

# Do They Exist? Experiment to Assess Panel Effects and Opinionation Effects in AmeriSpeak® Panel Surveys

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  - *Define Opinionation Effects*
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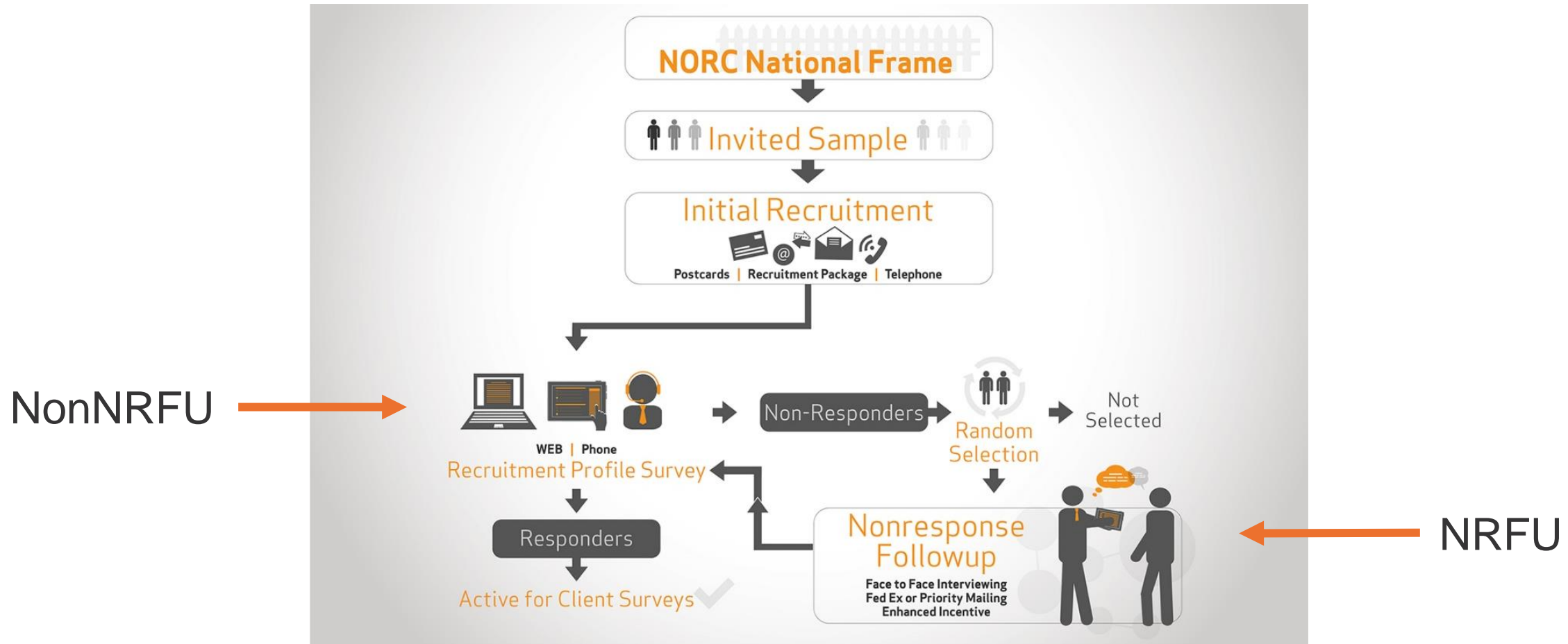


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# Background

**AmeriSpeak Panel, and Defining Panel Conditioning  
and Opinionation Effects**

- NORC's AmeriSpeak Panel is a National Probability Based Sample, established in 2015.



- Panel maintenance is a dynamic process, with the sample supplemented and refreshed regularly over time to grow the panel, compensate for panel attrition, and improve panel representation for specific subpopulations.

