

Forming research questions

Psychology



Forming research questions Developing usable research questions is the basis of designing and conducting a research study. A usable research question is one that distinctly outlines the aims of the research study. It also defines the limits of the study and clarifies the variable that will be studied as well as the way in which they will be studied. The research question provides information about the techniques of analysis that will be used with the collected data; as well as the expected direction of the observations, if the researcher does expect any particular trends.

On any given topic, research may be conducted using qualitative as well as quantitative methods; and the choice of the methods is determined by what aspect of the problem the researcher wishes to explore. Thus, the same topic may be explored from both the quantitative as well as qualitative perspectives.

Research topic:

The research topic for this study is “ The knowledge, attitude and practice of women in Miami Beach towards female condoms as a means of prevention of STIs”. Given this topic; a number of research questions may be developed based of the particular area being studied by the researcher.

Question #1

To determine the knowledge and likelihood of practice exhibited by women in the Miami Beach area towards female condoms as a means of prevention of STIs by means of a semi structured interview.

The data collected will be evaluated using qualitative techniques; as the data being collected is in the form of responses to a semi structured interview.

The variables under study are:

The knowledge exhibited by the women from the Miami Beach area towards
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female condoms used as a means of prevention of STIs

The likelihood of use of female condoms exhibited by the women from the Miami Beach area in an attempt to prevent STIs

This research question will provide data about the extent to which the target participants understand the importance of the female condom as a means to protect them from STI infections, and the likelihood of their using the same.

The data collected will be from female participants only; and will be collected from all participants who are sexually active.

Question #2

To determine the attitude exhibited by women in the Miami Beach area towards female condoms as a means of prevention of STIs as measured using a Likert scale as described in Spizzichino, Pedone, Gattari, Luzi, Gallo, Valli and Rezza (2007).

This study does collect numerical data; but the study is a qualitative study as it does not compare groups or attempt to find relationships. The aim of the study is to observe and record the attitude of the women participants from the Miami Beach area toward the use of the female condom. This information, when combined with the analysis of the knowledge that the participants have about the use of a female condom as a means of preventing STI's will help us understand how the target population views the subject, and what needs be done to improve the attitudes held and thus, increase the likelihood of the use of the female condoms by the participants. Collecting the data using a Likert scale helps in quantifying the overall attitude; and this information may be used later, to test changes in attitudes if promotion campaigns and other attitude change tactics are employed as a part of a social change campaign.

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Question # 3

To determine the difference in the attitudes towards the use of female condoms as a means of prevention of STIs by women above and below 35 years of age in the Miami Beach area using a Likert scale as described in Spizzichino, Pedone, Gattari, Luzi, Gallo, Valli and Rezza (2007).

It is likely that older women and younger women will have different attitudes and understanding of the STI concern, about protection use, and about the female condom. Cohort effects are often seen in the development of attitudes; and studying these effects across age groups will help identify populations that may be more at risk for STIs due to attitudinal differences towards the female condom.

This study is a quantitative study, as scores will be gathered for the participants in the two groups; and the average scores on Attitudes Towards the Female Condom will be compared across the two groups of participants. The groups will be divided according to age; and the same attitude scale will be given to both groups. The average scores of the two groups shall be compared using a t-test.

The two groups will differ on a single variable – i. e. – age of participant; which is the independent variable. The score on the Attitude Towards Use of the Female Condom scale will be the dependent variable.

References

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