

Question in Project:

German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES) 2021 (English Version)

Question Topic:

Politics/ Attitudes, appraisals, & ideologies

Construct:

Interest in the campaign & importance of the outcome of the election

General Information:

***Note: The item was tested in German. This is an English translation of the original German wording.**

Question Text:

Version a. How strongly do you care about the campaign for the upcoming federal election?

[Wie stark interessiert Sie der Wahlkampf zur bevorstehenden Bundestagswahl?]

Version b. How important is it to you personally how the upcoming federal election turns out?

[Wie wichtig ist es Ihnen persönlich, wie die kommende Bundestagswahl ausgeht?]

Answer Categories:

Version a:

Very strongly *[sehr stark]*

Strongly *[stark]*

Moderately *[mittelmäßig]*

Less strongly *[weniger stark]*

Not at all *[überhaupt nicht]*

Version b:

Very important *[sehr wichtig]*

Important *[wichtig]*

Moderately *[mittelmäßig]*

Less important *[nicht so wichtig]*

Not important at all *[überhaupt nicht wichtig]*

Cognitive Techniques:

Specific Probing

Findings for Question:

Questions 12a and 12b asked about interest in the upcoming federal election and the importance of the outcome of this election. Both questions used a five-point scale. More persons ($n = 5$) indicated that the outcome of the election was "very important" to them than that they "cared very strongly" about the election ($n = 3$). Similarly, more persons indicated that they cared "less strongly" ($n = 4$) about the election than indicated that they find the outcome "less important" ($n = 1$).

1. Are the two questions experienced by respondents as interchangeable?

The response distributions already indicated that the questions were not perceived as interchangeable or redundant by the persons. Numbering the differently named scales, three persons chose the same value in both questions. Six persons placed a higher value on the election outcome than they did on personal interest. Only one respondent (TP 03) stated that she was "very interested" in the Bundestag election, but that the outcome was only "moderately" important to her.

When asked, all ten test persons stated that the two questions would depict different aspects. The first question was aimed at interest in the election in the run-up to the election, while the second question represented the importance of the election outcome:

- *"These are different aspects. The campaign is before the election, the outcome of the election is the after."* (TP 07)
- *"They are not interchangeable. One is the process that I look at, for example, how fair an election campaign is. The other is the result that comes out; we have to endure that for four years. Those are different issues, sure."* (TP 09)

No comprehension problems were evident with either question.

Recommendations:

Question: We recommend asking "how much" instead of "how strongly" for question 12.

Response format: In order to adapt the response options to the questions in terms of wording, we recommend that both response scales be rephrased a little:

Question 12a: "very" – "rather" – "moderately" – "rather not" – "not at all"

Question 12b: "very important" – "rather important" – "moderately" – "rather unimportant" – "very unimportant"