

ANSWERS CHAPTER 2

THINK IT OVER



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TIO 2.1: It is always worthwhile to conduct a pilot. This entails conducting your research with a group who are similar to the group you wish to investigate. Once you have analysed the pilot data, you will know if it reveals the information you were looking for.

TIO 2.2: Reliability means that if someone else used your research methods, they would obtain the same results as you. Validity means that the data is logically or factually sound.

TIO 2.3: Yes it is. Subtle cues like body language, or emphasising certain words can all impact on answers. Rhetorical questions, leading questions or just nodding your head to indicate 'yes' are strategies interviewers can use to influence answers.

TIO 2.4: Inaccurate data can be classified as data that has been collected for a purpose other than the one you intend to use it for. Also, it is data collected when the respondent has been influenced by either the questions, the environment or an interviewer.

TIO 2.5: The order of questions is very important. Personal, challenging or difficult questions at the beginning of a survey will put people off. The order of questions should be designed to make the participants feel comfortable about answering them. Contentious questions can be mixed with questions that 'relax' the participant. Contentious questions can be repeated but worded differently so you can validate the answers.

TIO 2.6: Subjective means you have an influence on the answers. This could be how you interpret a response based on your opinions. Objective means that you do not have any influence whatsoever. When working with people it is impossible to be completely objective; we're all human! If you really disliked someone, then it might be better for someone else to do the interview.

TIO 2.7: See answer to TIO 2.1.

TIO 2.8: Yes it could. If you were looking at the clothes people bought, standing outside a brand label shop would only put you into contact with a certain type of shopper. An area away from the shops would be better.

TIO 2.9: Not necessarily. If the data was collected for the same purpose as yours then it would probably be OK; but then what would be the point of replicating someone else's work?

TIO 2.10: Most national data is about 12 months old. It takes a long time to analyse large data sets, hence the delay in publishing results.

TIO 2.11: It would depend on how important you considered the questions. People sometimes choose not to answer questions that make them feel uncomfortable, which can distort your analysis. Word questions carefully!

TIO 2.12: Project plans are guides not a rigid set of rules. Allowance for slippages should be built in, ensuring that critical stages are completed when necessary.

TIO 2.13: As a general rule, problem definitions should be as succinct as possible. They should clearly state the problem in terms all parties involved can understand. It is always a good idea, once you have written the problem definition, to check with your client that what you've written is accurate and states the problem as they understand it.

EXERCISES

1. The data will be historical and on topics the government are interested in.
2.
 - (a) She is trying to persuade Eddie to have a loyalty card.
 - (b) Yes he is.
 - (c) To gauge whether it was worth continuing the conversation.
 - (d) No it wasn't. The interviewer has a 'hidden agenda' to persuade Eddie to part with his cash in a particular shop.
3.
 - (a) Question 1 would remind me that the company did not value me as they should and I would therefore be very cynical with my answers.
 - (b) Question 1 should not be included if the questionnaire is about effective profit making strategies.
 - (c) It seems I must find five strategies when I may only know of two. It appears only single-sentence answers are required.
 - (d) It would be based on my experience and therefore be very subjective especially after answering question 1.
4. They both have their faults. Eddie's: very brief, not enough detail, of no real use. Esha's is very detailed and linear. There is some overlap but there could be more. For example, who does the data collection can be decided at the start, it doesn't have to wait until the questionnaires have been designed. Some of the time scales are unrealistic; analysing data, for example, always takes longer than you think!