

Introduction

Generally, schedules and questionnaires are used in the collection of primary data. In practice, these two words are used in the same sense; but there is a little difference between the two. Schedule is a list of questions, which is filled-in by the enumerators while questionnaire is filled-in by the informants themselves.

Blank Form

A list of questions that contains blank spaces for writing the answers in a statistical investigation may be called a **blank form**.

Questionnaire

(i) A questionnaire consists of a list of questions directly or indirectly connected with the work of the investigation and contains (or does not contain) blank space for writing the answers, but answers are written on another paper is called a **questionnaire**.

(ii) A list of questions that is sent to the person concerned to answer the questions and returned by him is called a **questionnaire**.

Schedule

A list of questions with blank spaces for answers in connection with a statistical investigation is said to be a **schedule** when they are filled in by the enumerators after obtaining their answers from the informants.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN QUESTIONNAIRE AND SCHEDULE

<i>Questionnaire</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
1. The questionnaire is a list of questions alongwith a space for answers. Sometimes the answers are given on a separate piece of paper.	1. The schedule is a list of questions alongwith a space for answers. In addition to a list of questions, the schedule contains blank tables and charts which are specially designed and prepared according to need.
2. The questionnaire refers to a device for securing answers to questions by using a form which the respondent fills-in himself.	2. The schedule refers to a device for securing answers to questions and is filled by the enumerator in a face-to- face situation with the respondent.
3. Questionnaire can be mailed to the respondents with a request for quick response.	3. Schedules are sent through the enumerators or interviewers.
4. Notes and covering letters are essential.	4. There is no need of covering letters and notes.

Conclusion

In view of the function there is no difference between questionnaire and schedule. But a distinction lies in the method of application. A list of questions in which the answers are written

by informants is known as questionnaire and a list of questions in which the answers are written by the enumerators is known as schedule.

Drafting of a Schedule or Questionnaire

To draft a schedule or questionnaire is an art. The success of a statistical investigation and the quality of its result depends upon tactful drafting of questionnaire. Because the task of eliciting information from human populations in desired form and with sufficient exactness to be useful in scientific analysis is the most difficult problem. People have their own whims and feelings of pride, desire and prejudice. Before attempting to draw up the questionnaire it is desirable to set out in detail the ideal data which we desire from the answers to the questionnaire. It might be wise to go even a step further and actually construct the sorts of tables which we should like to emerge from our enquiry.

However, the following general principles may be helpful in framing a questionnaire :

1. Introduction and Purpose : There should be introduction of the investigator and purpose of the investigation.

2. No. of Questions : The size of the questionnaire should be as small as possible. However, neither it should be too small nor too large.

3. Nature of the Questions : The questions should be clear, brief, unambiguous, non-offending, courteous in tone, collaborative in nature and to the point. Questions requiring calculations ought to be avoided. Personal, leading and sensitive questions should also be avoided. Questions should be capable of objective answer. Answers may be of three types :

(i) in 'Yes' or 'No'.

(ii) with simple alternative or multiple choice.

(iii) short as well as open answers.

4. Sequence of Questions : Questions should be arranged in a natural logical sequence.

5. Cross Check : Cross checks should be incorporated in the questionnaire to provide internal checks on the accuracy of the information given by the respondent.

6. Appearance : A questionnaire should be made as attractive as possible.

7. Mode of Tabulation and Analysis : The mode of tabulation and analysis should also be kept in mind.

8. Qualification of the Respondents : The qualification of the informants should be kept in mind while preparing a list of questions. For example, every person cannot tell his blood pressure.

9. Pre-test and Revision : The questionnaire should be pre-tested so that the shortcomings, if any, of it can be discovered and it can be revised.

Finally the technique of constructing questionnaire can be classified into three main parts :

1. Objective of the investigation, necessary instructions, covering letter, followup letter, etc.

2. Appropriate questions, less in number, simple, clear, short, proper sequence, relevant, other than personal questions, etc.

3. Get up of the questionnaire and good quality paper, etc.

Qualities of a Good Questionnaire

Since the value of the results obtained from the investigation depends largely on the adequacy and appropriate drafting of the questionnaire, the following points should be borne in mind :

(1) **The questionnaire should be brief :** A large number of questions will scare away respondents. All efforts should be made to reduce the number of questions to a minimum. Irrelevant questions should be eliminated. Every question included in the schedule or questionnaire must be relevant to the problem under investigation.

(2) **Simple, Clear and Unambiguous Questions :** The questions should be clear, unambiguous and precise. They should be unmistakable in meaning to people of varying standards of intelligence. They should be capable of being answered in only a limited number of ways. Complicated and long-worded questions irritate the informants and results in careless replies. No technical or pompous words should be used. The language should be very simple so that informants can easily understand.

(3) **Nature of Questions** : There are four types of questions, viz.,

(i) **Simple or Alternative Questions** : Such questions can be answered in 'yes' or 'no' or 'right' or 'wrong'. The questions which can be answered clearly in 'yes' or 'no' are the best. For example, a question, "Whether you have a car" can only be answered in 'yes' or 'no'.

(ii) **Multiple Choice Questions** : Such questions may be answered in a number of ways. The answers should be printed in the questionnaire itself, and the informants should be requested to mark against any one of them.

Examples of such questions are :

(A) What is your marital status?

- (a) Married
- (b) Unmarried
- (c) Widow/Widower
- (d) Divorced
- (e) Separated

(B) How do you go to your work place?

- (a) Your own vehicle
- (b) Bus or hired vehicle
- (c) Local train
- (d) On foot

(The informant may be asked to put sign ✓ against his correct marital status or mode of transport used.)

(iii) **Specific Information Questions** : Such questions solicit specific information like—What is your age? When did you pass your High School Examination? How many children do you have?

(iv) **Open Questions** : Open question is one which leaves the door open to any answer. Such questions are to be answered by the informants in their own words. Such questions solicit informants' views on a particular problem. Questions should be such that they do not require long answers. They are not expected to write an essay for you. Answers, such as, 'probably', 'fairly good' and 'average' etc. mean nothing to a statistician as they signify different degrees to different persons. Such answers should not be expected.

(4) **Use of Proper Words in the Questions** : Questions should be framed with right words. The right word at the right place will ensure the validity of answers. Words used should be such that their meanings are clear to all informants. Words prevalent in the region of enquiry should be used. In U.S.A. there are several lists which are available for reference in choosing words in devising questionnaire, common lists are Stanley L. Payne's lists, Dale lists, Lorge Count's list, etc.

(5) **The questions should be such that the answers of which are known to informants** : The general body of informants should be in a position to answer the questions. If the informants are asked about 'blood-pressure' or 'liquidity preference', they will not be in a position to answer such questions. The knowledge regarding these facts is not commonly possessed. Do not ask questions which rely too much on memory. Accurate memory of past events fades much more quickly than people realize.

(6) **Questions Capable of Objective Answers** : Questions should be capable of objective answers. Avoid questions of opinion. For example, instead of asking, 'whether he is content with his present job', it is better to ask, 'if he desires to change the job', if so, to what sort of job. This helps in tabulation of data.

(7) **Should not Effect Pride or Sentiment** : Questions affecting pride and sentiments of the people should not be asked. Due regard should be paid to their religious and political belief. Questions asking about private affairs should not be asked. Unduly inquisitive or offending questions should be avoided. In the words of Prof. Secrist, "If difficult and unfamiliar question or questions which in any way incite distrust or suspicion are asked, answers are likely to be either incomplete, brief, non-committal, general or purposely evasive."