SOCIAL SURVEY RESEARCH

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FORMAT

- DEFINITION

- PURPOSE OF SURVEY (TYPES OF QUESTIONS)

- STEPS IN CONDUCTING A SURVEY

- TYPES OF INSTRUMENTS: QUESTIONNAIRE/INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- TYPES OF QUESTIONS (OPEN-ENDED VS CLOSED-ENDED) & THEIR RESPECTIVE ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES

WHAT IS SURVEY RESEARCH?

- THE BROAD AREA OF SURVEY RESEARCH ENCOMPASSES ANY MEASUREMENT PROCEDURES THAT INVOLVE ASKING QUESTIONS OF RESPONDENTS.

- "A *SURVEY* CAN BE ANYTHING FROM A SHORT PAPER-AND-PENCIL FEEDBACK FORM TO AN INTENSIVE ONE-ON-ONE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW."

- TYPICALLY INVOLVE THREE CHARACTERISTICS.

1. IT *COLLECTS DATA IN A STANDARDIZED WAY* FROM A

2. *SAMPLE* OF RESPONDENTS,

3. ENABLING THE DATA TO BE *CODIFIED*, NORMALLY INTO *QUANTITATIVE* (MATHEMATICAL) FORM.

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SURVEY RESEARCH CAN BE ON

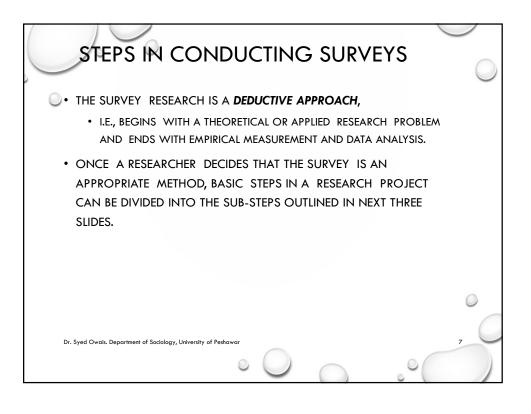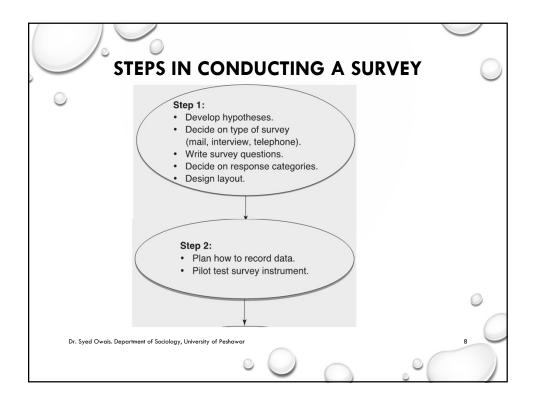| 1. Behavior.	How frequently do you brush your teeth? Did you vote in the last city election? When did you last visit a close relative?
2.Attitudes/beliefs/opinions.	What kind of job do you think the mayor is doing? Do you think other people say many negative things about you when you are not there? What is the biggest problem facing the nation these days?
3.Characteristics	Are you married, never married, single, divorced, separated, or widowed? Do you belong to a union? What is your age?

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CONT'D…

4.Expectations.	Do you plan to buy a new car in the next 12 months? How much schooling do you think your child will get?
5. Self-classification.	Do you consider yourself to be liberal, moderate, or conservative? Into which social class would you put your family?
6. Knowledge	Who was elected mayor in the last election? About what percentage of the people in this city are non-White? Is it legal to own a personal copy of Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto in this country?

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STEPS IN CONDUCTING A SURVEY

- A SURVEY RESEARCHER **CONCEPTUALIZES** AND **OPERATIONALIZES** VARIABLES AS QUESTIONS.

- THEN **WRITES** AND **REWRITES** QUESTIONS FOR **CLARITY** AND **COMPLETENESS**, AND **ORGANIZES QUESTIONS** ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE BASED ON THE **RESEARCH QUESTION**, **THE RESPONDENTS**, AND THE **TYPE OF SURVEY**.

- WHEN PREPARING A QUESTIONNAIRE, THE RESEARCHER THINKS AHEAD TO HOW S/HE WILL RECORD AND ORGANIZE DATA FOR ANALYSIS.
  - S/HE PILOT-TESTS THE QUESTIONNAIRE WITH A SMALL SET OF RESPONDENTS SIMILAR TO THOSE IN THE FINAL SURVEY.
  - S/HE ASKS RESPONDENTS IN THE PILOT-TEST WHETHER THE QUESTIONS WERE CLEAR AND EXPLORES THEIR INTERPRETATIONS TO SEE IF HIS OR HER INTENDED MEANING WAS CLEAR.

