

QUESTIONNAIRES

When can the method be used?

Questionnaires can be used in several phases of the design process. In a preliminary phase they can be useful for gaining information about the target group, product use and opinions on existing products. Questionnaires are also used for concept testing of products or services. This helps the designer in choosing one out of several concepts and/or assessing consumer acceptance of the concepts.

Quantitative research methods such as Questionnaires can be used in order to gain insight into the frequency with which certain perceptions/opinions/behaviours occur and into the level of interest of consumers in certain product or service concepts. Also, they enable you to determine the most interesting target group for the product or service.

Questionnaires can be administered face-to-face or by telephone, or be filled in by the respondents themselves either on paper or via the Internet.

How to use the method?

Questions in the Questionnaire should follow from your research questions. Asking useful questions is more difficult than it seems, and the quality of the Questionnaire determines the usefulness of the outcomes. It is recommended to read up on Questionnaire construction before using this method.

The end result depends on the goal of the research. Examples are: insight into the frequency of certain opinions or behaviours, the frequency of the perceived advantages and disadvantages of existing solutions, or the occurrence of certain needs. Such insights provide you with

Questionnaires are research tools consisting of a series of questions and other prompts intended for gathering information from respondents.

knowledge about the target group and help you to determine what to focus on in the development and design of a solution.

Possible procedure

STEP 1

Based on your research questions, determine the topics you want to address.

STEP 2

Choose the form of response per question, for example, closed, open or categorical.

STEP 3

Formulate the questions.

STEP 4

Determine the question order, group similar questions and make a clear layout.

STEP 5

Pre-test and improve the Questionnaire.

STEP 6

Invite the right respondents depending on the topic: a random sample or selected respondents, for example, those who are knowledgeable about the topic and vary in age and gender.

STEP 7

Present the results by reporting percentages for answer options or using statistics to report mean results and test relationships between variables/questions.

Limitations of the method

- Subconscious or more emotional information cannot be gathered with Questionnaires.
- The quality of the results strongly depends on the quality of the Questionnaire. Longer Questionnaires lead to fewer respondents.

- Designers often criticise Questionnaire results for being too abstract. For example, qualitative methods are better suited for eliciting empathy and deep insights. But for determining whether large groups share certain values and needs, quantitative data are needed.

Tips & Concerns

- Ask yourself whether the Questionnaire will answer all your research questions and whether all of its questions are really necessary.
- You can use Questionnaires to collect qualitative data as well. Sometimes, limited numbers of respondents in combination with deep and open questions result in more useful data than large numbers of respondents.
- Questionnaires are often boring to fill in, making it difficult to get enough responses. Make your research more fun by incorporating visuals, for example; online versions provide possibilities for doing so.
- When testing one or more concepts with consumers, the presentation of these concepts is crucial. The concepts should be clear. Test this before distributing the Questionnaire – see Product Concept Evaluation.



REFERENCES & FURTHER READING: Creusen, M.E.H., Hultink, E.J. and Eling, K., 2013. *Choice of consumer research methods in the front end of new product development*. International Journal of Market Research, January, 55(1), pp. 81-104. / Lietz, P., 2010. *Research into questionnaire design - A summary of the literature*. International Journal of Market Research, 1 September, 52(2), pp. 249-272. / McDaniel Jr. C. and Gates, R., 2001. *Primary Data Collection: Survey Research*. In Marketing Research Essentials. pp. 170-208. Cincinnati, Ohio: South-Western College Publishing. / McDaniel, C. Jr. and Gates, R., 2001. *Questionnaire Design. In Marketing Research Essentials*. pp. 287-324. Cincinnati, Ohio: South-Western College Publishing.