Difference between Questionnaires & Schedules

Both questionnaire and schedule are popularly used methods of collecting data in research studies. From the technical point of view there are some differences between the two.

Sl. No.	**Questionnaires**	**Schedules**
1	The questionnaire is generally sent through mail to informants to be answered as specified in a covering letter.	The schedule is generally filled out by the research worker or the enumerator, who can interpret questions when necessary.
2	This method is relatively cheap and economical since we have to spend money only in preparing the questionnaire and in mailing the same to respondents. Here no field staff required.	Whereas to collect data through schedules is relatively more expensive since considerable amount of money has to be spent in appointing enumerators and in importing training to them. Money is also spent in preparing schedules.
3	In case of questionnaire, it is not always clear as to who answers the questions.	But in case of schedule the Identity of respondent is known.
4	Non-response is usually high in case of questionnaire as many people do not wish to respond and many return the questionnaire without answering all questions.	In case of schedules non-response is generally very low because these are filled by enumerators who are able to get answers to all questions.
5	Questionnaire method can be used only when respondents are literate and cooperative.	In case of schedules the information can be collected even from illiterate respondents because of the physical presence of the investigator.
6	Under the questionnaire Method, wider and more representative distribution of sample is possible.	But in respect of schedules there usually remains the difficulty in sending enumerators over a relatively wider area.
7	Along with schedules, observation	But such a thing is not possible while

	method can also be used.	collecting data through questionnaires.
8	The success of questionnaire method lies more on the quality of the questionnaire itself.	In the case of schedules much depends upon the honesty and competence of enumerators.

Collection of Secondary Data

Sources of secondary data may either be published data or unpublished data. Various published data sources are:

- various publications of the central, state are local governments;
- various publications of foreign governments or of international bodies and their subsidiary organisations;
- technical and trade journals;
- books, magazines and newspapers;
- reports and publications of various associations connected with business and industry, banks, stock exchanges, etc.;
- reports prepared by research scholars, universities, economists, etc. in different fields; and
- Public records and statistics, historical documents, and other sources of published information.

The sources of unpublished data are:

- Personal diaries, letters,
- unpublished biographies and autobiographies
- information available with scholars and research workers, trade associations, labour bureaus and other public/private individuals and organisations.

One must be very careful in using secondary data. By way of caution, the researcher, before using secondary data, must see that they possess following characteristics:

1. Reliability of data: The reliability can be tested by finding out such things about the said data: (a) Who collected the data? (b) What were the sources of data? (c) Were they collected by using proper methods (d) At what time were they collected?(e) Was there any bias of the compiler? (t) What level of accuracy was desired? Was it achieved ?

2. Suitability of data: The data that are suitable for one enquiry may not necessarily be found suitable in another enquiry. Hence, if the available data are found to be unsuitable, they should not be used by the researcher. In this context, the researcher must very carefully scrutinise the definition of various terms and units of collection used at the time of collecting the data from the primary source originally. Similarly, the object, scope and nature of the original enquiry must also be studied. If the researcher finds differences in these, the data will remain unsuitable for the present enquiry and should not be used.

3. Adequacy of data: If the level of accuracy achieved in data is found inadequate for the purpose of the present enquiry, they will be considered as inadequate and should not be used by the researcher. The data will also be considered inadequate, if they are related to an area which may be either narrower or wider than the area of the present enquiry.

How to decide which method to be adopted?

As such the researcher must judiciously select the method/methods for his own study, keeping in view the following factors:

1. **Nature, scope and object of enquiry**
2. **Availability of funds**
3. **Time factor**
4. **Precision required**

Source: C.R. Kothari, "Research Methodology Methods & Techniques", Second Edition, New Delhi: New Age International publisher, 2004.