THE RESPONDENT: AN ENDAGERED SPECIES

"Qui répond aux enquêtes?"
Séminarire organisé par le CESP

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58.000
points

250
points

1000
points

2

**58.000
points**

VARIABILITY OF RESPONSE RATES
(IN STABLISHMENT SURVEYS FOR THE TV METER PANEL OPERATIONS)

≤ 40%		≥ 70%	
Netherlands	26%	Austria	74%
Italy	33%	Bulgaria	92%
Greece	31%	Germany	80%
Belgium	33%	Ireland	81%
Lebanon	23%	Romania	84%
Russia	35%	Sweden	72%
		Norway	70%

– Do these figures reflect actual RR variability?

or

– Are we talking of different things?

Source: Television Peoplemeters in Europe - Toby Syfret

THE RESPONSE RATE ISSUE

- It is of paramount importance.

- The present situation is far from acceptable.

- In the future, the situation will be even worse.

MAIN REASONS FOR THE DECLINING RESPONSE RATES

- Access restrictions.
- Increasing safety problems.
- Mobile phones (14% of the spanish households are only reached by mobile phones) .
- Answering machines (screening of incoming calls).
- Selling or fund raising activities presented as interviews.
- Privacy concerns.
- No people at home (more women in the labour market and decreasing family size).
- Quality of interviewers (students, part-timers,etc).

RESPONSE RATE DEFINITION

Basically, RR is defined as the percentage of pre-designated elegible respondents who provide completed interviews.

This indicator tries to reflect how different has been the seleccion of the actual sample from the theoretical sample (following a strictly equiprobable selection).

I: Completed interviews

P: Partial interviews

R: Refusals

NC: Not contacted but known elegible units

NE: Non elegible units

NI: Not interviewed units (language, mental or phisical problems)

$$\text{Response rate} = \frac{I}{I + P + NC + R + NI}$$

RESPONSE RATE DEFINITION

One of the main practical problems is to know (or to estimate) the number of elegible units among the unknown elegibility units (unanswered phone numbers,non-contacted homes, etc.)

I think that the effect of incomplete sampling frames should also be taken into the calculation (e.g. unlisted phone numbers).

Attention: Do not confuse "*response rate*" which is a global indicator of the quality of the sampling procedure with other indicators such us:

✓ *Refusal/Acceptance rate*   ✓ *Completion rate*

✓ *Contact rate*   ✓ *Collaboration rate*

✓ *Interview rate*   ✓ *Return rate*

✓ *Recovery rate*   ✓ *Etc*

The AAPOR (American Association for Public Opinion Research) provides 6 different definitions of response rate.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE RESPONSE RATES

There are a number of well-known factors such us:

- ✓ Length of the questionnaire
- ✓ Topic of the survey
- ✓ Number of visits or callbacks
- ✓ Incentives
- ✓ Others

But I would like to stress the importance of

A proper selection and training of the interviewers

because when an analysis of the response rate by individual interviewers is made, it shows that the variability is much higher than expected (ratios of 1 to 4 are easily obtained).

USUAL PRACTICE TO CORRECT THE NON-RESPONSE BIAS

Researches use to apply poststratification ratio adjustements to bring survey estimates of subdomains totals in agreement with independent or official population figures for the subdomains (normally using demographic groups).

The purpose is to reduce the bias at the likely cost of reducing also the precision of the estimates.

This should be done very carefully as, in many cases, this type of adjustements introduce a further bias making thing even worse.

The size of nonresponse bias depends up to what extent the nonrespondents are different from respondents on the survey measures. Interesting example: The Italian external coincidental check made for the TV meter panel.

OTHER RESPONSE RATE INFORMATION

➢ According to the Council for Marketing Research and on the basis of 473 U.S. surveys, the average response rate was 24%.

➢ The response rate in the tests Arbitron has recently carried out in the States was lower than 15%.

