

SURVEY LETTERS: A RESPONDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Ashley Landreth

U. S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC 20233-910¹

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I. INTRODUCTION

Federal survey research organizations rely on the use of survey letters to create interest and encourage survey response. These letters, however, also serve as vehicles for conveying informed consent messages to survey respondents in a consistent manner. These types of letters, due to the perceived benefits, are a mainstay in the U. S. Census Bureau's demographic survey program.

Research with survey letters is largely empirical in nature; very little published, qualitative research is available that accounts for a respondent's perspective. Certain aspects of respondents' interactions with survey letters have received less attention, such as their letter-processing strategies (i.e., what do they attend to and how do they attend to it?), their perceptions of the messages, and the limitations of such materials.

The current research seeks to fill this gap and suggests that respondent-based letter research helped the Census Bureau produce "respondent-friendly" survey letters and materials for two of its demographic surveys. Cognitive interviews with laboratory respondents revealed patterns in letter-processing strategies and focus groups with field interviewers helped uncover respondents' informational needs. Based on these results several survey letter design principles were identified, which produced informed consent messaging strategies that were more consistent with a respondent's perspective and needs.

This paper documents the strategies respondents used to process messages in survey letters, and proposes a general set of design principles for crafting "respondent-friendly" survey letters. Before those contributions are discussed, a brief review of the literature is presented in the next section, followed by a discussion of the methods. In addition, the concluding remarks recommend new directions for future research.

II. BACKGROUND

While the studies discussed below represent only a fraction of the literature on survey letters, most research on this topic is empirically based and explores the effectiveness of this type of survey tool under various experimental conditions (e.g., letter

length, tone, content, and type of appeal). Results have usually produced modest response gains, and occasionally significant gains were achieved for a particular subpopulation or with a novel mailing approach.

By manipulating prose style (tone) and overall length, Lynn, Turner, and Smith's letter experiment in a face-to-face survey found simple and informal letters generated greater survey response than complex and formal letters, although neither differed significantly from the "no letter" control treatment (1998). It should be noted, however, that the formal/complex letter suffered a drop in cooperation compared to the "no letter" treatment, suggesting that respondents' reactions to certain messaging approaches can inhibit response rates. Groves and Cooper (1998) however, found negative effects on cooperation were not generally born out in existing empirical studies. Dillman (2000) echoes the idea that lengthy advance letters, in addition to overly detailed information and a delay in delivering the mail questionnaire, may have rendered a survey letter for a national government survey of people aged 65 and older useless, as there was no difference in response rates between treatments.

After reviewing several advance letter experiments with telephone surveys, Groves and Cooper (1998) noted small positive gains could be achieved through the use of letters, and they concluded that survey sponsorship and content (i.e., varied amounts of information in the letters, which affected overall length) were important elements that could influence cooperation. Although Groves and Snowden (1987) found a trivial positive effect for advance letters on a follow-up interview for a telephone survey, response rates increased significantly for the elderly. Rates also increased for the general population when a novel mailing approach was used; instead of sending one letter per household, all household members received a letter.

Though sparse in comparison to the empirical literature on survey letters, some qualitative work has been undertaken to better understand respondents' perceptions of survey letters. Several studies indicate respondents find particular topics within the letter extremely salient, such as the survey's purpose, organization/sponsor (Luppés, 1994), and survey topic(s) (Bowers and Gonzales, 2002; Luppés, 1994). When critiquing survey letters, respondents expect to see adequate information about the survey's purpose and survey topics (Luppés, 1994; White, Martin,

¹ *This report is released to inform interested parties of ongoing research and to encourage discussion. The views expressed on are those of the author and not necessarily those of the U.S. Census Bureau.*

Bennett, and Freeth, 1998), in addition to the data uses and the research organization (Luppés, 1994). These studies take a necessary step in the direction of understanding survey letters from a respondent's perspective. Without knowing how respondents process, perceive, and comprehend survey letter messages, it is impossible to know whether they deliver the intended message and have the intended effect.

Respondent-based research with survey letters is a critical step in identifying effective language and an effective communication strategy, especially since aspects of the letters and respondent characteristics coalesce to complicate this type of communication process. First, federal survey letters serve a multifunctional purpose; they must simultaneously create interest, persuade, *and* convey legally required informed consent messages. In fact, many of the main messages within demographic survey letters for the Census Bureau are directly related to informed consent topics (e.g., survey purpose/data uses, confidentiality assurance, voluntary or mandatory survey disclosure statement, response burden estimate, follow-up interviews, authority under which data are collected, etc.).

