

What is a response error?

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Errors in obtaining responses from survey respondents are known as response errors. Some of the causes of response error include the following.

People may want to answer accurately but find it difficult to do so, for example, because they remember the name of a car they bought a few years ago but not the brand of sweets they bought a few days ago, or they forget whether they bought them or not, because the subject is of little interest to them or their memory is uncertain.

Respondents may also consciously give inaccurate answers, for example, giving factually incorrect answers about private details such as age, occupation or income, or answering questions about their opinions in a tautological manner.

Type of errors

Data errors

In addition to response errors, the following errors may occur in each process in obtaining data and should be noted.

Survey planning

Planning is misguided and attempts to obtain irrelevant data.

Selection of the target population

Attempting to obtain data by selecting an unrepresentative group of people.

Survey collection

Data is lost due to absence or refusal of the respondents, even after careful selection.

Question and answer

Interviews do not always provide reliable data.

Counting

Insufficient checking of individual data, tabulation errors occur and are not noticed.