

Near East University

MARKETING RESEARCH

MARK 401

Questionnaire design

SESSION 9

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Source: Malhotra and Birks, et al. Chp 13

Dr. Eric Shiu lecture notes

The questionnaire must motivate the respondent to cooperate, become involved, and provide complete, honest and accurate answers.

Questionnaire objectives

- It must translate the information needed into a set of specific questions that the respondents can and will answer.
- A questionnaire must uplift, motivate and encourage the respondent to become involved in the interview, to cooperate and to complete the interview.
- A questionnaire should minimise response error.

Figure 13.1 Exchange of values between marketing researchers and respondents

Figure 13.2 Trade-offs faced by the questionnaire designer

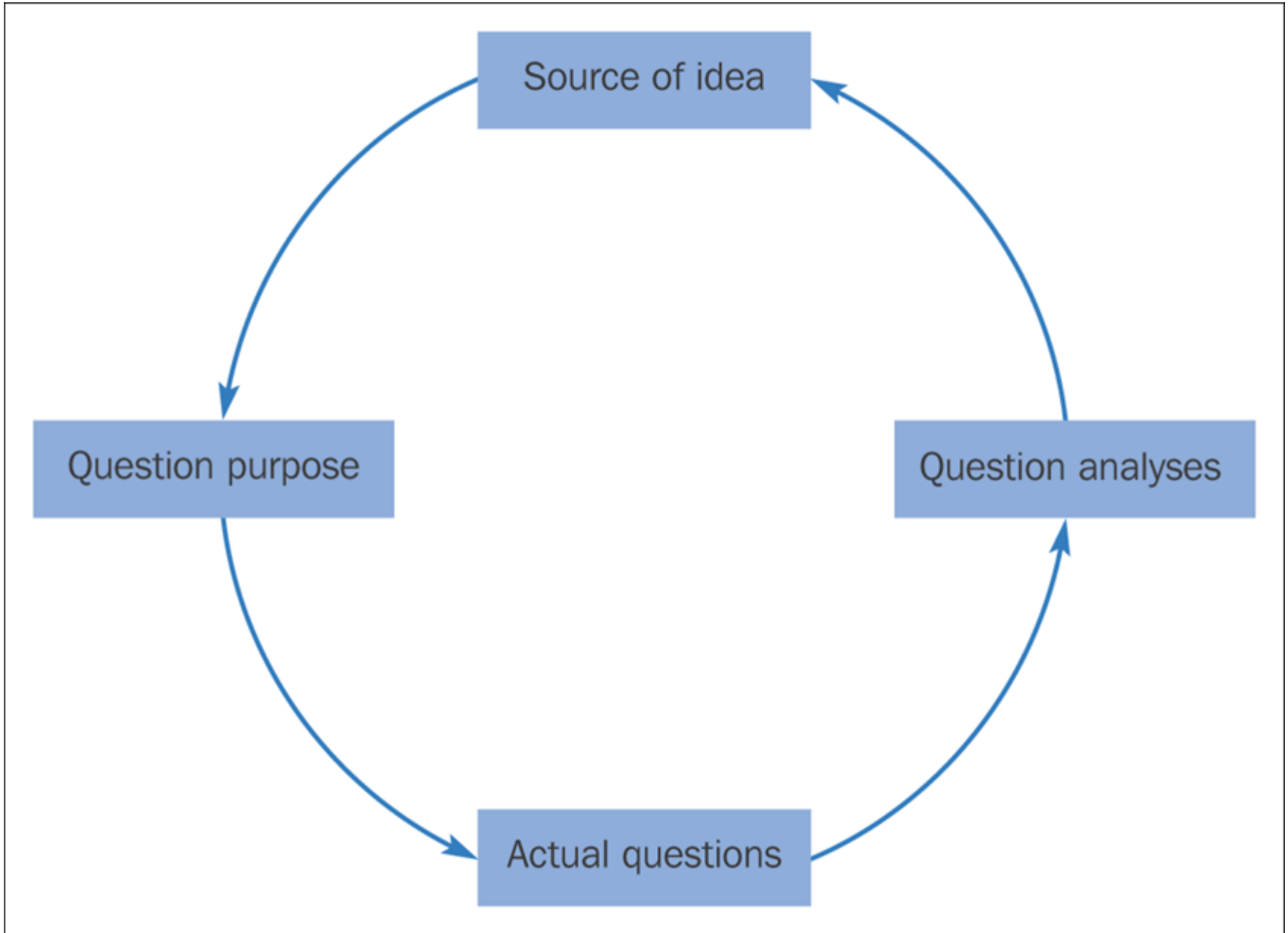
