

## **When a Face Doesn't Launch a Thousand Ships: Including a Personalized Image on a Mail Questionnaire**

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### **Abstract**

Research has been limited on whether including a personalized image within a mail questionnaire affects response rate and the quality of the data collected. We tested the hypothesis that including an image (photograph) of a person on a mail verification questionnaire would encourage response as compared to a no-image questionnaire as part of a study in Los Angeles County. Respondents who had previously participated in a parent survey were mailed a short verification questionnaire with a bilingual (English / Spanish) thank you message. We randomly selected half of the sample to receive a questionnaire with an image of a smiling staff member, with the other half receiving the questionnaire without an image. Both groups were asked to complete seven yes-or-no questions about their previous survey experience, including whether they had received a gift card incentive for their participation. Nearly 30 percent of the sample responded to the verification questionnaire mailing. The group that received the “image” verification questionnaire was less likely to return the questionnaire (23 percent) than the group that did not receive the image (34 percent), and this difference was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ). All respondents should have received the gift card at the time of the interview; the gift card was either handed to them (in-person interviews) or mailed after a telephone interview. However, 5.1 percent of the image group respondents reported not having received the gift card versus 9.4 percent of the “no image” group. We also examined the sample characteristics and selected previous interview variables to help understand these results.

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**Key Words:** Image, incentive, gift card, response rate, verification questionnaire, bilingual

### **1. Introduction**

Although we strive to maintain quality through designing high-quality questionnaires, providing strong training to our field staff, and giving careful consideration to our procedures, in the end the professional reputation of an organization rests on the quality of work performed by its data collection staff. Any problems with the quality of data collected for a project have serious implications that might affect the validity of the study and the reputations of all who are associated with it. Quality assurance procedures, therefore, are as much a part of the survey process as the collection of the data themselves. Following American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR)

best practices, Mathematica Policy Research conducts quality assurance procedures at every survey stage to ensure that the data are collected and processed in a valid, standardized, and professional manner. Monitoring data quality starts with interviewer certification at the end of training to make sure that all staff members are fully competent in administering the instruments. Quality assurance continues with monitoring throughout the data collection field period to ensure staff continues to collect data at a high level of competency. This is followed by contacting a sample (5 percent to 15 percent), of each interviewer's respondents (by telephone or mail) and asking them to complete a short questionnaire, usually fewer than 10 questions, often referred to as a recontact or verification questionnaire, to confirm they were in fact interviewed, discuss interviewer professionalism and confirm receipt of incentives (if any were given).

It is just as important for research organizations to verify that the "promise of payment" or "incentive" has been fulfilled as it is to verify that high-quality data are collected. If one researcher promised the "check is in the mail" and never delivered the incentive it could negatively affect all researchers. Procedures to verify the receipt of incentives can be developed and should be part of the quality control/verification process to ensure that respondents cannot assert that they have not received what was promised to them. Although simple accounting procedures can match cancelled checks to respondents, gift card or cash incentives present other verification challenges. It can be difficult to verify that field staff personally handed the gift card/cash to a respondent unless a receipt is used to record the respondent's name, signature, and, if available, the gift card number. The receipt is then equivalent to a cancelled check. And verification provides the survey director with an independent means of ensuring that procedures were followed. However, if gift card incentives are mailed to respondents after a completed telephone interview, there is no sure way to check if a respondent received the gift card unless the respondent is asked to send a receipt in the mail, which they might or might not do. For those cases that received gift cards in the mail, verification makes sure that the card reached the right hands.

Mailing a verification questionnaire can be more cost effective than calling a respondent. However, motivating a respondent to return the verification questionnaire (without offering an incentive) can be difficult and response rates typically are low. In late 2007, a verification questionnaire was sent to 13 percent (208) of parents who had completed the fall 2007 parent interview on the First 5 LA Universal Preschool Child Outcomes Study (UPCOS) and we achieved a 33 percent response rate without additional follow-up. For the spring 2008 data collection, we wanted to create an eye-catching mailing, something that would entice respondents to open the mailing, answer the seven questions regarding their experience from the parent interview, and return the completed questionnaire, hopefully resulting in an increased response rate.

