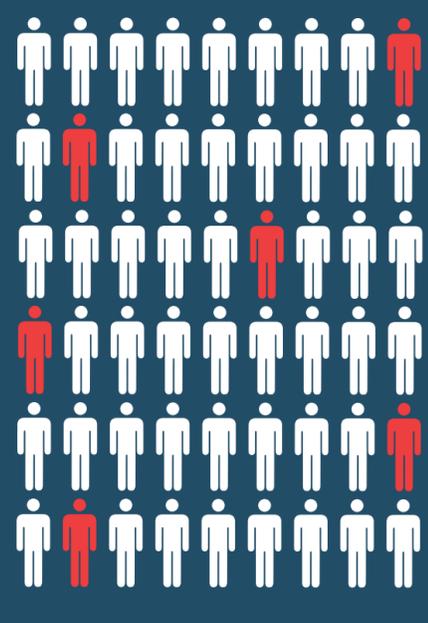


5 WAYS TO SPOT 'FAKE' RESEARCH

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1. IS IT GENERALIZABLE?

Generalization involves drawing **broad inferences** from **particular observations**. For example, survey research using a random sample allows researchers to generalize the results to the population. Generalization depends on certain factors, such as **sample size** and **response rate**. Examining the methodology is a good first step in deciding if the results can be generalized.



2. IS IT UNBIASED?

Good research is unbiased. When examining research, look at how data are collected to see if it is free from **potential influence**. For example, if a survey was conducted, ensure the wording of the questions **did not encourage a desired response**. Determine how the survey was distributed; a confidential or anonymous survey typically provides the most unbiased response. Also, review **who** conducted the research, and whether the conclusions **are consistent with other data and research**.



3. IS IT TRANSPARENT?

Good research is **transparent** about its methodology, data collection, and sponsorship/funding source. The methodology section should always answer **who, what, when, where, why, and how**. Additionally, researchers should be open and honest about the limitations or flaws in the research. This transparency can aid in future research. If any of these transparency components are missing, **it is a red flag**.



4. IS IT AS OBJECTIVE AS POSSIBLE?

Research should be objective as much as possible from personal interest or emotional preferences. Understandably, researchers may become emotionally attached to research and desire a certain outcome, but it is important to remain objective or recognize subjectivity.



Question the sources you choose and consider all the facts.



Approach the topic from a different angle and pose different questions.



Point out gaps or fallacies in your research.



Be open and transparent about your results.

5. IS IT ETHICAL?

Ethical research practice is **vital** to producing valid research. Individuals must give **consent** before you involve them in research, and understand how the information they provide will be used.

What should be disclosed to the participants prior to their participation:

- What personal information will be collected and tracked
- Research risks
- How the responses will be shared and used
- Accurate range of participation time
- Contact information for the survey point of contact for questions
- Ability to decline questions or withdraw from the survey at any time



All in all, conducting good or valid research can be difficult, and it is easy to allow human error. Additionally, it is important that as consumers of research, we **critically assess and analyze research** to determine the extent to which it is generalizable, unbiased, transparent, objective, and ethical.