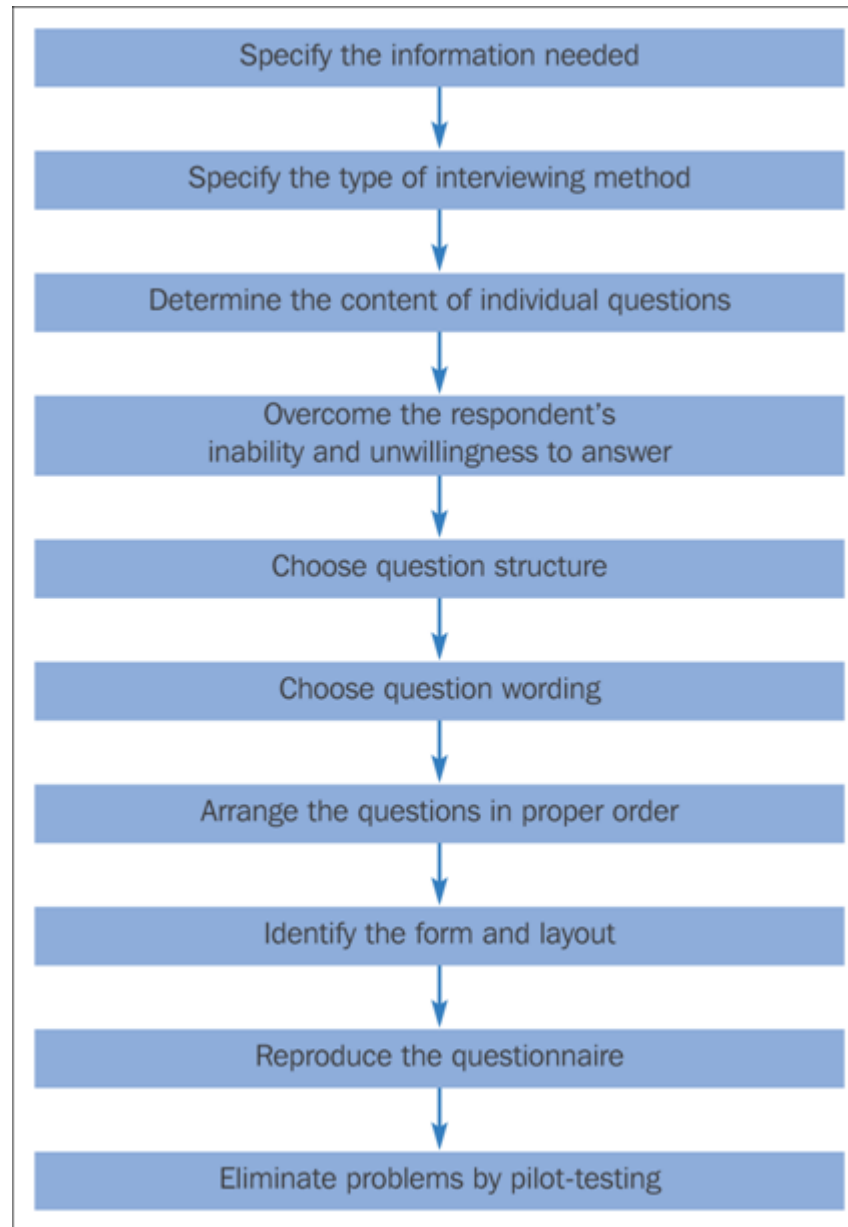


Figure 13.3 Questionnaire design process

Individual question content

- Is the question necessary?
- Are several questions needed instead of one?

Individual question content – are several questions needed instead of one?

- Sometimes, several questions are needed to obtain the required information in an unambiguous manner. Consider the question:

‘Do you think Coca-Cola is a tasty and refreshing soft drink’? (Incorrect)

- Such a question is called a **double-barrelled question**, because two or more questions are combined into one. To obtain the required information, two distinct questions should be asked:

‘Do you think Coca-Cola is a tasty soft drink’? and
‘Do you think Coca-Cola is a refreshing soft drink’?
(Correct)

Overcoming inability to answer

- Is the respondent informed?
- Can the respondent remember?
- Can the respondent articulate?

