

The Hawthorne effect



The Hawthorne Effect The Hawthorne Effect occurs when subjects in an experiment change their behavior because they are aware that they are being observed. They “improve or modify an aspect of their behavior being experimentally measured (Vandome 3)” in a response to being studied. When the subject in a study behaves in accordance to the Hawthorne Effect, they are purposely altering their normal behavior or actions owing to the fact that they are being watched. The individual either wants to appear a certain way before the observers or they want to sway the results of the experiment in a certain direction. Regardless of how they act in a real life setting, they will change their behavior to match what is expected or assumed of the experiment. It is also possible for the researchers themselves to fall prey to the Hawthorne Effect to sway the results towards their own expectations. The significance of the Hawthorne Effect is that it causes the results of experiments to be inaccurate. If the subject is aware of the hypothesis of the experiment, they have all the information that they need to change their behavior to influence the direction of the experiment. However, if the subject is not being honest about their behavior, then the experiment risks being a failure and becomes a waste of time and effort. By implementing the Hawthorn Effect into an experiment, the subject is not allowing the researchers to understand a concept or specific behavior. One example of the Hawthorne Effect is if Chip Company One were conducting a taste test between their product and the product of a rival. If the researchers made it known which product was theirs, odds are the subjects of the experiment would automatically say that that product tasted the best. Another example is the famous experiment which coined the term Hawthorne Effect. The experiment involved seeing if lighting had an effect on the productivity of people working in a business. However,

<https://assignbuster.com/the-hawthorne-effect/>

regardless of the lighting conditions, productivity increased because the workers/subjects knew that they were being watched. A third example would be if the subjects of an eating experiment were told that they would be testing an appetite suppressant. The subjects, knowing this information, would simply eat less; this would be made even more obvious if a placebo suppressant were used instead of an active suppressant. Works Cited Vandome, Agnes. Hawthorne Effect. Los Angeles, CA: VDM Publishing House Ltd., 2010. Print.