# Label Bias
Research Summary

Work today means juggling multiple tasks, facing tight deadlines, enduring stress, and making decisions that are often based on limited information. Through all of this, doing good work demands objectivity. Unfortunately, while we assume that we are objective, we forget that as human beings we are subject to a variety of cognitive biases that influence thinking, perception, and decision making.

Cognitive biases are mental shortcuts we use to process the world around us. They occur automatically, without conscious intent, and below conscious awareness. The host of biases evolved to help us survive, by enabling us to think and make decisions faster and more efficiently.

But while these shortcuts can be valuable, research shows that they can also lead us astray by creating mental blind spots—especially when we're stressed, under pressure, or in a hurry, resulting in a variety of problems:

- **Errors in thinking.** In our efforts to simplify, we can overlook important information or assume we know all there is to know.

- **Rushed decisions**. Rushed decisions can have a negative impact on people and events.

- **Suboptimal outcomes.** Applying the same solution to a different context and expecting the same result.
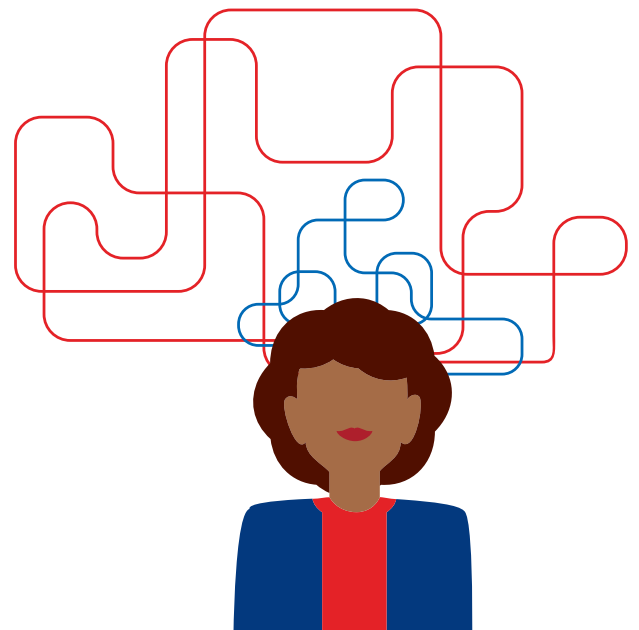
Researchers have identified more than 150 cognitive biases. **The SEEDS® Model represents five main categories of biases that shape everyday thinking: Similarity Bias, Expedience Bias, Experience Bias, Distance Bias, and Safety Bias:**

Similarity Bias "I feel more comfortable with people like me."

Similarity biases arise from our innate motivation to distinguish between friends and foes. Based on their similarity to us, we unconsciously categorize people as belonging to one of two groups: in-group (friends) or out-group (foes). We tend to trust and rely on information from in-group members, whereas we tend to be more suspicious and less open to what we hear from out-group members.

Examples of Similarity bias include:

In-Group Bias

Out-Group Bias

Label Bias
Research Summary continued

Expedience Bias "If it feels right, it must be true."

Expedience biases save mental energy by directing our focus to the most readily available, recallable, and recent information. This tendency to jump to conclusions often results in evaluating choices based on obvious, incomplete, or flawed information.

Examples of Expedience bias include: Confirmation Bias   Availability Bias

Experience Bias "My perceptions are accurate."

Experience biases stem from two unconscious beliefs: that we see things as they are, and that we know all there is to know. These beliefs cause us to think of the world we experience as a direct and objective representation of reality. As a result, we assume that others can and do see things the way we do. We fail to recognize that our perception of reality is fundamentally subjective and thus imperfect, limited, and different from that of others.

Examples of Experience bias include: Bias Blind Spot   Fundamental Attribution Error

Distance Bias "Close is better than far."

Distance biases are the brain's natural tendency to value people, events, and things based on their proximity to us in time and space. Since we unconsciously assign less value to things that are psychologically distant, we overvalue short-term concerns while undervaluing the long-term implications of our decisions.

An example of Distance bias is: Temporal Discounting   Affective Forecasting

Safety Bias "Bad is stronger than good."

Safety biases arise from the brain's threat-detection network, which continuously scans our environment for signs of danger and threat, both real and perceived. Since undetected threats can be fatal, we assign far greater weight to potential losses than we do to potential gains; this network operates on a faster and more instinctive basis than the reward-detecting network. In consequence, we are far more sensitive to potential risk and loss than we are to potential rewards.

Examples of Safety bias include: Loss Aversion   Framing Effects

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