While working on the new design and talking about how to increase response rate, one of our word processors jokingly suggested we should include an image (photograph) of our smiling UPCOS deputy survey director, Kathy Sonnenfeld, on the questionnaire. We decided to implement an experiment to see if using an image would increase response rates.

Images can evoke meanings to respondents. Research by Tourangeau, Couper, and Conrad (2003) on the use of images in web surveys hypothesized that "presenting an image of high frequency instances would enhance retrieval of similar instances and increase the total of number of instances reported." Gendall (1996) found the use of

images in a questionnaire cover design marginally increased response rates. Other studies have included images of males and females to see if gender will evoke different meanings or increase response rates differently. An image of a female model achieved a higher response rate than an image of a male model in a study conducted by Dommeyer (2008). We hypothesized that including an image of a smiling female UPCOS staff member on the spring 2008 UPCOS verification questionnaire would increase the response rate by personalizing the survey request.

## 2. Sample

UPCOS is a descriptive study of the children served by Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) conducted in fall 2007 and spring 2008. UPCOS included 98 early childhood programs, and consisted of interviews with parents by telephone or in person, assessments of children with a battery that included language, literacy, and math measures, and teacher ratings of children's social emotional development. Ninety-one percent of all eligible families agreed to participate in the study. Fall baseline interviews were completed with 1,593 parents (92 percent), 1,662 children (96 percent) were assessed, and teachers completed ratings for 1,657 children (96 percent), with 70 percent completed on the web. In the winter of 2008, we also conducted classroom observations. The spring 2008 data collection included completing 1,438 child assessments (92 percent), 1,397 (90 percent) teacher ratings of children, and 1,353 parent interviews (87 percent) among those with children still in the program. In both fall 2007 and spring 2008, 70 percent of the parent interviews were completed in person and the remaining 30 percent by telephone. Our culturally diverse field interviewers conducted 56 percent of the interviews in English, 43 percent in Spanish and less than 1 percent in other languages. Also, families in the UPCOS study were 74 percent Hispanic.

## 3. Methodology

As previously noted, the purpose of both the fall 2007 and spring 2008 verification surveys was to confirm that field interviewing procedures had been properly followed. Specifically, the verification questionnaire was designed to verify (1) the completion of the interview, including language of the interview and mode; (2) the professionalism of our field interviewers during data collection, including how pleasant they were perceived to be; and (3) that gift card incentive distribution procedures were followed. While often the focus of verifications, we were less worried about uncovering instances of fraudulently reporting a completed interview because the in-person interviews most often occurred at a child's preschool center and most telephone interviews had been coordinated with the help of the preschool center staff.

### 3.1 Gift Card Incentive Distribution

The procedures for gift card incentive distribution for both fall and spring data collection were as follows:

*In-Person Interview:* the parent was given the \$25 gift card and asked to sign a receipt acknowledging the receipt of the card.

*Telephone Interview:* the parent was asked if he or she would like the gift card mailed to the home or if he or she would prefer to pick up the gift card from the preschool director. If mailed to the home, parents were asked to sign and return the receipt using a business

reply postage paid envelope; otherwise they would be asked to sign the receipt in person at the preschool center.

However, it is possible that some respondents may not have received the incentive.

### **3.2 Fall 2007 Methodology**

The fall 2007 verification questionnaire was sent to the sampled parents at their homes, and it included a cover letter asking the sample members to answer the seven questions on the enclosed 4.25 inch by 5.5 inch, one-sided, yellow cardstock postcards, affixed with a postage stamp, and return them upon completion. The questionnaire was placed into a larger envelope affixed with the sample member's address. The cover letter and postcard questionnaire were prepared in two different languages (English or Spanish). Respondents who completed the parent interview in Spanish received the Spanish version and those who completed the parent interview in English received the English version. The mailing was sent to 13 percent (208) of the parents who had completed fall 2007 parent interviews (1,593). The interviews took place between August and October of 2007, with the verification survey occurring in late October 2007.

