Self-report data, part 2

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Some content adapted from Bilge Mutlu, Vibha Sazawal,
Today’s class

• Finish self-reporting
  – Interviews and surveys
• Start fieldwork
Biases in self-reporting data

- Social desirability
  - Also non-response to sensitive Qs.
- Acquiescence bias (want to say yes)
- Demand characteristics
- Ordering/priming
- Hawthorne effect? (modify when being observed)
Countering biases

• Social desirability:
  – Take interviewer out of loop
  – Give cues for non-judgment
  – List experiments

• Acquiescence:
  – Flip questions around
  – Use comparisons rather than absolutes
Countering biases, ctd.

• Demand characteristics
  – Conceal goal of study
  – Disclaim ownership of thing being evaluated
  – Use comparisons rather than absolute data

• Ordering/priming
  – Randomization (questions, response choices!)
  – Care in ordering/priming
  – From general to particular, easy to hard
Question wording/design

• Leading / not neutral
• Inconsistent interpretation / vague
  – Less jargon, or provide definition if needed
  – Consistent time period
  – Double-barreled
• Produce variability
  – (“Do you prefer good or evil?”)
Question wording/design

• Framing Likerts appropriately
  – Parallelism when possible
  – Not too many points (5-9ish)
  – Forced choice vs. neutrality

• Demographics at the end?

• Use pre-validated questions when possible
  – Pew, Reason-Rupe are question repos
Examples of good Likerts

• Level of Agreement: SD, D, N, A, AD

• Level of Satisfaction – 7 point
  – Completely dissatisfied, mostly dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, somewhat satisfied, mostly satisfied, completely satisfied

Sensitive questions

- Increases non-response
- Treat like social desirability bias
Closed-item best practices

• Sensible closed-item choices
  – Non-overlapping
  – Not missing things

• Include attention checks?

• Offer option not to answer (avoid lying)
  – Ethics!

• Limit shortcuts (branch questions equally)
General best practices

• Pilot, pilot, pilot!
  – Cognitive interviews, too
  – Validate question wording
  – Ensure getting interesting/usable data (matrix)

• Response bias in advertising
  – Also leads to demand chars.

• Don’t make it too long!
Exercises (Fix bad questions)

• How many times do you check email or text messages during the day?
  – Fix: double-barreled

• What brand of mobile phone do you own? Apple, Motorola, Samsung
  – Missing choices. Might own none, or more than one.

• Do you think privacy is important? Yes/no
  – Not concrete, not enough variability

• Would you like to use this tool I built?
  – No, maybe, sometimes, definitely
Interview best practices

• Make participants comfortable
  – Don’t make them feel incorrect, stupid, judged
  – It’s OK if they don’t know / haven’t thought about it

• Avoid leading questions
  – But, be specific
  – Ask from the side

• Know when to ask a follow-up
  – Have probes prepared

• Ensure consistency across interviews

• Stimulated recall

• Stop at saturation
Examples of good probes

• Tell me more about that

• Can you give me an example?

• Why was that important to you / why does that stand out in your memory?

• Do you always do X this way? What might make you do it differently? How has your approach changed over time?

• Counterfactual: You do A. Suppose someone did B instead. How would you respond?

• https://msu.edu/user/mkennedy/digitaladvisor/Research/interviewprobes.htm
Try it!

• In pairs, write 2-4 interview questions (brainstorm topics)

• Change partners with another pair and ask each other; report back
Try it!

In groups of 2-3, write a 5-question survey