

Knowledge Bias by Utilizing the Wording on Feedback Questionnaires: A Case Study of an Israeli College

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Abstract Many academic institutions tend to make use of feedback questionnaires without paying the attention required to the effect of wording and meanings on the results obtained. Recent evidence suggests that careless usage may be biased, and in some cases, the feedback may even be used as a punishment tool. This article examines the effect of the wording in questionnaires utilizing Likert-type scales, as tested on undergraduate students. The research hypothesis addresses the way in which the questions are worded. The findings show that wording has a direct impact on the results and show that there is a built-in bias in responses to questionnaires, as a direct result of the wording. Understanding knowledge bias is important in analyzing the decision-making process.

Keywords Knowledge bias · Feedback · Likert scale · Wording · Decision-making

Introduction

Distribution of student feedback questionnaires in Israel began about 30 years ago. It began as a student initiative to publish opinions on professors, so as to force the academic administration to improve instruction. Gradually, college administrations adopted the idea, but the results were not disclosed to students; instead, only the administration and lecturer in question received the feedback results. Collecting this data has been done for decades, and every few years, small changes are made in the nature of the questions. However, in general, the issue of academic course evaluations has a long history. An early example by [Bassin \(1974\)](#) included a series of Likert scales concerned with five aspects of teaching. These were lecture quality, exam quality, text

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