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Cross-national establishment survey about interview privacy practices

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Background

- Non-private interviews (where a third person is present) are common:
  - USA & Western Europe: 21% - 59% (Anderson & Silver, 1987; Bulck, 1999; Moskowitz, 2004; Pollner & Adams, 1994; Pollner & Adams, 1997; Reuband, 1992; Silver, Abramson, & Anderson, 1986; Smith, 1997,Welkenhuysen-Gybels & Billiet, 2001, Zipp & Toth, 2002)

  - Developing countries : 17%-82% (Casterline and Chidambaram, 1984, Mneimneh, 2012)

- Non-private interviews could affect the data differently across cultures (Mneimneh et. al., 2014)

- Researchers rely heavily on interviewers to establish a private interview setting (if the study protocol requires privacy)

Background

- Significant between-interviewer variance in interview privacy (Mneimneh, 2012, Mneimneh et al., 2015)
  - Measurement differences
  - True differences (variation in behavior, skills, attitudes, level of confidence, etc.)

- Are interviewers trained to request, achieve, and maintain privacy?
  - Several authors reported that the need for interview privacy does not get much attention in interviewer trainings (Aquilino 1993, Smith 1997, Taietz 1962)

  - Smith (1997) pointed out that though privacy and confidentiality are emphasized in training materials, interviewing manuals do not explicitly mention avoiding the presence of a third party

- *Empirically, information is lacking on how survey firms train interviewers to ask for privacy and negotiate with household members an environment free of bystanders.*

Research questions

Are interviewers trained on requesting a private interview setting?

Do training material mention interview privacy?

To answer these questions, a web survey was conducted among survey firms in the Middle East and North Africa region.

This is part of a larger project that aims at understanding the phenomena of interview privacy and investigating the prevalence of non-private interviews and its impact on survey response in Qatar (NPRP 7-792-5-103)

Establishment Web Survey in MENA region

- Sample Frame: A total of 126 firms were identified
  - Covers survey firms in Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Oman, Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen
  - ESOMAR, AAPOR, contacted international researchers and survey organizations known to conduct surveys in the region

- Field Protocol
  - Contacted all survey firms by phone to confirm eligibility and update contact information
  - Sent initial web invitation by e-mail
  - Three e-mail reminders
  - Final telephone reminder for non-respondents

- Experimental setup
  - Half of the firms received an invitation that promised sending a brief report of the results and half did not have this promise
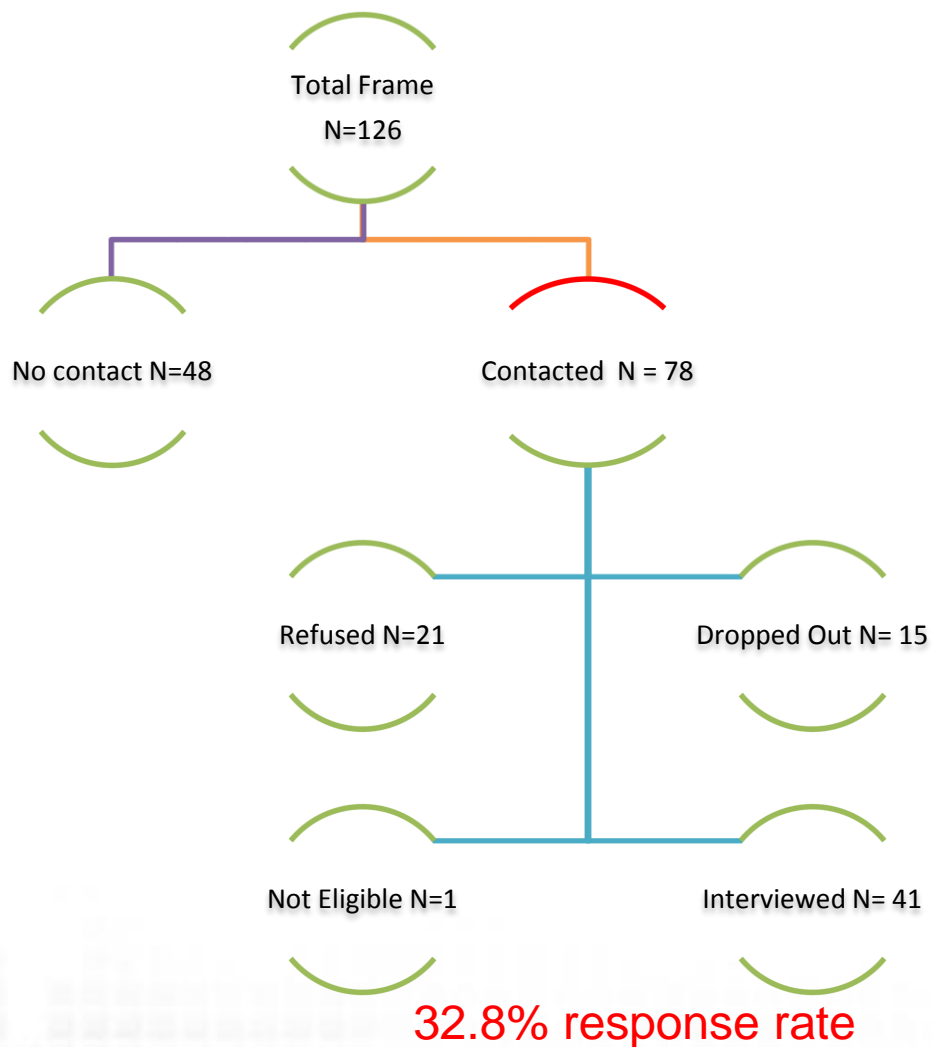
Questionnaire

