



Cornell National Social Survey 2008

Report 3: Respondent Incentives

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Introduction

This report summarizes the differences in respondent characteristics and survey responses between incentive groups in the 2008 Cornell National Social Survey (CNSS), conducted by the Survey Research Institute (SRI) at Cornell University. The 2008 CNSS queried continental United States residents regarding a wide range of topics through questions developed by Cornell University faculty and researchers. Questions were presented as modules that included topics on social capital, health and well-being, political identity, consumer identity, treatment of prisoners during war, social integration/environmental sustainability, attitudes towards immigrants, national civil justice and virtual worlds.

Methodology¹

- A ballot of 1,000 telephone interviews was conducted between November 1, 2008 and December 22, 2008, one-third of which were offered a \$10 incentive to complete the survey. All participants were asked core demographic questions as well as all questions from the omnibus modules.
- The CNSS utilizes a random digit dial (RDD) sample of all telephone exchanges within the continental United States. Eligible respondents must be at least 18 years old.
- The cooperation rate was 60.4% using American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) standards.
- The margin of error (MOE) for questions with two response options is 3.1% among the 1,000 respondents, 5.2% among the respondents offered an incentive, and 3.9% among the respondents that were not offered an incentive. The MOE may be smaller for some questions depending on the number of response options.

In 2008, data were collected on the use of incentives in order to evaluate the effect of offering a cash incentive to survey respondents.

This report compares the characteristics of respondents who are offered an incentive compared to respondents who are offered no incentive. Each household telephone exchange was randomly selected to have a \$10 cash incentive offered to the respondent for completing the survey. Of the 1,000 respondents who completed the survey, 359 were offered an incentive.

Response Outcomes by Incentive Status

Table 1 presents a distribution of the final sample status by incentive structure. Overall, the cooperation rate (which is often referred to as the response rate) was 60.4% and the American Association of Public Opinion Research (2) definition of response rate was 28.9%. For households not offered an incentive, 641 respondents participated from a sample list of 3,975; this indicates a cooperation rate of 60.0% and response rate of 28.8%. For households offered an incentive, 359 respondents participated from a sample of 2,118; this is a cooperation rate of 61.2% and a response rate of 29.3%.

Although one-third of the interviews offered an incentive, incentive status did not have a significant impact on the total number of completions or refusals, or the response and cooperation rates. Out of the total sample list, 16.4% completed the survey, and 10.8% refused. An additional 1.5% encountered physical or language problems, and 6.7% were ineligible.

¹ See Report 1: Introduction & Methodology for a full description at www.sri.cornell.edu. A copy of the questionnaire and data file is available at: <http://sri.cornell.edu/sri/CNSS.cfm>

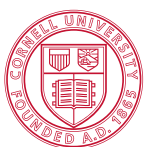


Table 1 Final Sample Status for CNSS

	Incentive Offered		Incentive not Offered		Total	
	N	% ²	N	% ²	N	% ²
	Completed Survey	359	16.9	641	16.1	1000
Refusal	228	10.8	428	10.8	656	10.8
Active	606	28.6	1101	27.8	1707	28.0
Physical/Language Problem	33	1.6	59	1.5	92	1.5
Ineligible/Not a Household	142	6.7	269	6.8	411	6.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>2118</i>		<i>3975</i>		<i>6093</i>	
Response Rate ³	29.3%		28.8%		28.9%	
Cooperation Rate ³	61.2%		60.0%		60.4%	

² Percentages are estimated using the total sample list.

³ American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) response rate and cooperation rate calculations. The response rate is the total number of survey completions divided by the total eligible sample (total sample minus all ineligible, non-households, and estimated proportion of households where eligibility was not determined). Cooperation rate is the total number of survey completions divided by the number of potential interviews (this includes all instances where contact was made with a properly selected person, but not including those instances where the respondent was incapable of cooperating due to language or physical limitations).

Respondent Incentive and Demographics

Gender

Comparison of the respondents who completed surveys when an incentive was offered to those who were not offered an incentive reveals a different distribution in gender for both groups.

Table 2 Distribution of Gender and Incentive Group

Gender	% of all respondents	
	Incentive Offered	Incentive not Offered
Male	41	48
Female	59	52

- A comparison of the gender distribution shows that there is a larger percent of females in the incentive group (59% vs. 52%) while the no incentive group is roughly 50% men and 50% women.
- This difference is statistically significant at the 5% significance level using a Fisher's Exact test (p-value = .025).

