

Written questionnaires for investigating students' career aspirations

[Business](#), [Career](#)



A questionnaire is a set list of questions. Positivists see questionnaires as useful because they produce statistical data which correlations and cause and effect relationships can be drawn. Positivists in particular see questionnaires because they produce statistical data from which correlations and cause and effects relationships can be drawn. Advantages of using questionnaires are very useful for getting large quantities of basic information on career aspirations. The pupils are geographically scattered group.

It is easier to research a large sample size of pupils. This can easily be done by posting the questionnaires to them, as Connor and Dewson did in 2001 when they posted 4, 000 questionnaires out. Positivists see this as useful because they want to be able to make generalisation by using a representative group. It can be particularly useful when researching sensitive issues. Their anonymity may overcome pupils' embarrassment such as questions about financial support etc. As a result, the response may be more likely to be higher to reveal details of their experience.

However, it depends on whether the pupils and parents are reassured that their anonymity will be safeguarded. Questionnaires are much better to find data which can be compared and analysed, and are therefore particularly useful for testing hypotheses about cause-and-effect relationships present in pupils' career aspirations, such as correlation between family income and pupils aspirations. From this analysis, we can make statements about the possible causes of poor pupil aspirations and which children are most likely

to have them. Positivists therefore favour this more compared to interpretivists.

However there are also many limitations of using questionnaires for investigating pupils' career aspirations. For example questionnaires are only snapshots of time. They give a picture of social reality at only one moment in time, and for something such as career aspirations which change constantly and are never really fixed always. Furthermore trends in career aspirations are always likely to be present; this means that information could possibly be biased or incorrect. This is why interpretivists tend not to use written questionnaires.

Another limitation of using written questionnaires for investigating pupils' career aspirations is that they are a very inflexible method as argued by interpretivists. Once the researcher has found out the pupils career aspirations, no other areas of interests can be explored. This contrasts with more flexible methods of research such as unstructured interviews, which allows the research to go in different directions, as preferred by interpretivists. In conclusion, there are several strengths as well as limitations of using written questionnaires, however in the case of investigations pupils' careers aspirations written questionnaires are useful and insightful.