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# The Effect of Acquaintanceship with the Invitation Initiator on Web Survey Response Rate

Kirill Gavrilov

Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia

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- How to increase the web survey response rate?

- How to increase the web survey response rate?
  - personalization of salutations in invitations
  - personalization of the e-mail address of the sender
  - authority of the e-mail signatory
  - status of the requesting office
  - use of graphical elements in the invitation
  - specific link (URL) placement within the invitation
  - emphasis on the unique role of the respondent
  - emphasis on certain items of the invitation's subject line
  - using reminders

# Hypothesis 1

- The acquaintanceship with the invitation initiator increases the response rate
  - the effect may be similar to the effect of sending personalized invitations or of signing the e-mail by some authoritative person
  - the acquaintanceship increases the credibility of the invitation

## Hypothesis 2

- The “professional interest” of respondents increases the response rate
  - our sample included students of sociological department, so this factor could have been a confounding one
  - sociology students may have a specific motivation to participate
  - if the invitation initiator is a sociologist then the effect of “professional solidarity” may occur (not tested)

# Survey Sample

- a sample of **250** students from two different departments of the Higher School of Economics (Russia, Moscow):
  - Department of Sociology (**129**);
  - International College of Economics and Finance (ICEF) (**121**)

# Methodology / Initiators

<b>3 initiators</b>	<b>Invitations</b>
Initiator 1 (Sociology)	91
Initiator 2 (Sociology)	66
Initiator 3 (Institute of Transport Policy)	93

# Methodology / Invitation Distribution

<b>3 initiators</b>	<b>Invitations</b>	<b>Sociology</b>	<b>ICEF</b>
Initiator 1 (Sociology)	91	Familiar 46	Unfamiliar 45
Initiator 2 (Sociology)	66	Unfamiliar 35	Familiar 31
Initiator 3 (Institute of Transport Policy)	93	Unfamiliar 48	Unfamiliar 45



# Methodology / Invitation Details

- The invitation subject – “a request to take part in the survey”
- Personal salutation (“Dear [First name]” format was used)
- Invitation length – about 450 characters
- The average response time is about 15 minutes

# Results

3 initiators	RR, %
Initiator 1, n=91 (Sociology)	36
Initiator 2, n=66 (Sociology)	32
Initiator 3, n=93 (Institute of Transport Policy)	32

n.s.

# Results

2 departments	RR, %
Sociology, n=129	36
ICEF, n=121	26

$t(248)=1.7, p=0.09$

# Results

3 initiators	RR for Sociology, %	
Initiator 1, n=46 (Sociology)	39	Familiar
Initiator 2, n=35 (Sociology)	40	Unfamiliar
Initiator 3, n=48 (Institute of Transport Policy)	31	Unfamiliar

n.s.

# Results

3 initiators	RR for Sociology, %	
Initiator 1+2, n=81 (Sociology)	40	Familiar / Unfamiliar
Initiator 3, n=48 (Institute of Transport Policy)	31	Unfamiliar

n.s.

# Results

<b>3 initiators</b>	<b>RR for ICEF, %</b>	
Initiator 1, n=45 (Sociology)	24	Unfamiliar
Initiator 2, n=31 (Sociology)	36	Familiar
Initiator 3, n=45 (Institute of Transport Policy)	22	Unfamiliar

n.s.

# Results

3 initiators	RR for ICEF, %	
Initiator 1+3, n=90	23	Unfamiliar
Initiator 2, n=31 (Sociology)	36	Familiar

n.s.

# Results: Overall

- Factor 1: is the participant acquainted with the invitation initiator?
- Factor 2: is the participant a sociologist?
- Factor 3: is the invitation initiator a sociologist?

In our study these factors didn't increase the RR significantly.

No need to use the acquaintanceship factor in web surveys?



# Proposition

- Some differences will be significant if we increase the sample size:
  - sociologists have a higher RR than ICEF students
  - acquaintanceship increases RR

# Proposition: indirect data

- The percentage of respondents who want to participate in future studies
  - sociologists want to participate with higher probability (19%) than ICEF students (10%),  $t(248)=2.0$ ,  $p=0.05$
  - Those students that are acquainted with invitation initiator want to participate with higher probability (23%) than those who were invited by an unfamiliar person (10%),  $t(248)=2.7$ ,  $p=0.007$

- Limitations of our study:
  - small sample size;
  - inability to control communication between respondents within one university department;
  - the differences between three invitation initiators were not controlled and not evaluated
- + to test the “professional solidarity” hypothesis an additional invitation initiator should be included: “a familiar non-sociologist”



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Thank you  
for your attention!

Kirill Gavrilov,  
gavrilov@socio.msk.ru