**L3 Research Methodology 6 Teacher: KHELEF Embarka**

**Data Collection Tools : 1- Questionnaires**

**Introduction**

The questionnaire has become one of the most used and abused means of collecting information. If well constructed, a questionnaire permits the collection of reliable and reasonably valid data in a simple, cheap and timely manner.

The task of developing and implementing a questionnaire can be accomplished by following the six essential steps: determine your questions, **draft the questionnaire items, sequence the items, design the questionnaire, pilot-test and revise the instrument, and develop a strategy for data collection and analysis.**

**Definition**

A questionnaire is a list of questions distributed by the researcher a sample of the population of research; taking part in the research. In other words “A questionnaire is a systematic compilation of questions that are submitted to a sampling of population from which information is desired.” ***Barr, Davis & Johnson***, qtd in Parley & Parley p57)

 It aims to measure the population's opinions, attitudes, tastes … “In general, the word questionnaire refers to a device for securing answers to questions by using a form which the respondent fills in himself.”

***W. J. Goode & K. Hall*** qtd in ibid p58)

 the questionnaire can be distributed or administered in various means: mail, post, by hand; online …etc

**Types of Questionnaires:**

1. **Closed-ended Questions**: fixed questions that aim at eliciting a fixed number of responses (quantitative data). Nunan (1992) defines a closed-ended item stating that is one in which the range of possible responses is determined by the researcher. This category of questions includes: MCQ, yes/no questions, Likert scale, …etc
2. **Open**-**ended questionnaires:** They are used to elicit qualitative data. Unlike the previous category, open-ended questions allow respondents to provide their own individual responses to explain meanings and motivation of the respondents since it is the informant
3. who decides what to say and how to express it.

A questionnaire may include open-ended items only or closed-ended items only or a mixture of both depending on the information needed from the population sample.

**Types of Questions to Include in a Questionnaire:**

1. **Multiple choice questions:**

Eg: How many days of training have you completed during the past 12 months?

none

6-10

11-15

16 or more

••••

What were you doing the year before you enrolled in this program?

Full-time employment Part-time

employment Unemployed

•••

Full-time student

Part-time student

Other (specify)

1. **Comment on items:**

Eg: To what extent did the training session relate to your job needs?

…………………………………………………………………………

1. **List items:**
2. List three most important skills you acquired during this training session.
* ……………………
* ……………………
* ……………………
1. List, in order of importance, three most important skills you acquired during this training session.
* ……………………
* ……………………
* ……………………
1. **Likert Scale Item:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strongly disagree | Disagree | I am not sure | Agree | Strongly agree |
| I use research methods in my job. |  |  |  |  |  |

1. **Rank Items:**

*Sample rank item*

Rank in order of importance the following five weaknesses of the training program. That is, place a 1 beside the weakness you consider most important, a 2 beside the next most important weakness and so forth, until you have ranked all five weaknesses.

Rank

The training program was too short. \_\_\_\_

The content did not suit my needs. \_\_\_\_

The content was too theoretical. \_\_\_\_

The training group was too large. \_\_\_\_

The training methods were poor. \_\_\_\_

**Questionnaires Administration:**

**self-administered**, that is, the respondent fills it in on his own, away from the researcher, or whether it is to be **interviewer administered**. Self-administered questionnaires could be sent through the post, delivered in person or distributed via the internet. It is also important to think about the analysis of your questionnaire at this stage as this could influence its design

**Wording and Structuring a Questionnaire:**

1. The question should not reveal the researcher's attitude, avoid leading questions.
2. Make sure the question is not ambiguous.Try not to use words which may have a double meaning or be misinterpreted, as some words have different meanings for different groups of people.
3. Don’t use emotive words.
4. Avoid questions which will cause annoyance, frustration, offence, embarrassment or sadness. You should never make someone feel uncomfortable, for whatever reason, as a result of filling in your questionnaire.
5. Questions should be kept short and simple. This will avoid many of the problems outlined above.
6. Check that a question is not **double-barrelled**, that is, two questions in one. If it is, ask two questions rather than one.
7. Avoid negative questions – the type which have ‘not’ in them as this can be confusing, especially when a respondent is asked to agree or disagree.
8. Make sure that your questions don’t contain some type of **prestige bias**. This phrase refers to questions which could embarrass or force respondents into giving a false answer so that they do not look bad for the researcher. ( income, educational qualification … etc) it would be better to get information about such things in an indirect way.

**Close-ended questions**

If you are constructing a closed-ended question, try to make sure that:

* All possible answers are covered. This is particularly important for time and frequency questions such as ‘how often do you . . .’
* All the frequencies are covered so that respondents aren’t constrained in their answers and tick a box which isn’t right for them.
* You don’t artificially create opinions by asking someone a question about which they don’t know, or don’t care.
* You include a ‘don’t know’ category in this case.

EXAMPLE:

My partner is self-employed and works on his own in an office based at home. He was recently asked to fill in a questionnaire that included the following question:

**Do your work colleagues swear . . .?**

More than you?

About the same as you?

Less than you?

They don’t swear.

**Characteristics of a Good Questionnaire:**

1. It deals with an important or significant topic.

2. Its significance is carefully stated on the questionnaire itself or on its covering letter.

3. It seeks only that data which cannot be obtained from the resources like books, reports and records.

4. It is as short as possible, only long enough to get the essential data.

5. It is attractive in appearance, neatly arranged and clearly duplicated or printed.

6. Directions are clear and complete, important terms are clarified.

7. The questions are objective, with no clues, hints or suggestions.

8. Questions are presented in a order from simple to complex.

9. Double negatives, adverbs and descriptive adjectives are avoided.

10. The questions carry adequate number of alternatives.

11. It is easy to tabulate, summarize and interpret.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Merits of Questionnaire Method:**  | **Demerits of Questionnaire Method:**  |
| 1. it’s very economical. 2. It’s a time saving process. 3. It covers the research in wide area. 4. It’s very suitable for special type of responses. 5. It is most reliable in special cases.  | 1. Through this we get only limited responses. 2. Lack of personal contact. 3. Greater possibility of wrong answers. 4. Chances of receiving incomplete response are more. 5. Sometimes answers may be illegible. 6. It may be useless in many problems.  |

**References:**

Dawson, C. (2009) *Introduction to Research Methods* – A practical guide to anyone undertaking a research project. How to Books

Nunan, D. (1992) *Research Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press

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