Attitude measurement

Attitude measurement

- Self-reports of attitudes are highly context dependent and minor changes in question wording, question format, and question order can profoundly affect the obtained results

- Key components of the response process:
  Comprehension – retrieval – judgment – formatting - editing

- Question comprehension

- Information retrieval and judgment
  - Question order effect
  - Response order effect

- Response formatting
  - Categorical response alternatives
  - Rating scales

- Response editing

Question comprehension

How successful have you been in your life?

1   9

-4   4

Information retrieval and judgment

▫ Question order effect
▫ Response order effect

Question order effect

1.	General satisfaction
2.	Marriage satisfaction

r= .43

1.	Marriage satisfaction
2.	General satisfaction

r= .67

WHAT TO DO?

"We now have two questions about your life. The first one pertains to your marriage and the second to your life in general."   **r= .18**

"Aside from your marriage, which you already told us about, how satisfied are you with your life in general"   **r= .20**

Response order effect

- **Written** vs. **Read** alternatives
- Written – primacy effect
- Read – recency effect

- Response order effects are more significant for older and less educated respondents

Response formatting

- Categorical Response Alternatives
  - Any opinion omitted from the list is unlikely to be reported
    - Q: "What is the most important thing for children to prepare them for life?"
      - A: "To think for themselves"
        61.5%   4.6%

Advice: Provide "I don't know" alternative

- Rating Scales
  - The effect of numeric values
  - Context dependent (answer is compared with previous answer)

Response editing

- Respondents may hesitate to report their attitude when they are concerned that their answer may present them in a negative light.
- Social desirability

Attitude measurement tools

- Likert scale
- Semantic differential
- Error choice technique

Likert Scale

- An one-dimensional scale that consists of attitude-related statements and asks individuals to indicate their agreement/disagreement with each statement along a numerical scale

Stan is the best teacher in the world.

| Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Neutral | Somewhat disagree | Somewhat disagree |
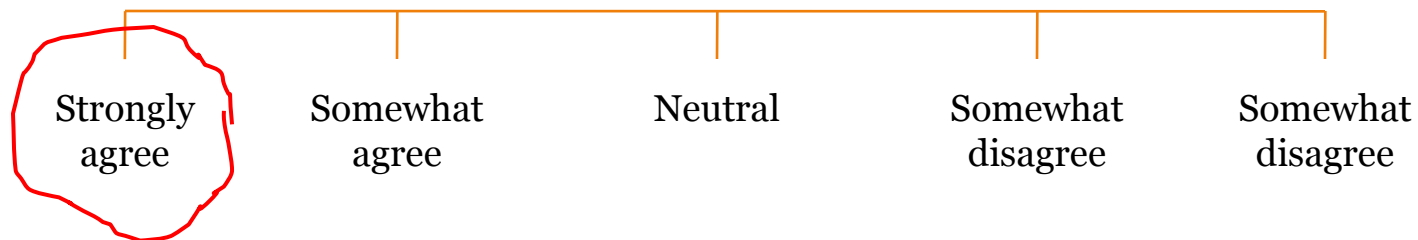
How to create the Likert scale?

1) Generate more questions than you need
2) Get a group of people to score the questionnaire
3) Sum the scores for all items
4) Calculate the intercorrelations between all pairs of items
5) Reject questions that have a low correlation with the overall score
6) For each item, calculate the t-value. Reject questions with lower t-values (higher t-values show questions with higher discrimination).

Semantic differential

- Osgood, Suci, Tannenbaum (1957)
- Respondents rate the attitude object on a number of (typically) 7-point bipolar scales that are end-anchored by evaluative adjective pairs
- (connotative meaning of words (freedom, marriage); ideas (capitalism); products (cell phones); brands (Volvo); etc...)

Barack Obama

good								bad

| honest | | | | | | | | dishonest |

| harmful | | | | | | | | beneficial |

| kind | | | | | | | | cruel |

Error-choice technique (Hammond, 1948)

- Attitudes can be indirectly measured by the bias shown in answering a mixture of factual and non-factual questions concerning a given topic
- Respondents think it is a knowledge test

The average IQ of black people is:

A: 87%   B: 113%

The average IQ of Japanese people is:

A: 85%   B: 115%

Summary – Attitude measurement

- Comprehension – retrieval – judgment – formatting – editing

- Likert Scale

- Semantic Differential

- Error-Choice Technique