Striving for equivalence in a multi country survey—comparative questionnaire design and meta data

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ESS Questionnaire Design

- Questionnaire design in a multi national survey involves additional considerations to a single nation survey.

- Questionnaire design in a multi national survey (ideally) involves additional actors.

- ESS approach for new modules is to bring substantive experts together with questionnaire design specialists and ESS national teams.

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Improving the process

Quality enhancement review of ESS Q’aire design and pre-testing suggested a number of improvements:

Key suggestions:
- earlier & greater input from NCs
- use of cognitive interviewing
- earlier pre-testing

Handout shows the stages of ESS questionnaire design with recent improvements shown in bold
Meta data for questionnaire design

- Questionnaire design process is difficult to document
- Process itself is complex and naturally iterative
- In a cross-national survey is more complex and involves additional actors
- Design often becomes separated from conceptual basis for including the questions

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ESS Questionnaire Design Template

- Section A: Theory behind the module
- Section B: Concepts to be measured in the module / expected relationships (verbally or diagrammatically)
- Section C: Complex concepts (with sub dimensions)
- Section D: Simple concepts (single items)

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Example from R4 Welfare Module

CONCEPT NAME: Beliefs

Sub-concept / Dimension: Risk perception
[BelRisk]

Template 1: Conceptual Descriptions

Template 1: Draft Questions

Template 2: Examples of queries raised by CCT
Example from R4 Welfare Module

Template 3: Example of points raised at meeting

Template 4: Examples of pre-testing feedback
  • Note that document includes analysis by QDT and CCT
  • Some earlier issues eg time frame still under consideration but amended here
  • Allows triangulation of data analysis and interviewer / national researcher feedback

Template 5: final documentation
Conclusions

Producing meta data for the questionnaire design process is hard work!

Documenting every decision - especially those made in meetings – not always possible

Having final documentation of the module useful – 2386 downloads of the final documentation (much lower for iterations)

Hoped to develop an electronic system for future rounds - paper version hard to work with posthoc

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