

5.4: Exercises

In practice, *wording effects* are often an extremely strong influence on the answers people give when surveyed. So... Suppose you were doing a survey of American voters opinions of the president. Think of a way of asking a question which would tend to *maximize* the number of people who said they approved of the job he is doing. Then think of another way of asking a question which would tend to *minimize* that number [who say they approve of his job performance].

Think of a survey question you could ask in a survey of the general population of Americans in response to which many [most?] people would *lie*. State what would be the issue you would be investigating with this survey question, as a clearly defined, formal *variable* and *parameter* on the population of all Americans. Also tell exactly what would be the wording of the question you think would get lying responses.

Now think of a way to do an observational study which would get more accurate values for this variable and for the parameter of interest. Explain in detail.

Many parents believe that their small children get a bit hyperactive when they eat or drink sweets (candies, sugary sodas, *etc.*), and so do not let their kids have such things before nap time, for example. A pediatrician at Euphoria State University Teaching Hospital [ESUTH] thinks instead that it is the parents' expectations about the effects of sugar which cause their children to become hyperactive, and not the sugar at all.

Describe a randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blind experiment which would collect data about this ESUTH pediatrician's hypothesis. Make sure you are clear about both which part of your experimental procedure addresses each of those important components of good experimental design.

Is the experiment you described in the previous exercise an ethical one? What must the ESUTH pediatrician do before, during, and after the experiment to make sure it is ethical? Make sure you discuss (at least) the checklist of ethical guidelines from this chapter and how each point applies to this particular experiment.

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