## AmeriSpeak by the Numbers

**Number of Participating Households →  
(50 States + DC)**

43K

**Client Surveys Completed →  
(Since June 2015)**

900+

**Panel Recruitment Response Rate (2014-2018) →  
(AAPOR RR3)**

24.1%

# Do Panel Conditioning and Opinionation Effects Exist in AmeriSpeak?

## Panel Conditioning Effects

- Panel conditioning is the change in a person's survey responses that is influenced by their panel tenure and panel experiences.
- *Examples of Panel Conditioning Effects*
  - *Improve quality*: As their panel tenure increases Panelists may be more willing to offer an opinion, reducing no opinion and DK survey responses.
  - *Degrade quality*: More tenured Panelists learn to take surveys more quickly by refusing to answer survey questions more often than less tenured Panelists.

## Opinionation Effects

- Opinionation is the variance within a population due to differential willingness of subgroups -- such as NRFU and nonNRFU subgroups in AmeriSpeak -- to voice opinions.
- *Example of an Opinionation Effect*
  - *Degrade quality*: Harder to recruit panelists may report greater nonattitudes as measured by higher skip/no opinion responses.
    - Trade-off of not recruiting NRFU panelists for sample representativeness vs potentially lower data quality

**NRFU Sample:** Panelists successfully recruited using enhanced nonresponse follow-up methods.

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# Research Constructs

## Panel Conditioning and Opinionation

## Conditioning Constructs

1. Will the **willingness of offering an opinion** increase as the panel tenure increases?  
(Decrease in Refused and DK responses)
2. Will the panelists **become more knowledgeable and interested** about topics that are asked frequently in surveys?
3. Will the panelists provide **more extreme responses** to attitudinal questions over time as their panel tenure increases?
4. Do the panelists provide **more moderate and/or no opinion responses** to attitudinal questions when they are first recruited to the panel?
5. Do the panelists provide **more or less item non-response, speeding, and satisficing** when they are first recruited to the panel?

## Opinionation Constructs

1. Will harder to recruit panelists (NRFU) have **greater non-attitudes** than nonNRFU panelists as measured by neutral/moderate/no opinion responses?
2. Will harder to recruit panelists (NRFU) provide **more extreme responses** to attitudinal questions over time as their panel tenure/knowledge increases?
  - *Work underway and not covered in this presentation.*



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# Research Design

## Research Design

### **Fielded a multi-topic survey w/randomized experiments for many survey questions:**

- Defined Low tenured (LT) panelists as those completing less than 20 surveys; High tenured (HT) panelists as those completing 20+ surveys.
- 18+ population, oversample of less tenured & NRFU panelists
- First fielded early 2021; repeat fielding will be early 2022
- 31 key survey questions
  - 24 questions with randomized experiments
    - Up to 4 alternative response option treatments
  - Socio-economic topics and knowledge questions

**Used sample matching to make HT and LT groups as equivalent as possible, accounting for socio-demographic differences due to attrition**

