

Journal #5

Think back to your research question from last class:

- What do you need to know in order to answer the question?
- Which group(s) of people would you need to participate? How many?
- What would you need to ask them?

Unit 2: Research Methods

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Survey

- Involves interviewing or administering **questionnaires**, or written surveys, to large numbers of people.
- The investigator analyzes the data obtained from surveys to learn about similarities, differences, and trends. He or she then makes predictions about the population being studied.
- Advantages include obtaining information from a large number of respondents, conducting personal interviews at a time convenient for respondents, and acquiring data as inexpensively as possible.

Survey

Limitations

- Disadvantages of survey research include **volunteer bias, interviewer bias, and distortion.**
- **Volunteer bias** occurs when a sample of volunteers is not representative of the general population. Subjects who are willing to talk about certain topics may answer surveys differently than those who are not willing to talk.
- **Interviewer bias** occurs when an interviewer's expectations or insignificant gestures (for example, frowning or smiling) inadvertently influence a subject's responses one way or the other.
- **Distortion** occurs when a subject does not respond to questions honestly.

Survey - Interview

- More personal form of research than questionnaires. In the **personal interview**, the interviewer works directly with the respondent.
- Unlike with questionnaires, the interviewer has the opportunity to probe or ask follow-up questions.
- Generally easier for the respondent, especially if what is sought is opinions or impressions.
- Can be very time consuming and they are resource intensive.
- The interviewer is considered a part of the measurement instrument

Survey - Questionnaire

- A list of pre-set questions to which the participants are asked to answer.
- Very structured with the participant having a few set answers to choose from (multiple choice)
- Data is quantitative so easy to analyze and compute
- Allow comparisons to be made with other sets of data

Limitations

- May not be able to follow up questions

Creating a Survey

- Determining the question content, scope and purpose
- Choosing the response format that you use for collecting information from the respondent
- Figuring out how to word the question to get at the issue of interest

Dichotomous Questions

- When a question has two possible responses
- Surveys often use dichotomous questions that ask for a Yes/No, True/False or Agree/Disagree response. There are a variety of ways to lay these questions out on a questionnaire:

Do you believe that the death penalty is ever justified?

Yes

No

Questions Based on Level Of Measurement

Nominal

- Here, the number next to each response has no meaning except as a placeholder for that response. The choice of a "2" for a lawyer and a "1" for a truck driver is arbitrary -- from the numbering system used we can't infer that a lawyer is "twice" something that a truck driver is

Occupational Class:

1 = truck driver

2 = lawyer

3 = etc.

Questions Based on Level Of Measurement

Ordinal

- We might ask respondents to rank order their preferences for presidential candidates using an ordinal question:
- We want the respondent to put a 1, 2, 3 or 4 next to the candidate, where 1 is the respondent's first choice.

Rank the candidates in order of preference from best to worst...

___ Bob Dole
___ Bill Clinton
___ Newt Gingrich
___ Al Gore

Questions Based on Level Of Measurement

Interval

- We can also construct survey questions that attempt to measure on an interval level.
- One of the most common of these types is the traditional 1-to-5 rating.
- We see how we might ask an opinion question on a 1-to-5 bipolar scale:

The death penalty is justifiable under some circumstances.

1
strongly
disagree

2
disagree

3
neutral

4
agree

5
strongly
agree

Questions Based on Level Of Measurement

Semantic Differential

- An object is assessed by the respondent on a set of bipolar adjective pairs (using 5-point rating scale):

Please state your opinions on **national health insurance** on the scale below

	very much	some- what	neither	some- what	very much	
<i>interesting</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>boring</i>
<i>simple</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>complex</i>
<i>uncaring</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>caring</i>
<i>useful</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>useless</i>

etc.

Questions Based on Level Of Measurement

Cumulative

- The respondent checks each item with which they agree. The items themselves are constructed so that they are cumulative -- if you agree to one, you probably agree to all of the ones above it in the list:

Please check each statement that you agree with:

___ Are you willing to permit immigrants to live in your country?

___ Are you willing to permit immigrants to live in your community?

___ Are you willing to permit immigrants to live in your neighborhood?

___ Would you be willing to have an immigrant live next door to you?

___ Would you let your child marry an immigrant?

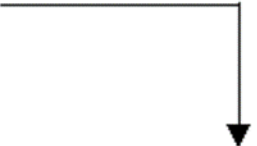
Filter or Contingency Questions

- Ask one question in order to determine if they are qualified or experienced enough to answer a subsequent one.

Have you ever smoked marijuana?

Yes

No



If yes, about how many times have you smoked marijuana?

Once

2 to 5 times

6 to 10 times

11 to 20 times

more than 20 times

Question Content

For each question in your survey, you should ask yourself how well it addresses the content you are trying to get at.

Is the Question Necessary/Useful?

- Examine each question to see if you need to ask it at all and if you need to ask it at the level of detail you currently have.

Are Several Questions Needed?

- This is the classic problem of the **double-barreled question**. You should think about splitting each of the following questions into two separate ones. You can often spot these kinds of problems by looking for the conjunction "and" in your question.