### **3.3 Spring 2008 Methodology**

The spring 2008 verification methodology and questionnaire were redesigned for the purpose of this experiment. Instead of two separate versions of the postcard questionnaire and cover letters used in the fall 2007 survey, we redesigned the spring 2008 questionnaire to become a bilingual, two-sided, 8.5 inch by 11 inch, tri-folded, all-in-one mailing on white cardstock. The questionnaire, when tri-folded, becomes 8.5 inches wide by 3.7 inches high and looks like a postcard—a message to the sample member on the left side and the member's address on the right. The message—like a cover letter—contained the purpose of the mailing and the request to complete the questions found on the reverse side of the mailing. Three of the seven questions are visible on the outside of the 8.5 inches by 3.7 inches mailing. When the respondent fully opens the tri-fold it becomes full size (8.5 inches by 11 inches) and the four remaining questions are visible. The inside (reverse side) of the fully opened mailing contained a thank you message from the deputy survey director on the top left third, the middle third contained the return address and business reply postage, and the bottom third contained information about how to contact the study team if the respondent had any questions, as well as instructions on how to refold the tri-fold questionnaire for remailing. All text on the bilingual mailing appeared in both English and Spanish, either side-by-side or one above the other.

A similar tri-fold questionnaire layout was used on a third year of a longitudinal study with young adults conducted by Mathematica in which a 62 percent response rate was achieved. However, a \$10 incentive was offered for completed questionnaire. Although no incentive was offered for the return of this spring 2008 verification questionnaire, we had evidence that the concept of the tri-fold all-in-one mailing had previously worked in three ways: (1) respondents understood the instructions on how to refold and return the complete—as is evident by the response rate in the young adult study, (2) that study achieved a higher response rate than the 33 percent response rate experienced on the UPCOS study's fall 2007 verification survey, and (3) it is more cost effective than sending out two pieces inside an envelope. Using business reply postage would increase the cost savings even further over the use of the postage stamp.

The cost savings from the all-in-one mailing also allowed for an increased sample size to be used for this experiment. We wanted to know if including an image on the verification questionnaire would yield a higher response rate than a version of the verification questionnaire that did not contain an image. Therefore, all parents (1,303) who provided mailing addresses at the end of the spring 2008 parent interview would be mailed the verification questionnaire, with a random half (652) receiving the verification questionnaire with an image, and the other half (651) receiving the verification questionnaire without an image.

The image (a photograph of the deputy survey director) was placed on the inside of the questionnaire on the top right third, next to the thank you message and instructions from the deputy survey director. The top right third was left blank on the version of the verification questionnaire without the image.

The following statement and seven yes-or-no questions were located on the bottom two-thirds of the mailing read as follows:

Our records show that you recently completed an interview for First 5 LA's Universal Preschool Child Outcomes Study. To ensure that our study staff is providing the highest level of quality, we would like to verify the outcome of your interview. Please complete the questions below and return this prepaid mailing to us.

Was the interview completed in person?

Was the interview completed over the phone?

Was the interviewer pleasant?

Did the interviewer ask questions about...

(a) your child's health?

(b) activities you do with your child?

(c) your experiences with your child's preschool program?

Did you receive the \$25 gift card?

Upon receipt of the verification questionnaires, we data-entered the responses and used the respondents' identifiers to link the responses back to the parent interview data. One verification questionnaire was returned blank and was treated as a nonresponse. Nineteen respondents who had torn off their address label (containing the study identifier) were used only for analyses that did not require matching to the parent interview data. Data items from the verification questionnaire were set to missing if they were left blank by the respondent or if the respondent checked both the "yes" and the "no" responses. We then merged the verification data to the parent interview data file and selected or constructed various variables to use in the analysis:

### 3.4 Parent Interview Variables

We examined the *month* of the parent interview, the *language* in which it was conducted, and the *mode*—whether it was conducted in person or by telephone.

