

Design, evaluation and analysis of questionnaires for survey research II.

by Willem E. Saris

Some people may think that formulating survey questions is very simple because we all can make questions. Others may think that it is an Art which one can not learn. Our point of view is that there is now enough knowledge about the consequences of the choices which are made when questions are formulated that survey design can be a scientific task. Therefore an overview of these choices and the consequences of these choices will be given in this course. Because errors will always remain in the questionnaires, we will also discuss how one can cope with these errors in the analysis of survey data

1. Prerequisites:

The prior knowledge to participate in this course is rather limited but it helps to know the basic concepts of descriptive statistics like mean, variance, standard deviation, covariance, correlation and regression

2. Competences to be achieved

The purpose of the course is that the students

- become aware of the major problems which are connected with survey research
- are able to develop proper questionnaires
- can evaluate the quality of questionnaire of other people
- have seen the effect of measurement error on survey results
- have seen the problems of comparative cross cultural research

3. Assessment

During the course the participants are expected to design their own questionnaire for a study. This can be done by small groups of maximally 3 persons. In the end a report should be written about the design of the questionnaire where the operationalization is discussed and the quality of the instrument evaluated with the program SQP.

Besides this task the participants will be given a research report from the literature to evaluate. The final mark for the course is a weighted average of the group report and the individual report.

4. Contents

In the first part of the course we will suggest an approach that can help to formulate proper question for the concepts one would like to measure.

In the second part an inventory will be given of the characteristics of survey items which might play a role in determining the quality of a survey question. In this part the different choices which a survey researcher will make while designing a survey item will be made explicit in order to reflect even on habitual choices.

The third part starts with a discussion of criteria for data quality and then gives a summary of the existing knowledge about the effect of the different choices on the quality of the questions as far as this knowledge is used in the SQP program. Subsequently the program SQP is introduced which predicts the data quality on the basis of the characteristics of the components of survey items which have been found to be of influence on the data quality of survey items.

In the fourth part of the course we will demonstrate how this knowledge can enhance the analysis of survey data by developing complex measurement instruments,

improving comparative research and correcting for measurement error in multivariate analysis.

5. Methodology

The course will be a mixture of seminars and lectures combined with groups work and individual tasks, especially exercises.

6. Sources of information

The textbook used is: W.E.Saris and I.N.Gallhofer Design, evaluation and analysis of questionnaires for survey research. Wiley (2007)

Programming of the activities for the course of 2011

<u>Date</u>	<u>activities</u>
9 March	10.00-12.00 introduction + chapter 1 12.00-13.00 Seminar: discussion about the task: questionnaire design Homework: chapters 2 and 3. Preparation of proposals
14 March	10.00-12.00 seminar; discussion + exercises of chapters 2 and 3 12.00-13.00 tutorial; Homework: chapters 4 and 5, preparation of proposals
16 March	10.00-12.00 seminar; discussion + exercises of chapters 4 and 5 12.00-13.00 tutorial; Homework: chapters 6,7 and 8, preparation of proposals
21 March	10.00-12.00 seminar; discussion + exercises of chapters 6,7 and 8 12.00-13.00 tutorial; Homework: chapters 9 and 10, preparation of proposals
23 March	10.00-12.00 explanation of chapters 9 and 10 12.00-13.00 tutorial; Homework: chapters 12 and 13, preparation of proposals
28 March	10.00-12.00 explanation of chapters 12 and 13 + SQP 12.00-13.00 tutorial; Homework: chapter 14 , preparation of proposals
30 March	10.00-12.00 explanation of chapter 14 12.00-13.00 tutorial; Homework: chapter 15 , preparation of proposals
4 April	15.00-17.00 explanation of chapter 15 12.00-13.00 tutorial; Homework: chapter 16 , preparation of proposals
6 April	10.00-12.00 explanation of chapter 16 12.00-13.00 tutorial; Homework: preparation of proposals
11 April	10.00-13.00 seminar: presentation and discussion of reports