

Race of Interviewer Effects under Explicit and Implicit Race-Matching in a Telephone Survey

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Introduction

- § Experiment embedded in a racial attitudes survey that manipulates race of interviewer effects in a telephone interview
- § Conducted race-matched phone interviews
- § Analysis examines how each experimental condition affects responses to individual items
- § Results of analyses
- § Interpretations and Conclusions

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Race of Interviewer Effects

- § Race of Interviewer Effects introduce bias and variance into the measurement process
- § Effects are present in interviewer administered surveys of racially sensitive items, where respondents provide socially desirable responses to the interviewer
- § Effects occur in face-to-face interviews, as well as in telephone interviews

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Race of Interviewer Effects, con't

- § Race of Interviewer Effects occur when respondents are aware of the race of the interviewer, regardless of mode
- § The correct identification of interviewer race over the telephone is not guaranteed
- § Respondents may correctly ID the interviewer race, incorrectly ID the race, or not think about it at all

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Race of Interviewer Effects, con't

- § Cotter, Cohen & Coulter (1982) recommend matching the race of interviewer and respondent in telephone interviews to control variance
- § Recognize that this practice is difficult and expensive
- § As a result, this practice is not often employed

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Data

- § The Survey Research Center at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock conducted a Racial Attitudes Survey over the telephone in 2006
- § RDD Sample consisted of a cross-section of 1665 White and Black adults in Pulaski County, AR
- § Each telephone interview was conducted with an interviewer whose race matched that of the respondent

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Experimental Conditions

- § The **Informed** group of respondents were immediately informed of the presence of a race match between interviewer and respondent
- § The **Correct** group correctly identified the race of the interviewer when asked at the end of the interview
- § The **Incorrect** group was not able to identify the interviewer's race as the same as the respondent

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Experimental Conditions

White			Black		
Group	n	%	Group	n	%
Informed	435	52%	Informed	406	54.4%
Not Informed, Guess Race Correctly	303	36.2%	Not Informed, Guess Race Correctly	232	31%
Not Informed, Guess Race Incorrectly	98	11.7%	Not Informed, Guess Race Incorrectly	109	14.6%
Total	836	100%	Total	747	100%

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Hypotheses

- § The Incorrect group serves as a proxy for no race match, as these respondents are not aware of the race match
- § The Informed group and the Correct group will provide similar responses to racially sensitive items
- § The Informed and Correct groups will differ from the Incorrect group in their responses to racially sensitive items, which are most susceptible to race of interviewer effects

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Analysis

- § All analyses are weighted for within household selection and using post-stratification weights
- § Dummy variables are formed for response categories to each question in the interview
- § Logit models are formed for each race, so as to isolate interaction effects between predictor variables and respondent's race

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Analysis, con't

- § Logistic regression models predict responses to individual questionnaire items
- § Predictors are dummy variables for membership in the Informed, Correct and Incorrect groups
- § Model controls for age, income, education, and Little Rock residency

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Model

$$\ln\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_{\text{Informed}} \chi_{\text{Informed}} + \beta_{\text{Incorrect}} \chi_{\text{Incorrect}} + \beta_{\text{Income}} \chi_{\text{Income}} + \beta_{\text{Age}} \chi_{\text{Age}} + \beta_{\text{Education}} \chi_{\text{Education}}$$

- Model also controls for Little Rock residency.
- All models are significant at the $p < .01$ level.

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Results

- § The sensitivity of all questionnaire items is rated by 8 independent raters
- § Significance at the $p < .05$ level is seen in a greater proportion of sensitive items when compared with less sensitive items, especially among black respondents
- § This shows that the impact of group assignment is greater for more sensitive questions
- § Between 25% and 62.5% of Items rated as Not Sensitive At All were significant

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Results, example

- § Question: "How about Whites? Generally speaking, would you say that you can trust them A Lot, Some, Only a Little, or Not at All?"
- § For black respondents, the log odds of responding A Lot or Some increase by 1.839 as one moves from being either Informed or Correct to being Incorrect.
- § This result is significant at the $p < .01$ level in a one-tailed test.

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Results, example

- § For white respondents, the log odds of responding A Lot or Some decrease by .74 as one moves from being either Informed or Correct to being Incorrect.
- § When whites do not think that they are speaking with a white interviewer, they are significantly less likely to report trusting other whites
- § This result is significant at the $p < .05$ level.

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Results

- § Hypothesis #1: Only sensitive items will see effects
 - § Non-Sensitive Items see significant effects as well
- § Hypothesis #2: The Informed & Correct groups are similar
 - § There are difference between the groups
- § Hypothesis #3: Informed & Correct groups will differ from Incorrect
 - § This hypothesis is confirmed

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Discussion – Hypothesis #1

- § Despite questions being rated as Not at all Sensitive, some coefficients for Informed and Incorrect are significant
- § This may be explained by framing
- § Previous questions in the survey and the informed consent process may have framed the entire survey as racially sensitive, as opposed to individual items

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Discussion – Hypothesis #2

- § Those respondents who were implicitly informed of the race match are similar, but not identical, to those that were explicitly informed
- § However, researchers do not know when respondents made the realization that the interviewer was the same race as them
- § There may be a temporal pattern, where Correct responses to those questions early in the interview differ from the Informed group

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Conclusions

- § Respondents do not uniformly recognize the presence of a racial match without being explicitly informed
- § Whether the respondent is aware of the racial match between him and the interviewer significantly impacts responses to both racially sensitive and non-sensitive questions
- § This effect is more prevalent in racially sensitive items, though less sensitive items see an effect

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Conclusions

- § When race matching is used as an attempt to control race of interviewer effects in telephone surveys, respondents should be uniformly aware of the presence of race matching
- § Differences in responses exist among all three groups: Those informed of the race match, those not informed of the race match but who are able to identify its presence, and those not informed and who are unable to identify the match

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