Some chemistry students were investigating the relationship between concentration and rate of reaction. In the investigation, different concentrations of hydrochloric acid were added to a sodium thiosulfate solution to produce solid sulfur. This reaction was represented by the following equation.

$$2 \; H^{\scriptscriptstyle +}(aq) \quad + \quad S_{_2}O_{_3}{^{_2 \scriptscriptstyle -}}(aq) \quad \to \quad SO_{_2}(g) \quad + \quad S(s) \quad + \quad H_{_2}O(\ell)$$

A piece of paper with a cross drawn on it was placed under the reaction vessel. The time taken for the cross to disappear due to the formation of the precipitate was measured.

- 24. When a number of laboratory groups pooled their data, one group's results were consistently higher than those of the others. This is an example of
 - (a) a systematic error.
 - (b) not enough trials.
 - (c) a random error.
 - (d) uncertainty.