		X		
4. Pentecostals are nice to research		X		

	SA	A	D	SD
1. I like Pentecostals.				
2. Pentecostals are nice people.				
3. Pentecostals are friendly.				
4. Pentecostals are nice to research				

Developing a Questionnaire

- Give clear directions for each new set of items:
 - Describe the type of items to be expected
 - How the participant is to respond
- Ensure the layout of the questionnaire is appealing
- Provide exact space for participants to indicate their responses
- Explain response categories (i.e., SA = Strongly Agree) *before* the items.

Literacy Questionnaire

This questionnaire is about your beliefs of literacy development. Please respond according to your PERSONAL beliefs about how young children first learn to read. Think of children in nursery school and early primary grades, from Nursery 1 to Primary 3. Consider how they learn to read and answer the following questions based on your beliefs.

Part 1: BioData

Please Circle the most appropriate response.

Part 2: Teaching Reading

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements using this scale:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree	SD
							SA
1. Kids need to develop good speaking and listening skills before they can learn how to read.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
2. Before entering school, a child can learn reading skills like letters and awareness of books.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
3. Parents can help a young child learn to read by talking to them and asking questions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
4. Drilling pupils on English grammar is important for teaching children how to read.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
5. Teachers should read texts to their pupils that are not in the textbook or curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
6. Children can only learn the skills needed to read when they begin formal school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
7. Teachers should give pupils class time to read books that are not part of the curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
8. Drilling pupils on identifying words is the main way to teach children to read.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
9. Listening to an adult tell a story can help a child learn how to understand books.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
10. Children can only learn to read when they are mature enough.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
11. Children learn to read best by doing drills on identifying letters and words.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
12. Parents can help their young children learn to read before entering school by reading out loud to them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	

Guidelines in Developing an Instrument

- Write a draft
 - Read the draft from the perspective of the participant.
 - Give the draft to somebody who is unfamiliar with your study to provide feedback
- Pilot the draft
 - Distribute to a small group of people similar to your target population to complete
- Revise the draft, Revise the draft, Revise the draft.

Interview Procedures

- There are two options for recording oral interviews:
 - Audio record
 - Get permission first
 - Immediately afterwards, transcribe the interviews (write out word-for-word)
 - Take notes as close as possible to the real words that the participant is saying
 - Use abbreviations when possible to save time
 - **IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS**, re-write the notes so they can be easily understood in the future

Key Resources

- *The Research Methods Knowledge Base*
 - <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/>
- *Conducting Educational Research*
 - <http://www.korbedpsych.com/R00Steps.html>
- *VassarStats: Website for statistical computation*
 - <http://vassarstats.net/>