

How to do the Questionnaire Assignment

Soc 357
Fall 2006

Pedagogical Goals

- Operationalize a variable with multiple indicators
- Evaluate construct validity (relations among different measures)
- Practice interacting with interview subjects
- Practice observing reactions to the questionnaire (**unstructured** observation)

Questionnaire Assignment: Things to ask about

- Attitudes, Values, Behaviors: concepts that are multi-dimensional
 - Eg. Trust in government, feelings about a controversial issue, health habits or behaviors
- Relevant demographic information

Set-up of questionnaire (1)

- Pick a **Dependent Variable**: a relatively complex concept that you will ask multiple close-ended questions about
- You will also ask 1-2 open-ended question about the general phenomenon you are interested in

Set-up of questionnaire (2)

- Pick 2-5 **Independent Variables**: these are variables that you can ask relatively simple close-ended questions about
 - One independent variable that you really think has an effect on the dependent variable
 - Others which may impact the dependent variable, or the relationship among the two

Set-up of questionnaire (3)

- Pick optional additional variables.
 - If these are complex, construct an index following the instructions for your dependent variable.

Write your Questionnaire

- Refine questions using tips from lecture, textbook
- Play around with order of questions & transitions
- Draft of questions due at end of next Tuesday's workshop

Collecting Your Data (1)

- Make copies – everyone should have the same sheet
- Each team member should collect a minimum of 10 questionnaires; each team a minimum of 20; no more than 50.
- Do **purposive convenience sampling**: try to get as much variation (different answers) as you can on both the dependent and independent variables. You will have to explain your sampling strategy in your report.

Collecting Your Data (2)

- Include a space for comments on the reaction to different questions – either on your sheet, or on a separate sheet. **Prepare this in advance.**
- Watch for:
 - Signs of difficulty or confusion, irritation at questions, hesitation in answering an item, giving the form back to you blank, changing answers, laughing, explaining the answer, etc.
 - Ask respondents to tell you if they find a question offensive, hard to understand, etc.