Second, the average survey letter recipient may be ill-equipped to fully process letters written in prose typically adopted by sophisticated people with advanced degrees: survey researchers and legal advisors. A national literacy study revealed between 46 and 50 percent of the American adult population possessed very low- to low-literacy skills (Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins, and Kolstad, 1993). These individuals were unable to integrate information from relatively long or dense text, or from documents. This finding seems particularly germane; by virtue of the volume of informed consent messaging embedded within federal demographic survey letters, these documents run the risk of resembling long, dense, complex text.

Finally, it would not be surprising if potential respondents were unable to fully absorb the cacophony of messages in a survey letter; they may only attend to those they find most salient. Instead of using a thoroughly considered systematic approach when deciding to comply with a survey request, Groves and Cialdini (1991) suspect potential respondents may engage in a heuristic approach, a "short-cut" decisional approach guided by one or two salient pieces of information used to make successful choices in the past. The implication of this decision strategy may be that while respondents assess their feelings on a variety of topics—the survey organization, their intrinsic interest in survey-taking, and perhaps the survey topic—they are unlikely to attend to the entire set of survey letter messages.

Instead, respondents may simply focus on one or two highly salient pieces of information within these letters. So, it would be useful to know which messages respondents most often attend to and convey those messages without unnecessary impediments to comprehension or motivation.

III. METHOD

This research involved letters and materials from two large demographic surveys conducted by the Census Bureau, the interviewer-administered Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) and the multi-mode American Community Survey (ACS).² The materials used for the SIPP research involved an advance survey letter only, which respondents would typically receive in the mail prior to an interviewer's personal visit. Research with the ACS materials included an advance letter sent to respondents prior to the mail questionnaire's arrival, and materials that accompany the questionnaire—a survey cover letter and an informational brochure labeled "Frequently Asked Questions."³ Several sets of survey letters were created for the experimental panels, since the intent was to examine response rate effects for mandatory- and voluntary-survey designs.⁴

Two research methods were employed to create and revise portions of these materials, focus groups and cognitive interviews. Three focus groups with field interviewers provided early insights to issues with an existing SIPP advance letter (e.g., any aspects impeding cooperation) and helped determine which respondent concerns were most prevalent upon initial face-to-face contact at the doorstep. The focus groups were conducted in the fall of 2000 with interviewers

² In 2000, the SIPP letters were the first to undergo the respondent-based research. A cadre of survey letter design principles emerged, and in 2003, they helped develop letters and materials intended for use in a split-panel experiment with the ACS.

³ Additional materials, not included in this research but which also accompany the ACS questionnaire's mailing packet, include a "Guide Book" containing instructions for completing the questionnaire, a postage-paid return envelope, and a self-administered paper questionnaire.

⁴ A set of "mandatory" survey materials was created, as were two sets of "voluntary" survey materials. The mandatory experimental panel included a set of original, unaltered "mandatory" materials already in use, while both sets of the materials for the voluntary panels were new—the main difference being one voluntary survey letter disclosed the voluntary nature of the survey earlier in the letter, and in a more explicit manner.

from four Census Bureau regional offices, and each lasted approximately an hour and a half.⁵

The groups contained roughly eight participants each, and were heavily populated by female interviewers, with only one to two male interviewers per group. The participants' interviewing experience ranged from one to seventeen years, with most participants averaging between four and eight years of interviewing experience with the SIPP. The interviewers worked in a variety of urban, suburban, and rural settings.

The cognitive interview method was used to gather information about respondents' general reactions to and interpretations of messages contained in the letters and materials, and was carried out with a scripted interview protocol. Results were achieved through a variety of respondent tasks, which included: 1) an initial silent review/reading of the letter and materials; 2) an independent recall task eliciting messages retained and interpretations for those messages; 3) read-aloud tasks to assess text readability and respondents' language fluency, which also allowed affective behavior observations—indicating negative or positive reactions to the material; and 4) paraphrasing tasks for certain passages in the letter to assess comprehension of main messages. The interviews tended to last anywhere from 45 minutes to an hour and a half.