**Verification-Specific Variables.** *Quality*—whether the respondent reported the interviewer being pleasant or not pleasant. *Topic*—to capture whether the respondent checked yes to the three parts of question 4, which asked the parent to recall being asked specific topics. If the response was "yes" to all three parts, we set this new variable to 1; otherwise, if they did not recall one or more of these three topics, we set the value to 0. *Gift Card Incentive*—did the respondent indicate receiving a gift card incentive.

**Constructed Variables: Compare Parent Interview with Verification Data.** We constructed two variables to compare the verification data to what was known from the parent interview data: *Language*—whether the parent interview and the verification questionnaire were completed in the same language; *Mode*—whether the verification questionnaire respondent reported the correct mode in which the parent interview had been completed (in person or by telephone);

**Created Four Groups.** Then we grouped the respondents into four categories, depending on whether they had the *image* or *no-image* version of the verification questionnaire and whether they reported (remembered) having received the *gift card incentive* or *no gift card incentive*.

To look for statistically significant associations between all variables, we did a series of Chi-Square tests for a number of bivariate comparisons. If any of the expected cell counts were too small for the Chi-Square test to be reliable, we also looked at the result of the Fisher Exact Test. We did not make any adjustments for multiple comparisons, and used a Type I error level of 0.05 to determine statistical significance. All comparisons were run for the respondents who were identifiable, and were repeated for this sample plus the 19 anonymous responses if the variables being analyzed did not require linking back to the parent interview.

**Image and Parent Interview Data.** We looked at whether the response rate to the verification questionnaire was related to the presence of an image on the questionnaire, the parent interview language, the parent interview mode, or the parent interview month.

**Gift Card Incentive and Verification Data.** We looked at whether the respondent reported receiving a gift card incentive by:

- presence of the *image*
- *language* of the parent interview and language used to respond to the verification questionnaire and whether these two languages matched
- parent interview *mode*, the mode recalled on the verification questionnaire, and whether these two modes matched
- the parent interview *month*
- whether the parent reported that the interviewer was pleasant (*quality*)
- whether the parent recalled the three parent interview (*topic*) questions

We also looked for other pair-wise relationships among these variables. Finally, we compared the four groups (formed by image and gift card incentive status) with the verification questionnaire completion language, whether the two languages matched, whether the respondent recalled the mode, whether the two modes matched, interviewer pleasantness, and questions recalled to look for any significant associations.

## 4. Findings

Of the 1,303 verification questionnaires mailed out during spring 2008, we received 375 responses, 19 of which had their address label removed and therefore could not be linked to the spring 2008 parent interview data. Table 1 shows the response pattern by whether the verification questionnaire had an image or not.

**Table 1:** Spring 2008 Verification Questionnaire Response Rate

	Total Sample (n)	No Reply (n)	Non-Identifiable Reply*	Identifiable Reply (n)	Total Reply (n)	Response Rate (%)	Chi-Square <i>p</i> -Value
Image	652	499	12	141	153	23.47	< .0001
No Image	651	429	7	215	222	34.10	
Total	1,303	928	19	356	375	28.78	

\*The 19 “Non-identifiable reply” are combined with the 928 “No reply” in response rates in which we link to the parent interview data and the “Total Reply” decreases to a total of 356.

n = number.

**Image.** We hypothesized that including an image of a person on a mail verification questionnaire would encourage response, compared with a no-image questionnaire. Although one might have thought that adding an image to the verification mailing might have increased the response rate, we in fact found the opposite occurred. Those with the image mailing were much less likely to complete the verification questionnaire (23.47 percent) than those receiving the mailing without the image (34.10 percent). The difference was significant ( $p < .0001$ ). Contrary to our hypotheses that “a face could launch a thousand ships” by encouraging respondents to complete the questionnaire, our total response rate for spring 2008 verification survey was 28.78 percent. Although not significantly different, the spring 2008 response rate was slightly lower than the 33 percent obtained in fall 2007 and seems to be a result of the low (23.47 percent) response to the image version. The spring 2008 response rate of 34.10 for the no-image version was nearly the same as the total 33 percent response rate for fall 2008 survey.

