

Difference Between Questionnaire and Schedule

Despite the difference between questionnaire and schedule, they are powerful tools for data collection for research. The researcher's method depends on the objective of the research and the appropriate research design.

To make it easy to understand the difference between a questionnaire and a schedule, let's have a look at the following table:

Questionnaire	Schedule
Anyone can collect data using this tool.	An expert is needed to collect the data.
The questionnaire contains multiple-choice questions.	Schedule contains open-ended questions with a space to write the answers of respondents.
An inexpensive and efficient form of data collection	Expensive and relatively slower
Allows for various forms of data collection. It does not require personal contact with the respondents.	Needs personal contact with the respondents as the data collected contains both respondents' answers and the interviewer's observations.
Higher chance of collecting inaccurate answers.	Less chance of inaccurate answers.
There is usually no time limit for answering a questionnaire.	Respondents of a schedule don't have as much time as respondents of a questionnaire.
Questionnaires can be used with a large population.	Schedules can be used mainly during one on one interaction between the interviewer and the respondent. Hence, it can be used with a small population.

What is a Questionnaire?

A questionnaire is a predefined interview style of questions shared with the respondents orally or in a written format. There is no fixed method for gathering the answers. Responses can be collected personally, remotely, or over the phone.

The questions in a questionnaire can be quantitative or qualitative. We can consider the 'number of people in your family' as a quantitative question. A question about 'what you think of the government' is open-ended, hence qualitative.

Collecting data through questionnaires is cost-effective and quick. Gathering a sizable sample of data efficiently is easy with a questionnaire. Processing the information gathered also is fairly simple. Questionnaires are efficient because they allow the standardization of questions, making comparing answers easy.

The disadvantage of a questionnaire is the honesty of the respondents. Research conclusions are as reliable as their answers. The analysis becomes tricky if people choose not to answer certain questions or do not answer accurately.

What is a Schedule?

Like the questionnaire, a schedule is a data collection tool for research. Schedules are a list of questions a data collector presents to the respondent in person. They also provide instructions on what to observe when answers are being shared.

Like questionnaires, schedules standardize the questions and make answers comparable.

However, schedules involve the interviewer's observations in addition to the answers.

Schedules work best with fewer respondents answering questions about a specific topic. An example of a schedule can be a child psychologist interviewing children on the impact of bullying.

Summary:

A key difference between questionnaire and schedule is that a questionnaire is one of the quantitative data collection tools, while a schedule is one of the qualitative data collection tools.

A questionnaire can be sent via mail, newspapers, magazines, etc., as they do not require a personal connection between the respondent and the researcher.

In contrast, an interview schedule is used while interacting with the respondent on a one-on-one basis. Answers can be written in detail by the respondent or the interviewer.