Marital Status

The distribution of marital status for the incentive group and non-incentive group do not show any substantial differences.

Table 3 Distribution of Marital Status and Incentive Group

Marital Status	% of all respondents	
	Incentive Offered	Incentive not Offered
Married	60	59
Divorced	10	13
Separated	2	1
Widowed	8	8
Single	19	17
Other	1	1
No Response	1	1

- Among the respondents who were offered an incentive a slightly higher percentage of respondents were divorced (13% vs. 10%), while a slightly lower percentage of respondents were single (17% vs. 19%).

Age

The distribution of age for the incentive group and no incentive group do not show any substantial differences.

- The average year of birth among the respondents who were offered an incentive a slightly higher than the year of birth of respondents who were not offered an incentive (1958 vs. 1957). This difference is not statistically significantly different from zero based on a t-test.

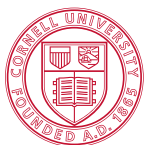
Race/Ethnicity

Comparison of the respondents who completed surveys when an incentive was offered to those who were not offered an incentive reveals a similar distribution in race for both groups.

Table 4 Distribution of Race and Incentive Group

Race	% of all respondents	
	Incentive Offered	Incentive not Offered
White or Caucasian	78	78
Black or African-American	12	10
Amer. Indian/Aleut/Eskimo	1	3
Asian or Pacific Islander	3	2
Other Race	3	3
No Response	3	4

- Among the respondents who were offered an incentive a slightly higher percentage of respondents were Black/African-American (12% vs. 10%).
- A slightly greater percentage of respondents in the group where no incentive was offered were American Indian/Aleutian/Eskimo (3% vs. 1%).



A greater percentage of Non-Hispanic respondents are included in the incentive offered group.

Table 5 Distribution of Ethnicity and Incentive Group

Ethnicity	% of all respondents	
	Incentive Offered	Incentive not Offered
Not Hispanic	95	92
Hispanic	4	8
No Response	1	0

- Among the respondents who were offered an incentive a slightly higher percentage of respondents were Non-Hispanics (95% vs. 92%).
- This difference is statistically significant at the 10% significance level using a Fisher’s Exact test (p-value = .056).

Income/Employment

The distribution of incomes for the incentive group and no incentive group do not show any substantial differences.

Table 6 Distribution of Income and Incentive Group

Income Range	% of all respondents	
	Incentive Offered	Incentive not Offered
less than \$10,000	3	1
10 to under \$20,000	6	5
20 to under \$30,000	7	6
30 to under \$40,000	7	7
40 to under \$50,000	7	5
50 to under \$75,000	16	15
75 to under \$100,000	7	10
100 to under \$150,000	14	15
\$150,000 and over	13	14
No Response	22	23

- The largest difference among the income ranges is among people with a reported income of \$75,000 to under \$100,000 which contributed 7% to the incentive group versus 10% to the no incentive group.
- Overall, there is not a significant difference in income distributions for the two groups. There is a slightly larger proportion of the lowest income respondents in the incentive group, and a slightly higher proportion of the highest income respondents in the no incentive group.

The distribution of employment status for the incentive group and

no incentive group do not show any substantial differences.

Table 7 Distribution of Employment and Incentive Group

Employment	% of all respondents	
	Incentive Offered	Incentive not Offered
Yes	58	57
No	23	21
Retired	15	18
Disabled	3	2
Unable to Work	1	1
No Response	0	0

Among the respondents who were offered an incentive a slightly higher percentage of respondents were retired (18% vs. 15%).

Education

The distribution of education level varies for the incentive and no incentive groups. There is a higher proportion of college graduate and post-graduate training in the no incentive group than the incentive group.

Table 8 Distribution of Education Level and Incentive Group

Education Level	% of all respondents	
	Incentive Offered	Incentive not Offered
Less than high school	1	1
High school incomplete	6	4
High school graduate or GED	24	18
Technical, trade, or vocational school	3	4
Some college or 2-yr degree	27	24
College graduate	23	26
Post-graduate training	16	22
No Response	0	0

- There were more respondents with college degrees and post-graduate training in the sample where an incentive was not offered (48% vs. 39%).
- Conversely, there were more respondents with less than a college degree in the sample where an incentive was offered (51% vs. 61%).
- The overall distributional difference is statistically significant at the 10% significance level using a Chi-square test (p-value = .082).

Religion

The distribution of religious affiliation for the incentive group and no incentive group do not show any substantial differences.

