

Quantitative Methods

Surveys

Surveys are a popular method of collecting primary data. The broad area of survey research encompasses any measurement procedures that involve asking questions of respondents. They are a flexible tool, which can produce both qualitative and quantitative information and are a useful means of gathering the views of residents and community organisations.

On-line Snap Surveys

amt-i design surveys in conjunction with the client on the SNAP Professional software system. SNAP allows for on line surveys to be posted as hyperlinks on websites and sent out as emails. Respondents simply click on a link, complete an easy to use survey before pressing submit. The data is then sent automatically to the AMT server where it is stored and immediately available for analysis. All surveys are piloted with a relevant sample group pre publication to ensure validity and operability.

On line Surveys allow for the distribution of a holistic survey to various cohort groups with simple design and formatting routing respondents through the questionnaire, dependent on the responses provided.

amt-i work with clients to ascertain on which websites, publications, businesses and e-mail addresses the survey will be placed/ advertised. Surveys are generally 'live' for a 3 week period. The setting of a time period ensures that completion by possible respondents does not lag. To ensure that the survey is well used, the project will be advertised in various media types as agreed with the client. amt-i suggests advertising on relevant notice boards and via press releases in the local newspapers and community publications.

To stop one person filling in more than one questionnaire, full contact details, such as name, address, post code and contact number will be asked for. Without all this information, the questionnaire will not be counted. A 10% sample of all completed on line questionnaires will be made to ensure validity and reliability.

On line surveys are particularly beneficial as they are:

- Fast
- Large samples do not cost more than smaller ones
- Respondents give longer and more honest answers to questions about sensitive topics
- Data entry is done by the participant and data analysis is simplified



Paper Based Surveys

Postal Surveys

One of the disadvantages of online surveys is the reliance on the user to both have access to a computer and be IT literate. amt-i thus augments any online survey with paper based options, such as postal surveys.

Due to the strong question construction employed by amt-i, the same questions and survey format can be used in the paper based surveys as in the on line version, allowing for standardisation and reliability.

All those in the sample will receive a postal survey and accompanying covering letter, explaining who is conducting the research with objectives. Before those members of the population who have been sampled receive a survey in the post, they will be contacted by a member of the research team, to indicate that they will be receiving a form in the post and to provide a brief outline of the nature of the research. The reason for this approach is that life in the modern consumer society often leads to unsolicited mail being posted out to members of the populace in order to complete forms, however, if it is possible to prime respondents, the chance of the form being destroyed before opened is diminished.

Pre paid envelopes accompany all surveys.

Sampling for postal surveys will normally take the form of the Simple Random technique, where all the population have an equal probability of being chosen. For example, a probability of being selected is set-say 10%. Each case is a given number; for example, if you had 100 cases then each case is allocated a number from 1 to 100, and these will be the cases for the sample.



Face to Face Interviews

amt-i can conduct surveys via a face to face method. Two interviewers are deployed at a relevant location to the study, and are given a quota sample; for example the study may refer to the development of a play area and the interviewees will be asked need to complete 50 surveys with those at the location. The interviewers are trained by the amt-i senior research consultant.

Face to face surveys can be particularly beneficial in terms of securing a high response rate, and offering the respondent to ask for further explanation of questions.

Sampling

amt-i lay particular importance on ensuring the right people are included in any research. The sample is the selection of the wider population that will be engaged in the survey and sampling is the process of identifying who will be contacted from that population. The word population is used to describe the target group, and while this may be the national population as a whole, it may also be a smaller group, such as residents in a particular estate, or users of a particular service.

Understanding population, sample size, and response rates are important for calculating confidence levels, which are vital in determining how many people are needed to be surveyed in order to get results that reflect the target population as precisely as needed.

Thus for example, operating at a 5% error with 95% confidence the following table outlines how many completed surveys are needed.

Population Size	No of surveys required
100	80
250	152
500	217
750	254
1,000	278
2,500	333
5,000	357
10,000	370
25,000	378
50,000	381
100,000	383
1,000,000	384