- IF **INTERVIEWERS**/**ENUMERATORS** ARE USED, THE RESEARCHER TRAINS THEM WITH THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

- THE RESEARCHER ALSO DRAWS THE **SAMPLE** DURING THIS PHASE.

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STEPS IN CONDUCTING SURVEYS

- THE SURVEY RESEARCH IS A *DEDUCTIVE APPROACH*,
  - I.E., BEGINS WITH A THEORETICAL OR APPLIED RESEARCH PROBLEM AND ENDS WITH EMPIRICAL MEASUREMENT AND DATA ANALYSIS.

- ONCE A RESEARCHER DECIDES THAT THE SURVEY IS AN APPROPRIATE METHOD, BASIC STEPS IN A RESEARCH PROJECT CAN BE DIVIDED INTO THE SUB-STEPS OUTLINED IN NEXT THREE SLIDES.

STEPS IN CONDUCTING A SURVEY

Step 1:
- Develop hypotheses.
- Decide on type of survey (mail, interview, telephone).
- Write survey questions.
- Decide on response categories.
- Design layout.

Step 2:
- Plan how to record data.
- Pilot test survey instrument.

STEPS IN CONDUCTING A SURVEY

Step 3:
- Decide on target population.
- Get sampling frame.
- Decide on sample size.
- Select sample.

Step 4:
- Locate respondents.
- Conduct interviews.
- Carefully record data.

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STEPS IN CONDUCTING A SURVEY

Step 5:
- Enter data into computers.
- Recheck all data.
- Perform statistical analysis on data.

Step 6:
- Describe methods and findings in research report.
- Present findings to others for critique and evaluation.

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SURVEYS CONDUCTED THROUGH

TWO TYPES OF INSTRUMENTS

1. **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:** "IS A SET OF QUESTIONS READ TO THE RESPONDENT BY AN INTERVIEWER, WHO ALSO RECORDS RESPONSES.

2. **QUESTIONNAIRE:** "A LIST OF QUESTIONS THAT RESPONDENTS READ THEMSELVES AND MARK ANSWERS ACCORDING TO THEIR CHOICE".

- NUMEROUS OTHER SMALL DECISIONS THAT MUST BE MADE TO CONDUCT A SURVEY. E.G.,
    - **CONTENT:** WHICH QUESTIONS TO INCLUDE?
    - **WORDING:** HOW QUESTIONS SHOULD BE WORDED?
    - **FORMAT:** SHOULD QUESTIONS BE OPEN (LIKE FILL IN THE BLANKS) OR CLOSED (I.E. WITH FIXED RESPONSE CATEGORIES)
    - **PLACEMENT:** WHERE SHOULD EACH QUESTION BE PLACED? AT THE BEGINNING, MIDDLE, END ETC.?

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FORMAT: OPEN VS CLOSE-ENDED QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE/QUESTIONNAIRE CAN BE:

1. **CLOSED-ENDED (A.K.A STRUCTURED/FIXED-RESPONSE):**
    1. "A QUESTION THAT HAS FIXED RESPONSE CATEGORIES FOR A RESPONDENT"

2. **OPEN-ENDED (A.K.A UNSTRUCTURED/FREE-RESPONSE):**
    1. AN OPEN-ENDED QUESTION IS DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE A FULL, MEANINGFUL ANSWER USING THE SUBJECT'S OWN KNOWLEDGE AND/OR FEELINGS. OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS ALSO TEND TO BE MORE OBJECTIVE AND LESS LEADING THAN CLOSED-ENDED QUESTIONS.

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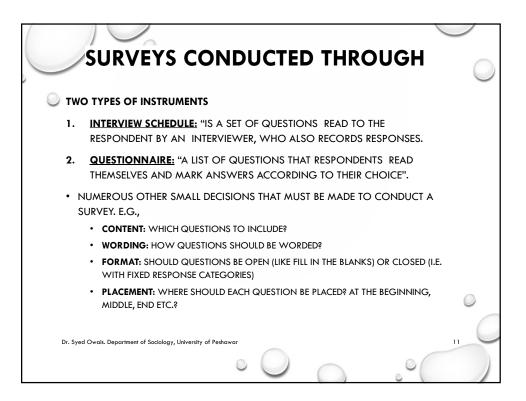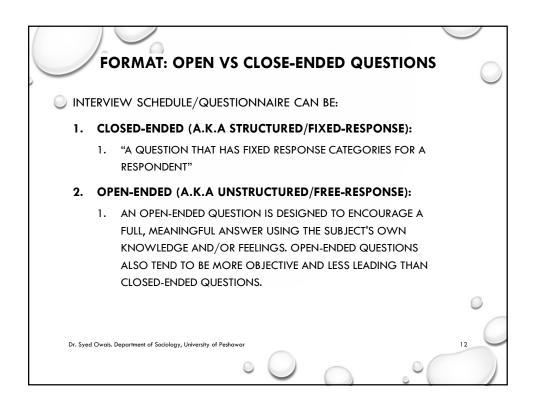
OPEN VS CLOSE-ENDED QUESTIONS: EXAMPLE