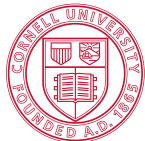


Table 9 Distribution of Religion and Incentive Group

Religion	% of all respondents	
	Incentive Offered	Incentive not Offered
Protestant	50	45
Catholic	25	23
Christian Orthodox	6	8
Jewish	4	2
Muslim	1	0
Other non-Christian	3	3
No religion/Atheist/Agnostic	11	15
No Response	2	2

- The percentage of respondents reporting their religion as Protestant is slightly higher for the group that was offered an incentive (50% vs. 45%). These differences are not statistically significant.

Overall, the largest demographic differences between incentive and no incentive groups are in gender, ethnicity and education.

Respondent Incentive and Survey Responses

The vast majority of the survey questions exhibit a similar distribution of responses for respondents offered an incentive versus respondents not offered an incentive. However, the following survey questions did show a statistically significant difference across incentive groups.

Social Capital and the Community

A higher percentage of respondents who devoted more than 10 hours per week of their time to a community group completed a survey with an incentive offered compared to the respondents who completed a survey when an incentive was not offered.

Table 10 Distribution of Community Time and Incentive Group

Time Devoted to Groups	% of all respondents	
	Incentive Offered	Incentive not Offered
Less than 1 Hour/Week	20	21
1 – 5 Hours/Week	50	51
5 – 10 Hours/Week	14	19
More than 10 Hours/Week	16	9

- A larger percentage of respondents who reported they devote more than 10 hours per week of their time to a community group completed surveys in the incentive group compared to the no incentive group (16% vs. 9%).

- On the other hand, a larger percentage of respondents who reported they devote 5-10 hours per week of their time to a community group completed surveys in the non-incentive group compared to the incentive group (19% vs. 14%).
- The difference in the distribution of responses by incentive group is statistically significant at the 5% level (p-value = .025).
- Within demographic categories, the overall difference between incentive and non-incentive groups within the more than 10 hours/week category is driven by the statistically significant pairwise differences for female (16% vs. 7%), non-Hispanic (16% vs. 9%), White (16% vs. 8%), Catholic (19% vs. 5%) and employed (14% vs. 6%) respondents.

Treatment of Prisoners of War

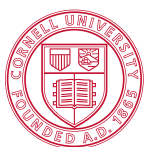
When asked whether it is justified for the United States to use torture to get information from prisoners in the context of war and the context of possible retaliation, a higher percentage of respondents who strongly agree or have no opinion completed a survey with no incentive offered compared to the respondents who completed a survey when an incentive was offered. This is somewhat balanced since a higher percentage of respondents who somewhat agree completed a survey with an incentive compared to respondents who completed a survey when an incentive was not offered.

Table 11 Distribution of Community Time and Incentive Group

Torture Justified	% of all respondents	
	Incentive Offered	Incentive not Offered
In Context of War		
Strongly Disagree	43	40
Somewhat Disagree	17	18
No Opinion	9	13
Somewhat Agree	22	17
Strongly Agree	9	12
In Context of Causing Possible Retaliation		
Strongly Disagree	36	37
Somewhat Disagree	12	17
No Opinion	10	12
Somewhat Agree	28	20
Strongly Agree	14	15

In Context of War

- In the context of war, a larger percentage of respondents who reported they strongly agree with torture completed surveys in the non-incentive group compared to the incentive group (12% vs. 9%).



- Also, a larger percentage of respondents who reported they have no opinion with torture completed surveys in the non-incentive group compared to the incentive group (13% vs. 9%).
- On the other hand, a larger percentage of respondents who reported they somewhat agree with torture completed surveys in the incentive group compared to the non-incentive group (22% vs. 17%).
- The difference in the distribution of responses by incentive group is statistically significant at the 5% level (p-value = .036).
- Within demographic categories, the overall distribution differences between incentive and non-incentive group are driven by the statistically significant pairwise differences for male, non-Hispanic, not employed, and non-divorced respondents.

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In Context of Causing Possible Retaliation

- In the context of causing possible retaliation, a similar distribution holds. However in addition a larger percentage of respondents who reported they somewhat disagree with torture completed the surveys in the non-incentive group compared to the incentive group (17% vs. 12%).
- The difference in the distribution of responses by incentive group is statistically significant at the 5% level (p-value = .044).
- Within demographic categories, the overall distribution differences between incentive and non-incentive group are driven by the statistically significant pairwise differences for non-Hispanic, Protestant or Catholic, employed, and married respondents.