- Covers 3 main sections
  - Eligibility (whether the firm have interviewers who conduct face-to-face interviews in one of the MENA countries)

  - Characteristics of the firm (number of completed interviews, staff size, interviewer pool, interviewer composition, interviewer pay structure)

  - Interview Privacy training
    - Do their surveys require a private interview setting?
    - Are interviewers trained on requesting a private setting?
    - Do the training material mention interview privacy?

Results: Disposition

Total Frame
N=126

No contact N=48

Contacted N = 78

Refused N=21

Dropped Out N= 15

Not Eligible N=1

Interviewed N= 41

32.8% response rate

Results: Response Rates

Key dates	Duration	Response Rate	
		Report Group (N=63)	No Report Group (N=63)
After initial invitation- Before first reminder	1 week	9.6%	11.2%
After first reminder before second reminder	1 week	14.4%	17.6%
After second reminder before third reminder	2 weeks	17.6%	24.0%
After third reminder before calling	4 days	19.2%	33.6%
Calling by Phone	1 week	24.4%	36.8%

Results: Characteristics of Responding Firms (N=41)

Countries the Firms are Located In

Results

Characteristics of Responding Firms Who <u>Hire</u> Interviewers in MENA region (N=25)

Results

Characteristics of Responding Firms Who Hire Interviewers in MENA region (N=25)
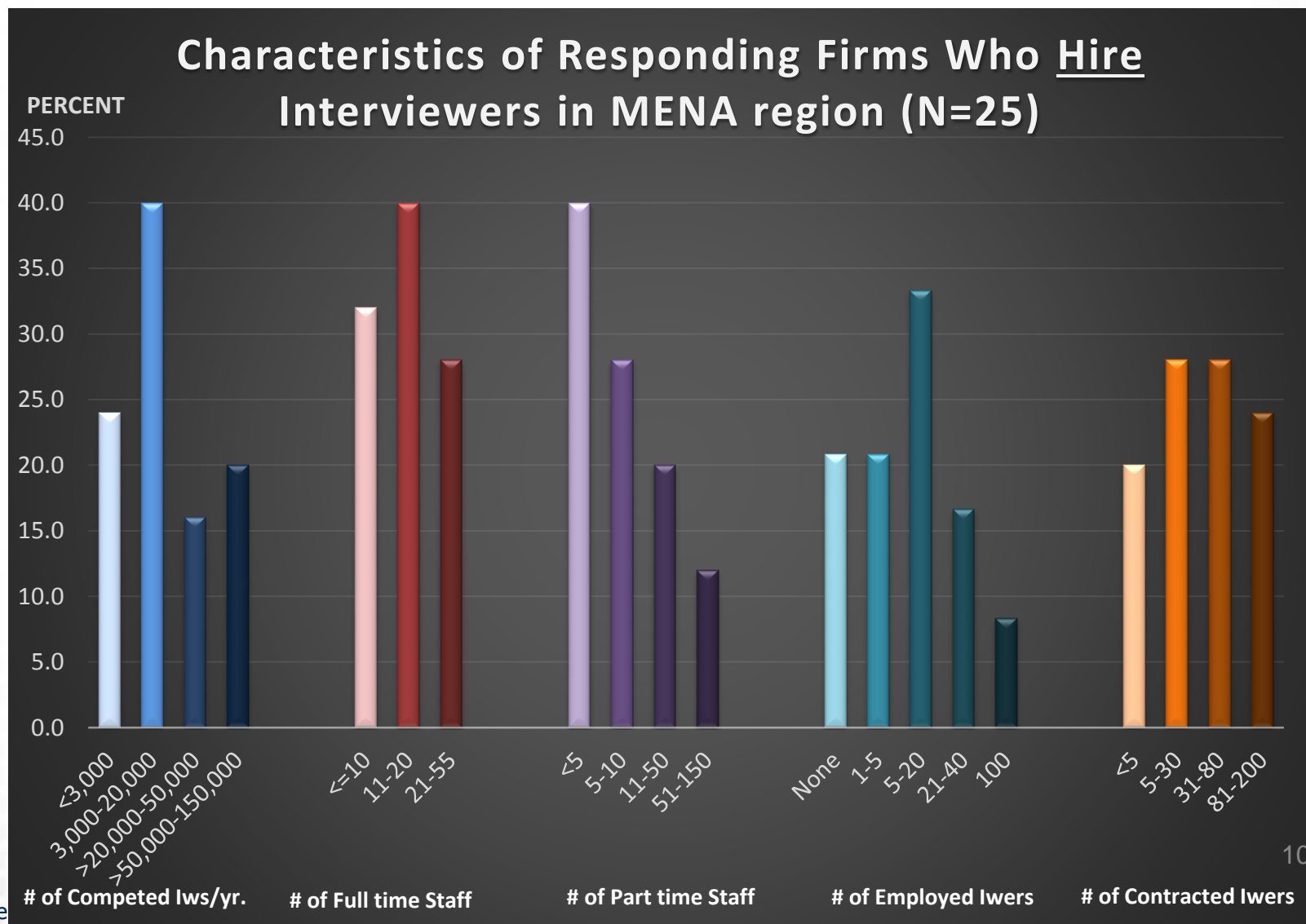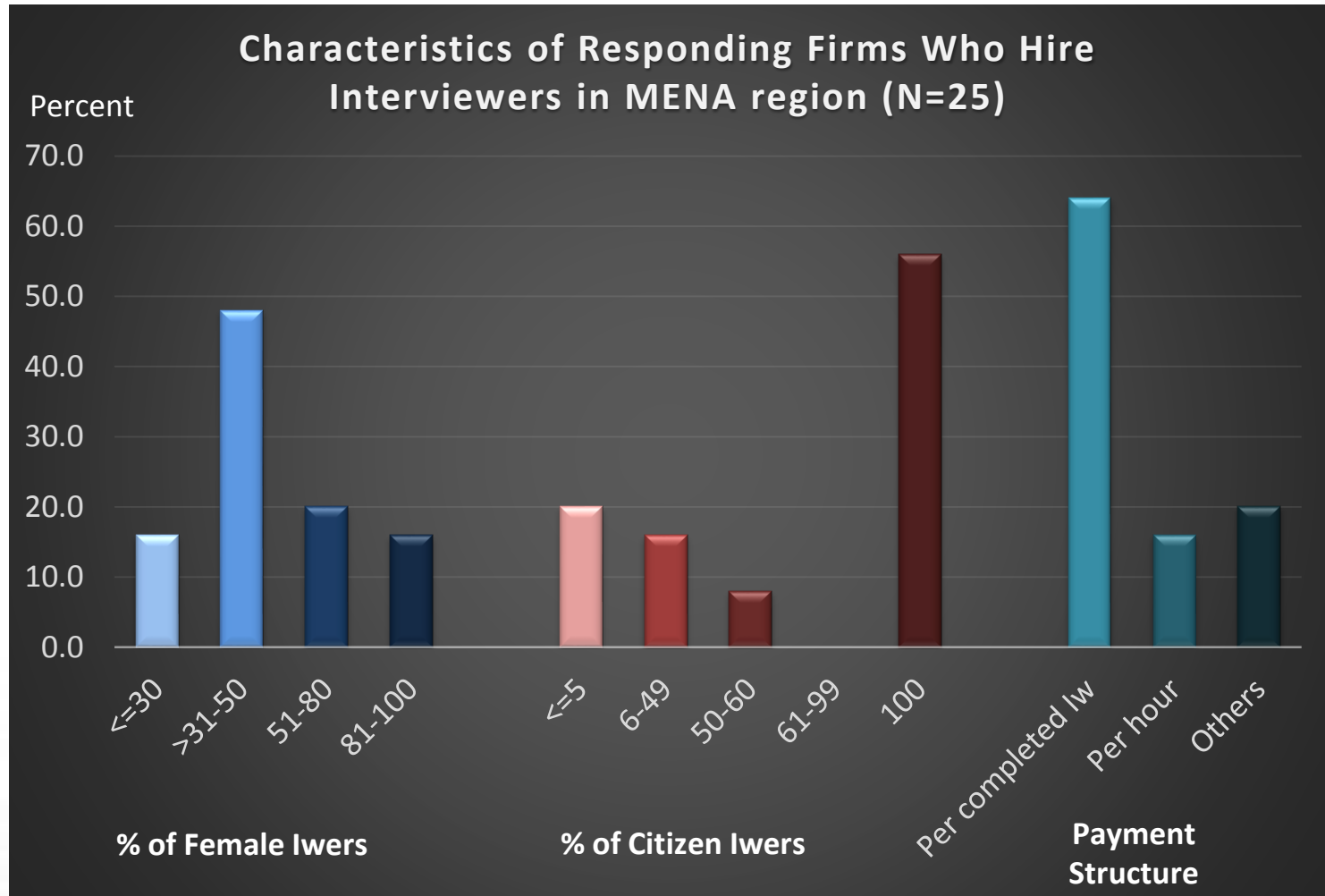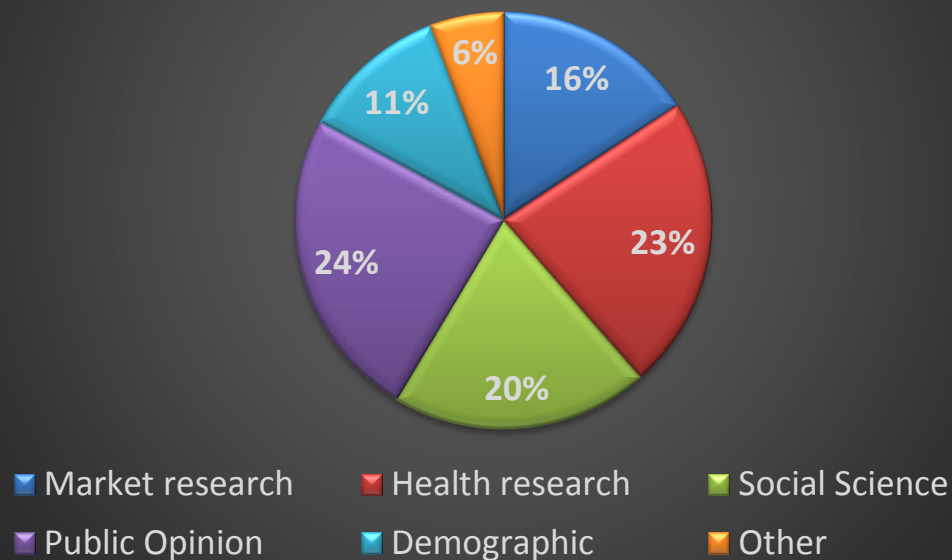
Results