Cognitive interviews with the SIPP advance letter were conducted in the spring of 2001 with 25 respondents from the DC metropolitan area (i.e., suburban and urban respondents), and interviews with the ACS materials were conducted in the fall of 2002 with 36 respondents located in the DC metropolitan area, northern Virginia, and Chicago, Illinois. With the exception of a handful of respondents from rural parts of northern Virginia, the majority of respondents lived in suburban and urban areas. Respondents were well dispersed along major demographic characteristics (e.g., age, educational attainment, gender, and income); however, diversity in race/ethnicity was limited as the majority of respondents were African-American and Caucasian, and only a few respondents were Asian and four were Hispanic.⁶

⁵ Focus group participants were staff from the Boston, Charlotte, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia Regional Offices. A combined focus group was held with interviewers from the Charlotte and Philadelphia Regional Offices, because of expected similarities in interviewing experience due to geographic location.

⁶ Hispanics recruited for this research all resided in Chicago, Illinois.

IV. RESPONDENT LETTER-PROCESSING STRATEGIES

The cognitively pretested survey letters were better organized than their predecessors, and messages likely to motivate response and convey legally required information were presented in a more respondent-friendly manner. Yet, respondents' letter-processing strategies, combined with the letters' contents, prevented the transmission of the complete range of messages, and sometimes prevented the intended message from getting through. This section outlines respondents' letter-processing strategies observed during the cognitive interviews and identifies aspects of the messages that may have hampered accurate and full comprehension/processing.

Myopic focus: In cognitive interviews with the SIPP and ACS letters, the limitations of working memory were evident by the scant information, mostly related to highly salient topics, that respondents were able to retrieve. Independent recall tasks performed by respondents immediately after reading the letters revealed that most respondents retained a general impression of the letter, often recalling only two or three key messages. The most frequently cited message related to the data use statements; respondents would often recall one or more of these topics (e.g., for SIPP they recalled providing more children with healthcare coverage, for ACS they recalled the need for additional schools and hospitals). Respondents also indicated they thought the survey was confidential, and some attended to the survey's sponsor and topics. Beyond these key pieces of information, most respondents could not recall anything further (e.g., survey name and estimate of response burden).

These results were typical for respondents with a high school education or less, but there were noticeable differences in the amount of information retrieved among those with more sophisticated literacy skills. Respondents with at least some post-secondary education were able to recall a few additional details from the letters, or were at least more articulate in expressing what they remembered (e.g., some recalled one or two additional data use topics, and a few recalled the estimated response burden and whether the survey was voluntary or mandatory).

Encoding generalized messages: Although respondents were able to hold a few salient messages in working memory, the messages were often encoded in a truncated manner, which sometimes deviated from the intended message. Even the data use statements, which were the most salient and consistently recalled aspect of these letters, were not always accurately recalled and interpreted. For

example, the SIPP letter message stating the “...survey results are used to cover more children with health insurance” was sometimes recalled more generally as “a survey about healthcare.” The ACS advance letter contained a plethora of general data uses examples:

“...community leaders depend on this information to decide when and where schools, highways, hospitals, and other services are needed. In addition, results from the survey are used to develop programs to reduce traffic congestion, provide job training, and plan for the healthcare needs of the elderly.”

Respondents, however, usually only attended to a few items early in the list (i.e., new schools and hospitals) and tended to interpret the data collection not as a national effort, but limited to their community (e.g., “to see if my community needed new schools or hospitals” vs. “communities across America” as stated in a preceding sentence).

Fixation on negative interpretations: Though it happened only occasionally in cognitive interviews, field interviewers in the focus groups revealed that respondents sometimes fixated on some negatively interpreted message or alarming information they read in the advance letter, to the extent that the impact of other more positive messages (e.g., data uses statements) and attempts to gain cooperation were diminished. Field interviewers reported that respondents became alarmed and upset when they incorrectly interpreted the phrase “please refer to your pay stubs and bank statements” as the Census Bureau’s intention to review their personal documents. Similar events occurred in the SIPP cognitive interviews when respondents read a portion of the survey burden statement in which respondents were told to “review your records.”

In the SIPP cognitive interviews, a number of respondents became very concerned, and one became irate, after reading an administrative records use disclosure statement notifying them of an impending Social Security number request to enable further data collection (i.e., “Providing your Social Security number allows the Census Bureau to get some additional information from other government agencies”).

