Cook your own survey: The basics of survey methodology and evaluation

Teacher(s)	Mgr. Hynek Cígler, Ph.D.		
Department/Faculty	Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Studies	Field/ Keywords	survey, questionnaire, respondents, evaluation, social science
Academic Level	Bachelor;Master;		

Course Description

Surveys and questionnaires are ubiquitous in many areas of both basic and applied research. While a psychologist may be interested in how participants in her research score on different personality traits, a marketing manager wants to know what defines a target group of his company's product campaign, and a group of teachers may need a clear and comprehensive way of assessing their students' attitudes to the new teaching method.

However, creating a reliable and valid survey is like cooking. Not following a recipe may result in a disaster. The course is divided into two weeks. During the first week, we will discuss theoretical questions concerning survey methodology – advantages and disadvantages of different item formats, selection of the right sample, and wording of your questions, so they're comprehensible both to you and your respondents. Towards the end of the first week, the students will create and administer their own survey in groups. In the second week, we will discuss how to analyse the data you have gathered. Can the questions in your survey be reduced onto one underlying dimension, or summarized in one comprehensible index? How do the answers relate to one another? And what can you draw from the text responses you've been given?

The course aims to educate students with a background of social sciences who are likely to use surveys as one of tools of their research or work. It is highly interactive and the students are to try out the demonstrated techniques with the guidance of the lecturers and in cooperation with fellow students.

Lecture Topics

Week 1:

- Questionnaire as a means for data collection, comparison with other methods, its advantages and disadvantages
- Validity and reliability – definition and importance in the questionnaire context, measurement and the so-called "psychometric paradox"
- Modes of administration, item and answer forms
- Purpose of a survey, cognitive interview and piloting
- Sampling and data collection strategies.

Week 2.
- Response rate, drop-out, answer variability, data inspection
- Reliability analysis, correlation analysis, frequency and central tendency indices
- The basics of confirmatory factor and principal component analysis
- Text answer analysis, word cloud building, basics of thematic qualitative analysis
- Group project presentation, feedback and reflection

Pre-Requisites

- Background in social sciences, humanities, or economics