Question Content

- Do Respondents Have the Needed Information?
- Does the Question Need to be More Specific?
- Is Question Sufficiently General?
- Will Respondent Answer Truthfully?
- Can the Question be Misunderstood?

Question Content cont.

Is Question Biased or Loaded?

- Does the question contain difficult or unclear terminology?
- Does the question make each alternative explicit?
- Is the wording objectionable?
- Is the wording loaded or slanted?

Observation

Questioning

Pros

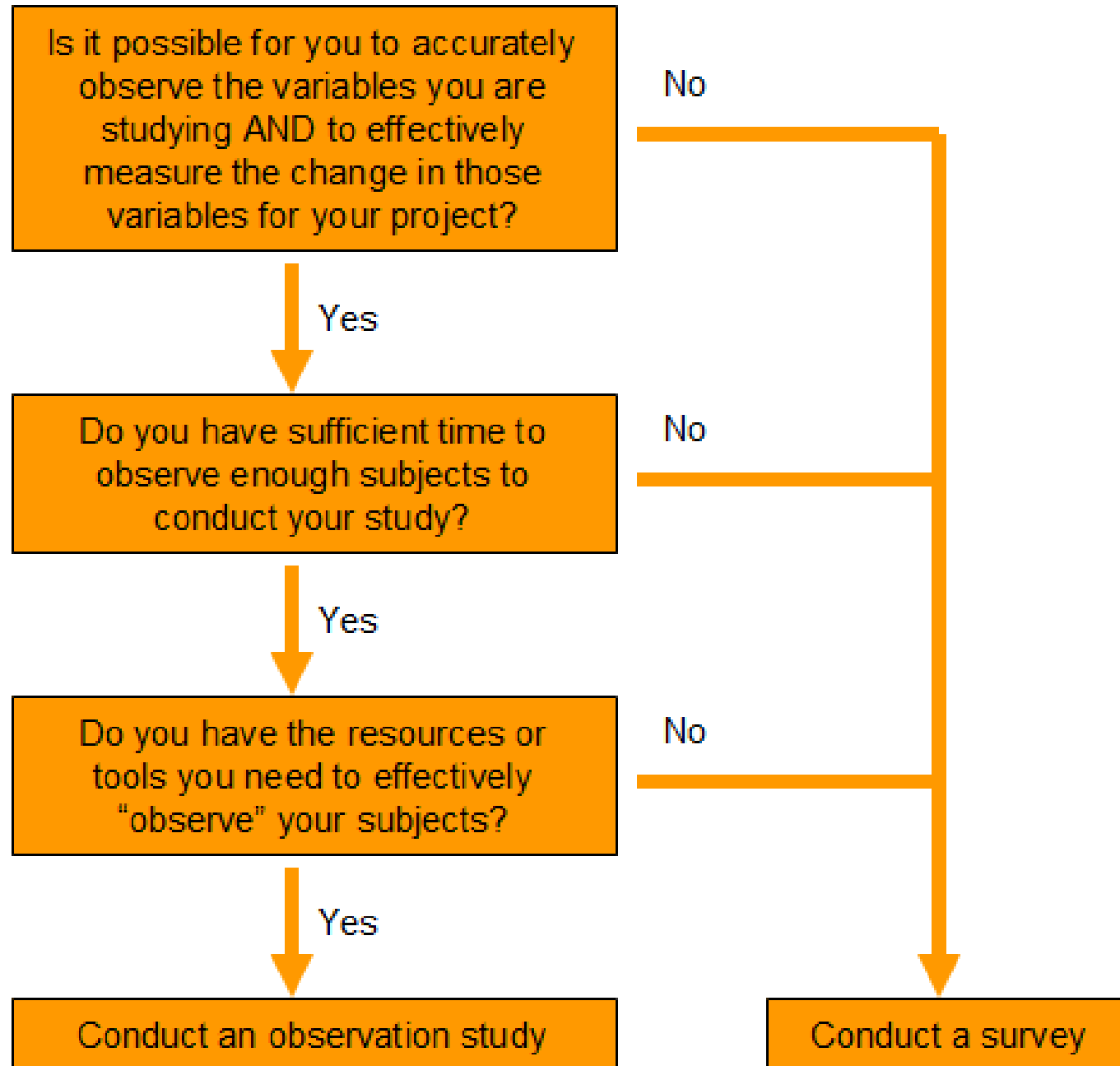
- Generally most effective means for studying young children who are unable to respond to questions
- More convenient and less intrusive for subject
- Captures an individual's genuine reactions

- Valuable for collecting information on unobservable variables such as feelings, motives, perceptions, attitudes, etc...
- Usually less time consuming method for capturing sufficient data

Cons

- Limited to collecting data about visible characteristics or behavior
- More time consuming to capture sufficient data for conclusions

- The questions, or the mere fact of being questioned, may influence a subject's responses.



On a separate sheet of paper: Survey

- Create a hypothesis for the research question from your journal.
- Create 10 questions with responses for a survey questionnaire to test your hypotheses.
- Limit of 2 Dichotomous Questions for this assignment