Interviewer Effects on Data Quality: Does Interviewer Experience Favor Completions Over Quality?

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Assessing Effects of Interviewer Experience Among Student CATI Interviewers
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Research Questions

RQ1: Are there differences in breakoffs between interviewers with and without experience?
RQ2: What factors can explain the trends and differences between interviewers?

Survey Design

Frame: Dual-frame RDD (17,300 Cell; 25,100 LL)
Field dates: Sept 10, 2015 - December 8, 2015
Language: English (n=1,811), Spanish (n=18)
Completes: 1,829 (1,278 cell; 551 LL)
AAPOR RR3: 27% overall (28% Cell; 23% LL)
AAPOR CR3: 65% overall (76% Cell; 50% LL)

Operationalization

Experience: Prior studies (No = 0, Low = 1, High = 2-3)
Cumulative Hours: Sum of differences between the time of each call’s dialing and its termination. Hours are limited by the University-mandated maximum of 20 hours per week.

Breakoff Operationalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AAPOR Dispositions</th>
<th>Frequencies (Overall)</th>
<th>Frequencies (Included)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completes</td>
<td>1,829</td>
<td>1,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakoffs</td>
<td>1,318</td>
<td>1,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent Breakoffs</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>602</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exclusions: Interviewers with fewer than 50 calls. This excludes all Spanish calls and leaves 21 interviewers included in the analysis.

Operationalization: Proportion of Breakoffs Over Study Period:

- All Interviewers
- No Experience
- Low Experience
- High Experience

Conclusions & Future Directions

Examined separately, new and experienced interviewers show opposite trends in the proportion of breakoffs. The negative trend for experienced interviewers appears to be an artifact of previous interactions with the eligible respondent. The six percent drop in the proportion of respondent breakoffs corresponds to approximately one additional completed interview per experienced interviewer.

A cost-benefit analysis may be needed for small research organizations to determine appropriate tradeoffs for additional completions.

More research is needed on the effect of experience for short-tenure interviewers; in a student-staffed organization, the length of an interviewer’s tenure is limited.

Future studies will examine additional interviewer characteristics and other indicators of data quality such as non-substantive responses.