**Compared survey estimates of LT and MT panelists, after sample matching**

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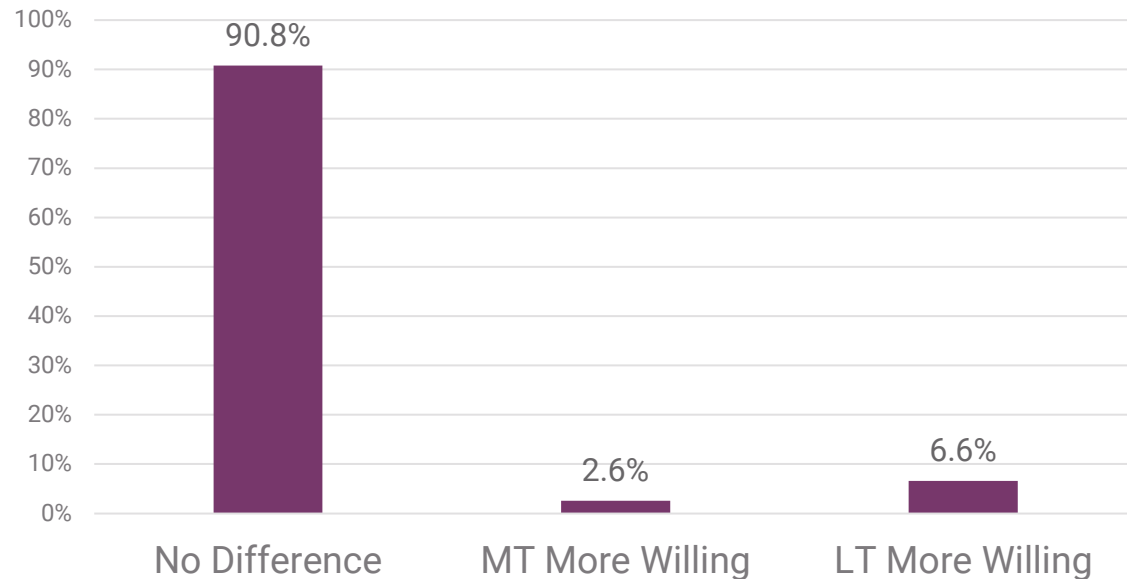
# Preliminary Findings

Panel Conditioning  
Effects: Differences  
between LT and MT  
Panelists.