Skipping and skimming: Although they were instructed to read the letters and materials thoroughly, respondents were observed skimming, and even skipping portions of the text. This was most noticeable when messaging was perceived as redundant. For example, ACS respondents skipped data uses statements in survey cover letters that were

more descriptive, because they’d already read an abbreviated and similar statement in the advance letter. This behavior was also observed when respondents read familiar-sounding bureaucratic “boilerplate” statements full of legalese. These types of messages were particularly susceptible to skimming and skipping in the ACS cognitive interviews, especially where Title 13 messages regarding confidentiality and authority to conduct the survey were concerned (e.g., one respondent said, “I read the whole letter, I didn’t read every legal word after ‘Title’ blah-blah-blah...but I read the rest of the letter”). These messages were often perceived as legalese disclosures to protect the organization rather than an assurance of protection for respondents’ data and identities.

Skipping/skimming behavior was also observed for disorganized paragraphs containing disconnected messages. The following confidentiality paragraph was often skimmed by respondents in the SIPP research—a similar but lengthier passage in the ACS research was skipped altogether—due to the combination of unrelated messages located in one paragraph. It contained messages regarding authority to conduct the survey, its emphasis on unfamiliar U.S. Code/law to express confidentiality, and the use of unfamiliar technical terms and phrases (i.e., authorized and statistical purposes):

“The Census Bureau is authorized to conduct this survey under Title 13, United States Code, Section 182. Section 9 of this law requires us to keep all information about you and your household strictly confidential. The Census Bureau will use this information only for statistical purposes.”

In contrast, the SIPP and ACS cognitive interview findings documented that respondents tended to read in its entirety a slightly different confidentiality paragraph, written more from a respondent’s perspective. This passage also elicited far more positive responses:

“The information the Census Bureau collects for this survey about you and your household is confidential by law (Title 13, United States Code, Section 9). By law, every Census Bureau employee—including the Director as well as every field representative—has taken an oath and is subject to a jail term, a fine, or both if he or she discloses ANY information that could identify you or your household.”

Aspects of this passage rendering it “respondent-friendly” include its narrow topic focus on confidentiality, its de-emphasis of specific references to U.S. Code through the use of a parenthetical statement, elimination of complex concepts and technical phrases (i.e., “statistical purposes”), and its emphasis on the existence of laws (and consequences) protecting respondents’ identities and data.

Revisiting complex and confusing messages:

After reading the ACS’s informational brochure, many respondents returned to a particular passage containing some complex concepts; it conveyed the methodological metamorphosis of the decennial long form data collection into the ACS, an ongoing national sample survey:

“The U. S. Census Bureau is changing the way it takes a census. The next census in 2010 will ask only basic questions using a short form. The long form questions that are asked of one-sixth of the households at the time of the census will now be asked in the American Community Survey, from about 2.5 percent of the population each year.”

Respondents seemed convinced that this passage contained important messages, but most were unable to disambiguate its meaning, and attempts to review the text caused additional confusion and increased frustration. Respondents were unable to understand the significance or accurate meaning of references to fractions and percents used to describe the sample survey concept. Most were unable even to identify the main message; the survey’s name and methodology has changed, but not the data collected. Instead some thought the ACS would replace the decennial operation entirely.

In the cognitive lab, these respondents returned to passages that were unclear to them, but in real life, respondents may not be so motivated and instead may choose to skip the text, if they’re able to extract enough informative information from other places in the survey letter and other materials.

Respondent assumptions and survey participation decision: Cognitive interview respondents brought their own set of assumptions to the survey process, and their impression of the survey letters and materials were affected. For instance, regardless of the ACS treatment respondents received (i.e., voluntary vs. mandatory letter), many respondents assumed the survey was voluntary. Though it might be an artifact of the cognitive interview, their interpretation was largely predicated upon the assumption that all surveys are, in essence, voluntary;

the respondent knowingly and ultimately controls whether or not they respond to any survey request, regardless of the presence of a “mandatory” survey message. In many cases, respondents seemed not to have noticed the mandatory survey message in the letter’s body (i.e., “You are required by law to respond to this survey”) or the full paragraph in the informational brochure titled “Do I have to answer the questions on the American Community Survey?” indicating that these messages may have been skimmed or skipped, and possibly never encoded.

