

Call for Papers

Applied Psychology: An International Review

Special Issue

Your attention please! Toward a better understanding of research participant carelessness

Guest Editors

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Background and Rationale for the Special Issue

Self-report questionnaires are used within many areas of psychological research to assess a variety of constructs, including attitudes, behaviors, and personality traits. When researchers use self-report questionnaires, they hope that participants will carefully read and reflect on each questionnaire item prior to responding. A growing body of research, however, suggests that a significant number of participants within low-stakes research contexts—perhaps 10% to 12% (Meade & Craig, 2012)—respond carelessly to self-report measures. Unfortunately, even modest levels of carelessness can produce misleading research findings (Huang, Liu, & Bowling, 2015; Schmitt & Stults, 1985). Data from careless participants, for instance, can sometimes attenuate and sometimes inflate observed correlations (see Huang et al., 2015). A better understanding of participant carelessness thus has the potential to greatly improve the quality of data collected by applied psychologists.

Despite its importance, researchers have only recently given sustained attention to research participant carelessness (see Bowling et al., 2016; Huang, Curran, Keeney, Poposki, & DeShon, 2012; Maniaci & Rogge, 2014; Meade & Craig, 2012). As such, much is left to be learned. This special issue will contribute to the literature by examining the measurement, causes, consequences, and prevention of research participant carelessness.

We will consider submissions that address several questions related to research participant carelessness. These questions include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. What are the most effective means of assessing research participant carelessness? Do existing measures of participant carelessness meet contemporary standards of reliability and validity? Is there a need for new measures of participant carelessness? What combination of measures most effectively captures participant carelessness?
2. What are the effects of research participant carelessness on observed research results? When does carelessness attenuate observed effects and when does it inflate observed effects? What effects does participant carelessness have on factor analysis, multiple regression analyses, path analysis, and structural equation modeling? What effects does it have on tests of mediation and moderation?

3. What are the causes of research participant carelessness? Does the prevalence of participant carelessness vary by type of data source? Does the research context play a role? Are some participants predisposed to be careless? Do situational variables and individual difference variables interact to influence participant carelessness?
4. What methods can be used to prevent research participant carelessness? How can incentives most effectively be used to prevent participant carelessness? Is participant monitoring an effective means of preventing carelessness? Can persuasion strategies be used to discourage participant carelessness? Do participants have more positive reactions toward some prevention strategies than toward others?
5. What methods are effective at correcting for the biases produced by participant carelessness? What are the effects of removing participants who appear to be careless?
6. Does participant carelessness predict “real-world” criteria? More specifically, do careless research participants also engage in careless behavior within important life domains, such as school, work, and family life? And do measures of participant carelessness predict these criteria after the effects of more traditional predictors are controlled?
7. Are there cross-cultural differences in research participant carelessness? Is research participant carelessness more prevalent within some cultures than within others? Do the causes of carelessness vary by culture? Does the effectiveness of preventative strategies vary by culture?

Successful submissions, in short, will build on and extend the existing scientific literature on research participant carelessness.

Submission Instructions

Authors may submit their manuscripts to the special issue throughout the month of November 2016. Please use the AP:IR submission portal to make your submission. The review process is open and competitive. Each submission will receive a double-blind review. Please e-mail **Nathan Bowling (nathan.bowling@wright.edu)** or **Jason Huang (huangjl@msu.edu)** with questions about the special issue.

References

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