

## Assessing Potential Research Problems

There are a number of problems that can arise in the market research process.

Your task in this exercise is to review the list of potential problems below and assess their likelihood of occurrence and their potential impact (that is, the damage to the validity of the final research results) if they did occur.

	<b>Potential Problem</b>	<b>How Likely?</b> (Very, somewhat, unlikely)	<b>Likely Impact?</b> (Major, minor, none)
1	You could speak to the wrong people. E.g. You interview mainly people in their 20's about nursing homes		
2	You ask badly worded or confusing questions. E.g. "How many times, in the last week or month, have you (or someone else) bought a packet of chewing gum that was on special or was in green packaging?"		
3	Respondents could make up the answers. Particularly if they are in a hurry		
4	Interviewers could make up the answers. Possible if you are using untrained people		
5	People may behave differently than what they say. E.g. "How often do you buy "generic (un-branded)" products?"		
6	Not enough people respond to the survey. E.g. Only 50 customers complete your firm's survey		

7	<p>You select an inappropriate research design.</p> <p>E.g. You use focus group/s to estimate your firm's market share</p>		
8	<p>You get too many of the same 'type' of respondents to your survey.</p> <p>E.g. A lot of retired people respond as they have more spare time</p>		

### Student Discussion Questions

1. Complete the above table, by assessing the likelihood of each research problem and the degree of impact it could have.
2. Therefore, which ones do you see as the most significant potential research problems?
3. In what ways can we control (or even correct) these issues if they could (or do) occur?
4. Are there any on the list that are 'hard to control'? (That is, they happen anyway, even if we try to prepare for them.)
5. Are there any types of survey design (that is, phone, mail, face-to-face, internet) that are more prone to potential problems? Why?