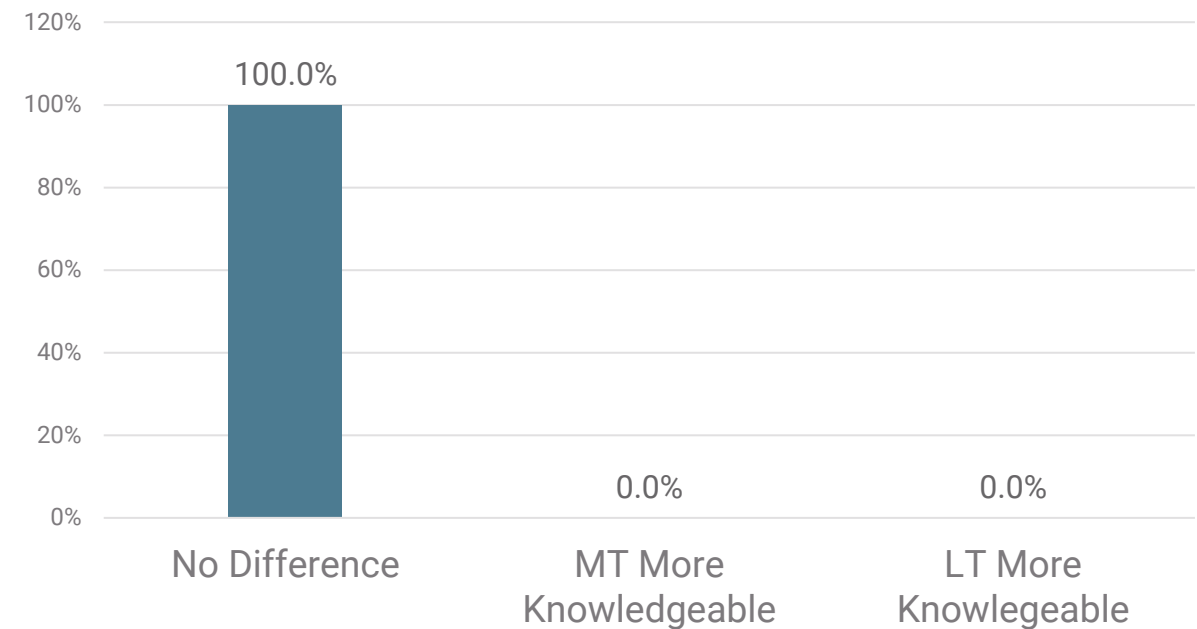


## Percent of Estimates that Significantly Differ\* between MT and LT Panelists, after Stat Matching

**Conditioning Construct 1: Will the willingness of offering an opinion increase as the panel tenure increases?**



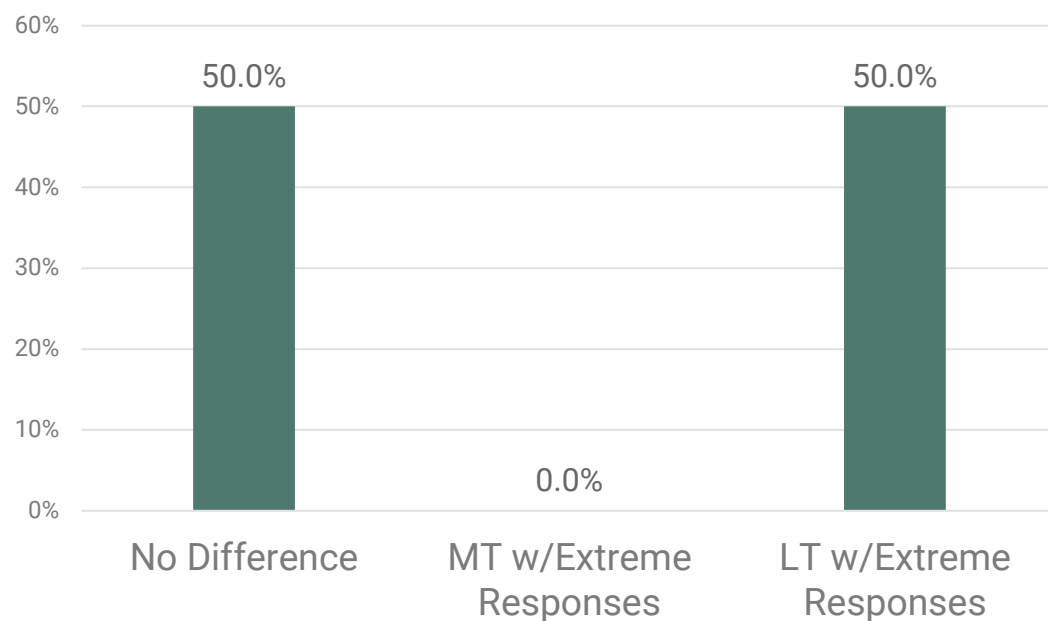
**Conditioning Construct 2: Will the panelists become more knowledgeable/interested about topics that are asked frequently in surveys?**



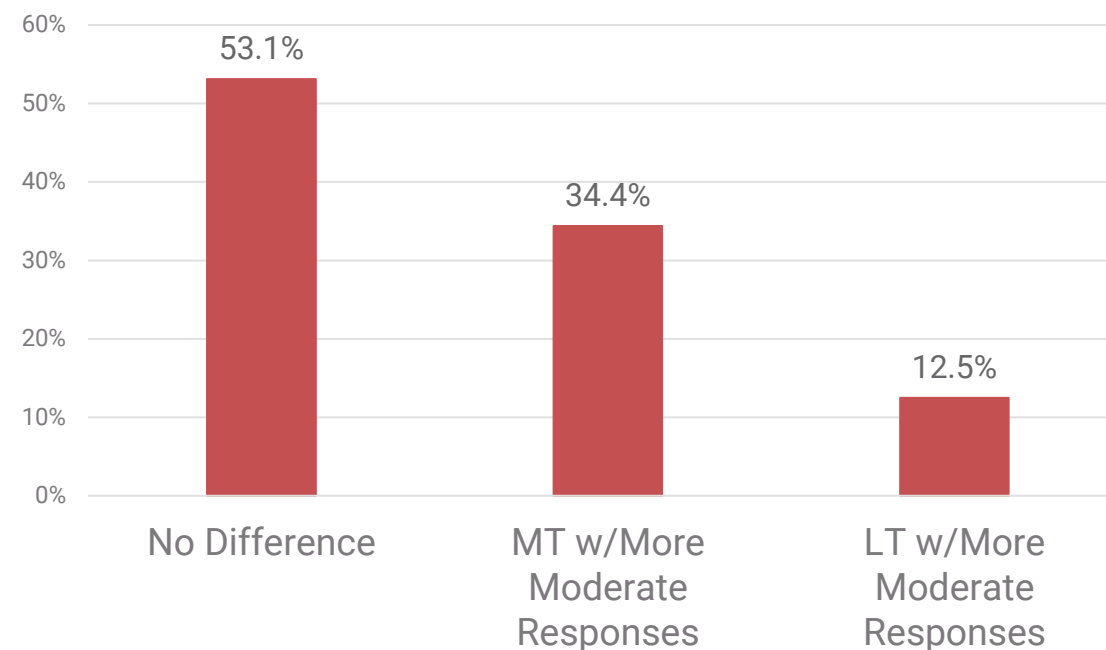
\* Minimum of 5 percentage points difference in estimates.

