

Nature of Questions in a Survey

The questions that will be asked in a survey will depend on the nature of the subject that is being investigated. On some occasions, open-ended questions for which the subject may provide an answer in a format and of a length of the subject's choosing are used. Such open-ended questions are appropriate for circumstances in which the researcher is looking for general observations and insights. However, for other circumstances, in which the researcher wishes to determine the intensity of the subject's opinion, questions with pre-defined measurement scales may be provided. Measurement scales provide a range of potential answers from which the subject will select. For example, in political surveys, it is not uncommon to ask a subject's opinion about a government policy by asking if they strongly agree with the policy, somewhat agree with the policy, somewhat disagree with the policy, strongly disagree with the policy or have no opinion about the policy. A subject's opinion can also be expressed on a numerical scale with one extreme of the subject's opinion being rated as the highest value on the scale. Common values for the highest number are 5, 7 and 9, but other values can be used, and the other extreme being rated as a 1 or a 0 on the scale. When the subject selects a particular value on such a measurement scale, the intensity of the subject's feeling about the topic is known.