

What effect does questionnaire wording have on response surveys, public opinion polls, and victim surveys?

The effect that questionnaire wording has on responses on surveys, public opinion polls and victim surveys is much like how people can choose different inflections on different words to change the meaning of their sentences.

ARE you going to the mall?

Are YOU going to the mall?

Are you going to the MALL?

Take a look at this, here we have three sentences that are exactly the same. The only difference with each is that the focal point of each sentence is set on a different word which in turn gives the sentence a different meaning.

Wording on surveys and questionnaires have the same affect. Different words can strike different feelings and opinions from people. Some words are terrible and to use them can force the person to feel differently about a subject than they would have otherwise if the wording had been different.

Do you think it is okay to harness our natural resources?

Do you think it is okay to rape mother Earth?

Two different questions that could be considered to mean the same thing that are written and worded differently that can inspire different feelings. The use of the ugly word 'rape' could make a person immediately frown and be disgusted with the context that it is being used and immediately disagree with the statement.

Response 2

Questionnaire wording can affect response surveys, public opinion polls, and victim surveys either negatively or positively. If the wording in a questionnaire is bias, demanding, suggestive, or threatening then the individuals taking the survey may feel pressured into choosing the correct answer. If the wording used is medical or scientific terminology, yet the survey takers are in high school, then chances are the individuals will give up half way or guess on all their answers. If the questionnaire is aimed towards foreign individuals but not

translated properly or at all, chances are the individuals will be confused by the questions and guess on the answers. Other ways that questionnaire wording may affect polls or surveys is by the use of too many open-ended questions, skip questions, or unnecessary questions.

All of these mistakes in questionnaire wording can cause individuals to answer the polls or surveys incorrectly, either purposely or accidentally. This will in turn cause the researchers to receive inaccurate responses and data. What this means is that the answers will provide guesses rather than factual information. When conducting surveys or polls ones main goal is to collect factual data that can be useful to research such as criminal justice programs.