## Percent of Estimates that Significantly Differ\* between MT and LT Panelists, after Stat Matching

**Conditioning Construct 3: Will the panelists provide more extreme responses to attitudinal questions over time as their panel tenure increases?**



**Conditioning Construct 4: Do panelists provide more moderate and/or no opinion responses to attitudinal questions when first recruited to the panel?**



\* Minimum of 5 percentage points difference in estimates.

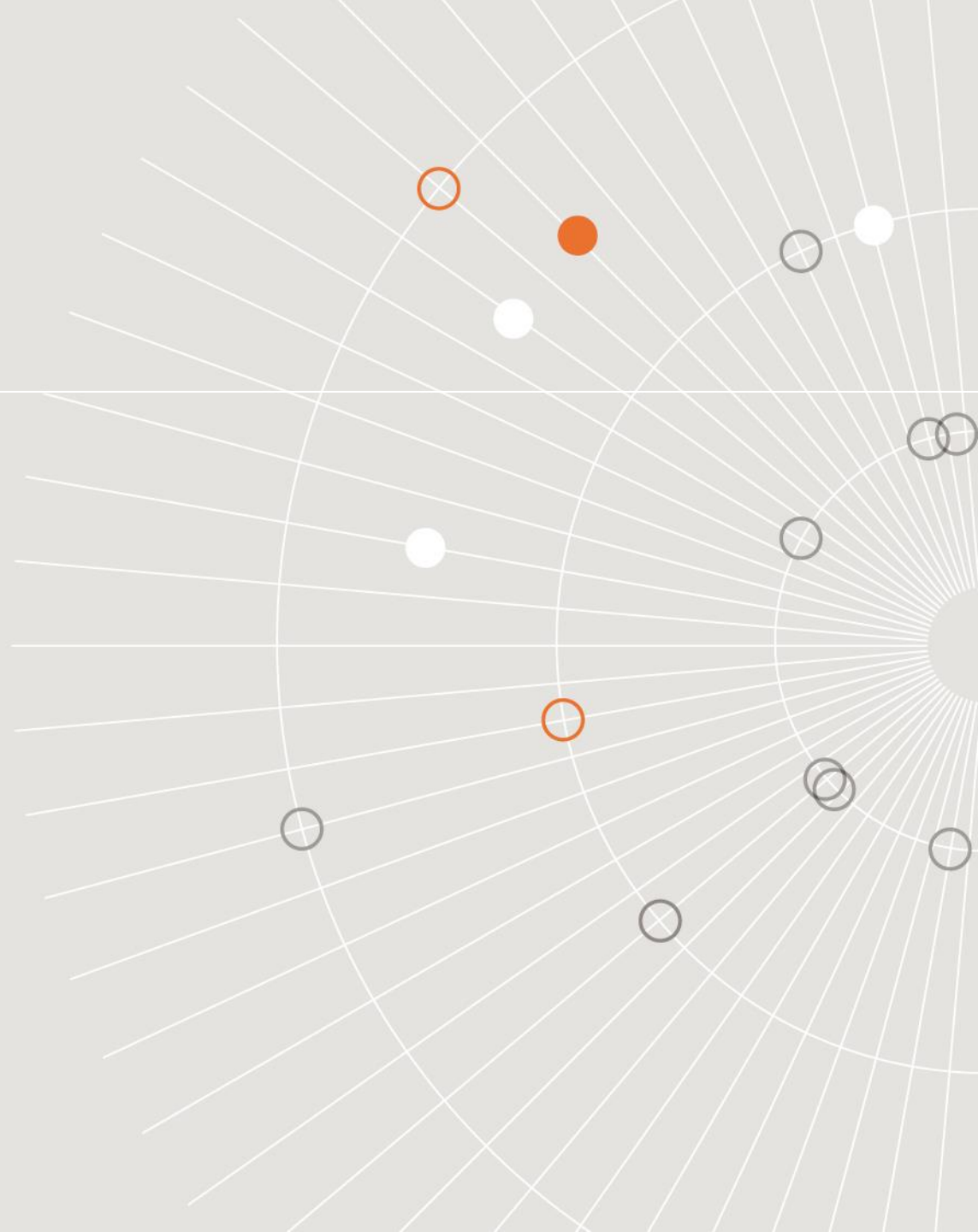
Do the panelists provide more or less item non-response, speeding, and satisficing when they are first recruited to the panel?

