PhD Comprehensives Examination March 2010

Section One 8am– 12am
Core section questions

Answer three out of four:

Question 1

Discuss the retrieval strategies that respondents use while providing behavioral frequency reports and the evidence that supports the existence of these retrieval strategies. Explain the relationship between which retrieval strategies are more likely to be used and one's past experience with the behavior (and hence how it is represented in memory), and how length of reference period will also influence which retrieval strategy is used. Review the evidence regarding the relationships among retrieval strategy, memory representation, and the accuracy of behavioral frequency reports, on how context can impact behavioral frequency reports, and on how certain conditions involving both retrieval strategy and memory representation can mitigate the impact of context.

Question 2

You have been asked by a client to conduct a study in the state of Nebraska to measure the proportion of people who have high-speed internet access, who are cell-only, and who use a digital video recorder (DVR) to record television shows. The client wants to know if they should conduct an in-person survey, a telephone survey, a web survey, a mail survey, or a survey that combines at least two of these modes. They have a large budget, but want the information quickly. What would you recommend? Be sure to discuss the pros and cons of each option for this survey and to justify your final recommendation given these.

Question 3

Cross-national studies need to collect socio-demographic information that often cannot usefully be collected on the basis of simply asking the same question with the same answer categories across populations. Explain and demonstrate why this is the case. Then describe the basic options available to collect such data for a cross-national social science survey in which such information is to be used as so-called "background variables". Discuss the individual advantages or disadvantages of each approach. You will probably find it helpful to concentrate three variables, from such as education, occupation, race/and or ethnicity, religion, or household composition. Refer to relevant literature and any pertinent studies you know in answering the question.
Question 4

You have been asked to conduct a mail survey of adults in the state of Nebraska. The client wants one adult member of the household randomly selected to be the respondent. Compare and contrast at least two methods for within-household selection. Name at least three strengths and weaknesses of each method. Reflect and refer to appropriate literature in your answer.