Examination of Panelists’ Reported Satisfaction, Response, and Retention over Time in a Multi-Purpose Probability Sample Panel

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• In both online panels and longitudinal surveys, panel attrition and low participation rates impact survey estimates, total survey error, as well as panel operation costs

• Panel retention and high survey cooperation rates are also crucial to support studies of lower incidence populations and to potentially minimize nonresponse bias

• One of the potential indicators of low participation and panel attrition/turnover is panelist dissatisfaction
Big Picture Research Questions

• Is it feasible to predict panel attrition and nonresponse to subsequent surveys using overall and over time panelist satisfaction scores?

• Who has lower panelist satisfaction scores?
  – If (and how) their panelist satisfaction scores change over time?

• How do survey intervention trends relate to panelist satisfaction and cooperation?

**Predict panelist activity and propensity to respond to subsequent surveys using:**

• Overall self-reported panelist satisfaction and change in survey-level satisfaction items (asked at the end of each subsequent survey) over time

• Survey-level characteristics and interventions such as incentive amount, fielding period, survey length, etc.
Data & Methods
Panelists rated their survey experience during each survey after recruitment, using NORC’s AmeriSpeak probability-based panel

• Survey completion mode after recruitment = Web and Phone

• N = 30,259 panelists
  – At least one completed survey w/ satisfaction items

• Self-reported satisfaction items are asked after recruitment at the end of each subsequent survey administered during panelists’ tenure
  – Survey satisfaction rating
    • 7-point response scale from Poor to Excellent
  – Identification of a technical issue
  – Open-ended feedback
In this presentation, we are specifically focusing on survey satisfaction rating asked at the end of each survey.

**Models used for the analyses**

- **Overall panelist activity and self-reported satisfaction relationship**
  - Multinomial logistic regression

- **Trend Analyses: Panelist activity and self-reported satisfaction over time**
  - Multi-level/Hierarchical logistic regression models
    - Level 1 = Time point for each survey; Level 2 = Panelist
Results
Average survey satisfaction rating during panelists’ tenure

Rating: 1-2 (“Poor”)
Rating: 3-4 (“Average”)
Rating: 5-6 (“Good”)
Rating: 7 (“Excellent”)

Overall, panelists with lower ratings are less likely to participate in surveys.
Self Reported Satisfaction

Significant differences in panel satisfaction change among panelists w/ lowest completion rates (less than 25th percentile)
WHOSE PANELIST SATISFACTION SCORES CHANGE OVER TIME?

Self Reported Satisfaction

CATI panelists have overall higher satisfaction scores

CATI: Decline over time
CAWI: Increase over time
No large differences in panel satisfaction change over time among panelists with different demographics

- **Education**
  - Higher education group has overall lower satisfaction scores, which slightly increases over time.

- **Race/ethnicity**
  - Non-Hispanic White group has overall lower satisfaction scores, which slightly increases over time.

- **Age**: Slight increase among ages 35-49 and 50-64 over time.

- **Gender**: Slight decline among women’s satisfaction scores over time.

- **Initial respondents versus NRFU**
  - Overall lower satisfaction scores among NRFU.
Predicted Response Propensity by Satisfaction Change Over Time (First 6 Months of Panel Tenure)

More steep increase in propensity scores over time among panelists with low satisfaction scores.
Changes less than $10 do not make a significant difference in predicted response propensity scores in subsequent surveys.
Changes in survey length are not associated with predicted response propensity scores in subsequent surveys.
Drastic survey fielding length changes (more than 2 weeks) are significantly associated with predicted response propensity scores in subsequent surveys.
Conclusion & Discussion
Early drop-outs and panelists with overall low participation rates can be identified using the satisfaction score change within the 6 months of panelists joining the panel.

- Our predictive models show that our typical interventions (increasing incentives + fielding periods and decreasing questionnaire length) are not too effective unless we make drastic changes.

Next steps:
- In-depth interviews w/ panelists whose satisfaction scores decrease drastically in the first 6 months.
- Other potential forecasting measures?
  - Implementation of “Future Likelihood of Participation” item.
Thank you.

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