

Bias

Another very important point to consider is bias. If the information gathered from a sample is not representative of the entire sample, it is biased. Or, if the researcher asks leading questions, it is biased.

Example

Vitamin A is an important nutrient. It is used to make rhodopsin, a pigment in our eyes. Thus, Vitamin A is necessary for healthy vision. People can develop night blindness if they do not get enough of it. Carrots are an excellent source of vitamin A.

Question: Do you think carrots should be a part of your daily diet?

Do you think this question is biased?

Maybe not, but what if you were told it was written by people who grow carrots for sale?



Types of Bias

Selection Bias

Selection bias occurs when the sample used in the research sample does not reflect the entire population accurately. For example, finding out how much people in Dublin exercise by asking the people leaving a gym.

Measurement Bias

Measurement bias occurs when researchers use methods that influence the results, for example, creating questionnaires where the questions influence the response.

Intervention Bias

Intervention bias refers to the timing of the research and how much the researcher intervenes with the subjects.

Exercise

1. One of these questions is biased. Which one? Why is it biased?
 - (a) Should people have the right to smoke in public places?
 - (b) Since cigarettes are dangerous and have deadly side effects such as cancer wouldn't you agree that smoking should be controlled to save the lives of many?
2. Are any of these survey questions biased?

Question	Biased	Unbiased
Do you agree that a jungle party would be more fun than a bowling party?		
Of the following three parties, which would you prefer: a) jungle party, b) beach party, c) sports-themed party?		
Cake sales are a lot of fun. Should we have a cake sale to earn money for the party?		
Would you be willing to help decorate for the party? a) yes, b) no, c) maybe		
Would you be more likely to come to the party if it was during the week or at the weekend?		
Do you agree with the Student Council President that more students will come to the party if it is during the week than if it is at the weekend?		
Most people like ice-cream. Should we have ice-cream at the party?		
What is your favourite flavour of ice-cream?		
Which of the following foods would you prefer for the party a) delicious pizza, b) hot dogs, c) pasta		