

What is evaluation

Randomly or systematically choosing people to respond to surveys means using some defined method to select people. For example:

- Systematic selection – a typical method is to start with the 5th person and then select every 7th person after that. The numbers, the 5th and the 7th are chosen randomly.
- Randomly select locations to be in the sample, and then survey everyone in that location.
- Group locations, randomly select sites within groups, then systematic selection of people at selected sites.

Random or systematic selection means that the group of people you select are more likely to be similar to your clients, in general. You aren't excluding any particular groups, or including only certain groups. You are avoiding bias, in sampling terms.

If you **do** use random or systematic selection, then most likely you **can** use your results to make conclusions about your clients.

If you **don't** use random or systematic selection, you can **NOT** use the results of your survey to make conclusions about your client population. That is, you cannot generalize from your study to your client population. You can only say “The people who took this survey said ...”

Additional resource

G. David Garson Statnotes, chapters on Surveys and Sampling

<http://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/garson/PA765/survey.htm>

<http://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/garson/PA765/sampling.htm>

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I also benefited greatly from feedback from folks on various email lists, and I thank them all!

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