Closed-Ended Question	Open-Ended Question
Do you get on well with your boss? 1. Yes 2. No	Tell me about your relationship with your boss. _____
Who will you vote for this election? 1. Yes 2. No	What do you think about the two candidates in this election? _____
What colour shirt do you like wearing? 1. Black 2. Blue 3. Red 4. Yellow 5. White 6. Pink 7. Purple	Which Colour Shirt do you like to wear? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

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ADVANTAGES OF CLOSED ENDED QUESTIONS

❑ EASIER AND QUICKER FOR RESPONDENTS TO ANSWER.

❑ THE ANSWERS OF DIFFERENT RESPONDENTS ARE EASIER TO COMPARE.

❑ ANSWERS ARE EASIER TO CODE AND STATISTICALLY ANALYZE.

❑ THE RESPONSE CHOICES CAN CLARIFY QUESTION MEANING FOR RESPONDENTS.

❑ RESPONDENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO ANSWER ABOUT SENSITIVE TOPICS.

❑ THERE ARE FEWER IRRELEVANT OR CONFUSED ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

❑ LESS ARTICULATE OR LESS LITERATE RESPONDENTS ARE NOT AT A DISADVANTAGE.

❑ REPLICATION IS EASIER.

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DISADVANTAGES OF CLOSED-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

❑ CAN SUGGEST IDEAS THAT THE RESPONDENT WOULD NOT OTHERWISE HAVE.

❑ RESPONDENTS WITH NO OPINION OR NO KNOWLEDGE CAN ANSWER ANYWAY.

❑ RESPONDENTS CAN BE FRUSTRATED BECAUSE THEIR DESIRED ANSWER IS NOT A CHOICE.

❑ CONFUSING IF MANY (E.G., 20) RESPONSE CHOICES ARE OFFERED.

❑ MISINTERPRETATION OF A QUESTION CAN GO UNNOTICED

❑ DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN RESPONDENT ANSWERS MAY BE BLURRED.

❑ CLERICAL MISTAKES OR MARKING THE WRONG RESPONSE IS POSSIBLE.

❑ THEY FORCE RESPONDENTS TO GIVE SIMPLISTIC RESPONSES TO COMPLEX ISSUES.

❑ THEY FORCE PEOPLE TO MAKE CHOICES THEY WOULD NOT MAKE IN THE REAL WORLD

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ADVANTAGES OF OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

• PERMIT AN UNLIMITED NUMBER OF POSSIBLE ANSWERS.

• RESPONDENTS CAN ANSWER IN DETAIL AND CAN QUALIFY AND CLARIFY RESPONSES.

• UNANTICIPATED FINDINGS CAN BE DISCOVERED.

• PERMIT ADEQUATE ANSWERS TO COMPLEX ISSUES.

• PERMIT CREATIVITY, SELF EXPRESSION, AND RICHNESS OF DETAIL.

• REVEAL A RESPONDENT'S LOGIC, THINKING PROCESS, AND FRAME OF REFERENCE.

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DISADVANTAGES OF OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

- DIFFERENT RESPONDENTS GIVE DIFFERENT DEGREES OF DETAIL IN ANSWERS.

- RESPONSES MAY BE IRRELEVANT OR BURIED IN USELESS DETAIL.

- COMPARISONS AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS BECOME VERY DIFFICULT.

- CODING RESPONSES IS DIFFICULT.

- ARTICULATE AND HIGHLY LITERATE RESPONDENTS HAVE AN ADVANTAGE.

- QUESTIONS MAY BE TOO GENERAL FOR RESPONDENT WHO LOSE DIRECTION.

- RESPONSES ARE WRITTEN VERBATIM, WHICH IS DIFFICULT FOR INTERVIEWERS.

- A GREATER AMOUNT OF RESPONDENT TIME, THOUGHT, AND EFFORT IS NECESSARY.

- RESPONDENTS CAN BE INTIMIDATED BY QUESTIONS.

- ANSWERS TAKE UP A LOT OF SPACE IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

REFERENCES

- NEUMAN, W. L. (2013). *SOCIAL RESEARCH METHODS: QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE APPROACHES* (7TH ED.). PEARSON EDUCATION LIMITED: ESSEX.