

Tabulating Responses to Closed- and Open-Ended Questions

Tabulating Responses to Closed-Ended Questions

Closed-ended questions force participants to select a response from several alternatives. A quick method for tabulating or counting responses to each question is to use a blank questionnaire:

1. Take the first questionnaire and record the answers to each closed-ended question by making a check mark in the right-hand column next to the appropriate response.
2. Repeat this procedure for every questionnaire.
3. Tally the total number of check marks and then calculate the percentage of participants who gave each response.

Tabulating Responses to Open-Ended Questions

Tabulating or counting responses to open-ended questions is more time consuming. Open-ended questions allow participants to express themselves in their own words. For example:

- What did the message say?
- What did the message show?
- What was the main idea the message was trying to get across?

The easiest way to analyze these questions is to write each question at the top of a separate blank page (the coding sheet). Because participants are answering in their own words, the first step is to group the responses into categories (e.g., correct, partially correct, and incorrect).

When categorizing the audience recall and main idea responses, use the ad script and your own statement of the message's main points to guide the analysis. For some open-ended questions (e.g., "What, if anything, did you like about the message?" or "What, if anything, did you dislike?"), you may wish to classify the responses as favorable or unfavorable.

Use the following procedure to tally the responses:

1. Take the first questionnaire and record the answers to each open-ended question by making a check mark in the appropriate column (e.g., favorable or unfavorable).
2. Repeat this procedure for every questionnaire.
3. Tally the total number of check marks in each column and then calculate the percentage of participants who gave each type of response.

Once you have tabulated the responses to each question, your interpretation should be guided by the objectives you set forth in the planning stage.