When asked what they considered prior to deciding whether or not to cooperate with the hypothetical survey request, cognitive interview respondents mainly attributed their decision to a positive assessment of the data uses statements and the survey sponsor (i.e., the U.S. Census Bureau). Many, however, indicated they would postpone this decision until they learned more about the types of survey questions that would be asked, even though the letters provided a few summary examples (i.e., “your job and economic situation” in SIPP, and “education, housing, and jobs” in ACS). Thus, information gleaned from either a field interviewer or a mail questionnaire would ultimately decide the fate of a completed interview or survey. Of course other aspects of the survey request factor into cooperation decisions, but these did not emerge in the cognitive interviews themselves. For example, none of the respondents questioned the U.S. Census Bureau’s legitimacy to collect these data and whether respondents actually had any intrinsic interest in the survey purpose or topics.

V. RESPONDENT-FRIENDLY SURVEY LETTER DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Clearly, these respondents possessed characteristics that hampered comprehension and encoding of the letters’ messages, such as limitations of working memory and, for some, literacy skills. In addition, however, aspects of the letters themselves became impediments; complex concepts, unfamiliar references to laws, academic/technical terminology, and redundant messaging prevented respondents from fully processing the entire range of messages. In sum, these cognitive interview respondents displayed a variety of strategies for culling aspects of the survey request that were salient to them and most important for making a survey participation decision.

Actual respondents may be *more* likely than motivated laboratory respondents to scan letters for an even narrower subset of information regarding a survey request, which suggests carefully considered design principles for survey letters and materials are truly needed. From this research, implications for crafting survey letters include striving to create letters

that deliver this subset of information in an easily accessible manner, while considering the respondents' perspective and accounting for their informational needs. Survey letter designers must recognize that readers will not attend to all messages, and strive to promote the essential, most sought-after, positively received messages in a way that makes reading and encoding easy for respondents.

As a result of this research, the following design principles for survey letters were identified:

1. Prioritize and limit content: Survey letter messages, many of which relate to informed consent, may be communicated through these letters prior to data collection, but it is essential to first prioritize the various topics to be covered. Priority should be given to those topics respondents are likely to find most compelling about a survey request (e.g., survey purpose and topics, a few data uses statements, sponsor, confidentiality), and those that have the greatest chance of generating positive reactions. Limiting content in the body of the letter to a few high priority topics ensures respondents will have little difficulty identifying key messages that are critical to the survey participation decision. Other messages, and additional information about the survey process for inquisitive respondents, are also necessary, but these should be placed elsewhere (e.g., back of letter, include a website address, and/or an informational brochure).

2. Control order of presentation: By controlling the order in which (informed consent) messages appear in the survey letter, respondents are more likely to process various aspects of the survey request. In addition, any negative reactions to particular messages may be more easily mitigated. Placing prioritized/key messages most likely to positively influence response (e.g., data uses) before messages that might automatically discourage response (e.g., a voluntary survey disclosure or a statement about administrative records use) may engage respondents in the letter long enough to consider a greater range of messages. Encouraging them to read more of the letter can prevent respondents from prematurely deciding to refuse the request (e.g., "I see the survey's voluntary, so I don't have to do this"), which might also cause them to miss other important, cooperation-building messages (e.g., confidentiality assurance). Increasing the saliency of positively received and sought-after information can be achieved by placing these messages early in the body of the letter, and prior to other messages that may prematurely discourage cooperation or further reading.

3. Create mutually exclusive topic organization: To the extent possible, eliminating discernable topic overlap will ensure main concepts are addressed

in a mutually exclusive fashion, preventing respondents from bypassing important information they perceive as redundant. This is especially important for critical informed consent messages likely to influence response (e.g., data uses, confidentiality assurance). In situations where the use of redundant legalese/bureaucratic language is unavoidable, especially where more complex messages are entwined, it is advisable to place this text after the main, respondent-friendly message that appears in the body of the survey letter—preferably in a less salient location (e.g., on the back of the survey letter or in a separate piece of literature). For example, the ACS's and SIPP's survey letters and materials contain a message stating that data from other government agencies may be collected and combined with survey data. This message is paired with a restatement of the confidentiality protection afforded to these additional data, using some of the same language and references to the law. Wisely, this information is placed in a less salient location (i.e., on the back of the SIPP letter and in the ACS's informational brochure), so that respondents are given a chance in the survey letter to read and encode the uncomplicated, respondent-friendly version of the confidentiality statement first.