➢ Continuous tracking studies in Canada (as reported by the Canadian Professional Marketing Research Society in respect to phone research)

	1997	1998	1999	2000
Surveys reported	35	48	53	52
Response rate	15.7	13.1	12.9	11.3

➢ The American ABC standards for media research surveys call for a 40% response rate. Unfortunatelly only one out of 8 test studies achieved that standard and the RR for the others ranged from 20% to 40%.

COMPARISON CANADA-SPAIN. PHONE RESEARCH

	50 one-time surveys in Canada (1999) Last attempt (000)		Spanish survey-3 calls Typical results Last attempt	
Total numbers attempted	445		23584	
A Non elegible (bussines, fax,etc)	138	31.0%	5261	22.3%
Busy	7.5		101	
Answering machines	25.9		1990	
No answer	72.6		2787	
Languages, Illness, Incapable	12.6		99	
Not available	24.6		983	
B Total unreachable	143	32.1%	5960	25.3%
C Refusal	111	24.9%	9411	39.9%
D Cooperative contacts	52.4	11.8%	2952	12.5%
RESPONSE RATE = D/ (B+C+D)	17.1%		16.1%	
REFUSAL RATE= C/ (C+D)	67.9%		76.1%	

FACE TO FACE INTERVIEWS

The EGM case (Multimedia survey)
- ✓ Using tablet CAPI
- ✓ Second attempt when nobody is at home in the first visit.

Distribution of "elegibles"

Unreachable	29.8 %
Refusals	40.6 %
Completed interviews	29.6 %

Response rate: 29.6 %
Refusal rate: 57.8 %

CALCULATIONS OF RESPONSE RATES FOR TV METER PANEL

SIGN-UP PROCEDURE

Contact Rate

$$\frac{Contacted\ Households}{Attempted\ Households\,(*)}\%$$

(*) Excluding non - households dwelling units

Basic Interview Rate

$$\frac{Completed\ Interviews}{Contacted\ Households}\%$$

Collaboration Rate

$$\frac{Colaboration\ Agreements\ Signed}{Completed\ Interviews}\%$$

CALCULATIONS OF RESPONSE RATES FOR TV METER PANEL

PANEL OPERATION

Instalation Rate

$$\frac{Completed\ Meter\ Instalations}{Collaboration\ Agreements\ Signed}\%$$

Polling Rate

$$\frac{In\text{-}Tab\ Panel\ Households}{Total\ Panel\ Households}\%$$

CALCULATIONS OF RESPONSE RATES FOR TV METER PANEL

The response rate is calculated by combining all the rates obtained for the different sampling steps

*Response Rate=(Contact rate) * (Basic interview rate) *
* (Collaboration rate) * (Instalation rate) * (Polling rate)*

Typical figures for the Spanish TV meter panel are as follows:

Contact rate	*54%*
Basic interview rate	*35%*
Collaboration rate	*36%*
Instalation rate	*81%*
Polling rate	*94%*

Response rate=(0.54*0.35*0.36*0.81*0.94) = 5.2%

**SURVEY ON INTERNET USAGE TO COMPANIES
WITHIN THE ADVERTISING SECTOR (1998)**

Universe

- ✓ Companies that were members of the Asociación de Centrales de Medios, Asociación Española de Agencias de Publicidad y Federación de Empresas de Publicidad.

Requesting the collaboration

- ✓ Letters from the presidents of participating associations.
- ✓ Several reminders.
- ✓ Personal telephone calls to the executive officers of the companies.

Final response rate

- ✓ A fustrating 24%

**SURVEY TO THE INTERNET DOMAINS WIHT
EXTENSION ".es" (2000)**

➢ Universe and sample: 25.983 registered domains with indications of name and e-mail of contact person.

➢ The questionnaire was sent by e-mail and 2 reminders were also mailed.

➢ The survey was made by AIMC on behaif of the "Comisión del Mercado de las Telecomunicaciones"

➢ Response rate achieved: 13%

A BASIC DILEMMA

➢ Probability sampling is the only sistem scientifically based and other sampling procedures as the "quota method" can not be regarded as scientific.

➢ But,

  ✓ Can we still consider a probability sampling with a response rate of 20% as being still scientific?

  ✓ Is still preferable to a quota system?

Merci pour votre attention