

purposes of survey research

- exploratory: e.g. what are the general views of the dutch on sending weapons on Ukraine?
 - descriptive: e.g. what percentage of the dutch population supports sending tanks to Ukraine and what percentage supports sending fighter jets?
 - explanatory: e.g. what are decisive factors that make the dutch supporting sending weapons to Ukraine?
- these questions inquire after opinions of a large group of people or a population; a survey offers an overview of the population
- the latter 2 are most often used; they test hypotheses based on underlying theories

conducting survey research does not necessarily mean you have to collect data yourself; you can also perform a secondary analysis (*=the data collected and processed by one researcher is reanalysed for a different purpose by another*)

characteristics of a survey

- use large scale sample from a population
 - using *standardised* questions
 - mostly *close-ended* questions
 - data are processed *statistically*
- surveys capture:
- opinions
 - orientations
 - attitudes
- of large populations by interviewing individual respondents

survey questions

can be:

- open-ended: respondent's own answer
 - close-ended: predefined answers → must be exhaustive and exclusive
- the quality of survey research depends on the quality of the questions*

criteria:

- clear + precise

survey questions (cont)

- unambiguous + not double-barrelled
- relevant → Responders must be competent to answer
- unbiased → they should not contain biased terms
- they should not refer to norms

survey methods

four main methods of administering survey questions:

- self-administered questionnaires: respondents have to fill out a copy of the questionnaire themselves (CASI)
- interview surveys: face-to-face, administered by an interviewer (CAPI)
- telephone surveys (CATI)
- online surveys (CAWI)

advantages vs. disadvantages

methods	advantage	disadvantage
self-administered	• cheaper • less time consuming • more willingness to report controversial opinions • interviewers do not impact answers	- lower response rates - higher risk of receiving incomplete questionnaires - no control over who fills in the questionnaire

advantages vs. disadvantages (cont)

interview	• higher response rate • higher completion rate • more affective in addressing complicated issues • possibility of making additional observations • control over who answers the questions	- expensive and time consuming - risk of non-compliance - less willingness to respond to sensitive issues
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strengths and weaknesses

strengths:

- get a fairly accurate picture of large population
- can get data on large number of cases
- large number of questions on very different topics give flexibility in analyses
- standardised data allows you to compare different respondents

weaknesses:

- social context or life in which respondents act/think cannot be captured
 - you cannot react to sudden changes in field or the life of respondents
 - assigning respondents scores on the basis of standardised, close-ended questions may result in certain degree of superficiality
- survey research is generally weak on *validity (due to artificiality)* and strong on *reliability (due to standardised questions)*



By faminconnue
(faminconnue)

cheatography.com/faminconnue/

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