4. Attend to data uses statements: Since these were the most compelling and salient messages within the letters, it stands to reason that a good deal of attention should be given to them. Specific data uses seemed to be more compelling, salient, and effective than general ones. In addition, the use of one or two data uses statements is preferential to a laundry list, since respondents can only hold a few in working memory and the inclusion of auxiliary text can be counter-productive. Cognitive pretesting of these statements, within the context of the survey letter or entire mailing package, is essential for determining whether these messages seem compelling to respondents and whether they are reliably and accurately interpreted.

5. Convey basic concepts in simplified, respondent-friendly language: The ideas behind survey letter messages must be communicated in short statements with simple, straightforward language. This not only enhances comprehension for respondents with lower literacy skills, but it also may allow those with more sophisticated literacy skills to scan selected messages with greater ease. Most importantly, to the extent possible these messages must address any given topic from a respondent's perspective (e.g., what is Title 13 and how does it apply to me?). Otherwise, respondents quickly get the impression the information was not actually written for them, but rather for the organization's benefit. Omitting content-imposed comprehension impedi-

ments such as technical jargon and academic or unclear terms (e.g., demographic), complex syntax, and complex concepts that cannot be conveyed in one statement, will help reduce this perception.

Designing survey messages relating to these last two design principles requires cognitive pretesting, of course, because data uses will vary by survey and particular populations of interest may find the stated uses differentially compelling. In addition, it is sometimes impossible to predict which terms or combination of words and ideas can reasonably be expected to elicit consistent and accurate interpretations, or worse, which ones may cause severe negative reactions and misinterpretations.

VI. CONCLUSION

Survey letters may be limited in what they are able to convey to respondents. Not only is working memory taxed by letter content, but focus is also narrowed as respondents search for a few key pieces of information to guide their survey participation decision. Since respondents in this study retained a limited amount of information from the letters, a pragmatic approach to these types of communications suggests that messages should be brief and explained in terms relevant to the respondent's relationship to the survey effort (e.g., the survey request or outcome and other informed consent messages). After all, survey letter content need not be treated as mere legal disclosures; messages can also be used to persuade or allay respondents' concerns if constructed in a manner that conveys data protections and survey benefits from a respondent's perspective (e.g., confidentiality assurance derived from U. S. law).

Whether or not the suggested survey letter design principles generate response rate differences should be the subject of future empirical studies. A priori, it is reasonable to expect that response rate differences may be more apparent in mail-mode studies, compared to face-to-face designs, due to the absence of the mediating effect of interviewers in mail-mode survey designs. In addition, for mixed mode surveys like the ACS, which rely on the mail mode portion of the survey process to capture the bulk of initial response rates, a poorly constructed letter could contribute to an escalation in the survey cost structure if it causes unexpected dependency on post mail-back data collection methods (e.g., telephone or personal visit follow-up). If follow-up measures are not used in mail mode surveys, the design of survey letters is even more critical because there is little chance for the core set of important survey information to be conveyed in a more effective manner. In face-to-face surveys, on the other hand, interviewers are able to mediate the letter's message, so a respondent-friendly letter may be less critical. Although, the affect of

poorly written messages should not be treated as trivial, as they may still complicate the cooperation-gaining process at the doorstep.

Although not discussed in this paper, one empirical study was recently undertaken with the ACS. Results from the split-panel experiment suggest that using "respondent-friendly" survey letters and materials, in addition to controlling the presentation order of particular informed consent messages, creates response rate differences (Raglin, Leslie, and Griffin, 2004). In one experimental panel, a "respondent-friendly" survey letter achieved a significantly higher mail response rate compared to an older version of the same letter, which had never been pretested. In addition, another experimental panel yielded a significantly lower response rate using a letter that presented the voluntary survey statement too early (i.e., first paragraph) compared to a similar letter that presented the data uses and survey purpose statements before disclosing the voluntary nature of the survey.

In future studies it would be helpful to measure the effect of different approaches to communicating the most compelling messages in survey letters: the data uses statements. Varied approaches could be used for these statements—comparing specific examples with general examples. More research is needed to further develop and test these suggested design principles in different contexts, for example where the survey sponsor, topic, and mode are varied.

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