

How to Conduct a Survey

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There are a variety of ways through which a survey can be conducted. Each method of conducting surveys present their own advantages and disadvantages which are to be considered and weighed carefully before the actual execution of administering the survey. In addition to the method of administration, there are other factors that may influence the response rates and results of the survey.



The banner features the Explorable logo at the top center, with the text "EXPLORABLE" in a large, bold, sans-serif font and "Quiz Time!" in a smaller, cursive font below it. Below the logo are three square tiles, each containing a different image and a quiz title. The first tile shows a pair of red roller skates on a wooden deck, with the text "Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2". The second tile shows a fan of colorful pencils, also with the text "Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2". The third tile shows a Ferris wheel at sunset, with the text "Quiz: Flags in Europe". To the right of these tiles is a link that says "See all quizzes =>".

Methods of Administering Survey

1. Personal Approach

A. Face-to-Face Structured Interview

Pros: Questions on the survey that are asked directly to the respondent ^[1] by the researcher usually produces good response rates ^[2] if visual materials are required during the survey. This also provides a great opportunity for the researcher to observe the participants.

Cons: There's a higher chance of bias ^[3] due to the interaction between the respondent and the interviewer. The principle of anonymity ^[4] is also lost. It is neither ideal if the participants are located in different geographical areas.

B. Telephone Survey

Pros: This method can be used for asking consequential questions. It provides anonymity better than face-to-face interviews [5].

Cons: Telephone surveys [6] are not ideal for data gathering which requires the participants to see a visual material. In addition, telephone calls for survey purposes are not appropriate if long questions are to be asked.

2. Self-Administered Approach

A. Paper-and-Pencil Survey

Pros: A traditional survey administration method, the paper-and-pencil survey is ideal for respondents who are not computer literate or do not have an access to the Internet.

Cons: The paper-and-pencil self-administered technique usually requires the researcher to be present during the administration, and also necessitates doing the expensive reproduction of survey questionnaires and the tiring manual distribution of the questionnaires to the respondents.

B. Online Survey

Pros: The online survey [7] technique is ideal for a survey requiring a huge sample size and/or a sample whose members live in wide geographical areas. This is also less expensive compared to sending survey through mail. Also, many survey companies can help you conduct the survey online with decent precision.

Cons: The members of the sample must be computer literate in order to answer the survey questions online. This method may also require giving an incentive to the participants.

C. Mail Survey

Pros: This method facilitates easy administering of the survey. The visual quality of the instrument is also controlled by reviewing the mails before they are sent. Anonymity can also be easily achieved through this technique.

Cons: Mail surveys are not as popular as they were years ago because there were increasingly lower response rates from the participants.

Increasing Response Rates

There are various ways by which the researcher can encourage participants to respond and complete the survey:

1. Compensate the participants' effort by means of providing an incentive. The usual incentive given by researchers is money, ranging from as little as \$1 to as much as \$50 per completed survey. However, some give donations or small gifts after completing the survey.

2. Maintain a professional-looking survey questionnaire. Double-check the instructions, spacing, layout, and printed look of the survey before administering them.
 3. Follow the KISS principle. “KISS” stands for “Keep It Short and Simple”. Higher response and completion rates are associated with concise, simple, and easy-to-answer survey questionnaires.
 4. Ensure confidentiality (and anonymity, if it applies). Assure the participants that all their answers will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purpose of the survey.
 5. Look professional, courteous and polite. Participants are more likely to cooperate if the researcher practices professionalism whether in appearance or behavior. Saying “please”, and “thank you” as well as guiding the respondent politely are also helpful in motivating the participant to finish the survey.
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Links

- [1] <https://staging.explorable.com/social-science-subjects>
- [2] <https://staging.explorable.com/increasing-survey-response-rates>
- [3] <https://staging.explorable.com/research-bias>
- [4] <https://staging.explorable.com/privacy-in-research>
- [5] <https://staging.explorable.com/personal-interview-survey>
- [6] <https://staging.explorable.com/telephone-survey>
- [7] <https://staging.explorable.com/online-surveys>