Overcoming inability to answer – is the respondent informed?

- In situations where not all respondents are likely to be informed about the topic of interest, **filter questions** that measure familiarity and past experience should be asked before questions about the topics themselves.
- A 'don't know' option appears to reduce uninformed responses without reducing the response rate.

Overcoming inability to answer – can the respondent remember?

How many litres of soft drinks did you consume during the last four weeks? (Incorrect)

How often do you consume soft drinks in a typical week? (Correct)

1. _____ Less than once a week
2. _____ 1 to 3 times per week
3. _____ 4 to 6 times per week
4. _____ 7 or more times per week

Overcoming unwillingness to answer

- Effort required of the respondents
- Context
- Legitimate purpose
- Sensitive information
- Increasing willingness

Overcoming unwillingness to answer

Please list all the departments from which you purchased merchandise on your most recent shopping trip to a department store. (Incorrect)

In the list that follows, please tick all the departments from which you purchased merchandise on your most recent shopping trip to a department store.

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------|-------|
| 1. | Women's dresses | _____ |
| 2. | Men's clothing | _____ |
| 3. | Children's clothing | _____ |
| 4. | Cosmetics | _____ |
| . | | |
| 16. | Jewellery | _____ |
| 17. | Other (please specify) | _____ |

(Correct)

Overcoming unwillingness to answer – increasing the willingness of respondents

- Place sensitive topics at the end of the questionnaire.
- Preface the question with a statement that the behaviour of interest is common.
- Ask the question using the third-person technique: phrase the question as if it referred to other people.
- Hide the question in a group of other questions that respondents are willing to answer. The entire list of questions can then be asked quickly.
- Provide response categories rather than asking for specific figures.
- Use randomised techniques.

Choosing question structure – unstructured questions

- **Unstructured questions** are open-ended questions that respondents answer in their own words.

What is your occupation?

Who is your favourite actor?

What do you think about people who shop at organic food shops?

Choosing question structure – structured questions

- **Structured questions** specify the set of response alternatives and the response format. A structured question may be multiple-choice, dichotomous or a scale.

Choosing question structure

- Unstructured questions
- Structured questions
- Multiple choice questions
- Dichotomous questions
- Scale questions

Choosing question structure – multiple-choice questions

- In **multiple-choice questions**, the researcher provides a choice of answers and respondents are asked to select one or more of the alternatives given.

Do you intend to buy a new car within the next six months?

- _____ Definitely will not buy
- _____ Probably will not buy
- _____ Undecided
- _____ Probably will buy
- _____ Definitely will buy
- _____ Other (please specify)

Choosing question structure – dichotomous questions

- A **dichotomous question** has only two response alternatives: yes or no, agree or disagree and so on.
- Often, the two alternatives of interest are supplemented by a neutral alternative, such as 'no opinion', 'don't know', 'both', or 'none'.

Do you intend to buy a new car within the next six months?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Choosing question structure – scales

- **Scales** were discussed in detail in Chapter 12

Do you intend to buy a new car within the next six months?

Definitely
will not buy

1

Probably
will not buy

2

Undecided

3

Probably
will buy

4

Definitely
will buy

5

Choosing question wording

- Define the issue
- Use ordinary words
- Use unambiguous words
- Avoid implicit alternatives
- Avoid implicit assumptions
- Avoid generalisations and estimates
- Use positive and negative statements

Choosing question wording – define the issue

- Define the issue in terms of who, what, when, where, why and way (the six Ws). Who, what, when and where are particularly important.

Which brand of shampoo do you use?

(Incorrect)

Which brand or brands of shampoo have you personally used at home during the last month?

In case of more than one brand, please

list all the brands that apply. (Correct)

Choosing question wording

The W's	Defining the question
Who	<p>The respondent It is not clear whether this question relates to the individual respondent or the respondent's total household.</p>
What	<p>The brand of shampoo It is unclear how the respondent is to answer this question if more than one brand is used.</p>
When	<p>Unclear The time frame is not specified in this question. The respondent could interpret it as meaning the shampoo used this morning, this week or over the past year.</p>
Where	At home, at the gym, on the road?

