

Best Practices in Survey Research using Qualtrics

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Agenda

- **Preparing your survey**
 - Guiding questions
 - IRB
 - Survey design
 - Implementation
- **Managing your survey**
 - Response rates
 - Reminders
- **After your survey**
 - Taking down your survey
 - Reporting

Preparing your survey: Guiding Questions

- Guiding questions:
 - What do you want to know?
 - Why do you want to know it?
 - What do you plan to do with the information? What actions will you take with these data?
- Need a clear research question and purpose
 - Survey should collect good data
 - Survey should not burden participants
- Don't collect data "because it's interesting."

Preparing your survey: Guiding Questions

- Not all research questions demand surveys
 - Is the data already available?
 - (Contact OIR&E!)
 - What about focus groups or interviews?

Preparing your survey: IRB

- Institutional Review Board
 - Must review research proposals
 - Will guide you to ensure your research is ethical
- To contact :
617-627-3417
<http://www.tufts.edu/central/research/IRB/>

Preparing your survey: Design

- Fixed-choice vs. open-ended questions

- Fixed-choice:

Which flavor of ice cream is your favorite?

Chocolate

Vanilla

Strawberry

- Open-ended:

Which flavor of ice cream is your favorite?

Preparing your survey: Design

Fixed Choice Questions

- Pros:
 - Easier data collection
 - Easier data analysis
 - Best approach for large populations
 - A variety of ways to ask questions
- Cons:
 - May not get at participant's true feelings/thoughts

Preparing your survey: Design

Open-Ended Questions

Pros:

- Offers flexibility and freedom in responding
- Rich, interesting data

• Cons:

- Time-consuming
- Coding a challenge
- Vague or irrelevant responses

• Size open-ended question boxes appropriately

- They cue the response

Preparing your survey: Design

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 - Spelling, grammar, punctuation
 - Rate your favorite ice cream, brands.

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- Avoid “double-barreled” questions
 - How satisfied are you with the ice cream flavors and toppings at JP Licks?

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 - How satisfied are you with the ice cream flavors and toppings at JP Licks?
- Bad questions lead to bad data (and survey dropout)!

Preparing your survey: Design

- Design recommendations
- Visual ease
 - Don't put too much on one page – use page breaks
 - Use “Preview Survey” to test your survey on multiple devices
 - List down, not across
 - Don't overwhelm your matrix questions
 - Use “Repeat Headers” to break things up
 - Use the “Look and Feel” option to customize design
 - Keep it simple!

Preparing your survey: Implementation

- What is your population?
- Is an entire population necessary or can you employ sampling?
- Sampling: using a subset of a population as a proxy for the entire population
 - Different approaches to sampling depending on your needs

Preparing your survey: Implementation

- Sending your survey:
 - Anonymous link
 - Pro: Good for sensitive topics
 - Con: Potential for duplicated data
 - Survey panel
 - Pro: Tracks responses
 - Con: Data security
 - Combination approach
 - Use “Survey Flow” to add “End of Survey” element

Managing your survey: Response Rates

- Keep tabs on your response rate!
 - Qualtrics Survey Health Report
- What is your expected response rate?
 - Depends on the survey and the population
 - 20%-35% for a 10-minute survey

Managing your survey: Response Rates

- Incentives increase response rates
- Which incentives work best?
 - It depends on...
 - Your population
 - Your budget
 - Your survey methods
- Guaranteed small incentives > Raffles
- Be creative
- Does not have to be expensive or flashy

Managing your survey: Reminders

- Reminders
 - Participation drops steeply after a few days
 - Reminders are highly recommended
 - Improve representativeness of sample
 - Hear more diverse opinions
- Reminders are easier with survey panels

After your survey: Taking down data

- Deactivate your survey
- Download data
 - Data cleaning is easier elsewhere
 - -99!
 - Coded values vs. Choice text

After your survey: Reporting

- Built-in reporting tools in Qualtrics
 - Not useful if you have cleaned data in another program
 - Cleaning data in Qualtrics is complicated
 - Don't tinker with original data!!!
- Best if your data...
 - Is straightforward, simple
 - Is already clean (no transformations, deletions, etc.)
 - Requires only simple reporting

OIR&E

- Office of Institutional Research & Evaluation
- University-wide resource with expertise in survey research
- Provide data, research, and analytic services
- Assists with outcomes assessment and program evaluation
- Offer consulting services

- To contact:
 - 617-627-3274
 - <http://go.tufts.edu/OIRE>