Pilot study protocol

ESF: **DXH_MET2** Metodologie 2

Purpose for a Pilot study

- test feasibility of plan
  - methods work
  - participants go through the whole procedure without issues
  - data look as expected
  - analysis feasibility
- do people (participants) function as I imagine them?
- identify weak spots - adjust the plan

from Leong, Austin (2006)

Lets try out the procedure

- Find a suitable space
- Researcher administeres the whole procedure incl. brief informed consent and debriefing
  - Participant is just himself/herself
  - Observer tries to be invisible and looks for possible misunderstandings
- Reflection
  - Participant reflects experience – thoughts, emotions, motivation & issues
  - Observer gives feedback, ask questions for clarification, revise materials…
  - Together review materials, procedure, ethics
- Suggestions for modification

Possible sources of problems in asking questions. Respondents….

- May not understand, may misunderstand
- May not know the answer or how to get to answer
- May not be motivated to invest energy in getting the best (truest) possible answer
- May have trouble fitting their answer to the response scale you offer
- May not want to tell you the (known) answer (even though they agreed to participate)
  - May not even want to know the answer
- May have their own agenda with respect to your study
- May just wanna have fun

Possible sources of problems in observing behavior (e.g. games)

- Opportunities for observation error – vague definitions of categories, high cognitive demands on observer
- Missing important situational factors, determinants
  - Fundamental attribution error
- Missing unobservable personal variables
- Not optimal scale of behavior – too micro, too macro

- …. unless the observed behavior does not represent something else

Checklist for the pilot study

- RQ/H are clear in my mind
- Measures, materials
  - measures valid, reliable; materials representative
  - clear and standard instructions
  - assumed/required abilities of my participants
- Design, procedure
  - clear, standard sequence of acitivities
  - standard instructions, timing („rapport maintenance“)
  - monitoring the procedure
- Recruitment of participants
  - standard, clear advertisement/info (good to cross-check against consent form)
- Practical issues
  - Settings – lab, „quiet room“, online, field
  - Assistants, conferedates, other presonell

- Ready for ethical approval – make as much use of IRB as they let you
  - functional, „informing“ consent
  - considering and recognizing non-standard participants
  - debriefing as an ethical and validity-enhancing procedure, not only if deception is used, may uncover previously
- Data processing plan

Final task

- As a final outcome of the course write a short report (5-10 pages)
  - Very brief overview of the RQ an H
  - Method
  - Data description focusing on possible issues
  - Critical evaluation with suggestions for modification.