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## Selecting the Survey Method

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There are various types of survey method, and each one of them has its own advantages and disadvantages. The success of conducting a survey always involves choosing the most suitable survey method by means of balancing the pros and cons and considering other factors related to the survey methods.

In order to choose the best survey method for a particular survey project, you need to consider the following:

The banner features the Explorable logo and the text "Quiz Time!". Below the logo are three quiz cards:

- Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2** (Image: Red roller skates on a wooden deck)
- Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2** (Image: A fan of colorful pens)
- Quiz: Flags in Europe** (Image: A Ferris wheel at sunset)

[See all quizzes =>](#)

## Population and Sampling

Before you choose a survey method, [1] you need to point out the characteristics of people who belong to your target population. Literacy levels, language issues, geographic restrictions must be analyzed first. If the target population is composed of college students, you may choose the online survey method. However, if the target population is comprised of homeless people, online, telephone or mail surveys are not suitable, but a personal interview survey is.

In terms of sampling issues, consider the number of respondents in the sample when choosing a survey method. Online surveys are best for surveys requiring a hundred or a thousand responses, while telephone surveys are ideal for 10 to 20 responses.

# Questions

The types of questions that will be asked matter in choosing the right survey method. A survey that asks mostly closed-ended questions needs paper-and-pencil survey, [online survey](#) [2] or [telephone survey](#) [3], whereas a survey containing more open-ended questions requires a focus group survey or a personal interview survey. The length and type of the [response scales](#) [4] to be used are also considered along with the [question types](#) [5].

# Bias Issues

One of the [bias](#) [6] issues that you need to look at is social desirability. Many respondents might answer questions that make them look good even when their responses are not really true. Social desirability is a serious concern when conducting a [personal interview](#) [7] survey or a [focus group](#) [8] survey, but can also be present in self-administered [online](#) [2] or mail surveys.

Another bias issue is concerned with how the interviewer asks the questions. Judgments may be created if the interviewer already has strong opinions about the topic and might not listen to what the respondent has to say.

Seen also: [Hawthorne Effort](#) [9].

Personal interview survey makes sure that you are getting the responses from the very person that is included in the sample. On the other hand, false respondent bias may come to fore when using a mail survey or an online survey, as it is more difficult to verify the person who really gave the responses with these methods. A countermeasure often include that a each participant get a token or a code which they enter in the beginning of the survey and researchers may match to the individual.

# Resources

Other factors that you need to consider when choosing a survey method include the costs and budget for the survey, the facilities and equipment needed to conduct and process the survey, the time allotted, and the manpower the survey demands.

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**Source URL:** <https://explorable.com/selecting-the-survey-method?gid=1576>

## Links

[1] <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/survsel.php>

[2] <https://explorable.com/online-surveys>

[3] <https://explorable.com/telephone-survey>

[4] <https://explorable.com/survey-response-scales>

[5] <https://explorable.com/types-of-survey-questions>

[6] <https://explorable.com/research-bias>

[7] <https://explorable.com/personal-interview-survey>

[8] <https://explorable.com/focus-groups>

[9] <https://explorable.com/hawthorne-effect>