

Response bias

Response bias is a type of [cognitive bias](#) which can affect the results of a [statistical survey](#) if respondents answer questions in the way they think the questioner wants them to answer rather than according to their true [beliefs](#). This may occur if the questioner is obviously angling for a particular answer (as in [push polling](#)) or if the respondent wishes to please the questioner by answering what appears to be the "[morally](#) right" answer. An example of the latter might be if a woman surveys a man on his attitudes to [domestic violence](#), or someone who obviously cares about the [environment](#) asks people how much they value a [wilderness area](#).

This occurs most often in the *wording of the question*. Response bias is present when a question contains a leading opinion. For example, saying "Given that at the age of 18 people are old enough to fight and die for your country, don't you think they should be able to drink alcohol as well?" yields a response bias. It is better to say "Do you think 18 year olds should be able to drink alcohol?"

It also occurs in situations of voluntary response, such as phone-in polls, where the people who care enough to call are not necessarily a statistically representative sample of the actual population.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Response_bias