



## Types of Survey Questions <sup>[1]</sup>

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The questions are the primary tools in collecting necessary information from the respondents of a survey. By making the right choices on the type of survey questions, you will be able to extract only data that are related to the purpose or goal of the survey.

Before constructing questions, you must be knowledgeable about each type of question used in survey research. These basically include:

### 1. Closed-Ended Questions

Closed-ended questions limit the answers of the respondents to response options provided on the questionnaire.

- **Advantages:** time-efficient; responses are easy to code and interpret; ideal for quantitative <sup>[3]</sup> type of research
- **Disadvantages:** respondents are required to choose a response that does not exactly reflect their answer; the researcher cannot further explore the meaning of the responses

Some examples of close ended questions are:

- a. **Dichotomous or two-point questions** (e.g. Yes or No, Unsatisfied or Satisfied)
- b. **Multiple choice questions** (e.g. A, B, C or D)
- c. **Scaled questions** that are making use of rating scales such as the Likert scale (i.e. a type of five-point scale), three-point scales, semantic differential scales, and seven-point scales

### 2. Open-Ended Questions

In open-ended questions, there are no predefined options or categories included. The participants <sup>[4]</sup> should supply their own answers.

- **Advantages:** participants can respond to the questions exactly as how they would like to answer them; the researcher can investigate the meaning of the responses; ideal for qualitative <sup>[5]</sup> type of research
- **Disadvantages:** time-consuming; responses are difficult to code and interpret

Some examples of open-ended questions include:

- a. **Completely unstructured questions**- openly ask the opinion or view of the respondent
- b. **Word association questions** - the participant states the first word that pops in his mind once a series of words are presented
- c. **Thematic Apperception Test** – a picture is presented to the respondent which he explains on his own point-of-view
- d. **Sentence, story or picture completion** – the respondent continues an incomplete sentence or story, or writes on empty conversation balloons in a picture

### 3. Matrix Questions

Matrix questions are also closed-ended questions but are arranged one under the other, such that the questions form a matrix or a table with identical response options placed on top. For example:

Please rate the following characteristics of the product based on your satisfaction ( use a check mark):

	<b>Strongly Satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Unsatisfied</b>	<b>Strongly Unsatisfied</b>
Size					
Color					
Shape					
Overall Appearance					

### 4. Contingency Questions

Questions that need to be answered only when the respondent provides a particular response to a question prior to them are called contingency questions. Asking these questions effectively avoids asking people questions that are not applicable to them. For example:

Have you ever smoked a cigarette?

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

If YES, how many times have you smoked cigarette?

\_\_\_ Once

\_\_\_ 2-5 times

\_\_\_ 6-10 times

\_\_\_ more than 10 times

The second question above is what we refer to as a contingency question following up a closed-ended question.

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