**Compare with Parent Interview Data.** The *language* and *mode* of the parent interview to which the verification mailing referred was not significantly associated with the response rate; however, the time between the *month* the parent interview occurred and the month of the verification mailing was significant at the 0.10 level and showed a trend—the more recent the parent interview, the more likely the person was to return the verification form. Table 2 lists the response rates by parent interview data (known only for the 356 identifiable replies).

**Table 2:** Spring 2008 Verification Questionnaire Response Rate, by Parent Interview Characteristics

	Response Rate %	Chi-Square <i>p</i> -Value (Fisher’s Exact <i>p</i> -Value)
<b>Language</b>		
Parent interview in English	28.61	.1208 (.1068)
Parent interview in Spanish	25.49	
<b>Mode</b>		
Parent interview in person	27.60	.7404
Parent interview by telephone	26.72	
<b>Month</b>		
Parent interview in April	23.15	.0998
Parent interview in May	27.83	
Parent interview in June-July	30.62	

**Gift Card Incentives.** Under the assumption that everyone received a gift card incentive (which might not have been the case for some who were interviewed by telephone), we looked at whether the verification form response indicated that an incentive was received, and whether this was related to several characteristics. Table 3 summarizes the findings.

**Table 3:** Spring 2008 Verification Questionnaire Percent Reporting Receipt Of Gift Card Incentive By Parent Interview And Verification Questionnaire Characteristics

	Percentage Reporting Receipt of Gift Card Incentive	Chi-Square <i>p</i> -Value (Fisher's Exact <i>p</i> -Value)
<b>Image/No Image</b>		
Image	94.89	
No image	90.61	.1430
<b>Language</b>		
Parent interview English	93.30	.3753
Parent interview Spanish	90.70	
Verification English	91.06	.2207
Verification Spanish	94.78	
Interview and verification language match	93.65	.0041 (.0111)
Interview and verification language different	80.00	
<b>Mode</b>		
Parent interview in person	97.11	<.0001
Parent interview by telephone	81.48	
Verification recalled interview was in person	98.65	<.0001
Verification recalled interview was by telephone	80.00	
Interview mode recalled correctly	93.75	.0083 (.0153)
Interview mode recalled incorrectly	82.61	
<b>Month</b>		
Parent interview in April	95.95	.4121
Parent interview in May	91.21	
Parent interview in June-July	91.49	
<b>Quality</b>		
Verification indicated interviewer pleasant	92.77	.0014 (.0313)
Verification indicated interview not pleasant	50.00	
<b>Topic</b>		
Verification recalled 3 interview questions	92.33	.8620 (.5920)
Verification did not recall all 3 questions	90.91	

A few variables were related to whether the incentive was reported received on the verification questionnaire:

**Language.** If the language of the parent interview and the verification questionnaire matched, the person was significantly more likely to report having received a gift card incentive (94 percent versus 80 percent).

**Mode.** If the parent interview was conducted in person, the verification questionnaire reported it was done in person, or the interview mode was recalled correctly on the



questionnaire, then the person was significantly more likely to report having received a gift card incentive.

**Quality.** If the verification questionnaire respondent reported the parent interviewer had been pleasant, then the respondent was significantly more likely to report having received a gift card incentive (92.77 percent) than if the respondent reported the interviewer had not been unpleasant. (Of the four people reporting that the interviewer was unpleasant, two reported not receiving the gift card). Results were similar when including the 19 anonymous responses to the verification questionnaire.

**Gift Card Incentive and Verification Language.** We looked at the relationship between reporting receipt of the gift card incentive and the verification language and found no significant association.

**Other Associations.** We looked for any significant relationships between the parent interview and verification questionnaire responses unrelated to response rate or the reporting of incentive. Some of these findings were not noteworthy because they are logically expected to be related; for example, parent interview language is significantly associated with verification questionnaire language. Others were significant due to more relevant secondary associations already described.

