Definition

A series of questions on a topic about which the respondent’s written opinions are sought.

(Sommer and Sommer p.63)
Comparison

Questionnaires and Interviews share a common purpose and can be considered as alternative ways of collecting the same information.
Comparison

- **Questionnaires**
  - Written interview
  - Physical presence absent
  - Economical
  - Scored by a machine or a clerk
  - Impossible to elaborate – must anticipate all possible sources of error

- **Interview**
  - Oral Questionnaires
  - Physical presence of an interviewer
  - Expensive
  - Scored by a researcher
  - Less chances of error
Elements Of Good Questionnaires

- Cover Letter or Explanation of Research Purpose
- Directions for answering questions
- Funnel approach
- ‘Good’ questions
Cover Letter

- Purpose of research
  - Why should respondent provide input
  - Importance of study
- Who is conducting study
- What needs to be done
- How long it will take
Question Directions

- Clear directions
- May come at beginning of questionnaire or for each question where response format is different from previous questions
- Don’t assume people will know how to answer your questions
Funnel Approach

- Start with easy, general questions
- Place harder or sensitive questions in body or towards end
- Demographics at end
- Address important topics early
- Keep questions on one subject grouped together
Good Questions

- Clear, unambiguous meaning
- Concise
- Language appropriate for audience
- Begin with factual, non controversial questions
- General questions should precede specific questions

Example:

1. What do you think of this playground?
2. Is there enough play equipment?
3. Do you feel that any of the play equipment is dangerous?
**Good Questions**

- Avoid double-barreled, leading, and biased questions

  Ex) Double-barreled question
  
  What do you think about the cost and efficiency of municipal service?

  Ex) Leading Question-
  
  Did you see David at 4 p.m.?
  
  → At what time did you see David?

  Ex) Biased question
  
  How would you rate the housing in which you live?

  1. Satisfactory
  2. Good
  3. Excellent

  ☢️ No negative options provided.
Good Questions

- Avoid loaded terms, scare words, and phrases
  
  Example:
  Excess government spending, dangerous drugs.

- Define all difficult terms

- Include synonyms
  
  Example:
  - nuclear power (atomic power)

- Avoid phrasing questions in the negative
  
  Example:
  Of all the classes that you took in high school, which was the single class that you liked least?
Categories of Questions

- Open-ended
- Closed/Multiple-Choice
Open-ended

- The respondent writes in their own answers.
- Preferred when the researcher does not know all possible answer to a question.
- Range of possible answer is so large that the question would become bulky in multiple choice format.
- A researcher wants to avoid suggestion answer to the respondent.
Open-ended

# Example

- What do you like most about this cafeteria?
- What do you like least about this cafeteria?
# Example-Rank-order question

List those qualifications you would look for in hiring a secretary. Place a 1 next to the most important qualification, a 2 next to the second most important, and so on, until all qualifications on your list are ranked.
Closed/ Multiple-Choice

- Respondent choose among alternatives provided by the researcher.
- Preferred when large number of respondents and questions
- The answer score by machine.
- Responses from several groups of individuals are to be compared.
Closed/ Multiple-Choice

# Example

- What do you think of the salads here?
  (like)   (dislike)   (indifferent)

- What do you think of the cost of the meals here?
  (too expensive) (very reasonable) (about right)
# Example-Rank-order question

Rank each of the following qualifications in terms of its importance for a secretary in your office (1 = most important)

___ Typing speed
___ Typing accuracy
___ General clerical skills
___ Taking dictation
___ Telephone answering skills
___ Meeting the public
___ Other (please specify)
# Example: Rating ranking question

Rate each of the following qualifications in terms of its importance for a secretary in your office. Please use the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Very important</td>
<td>___ Typing speed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Moderately important</td>
<td>___ Typing accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Slightly important</td>
<td>___ General clerical skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Not at all important</td>
<td>___ Taking dictation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>___ Telephone answering skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>___ Meeting the public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Types of Question

- Filtering questions
- Binary responses
- Categorical responses
- Ordinal responses
- Linked questions
Filtering Question

Two-(or more) part question that is used to direct respondents to relevant questions.

Example

- Have you ever had treatment with antibiotics?
  - [ ] No (Go to question 2)
  - [ ] Yes

- If yes : About how many times?
  - [ ] once
  - [ ] 2 to 5 times
  - [ ] 6 to 10 times
  - [ ] More than 10 times
Binary Responses

One of the Simplest questions allows only one of two possible answers

Example:

What is your gender?  ____ Male  ____ Female
Categorical Responses

A categorical question presents the respondent with a list of unordered statements which they are asked to: (a) select one or more (b) rank.

(a)
Which of the following do you consider to be essential topics for a biological sciences degree course (choose one or more items)

1. genetics
2. evolution
3. statistics
4. chemistry...etc

(b)
Place the following items in order of importance for a biological sciences degree course

1. genetics
2. evolution
3. statistics
4. chemistry...etc
Ordinal Response

Scaled response.

Example; 5 point Likert scale:

Abortion is morally inexcusable under all circumstance.

__ Strongly Agree
__ Agree
__ Neutral
__ Disagree
__ Strongly Disagree
Q) What a respondent thought about the importance of relaxation techniques for good health.

**Specific rating scale**

| Importance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

**Alternative scale**

unimportant _____________________________ important
Linked Questions

If several questions have the same style of answer, a matrix of items and answers can be useful

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree Somewhat</th>
<th>Neutra</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pre-testing

- Reduce ambiguity
- Revision
- Done in short period of time
- No need of detailed sampling.
- Fist draft should never be mimeographed or printed.
- Easier to change a first draft than to interpret people’s answers to ambiguous questions.

(Sommer & Sommer)
For maximum returns the questionnaires should be given out or collected in person.

The respondent’s anonymity can be assured

Notify people before the survey.

Convincing people of the usefulness of their answers.

Establish specific connection between the respondent and survey.

Send follow up letters.

Give clear instructions about how the questionnaires is to be returned.
Methods

Hand out

Telephone

Mail/ E-mail
Scoring

- **Hand Scoring:**
  Open ended questionnaires &
  Close ended questionnaires.

- **Machine Scoring:**
  Close ended questionnaires.
Interpretation & Report Writing

- Do not be concerned incomplete answers

- Can a survey be worth anything if the results are not shocking?
  -- Yes

- A survey that finds there is no problem may be just as important as one that identifies a source of tension.
Limitations

- The questionnaire is of little use with respondents who are very young, very old, infirm, or uninterested in the topic.
- Questionnaires are inflexible
- Questionnaire replies are more useful for identifying attitudes than for predicting behavior.
- Misunderstandings
- Unless the researcher asks precisely the right questions, the information will not be very useful.
Analyze Data

- Chart
- Graph
Summary

1. Why are you carrying out the survey?
2. Define the population that you will be surveying
3. Select a sampling program
4. Write the initial questionnaire
5. Decide how you will analyze the data to achieve your aims and objectives
6. Run a small pilot survey to validate the questionnaire and analysis method
7. Revise the questionnaire as required
8. Collect the data
9. Analyze the data
10. Write the report
Reference

- Oppenheim. A. N. Questionnaire design and attitude measurement.
- Sommer, Robert and Sommer, Barbara ( ). A practical guide to behavioral research: tools and techniques
- Cresswell, John W. ( ). Research Design

Website

http://149.170.144/resdesgn/survey2.htm
http://www.edu.bham.ac.uk/edrt06/questionaires.htm