### Assessment Metrics across All Questions and Treatments

Metric	Less Tenured	More Tenured	Finding
Average of Item Nonresponse (Skipped)	.97%	1.62%	MT data quality only slightly impacted by higher Item nonresponse
Average of "Don't Know" Responses	5.28%	5.36%	No difference on DK responses
Average Survey Time (minutes)	13.3	10.7	MT have better survey taking skills or more prone to speeding?
Variance of Responses	315.89	283.24	Satisficing: 10% lower differentiation of responses for MT

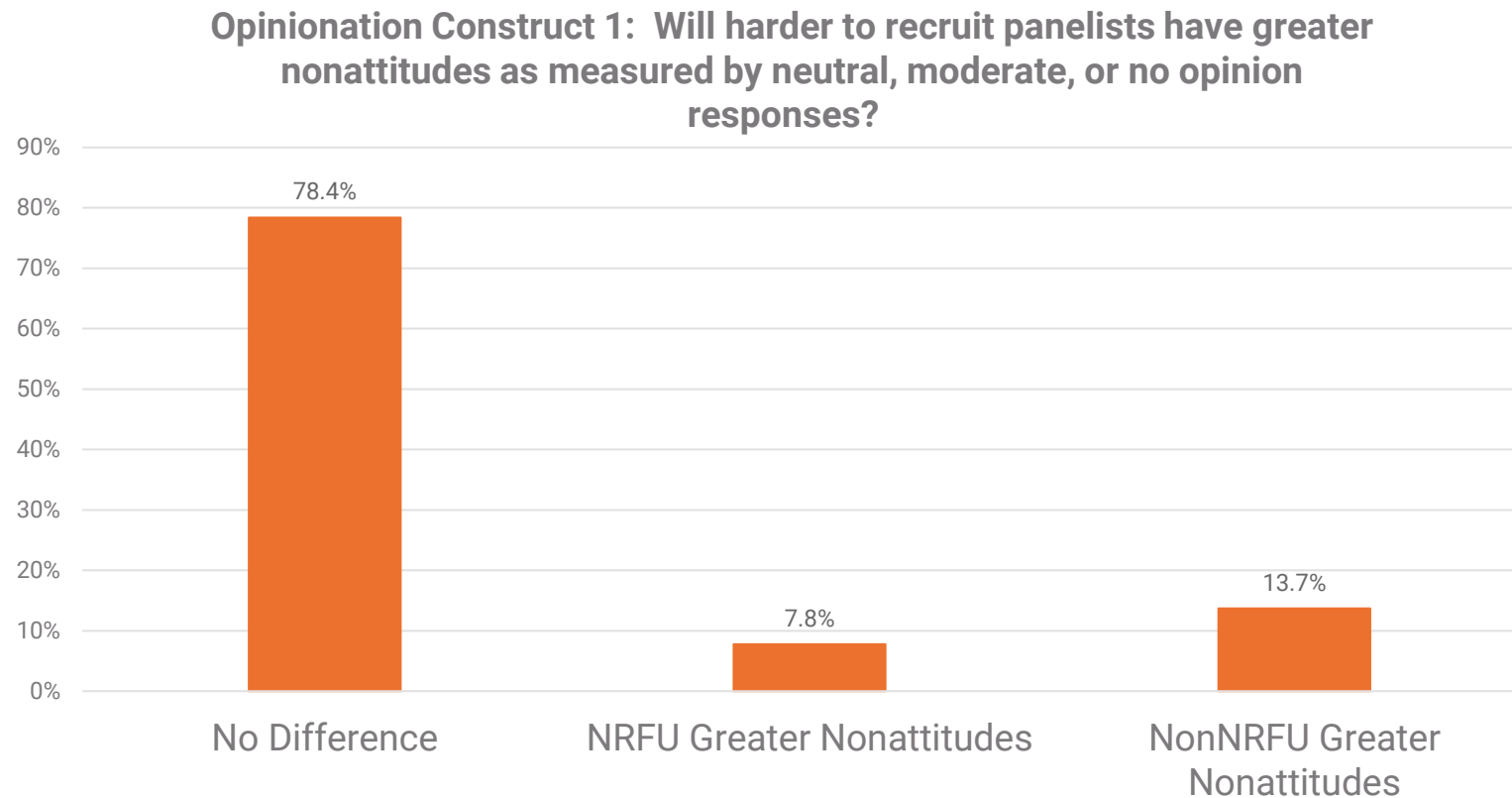
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# Opinionation Effects – Differences between NRFU and nonNRFU Panelists