Whether the person received an image or no-image version of the verification questionnaire was significantly associated with whether the interview language matched the verification questionnaire language: those who received a verification questionnaire with an image were more likely to have a language match than those who received a verification questionnaire without an image (95 percent versus 87 percent, not shown). At first this relationship seems peculiar, but one can conjecture that those who received the image version were more likely to have the actual parent interview respondent reply to the verification questionnaire, as instructed. We highlight the statistically significant associations in Table 4. The results were similar when including the 19 anonymous responses to the verification questionnaire. In general, mode variables (parent interview mode, verification mode recalled, correct mode recalled) were significantly related to one another, as one would expect. But recalling the correct mode was also related to the parent interview month and the recalled pleasantness of the interviewer.

**Table 4:** Spring 2008 Verification Questionnaire Significant Associations of Image Language and Mode

	Image or No Image	Language		Mode		
		Parent Interview Language	Verification Language	Parent Interview Mode	Verification Mode Recalled	Correct Mode Recalled
<b>Language</b>						
Verification language		***				
Language match	*	***	*			
<b>Mode</b>						
Verification mode recalled				***		
Correct mode recalled				*	***	
<b>Month</b>						
Parent interview month		*	*			*
<b>Quality</b>						
Interviewer pleasant						** <sup>a</sup>

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001.

<sup>a</sup>p = 0.019 using Fisher's Exact Test.

**Image and Gift Card Incentive Groups.** We also looked at whether dividing the verification questionnaire respondents into four groups based on whether they received the image version of the questionnaire and whether they reported receiving a gift card incentive was associated with other characteristics. These groups were not related to whether they answered the English or Spanish column of the verification questionnaire or whether they remembered the questions asked during the parent interview. These groups were significantly related to whether the parent interview language matched the language used to complete the verification questionnaire, what the verification questionnaire reported as the mode of the parent interview, and whether the respondent reported the interviewer being pleasant. There was suggestion of an association ( $.05 < p < .10$ ) between these groups and whether verification response correctly reported the mode of the parent interview. Table 5 summarized the findings.

**Table 5:** Spring 2008 Associations by Image and Incentive Groups

	No Image, Gift Card Reported	No Image, No Gift Card Reported	Image, Gift Card Reported	Image, No Gift Card Reported	Chi-Square <i>p</i> -Value (Fisher's Exact <i>p</i> - Value)
	n = 193 %	n = 20 %	n = 130 %	n = 7 %	
<b>Language</b>					
Verification in English	69.95	80.00	60.77	71.43	.2002 (.2123)
Interviewer and verification language match	89.12	65.00	94.62	100.00	.0005 (.0025)
<b>Mode</b>					
Verification recalled interview in person	74.44	11.11	71.67	20.00	<.0001 (<.0001)
Interview mode recalled correctly	89.12	710.00	86.92	71.43	.0628 (.0518)
<b>Quality</b>					
Verification indicated interviewer pleasant	99.48	90.00	99.23	100.00	.0020 (.0353)
<b>Topic</b>					
Verification recalled 3 interview questions	96.89	100.00	96.92	85.71	.3199 (.3555)

NB Excludes six cases that could not be grouped due to missing data.

**Image and Verification Language.** Because 56 percent of the parent interviews were conducted in English, 43 percent in Spanish, and fewer than 1 percent in other languages, we wanted to see what effect the presence or absence of an image had on selected verification language and response rates. The distribution of the 1,303 verification questionnaires was split evenly, with 50 percent receiving the image version and the other 50 percent receiving the no-image version; we received 375 responses. However, nearly 41 percent of the completed verification questionnaires were from the group that received the image version and 59 percent were from the group that received the no-image version. A total of 247 (66 percent) out of the 375 responses completed their answers using the English column; 128 (34 percent) used the Spanish column to provide their answers. However, among those who responded in English, 62 percent had received the no-image version, and 38 percent had received the image version. The 34 percent who responded in Spanish were more evenly divided, with 53 percent from the no-image mailing and 47 from the image mailing, which is closer to the 50/50 (image/no image) distribution of the full sample of 1,303. The difference however, is only statistically significant at the .10 level ( $p = .08$ ). Table 6 summarizes the findings.

