



Interuniversity Graduate School of Psychometrics en Sociometrics
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Postdoctoral course ‘Questionnaire Design and Pretesting’

Final registration date: 10 September 2007

Instructors

- Edith de Leeuw (Utrecht University, Methodika)
- Henny Boeije (Utrecht University)
- Ger Snijkers (Utrecht University, Statistics Netherlands)

Coordination

Edith de Leeuw (Utrecht University/Methodika)

Dates: Monday 24 - Friday 28 September 2007 (five full days)

Location and how to get there: Utrecht University, address and room numbers will follow

Description of the course

Central to every study in which data are to be collected with questionnaires, are the actual survey questions. The questionnaire, as a measuring instrument, has to produce accurate and relevant data. However, after a survey has been conducted, researchers are often confronted with the fact that data have been collected on irrelevant variables, that variables are lacking, or that strange, unexplainable patterns appear during data analysis. To overcome these problems, it is important to carefully design the questionnaire and to pretest draft versions of the questionnaire thoroughly. This course focuses on the design of questions and questionnaires used in survey research and aims to introduce the broad range of techniques currently available to test and improve questionnaires. The course will explore the theoretical and experimental literature related to question and questionnaire design as well as focusing on practical issues in the design, critique, and interpretation of survey questions that are often not taught in formal courses. There will be exercises to reinforce both theory and practice, including the construction and testing of a questionnaire. Participants will be invited to bring and discuss their own questions or questionnaires.

Guidelines for questionnaire design will be presented, tailored to different modes of data collection: face-to-face, telephone, mail and Web interviewing. Questionnaire design topics include cognitive guidelines for question construction to ensure respondent understanding, the effects of question wording, response formats, and question sequence on responses, special

guidelines for self-completion surveys and web surveys versus interview surveys, strategies for obtaining sensitive or personal information and techniques for measuring the occurrence of past behaviors and events, questionnaires for special groups (children, elderly) and for establishment surveys.

Question testing methods covered include expert review, focus groups, in-depth (cognitive) interviewing, behavior coding and usability testing. Also pilot (field) testing methods will be discussed, including respondent and interviewer debriefing. All tests are aimed at assessing the quality of a questionnaire, i.e. examine whether the questionnaire works as intended and whether the questionnaire is easy to complete. Through discussion and exercises, participants will apply these methods, thus testing the questions that have been developed in the first part of the course, as well as parts of their own questionnaires.

Target group

Ph.D. students, post-docs, and researchers (who have to design a questionnaire or who have to work with survey data collected using a questionnaire).

Method of working

The course will be a practical, 5-day course, with many exercises. Participants will be invited to bring their own questionnaire and discuss problems encountered. However, it is not a prerequisite for this course to be actively working on a questionnaire and have a ready-made questionnaire available. In consultation with the participants, the course will be tailored to their questions and wishes with regard to questionnaire design.

Language

Course material will be in English. Lectures and exercises will be either in Dutch or English, depending on the participants.

Prerequisites

None. Participants are expected to have read Fritz Scheuren (2004). "What is a survey". Freely available at <http://www.whatisasurvey.info/> or at <http://www.amstat.org/sections/srms/>

Literature (books, readers), price:

Course pack with readings.

Minimum/maximum number of participants: 10 / 25

Certificate: yes

Number of credit points: 3 ECTS

Fees

IOPS PhD students	Free
IOPS staff members, and IOPS alumni	€ 500 and € 25 registration fees; additional costs for course materials
Participants appointed as PhD students at a university	€ 500 and € 25 registration fees; additional costs for course mate
Other participants	€ 1500 and € 25 registration fees; additional costs for course materials

Information and registration

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Cancellation

No refund is made for cancellations within one week before the start of the course.