**Remaining unbiased when conducting M&E**

When conducting an evaluation, it is paramount to remain unbiased in order to ensure that you gain the best and most accurate insight into the progress, or the lack of progress, of a project.

The above table has been compiled using information cited from:

<https://www.quirks.com/articles/9-types-of-research-bias-and-how-to-avoid-them>

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| --- | --- |
| Type of bias | How to avoid |
| **Selection bias**  When the selection of participants leads to a result that is different from what you would have gotten if you had enrolled the entire target population | Use random or stratified random sampling techniques and be cautious of interviewing too many participants suggested to you by other participants (the snowball effect) as participants may purposefully suggest certain individuals. |
| **Confirmation Bias**  When a researcher forms a hypothesis and uses respondents’ information to confirm that belief. Researchers judge responses that confirm their hypotheses as relevant and reliable, while dismissing evidence that doesn’t support a hypothesis. | Continually re-evaluate impressions of participants and challenge any pre-existing assumptions. |
| **Cultural Bias**  When a researcher judges any responses or results by your own culture’s values. | Show positive regard and be cognizant of cultural assumptions |
| **Question-order Bias**  When questions may influence responses to subsequent questions. For example, if a respondent rates one product a 10 and is then asked to rate a competitive product, they will make a rating that is relative to the 10 they just provided. | Ask general questions before specific questions.  Ask unaided questions before aided questions.  Ask positive questions before negative questions. |
| **Leading Questions and Wording Bias**  Elaborating on a respondent’s answer puts words in their mouth and. Researchers may do this because they are trying to confirm a hypothesis, build rapport or overestimate their understanding of the respondent. | Ask questions that use the respondents’ language and inquire about the implications of a respondent’s thoughts and reactions. Avoid summarizing what the respondents said in your own words and do not take what they said further. |
| **Recall Bias**  This happens when participants do not remember previous events or experiences accurately and may omit details. | Check your results against other data collection method results. Devise quality questionnaires and ensure that participants are given sufficient time for adequate recall of long-term memory. |
| **Analysis Bias**  When analysing findings, the researcher may naturally look for data that confirm their hypotheses or confirm personal experience, overlooking data inconsistent with personal beliefs. | Contextualise your results, triangulate findings, do not overstate or understate your findings. Be aware of subconscious bias towards results which confirm your hypothesis. |

Other points to consider

* + Contextualise your findings
  + Triangulate or double-check your findings
  + Use various data collection methods