**Table 6:** Distribution of Images Among Spring 2008 Verification Questionnaire Respondents, by Verification Language

	Verification in English		Verification in Spanish		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Image	93	37.65	60	46.88	153	40.80%
No Image	154	62.35	68	53.13	222	59.20%
Total	247	100.00	128	100.00	375	100.00

#### 4.1 Discussion

Respondents who were randomly assigned to an image verification questionnaire were compared with those who were assigned to a no-image verification questionnaire. Our intention when including an image to the verification questionnaire was to see if an image would increase the response rate and affect the accuracy of the responses as they relate to having received the gift card incentive. The result was quite the opposite: the lower response rate of the image verification questionnaire brought our total response rate lower than that found in fall 2007.

As we reviewed the results we discovered some design elements or methodology that could have affected the outcomes.

***Location of the image could be important.*** We placed a personalized bilingual thank you message from our deputy survey director on the inside of the image verification questionnaire. Placing the image on the outside of the mailing verification questionnaire might have enticed respondents to open the questionnaire and mail it back.

***Send the verification questionnaire mailing shortly after the parent interview.*** The UPCOS spring parent interviews took place between April and July of 2008. Parent interview verification questionnaires were mailed in early August of 2008. Analysis on the month of the parent interview and response rate to the verification questionnaire showed that the more recent the parent interview, the more likely the person was to return the verification questionnaire. The mailing date of the verification questionnaire should be as close to the parent interview as possible.

***Improve the ability to link data.*** Nineteen respondents removed their address labels from the verification questionnaires. The information on the address label was used to link the respondents back to the parent interview data. In the future we would place a unique identifier (maybe in barcode format) in an obscure location on the questionnaire where it is less likely to be removed by the respondent.

***Improve the design of the questions.*** It is always wise to double check the design of the questions and ask, “Could a redesigned questionnaire have encouraged non response or incorrect response to an item?” For example, there was no need to ask the respondent two questions—one asking if the interview had been conducted in person and another if it had been conducted over the phone; sometimes people answered yes to both.

We also wondered what else we could have been done differently and what other experiments could be conducted with images that would either further support the body of research that has been conducted or possibly achieve a different outcome.

Our results support the findings of Dommeyer (2008), in which including an image of a researcher does not increase the overall response rate of a survey. However, Dommeyer also discovered female images achieved higher response rates than images of males, and using attractive male images resulted in even lower response rates. Tourangeau, Couper, and Conrad (2003) included images of both a male and a female in a web survey and found that the gender of the person in the images mattered only when questions regarding sex roles were asked. *Would we have achieved even lower response rate or obtained different answers to the question regarding incentive if we had used a male image instead of the female image?*

There have also been several studies regarding the use of postage stamps (an image) to increase response rates and our research is consistent with these studies. Harrison, Holt, and Elton (2002) and Lavelle, Todd, and Campbell (2008) both found no significant effect on response rates when providing respondents the ability to return a completed questionnaire using an envelope with a first class postage stamp (image) or a prepaid business reply envelope. However it was unclear what image was on the postage stamp in the postage stamp studies. *Should future researchers consider using different postage stamp images to determine if that has an effect the outcome?*

Our research seems to shed additional light on past research regarding how images alter the way respondents answer particular questions. A study by Bialenson, Iyengar, Yee, and Collins (2008) found that facial similarity between voters and candidates can alter electoral results, especially when the candidate is unfamiliar. They also found other research that indicated faces can and do influence how we judge others. Although the parents who were sent the UPCOS verification survey might have recognized the deputy survey director's name from various documents distributed to the respondents in previous rounds of data collection, the image would not have been salient to them. *Would we have achieved a higher response rate if we would have included an image of the actual field staff who conducted the in-person parent interview?*

Our results seem to indicate that the image had a negative effect for those who responded using the English response categories on the parent verification questionnaire. However, the image did not make a difference for those who responded using the Spanish response categories. Should researchers consider conducting cognitive interviews or focus groups to find out why the image seemed to have a negative for the English responders and no impact on the response rate for the Spanish responders? Would we have achieved an even higher response rate if we would have had an image of a staff member who was more similar in ethnic and racial background to the majority of the sample (74 percent of the sample were Latino), or would it have had a negative effect?

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