

## Mixed Modes and Measurement Error

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Increasing pressures of falling response rates and rising costs of survey operations have provided the impetus for using mixed modes of data collection in survey research.

Offering alternative modes of data collection may encourage sample members to participate, resulting in a higher response rate. Furthermore, if a sufficient number of respondents can be persuaded to use the less expensive mode, the overall costs of data collection can be reduced.

However, the benefits of using mixed modes come at the potential cost of reduced data comparability, caused by differences across modes in the nature of (1) coverage error, (2) non-response error, and (3) measurement error. This session will focus on the third component; i.e. the impact on the data collected because respondents may answer 'equivalent' questions differently in different modes.

The first paper in this session will be given by the session organisers who will review the existing evidence on mode effects and highlight areas requiring further research. The authors will present a matrix of question types and mode comparisons which summarises what is known about (1) the magnitude of errors (in particular whether they are likely to affect conclusions made by analysts), (2) the nature of errors (for example, item non-response, acquiescence, non-differentiation, etc.), (3) the likely causes of differential measurement error and (4) ways of reducing mode effects and of creating questions which are portable across modes (for example question format, but also other conditions affecting the interview). This presentation will serve as an introduction to the session and set the context for the other papers.

Possible topics for the other papers include, but are not limited to, the following:

- the causes of mode effects (e.g. social desirability);
- the symptoms of mode effects (e.g. item non-response, acquiescence);
- the impact of alternative data collection modes on data quality;
- how to measure and reduce measurement error when mixing modes;
- the impact of mixing modes for time series, cross-national comparisons, etc.