

# Bias Definitions

## Affinity Bias

**Definition:** Unconscious tendency to get along with others who are like us. It is easy to socialize and spend time with others who are not different. It requires more effort to bridge differences when diversity is present.

**Example:** Walk into any high school cafeteria in America, and you will see students grouped by perceived affinity.

## Confirmation Bias

**Definition:** Confirmation bias is the tendency to search for, interpret, favor, and recall information that confirms or supports one's prior beliefs or values.

**Example:** For example, imagine that a person holds a belief that left-handed people are more creative than right-handed people. Whenever this person encounters a person that is both left-handed and creative, they place greater importance on this "evidence" that supports what they already believe.

## Halo Effect

**Definition:** Halo effect is the tendency for positive impressions of a person, company, brand or product in one area to positively influence one's opinion or feelings in other areas.

**Example:** One great example of the halo effect in action is our overall impression of celebrities. Since people perceive them as attractive, successful, and often likable, they also tend to see them as intelligent, kind, and funny.

## Status Quo Bias

**Definition:** Status quo bias is an emotional bias; a preference for the current state of affairs.

**Example:** One study found that when given the choice between their current medication and an even better medication, people are biased toward choosing their current medicine. Rather than risk trying an unknown medication, people prefer to stick with what they know, even if it is potentially not as good as the alternatives.

## Implicit Bias

**Definition:** An implicit bias/unconscious bias, or implicit stereotype, is the unconscious attribution of particular qualities by an individual to a member of some social out group

**Example:** a person may unconsciously form a bias towards all Pitbulls as being dangerous animals.

## Fundamental Attribution Error

**Definition:** The tendency for people to under-emphasize situational explanations for an individual's observed behavior while over-emphasizing dispositional and personality-based explanations for their behavior

**Example:** Alice, a driver, is cut off in traffic by Bob. Alice attributes Bob's behavior to his fundamental personality, e.g., he thinks only of himself, he is selfish, he is an unskilled driver; she does not think it is situational, e.g., he is going to miss his flight, his wife is giving birth at the hospital, his daughter is convulsing at school.

## Endowment Effect

**Definition:** People are more likely to retain an object they own than acquire that same object when they do not own it. Endowment effect is, in part, due to the fact that once a person owns an item, forgoing it feels like a loss, and humans are loss-averse.

**Example:** One study revealed: participants first given a Swiss chocolate bar were generally unwilling to trade it for a coffee mug, whereas participants first given the coffee mug were generally unwilling to trade it for the chocolate bar.

## Sunk Cost Fallacy

**Definition:** Individuals commit the sunk cost fallacy when they continue a behavior or endeavor as a result of previously invested resources.

**Example:** For example, individuals sometimes order too much food and then over-eat just to "get their money's worth".

## Framing Bias

**Definition:** Occurs when people make a decision based on the way the information is presented, as opposed to just on the facts themselves.

**Example:** 93% of PhD students registered early when a penalty fee for late registration was emphasized, with only 67% doing so when this was presented as a discount for earlier registration.

## Post Hoc Fallacy

**Definition:** Since event Y followed event X, event Y must have been caused by event X.

**Example:** A simple example is "the rooster crows immediately before sunrise; therefore the rooster causes the sun to rise."

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## Anchoring Bias

**Definition:** Individual depends too heavily on an initial piece of information offered to make subsequent judgments during decision making. Once the value of this anchor is set, all future negotiations, arguments, estimates, etc. are discussed in relation to the anchor.

**Example:** The initial price offered for a used car, set either before or at the start of negotiations, sets an arbitrary focal point for all following discussions. Prices discussed in negotiations that are lower than the anchor may seem reasonable, perhaps even cheap to the buyer, even if said prices are still relatively higher than the actual market value of the car.

## Group Think

**Definition:** Psychological phenomenon that occurs within a group of people in which the desire for harmony or conformity in the group results in an irrational or dysfunctional decision-making outcome. Cohesiveness, or the desire for cohesiveness, in a group may produce a tendency among its members to agree at all costs. This causes the group to minimize conflict and reach a consensus decision without critical evaluation.

**Example:** critics of Twitter point to the predominance of the hive mind in such social media, the kind of groupthink that submerges independent thinking in favor of conformity to the group, the collective