## Number and Percent of Estimates that Significantly Differ\* between NRFU and non-NRFU Panelists



\* Minimum of 5 percentage points difference in estimates.

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# Summary & Next Steps

We largely find no panel conditioning effects in the AmeriSpeak survey data

- **Construct 1: Willingness to Offer an Opinion** - Less than 10% of comparisons were different between More and Less Tenured panelists
- **Construct 2: Increase in Knowledge** - No Differences
- **Construct 3: Less Tenured panelists more often offered extreme responses than More Tenured panelists**
  - More Tenured panelists may be more thoughtful/nuanced and not voicing opinions in the extreme
- **Construct 4: Less Tenured panelists offer more moderate/no opinion responses?**
  - Responses of Less Tenured and More Tenured panelists differed <47%, but differences was bi-directional
- **Construct 5: More or less item non-response, speeding, and satisficing for LT?**
  - Item nonresponse and Don't Know responses were small/very comparable between Less and More Tenured panelists.
  - Variance of responses and survey taking time was somewhat less for More Tenured panelists
    - Needs further analysis to understand any potential impact on data quality

More investigation needed into opinionation effects between NRFU and nonNRFU panelists

## **Opinionation Construct 1: Will NRFU panelists have greater nonattitudes than nonNRFU panelists?**

- Less than 28% of survey response comparisons were significantly different between NRFU and nonNRFU panelists.
- Differences in expressing nonattitudes by NRFU and nonNRFU panelists were bi-directional across the survey questions.
- NEXT: Separately analyze *Neutral*, *Moderate*, and *No Opinion* response questions

Results are preliminary – more to do!

## **Further analyze only those questions that exhibited significant conditioning and/or opinionation effects**

- Identify question type, topics, response options that may be more prone to the effects

## **Tackle Conditioning Construct 2: Assess whether NRFU panelists provide more extreme responses to attitudinal questions over time as their panel tenure/knowledge increases**

### **Re-field the same survey January 2022**

- For same panelists, assess survey taking behavior between 1st and 2nd fielding as panel tenure increases

# Thank you.

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University of  
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