Should I Judge Safety or Danger?

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Introduction

The phrasing of a question (i.e., question frame) focuses attention on a certain perspective while suppressing attention toward alternative perspectives. That perspective becomes the reference point for the judgment. Information cues are selected and analyzed relative to that reference point.

Research Questions

1. Does the question frame influence perceived risk?
2. Does the question frame influence skiing behavior?
3. Can question framing help backcountry skiers to make better risk judgments and decisions in avalanche terrain?

Methods

- 6 studies ($N = 1599$)
- Experienced skiers judged backcountry scenarios
- Studies 1-4: 6 scenarios of uncertain risk
- Studies 5-6: 3 safe scenarios, 4 uncertain scenarios, and 3 dangerous scenarios
- Half the participants judged "How safe is it?"; half judged "How dangerous is it?" (7-point response scale)
- All reported whether they would ski each scenario (Yes/No/I cannot say)
- Ordinal regression analysis using multilevel models

Link to view all scenarios: https://osf.io/6zs2a/

Results

Risk perception is influenced by the question frame

How SAFE is it? resulted in more conservative risk judgments and behavior than How DANGEROUS is it?