Questionnaire development & testing in the 21st century: What are the challenges?

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The QDET ‘challenges’
Almost 10 years ago

“...pretesting’s universally acknowledged importance has been honored more in the breach than in practice, and not a great deal is known about many aspects of pretesting, including the extent to which pretests serve their purpose and lead to improved questionnaires.”

The QDET ‘challenge’

whether problems identified in pretests predict measurement error in surveys; which pretesting methods are best and in what circumstances

the cost-effectiveness of different pretesting methods in terms of reducing survey costs

using question-testing findings to develop theory to improve the 'repair' of questions

the development of a repository of findings from pretests to facilitate the growth of knowledge
What’s been achieved
QT predicting measurement error

Statistical modelling: e.g. MTMM, IRT

Experimental Designs, typically involving split ballot experiments

To date limited experimental evidence
- McGee (2007); Fowler (2007; 2009; 2011); Consenza (2007; 2009); Haraldsen (2009);
## Cost effectiveness

|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|

But cost effectiveness not quantified
Developing theory

Observations → Explanations → Experiments
Repository of findings

UK Data Archive

Individual org’s archives

QBank
Challenges for the next decade
Some challenges

- Does pretesting ‘improve’ survey questions?
  - How do we measure improvement?
- Which pretesting methods are most cost effective in improving survey quality?
  - How do we measure cost effectiveness?
- How do we do more with less?
- What place is there for pretesting in a world without surveys?
Shaping the agenda
What to do?

Designing experiments
To demonstrate impact and cost-effectiveness of pretesting
Defining improvement

Meta analyses
Of existing pretest data to inform theory & learn more about effective use of pretesting methods
Should QUEST be more proactive in shaping the research agenda?

What resources are needed to support this?
Thank you

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