Choosing question wording – use ordinary words

‘Do you think the distribution of soft drinks is adequate’? (Incorrect)

‘Do you think soft drinks are readily available when you want to buy them’? (Correct)

Choosing question wording – use unambiguous words

In a typical month, how often do you shop in a health shop?

- _____ Never
- _____ Occasionally
- _____ Sometimes
- _____ Often
- _____ Regularly

(Incorrect)

In a typical month, how often do you shop in a health shop?

- _____ Less than once
- _____ 1 or 2 times
- _____ 3 or 4 times
- _____ More than 4 times

(Correct)

Choosing question wording – avoid leading or biasing questions

- A **leading question** is one that clues the respondent to what the answer should be, as in the following:

Do you think that patriotic French people should buy imported cars when that would put French workers out of employment?

Yes
 No
 Don't know

(Incorrect)

Do you think that French people should buy imported cars?

Yes
 No
 Don't know

(Correct)

Choosing question wording – avoid implicit alternatives

- An alternative that is not explicitly expressed in the options is an **implicit alternative**.

1. Do you like to fly when travelling short distances?
(Incorrect)

2. Do you like to fly when travelling short distances, or
would you rather drive?
(Correct)

Choosing question wording – avoid implicit assumptions

- Questions should not be worded so that the answer is dependent upon **implicit assumptions** about what will happen as a consequence.

1. Are you in favour of a balanced budget?

(Incorrect)

2. Are you in favour of a balanced budget if it would result in an increase in the personal income tax?

(Correct)

Choosing question wording – avoid generalisations and estimates

‘What is the annual per capita expenditure on groceries in your household’? (Incorrect)

‘What is the monthly (or weekly) expenditure on groceries in your household’?

and

‘How many members are there in your household’?
(Correct)

Choosing question wording

Dual statements: positive and negative

- Questions that are in the form of statements should be worded both positively and negatively.

Determining the order of questions

- Opening questions
- Type of information
- Difficult questions
- Effect on subsequent questions
- Logical order

Determining the order of questions (Continued)

Opening questions

- The opening questions should be interesting, simple non-threatening.

Type of information

- As a general guideline, basic information should be obtained first, followed by classification and finally, identification information.

Difficult questions

- Difficult questions or questions that are sensitive, embarrassing, complex or dull should be placed late in the sequence.

Determining the order of questions (Continued)

Effect on subsequent questions

- General questions should precede the specific questions (funnel approach).

Q1: 'What considerations are important to you in selecting a coffee shop'?

Q2: 'In selecting a coffee shop, how important is convenience of location'?

(Correct)

Form and layout

- Divide a questionnaire into several parts.
- The questions in each part should be numbered, particularly when branching questions are used.
- The questionnaires should preferably be pre-coded.
- The questionnaires themselves should be numbered serially.

Pilot-testing

Pilot-testing refers to the testing of the questionnaire on a small sample of respondents to identify and eliminate potential problems.

- A questionnaire should not be used in the field survey without adequate pilot-testing.
- All aspects of the questionnaire should be tested, including question content, wording, sequence, form and layout, question difficulty and instructions.
- The respondents for the pretest and for the actual survey should be drawn from the same population.
- Pretests are best done by personal interviews, even if the actual survey is to be conducted by mail, telephone or other electronic means, because interviewers can observe respondents' reactions and attitudes.

Pilot-testing (Continued)

- After the necessary changes have been made, another pretest could be conducted by mail, telephone or other electronic means if those methods are to be used in the actual survey.
- A variety of interviewers should be used for pretests.
- The pretest sample size varies from 15 to 30 respondents for each wave.
- Protocol analysis and debriefing are two commonly used procedures in pretesting.
- Finally, the responses obtained from the pretest should be coded and analysed.

Questionnaire design checklist

- Step 1. Specify The Information Needed**
- Step 2. Type of Interviewing Method**
- Step 3. Individual Question Content**
- Step 4. Overcome Inability and Unwillingness to Answer**
- Step 5. Choose Question Structure**
- Step 6. Choose Question Wording**
- Step 7. Determine the Order of Questions**
- Step 8. Form and Layout**
- Step 9. Reproduce the Questionnaire**
- Step 10. Pretest**