

Review of Cross- Cultural Survey Guidelines

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General remarks

Thanks for the opportunity to review and to give inputs

- Well structured
- Very comprehensive
- Very helpful for the survey research community

My brief to look at the guidelines and identify gaps or give possible suggestions of changes

Study, Organizational and Operational Structure

- Central/core steering committee
- Tasks, roles and responsibilities
- Critical success factors for the project.
- Detailed work plans, guidelines and communication channels.
- Agreed upon final deliverables and standards

Study, Organizational and Operational Structure

- Not enough emphasis on the situational/contextual issues within the country which is being surveyed that might play a role i.e. look at issues such as literacy levels, levels of democracy, Gini coefficient, income levels, infrastructure etc.
- Should also emphasize potential project limitation and risk mitigation strategies.
- Consider country climate and issues pertaining to the society @ time of survey i.e. Collect media material about the media and public agenda at the time of the survey

Tenders bids and contracts

- Procedural steps

Add-Demonstrated ability in data capturing, data cleaning, data management and data warehousing.

- Discuss pros and cons of capped amount and open amount tenders

Ethical considerations

- Giving consent: Add guidelines on how to handle illiterate respondents
- We often find that interviewers lie about the length of the questionnaire in order to gain entrance to an interview-this is unethical. Give this as an example of unethical behaviour

Ethical considerations

- Guideline: A clear identification of the research firm affiliation
- Lessons learned: Name tags with photos of each interviewer; letters from traditional authorities allowing interviewing; in a high crime area report to police and notify them of your presence in the area

Ethical considerations

- Should consider including a chapter on protection and rights and ethical consideration regarding interviewers/data gatherers. The rights of respondents are protected but not the rights of the interviewers.
- Consider guidelines on how to handle difficult situations i.e. drunk respondents, handle harassment, dangerous situations etc.

Sample design

- Longitudinal/panel studies-Developing countries' attrition rate very high due to migration and informal settlements, relocations etc. Strategy need very clear identifiers.
- Definition of a household very difficult especially w.r.t extended families. Concepts such as single households is easier in nucleus societies-extended families very difficult

Survey instrument design

- Add a section on the length of questionnaires and respondent fatigue.
- Found this to be a big problem. Max length of questionnaire 45-60 minutes.
- If questionnaire is longer consider ways of reducing respondent burden i.e. a different person that the respondent can give household information.

Translation

- Core: Meaning of questions in source questionnaire must be clear
- How satisfied are you with: Job security
- Lessons learned-used translators from the University of South Africa-had problems since the translations were too academic – not in spoken language.

Pretesting

- Discuss length of questionnaire-determine with pre-testing where respondent fatigue sets in.
- If questionnaire has different modules/ topics discuss the placement of these modules or topics. I.e. we found that we asked very intense role of government questions and saw that respondent were getting tired. Then asked about a “light topic” the 2010 world cup soccer whereafter we proceeded again with more “serious” issues.

Interviewer recruitment and training

- Payment of interviewers –best practice found that they get a basic pay/questionnaire and then and additional 10% based on the number of errors/quality of the work.
- Also cap maximum of questionnaires to be done per day-otherwise they rush.
- Rural areas the interview process is much slower than in urban areas-take care of this by balancing number of urban/rural interviews.

Interviewer recruitment and training

- Lessons learned: After training we usually send the interviewers to do one batch of interviewing at a nearby location. They then come back, discuss and questionnaires are checked. In this way if problems occur it is physically nearby and can be rectified easier than if these mistakes occur in remote areas.

Data collection

- Appendix-Household enumeration table-add definition of household
- Also instruct interviewers to list respondents from eldest to youngest-easier to recall for respondent and also they cannot falsify the Kish grid selection by rearranging respondents.

Data collection

- Measures to ensure interviewer safety-add -report to local police station (7).
- Generate a report at the end of the fieldwork with each interviewers' errors. This can identify potential falsification and give an indication of typical errors by a specific interviewer, language etc. Could point to difficulties in the questionnaires etc. Also consider rating these interviewers on a database for future reference.

Data collection

- 2. Select a mode of administration – Lessons learned- not clear- face to face surveys is twice as long as the telephone version; this is because breakoffs are less common in face-to face surveys than telephone surveys.

Dissemination of survey and statistical data

- The issue of ownership of data needs to be addressed. Often an organisation pays for the data to be collected i.e. ISSP and they might have restrictions concerning the dissemination of data.