Do all, some or none of your interviews require a private setting?

Face-to-Face Interviews Requiring a Private Setting (N=25)
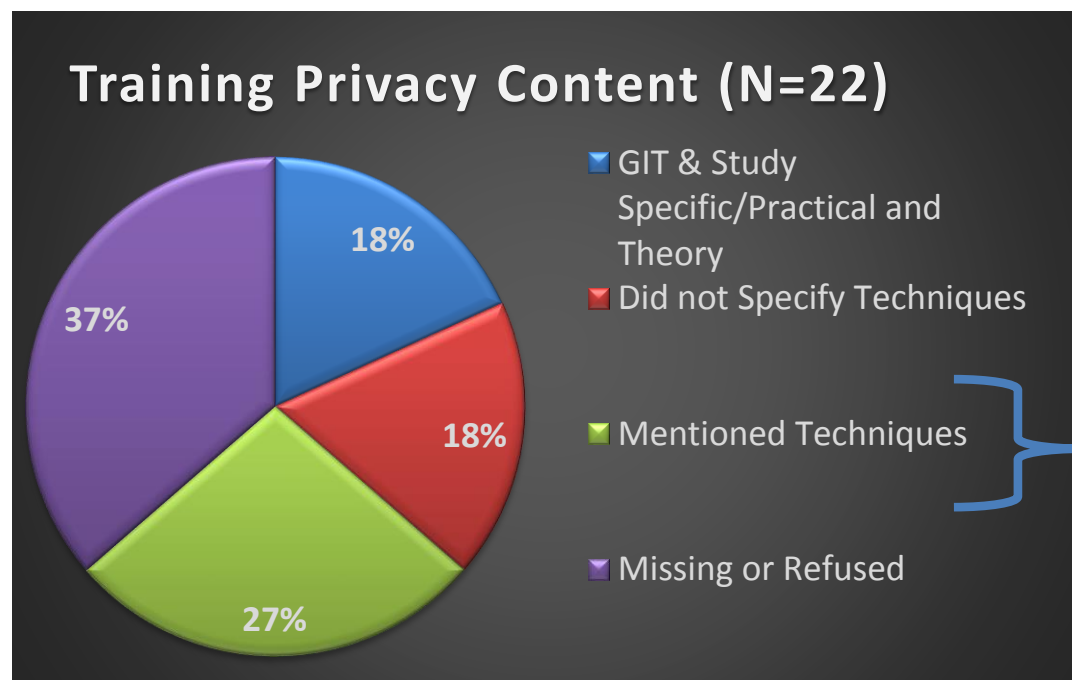
- All 42%
- Some 42%
- None 16%
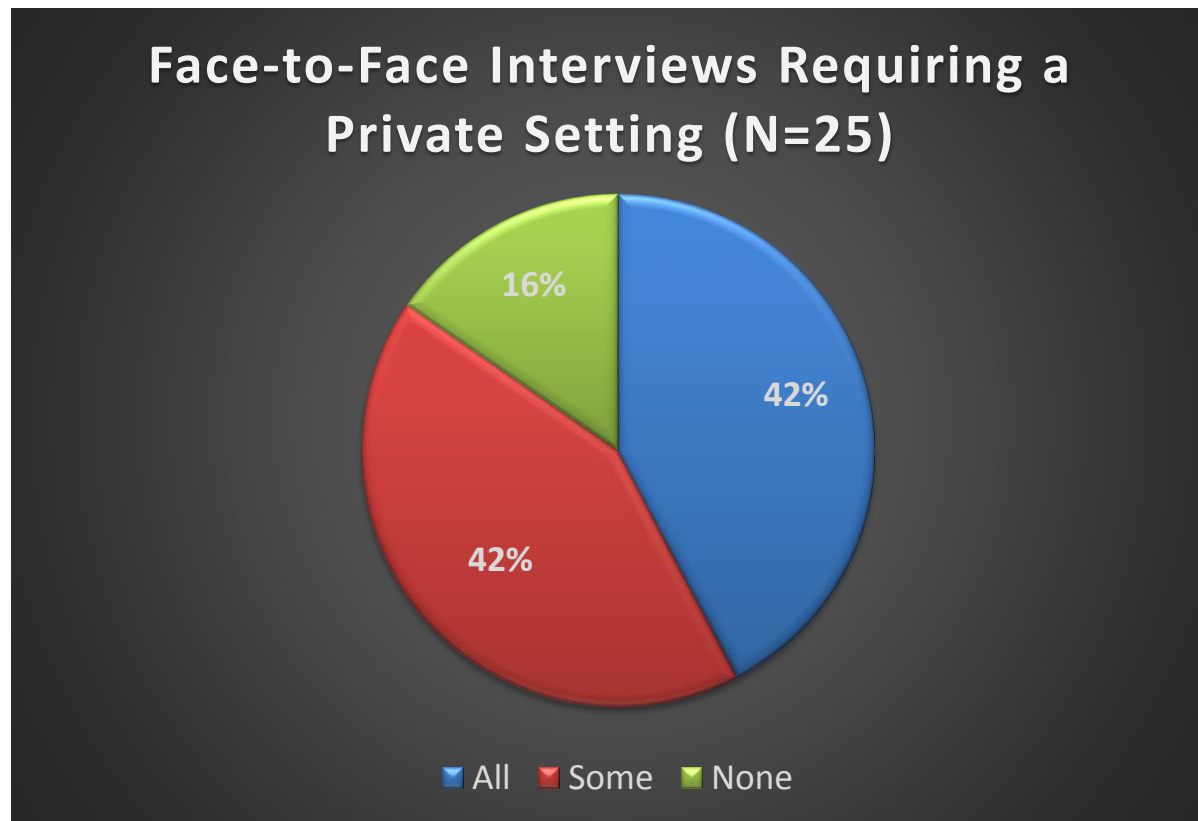
Results

Type of Surveys that Require a Private Interview Setting (N=21*)

*1 missing

Results: Are interviewers trained on requesting a private interview setting ?

- All firms said that their interviewers are trained on how to request for privacy (22/22)

Training Privacy Content (N=22)

- GIT & Study Specific/Practical and Theory — 18%
- Did not Specify Techniques — 18%
- Mentioned Techniques — 27%
- Missing or Refused — 37%

Emphasize confidentiality to R
Emphasize the need to express opinions freely
Have another Iwer occupy 3rd person
Gender matching
Move to a diff. spot in the room away from 3rd person
Stop asking iw questions
Code question as missing
Reject the whole iw

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Results: Do training material mention interview privacy?

More than half (57%) of the firms said that their written training material talk about interview privacy.

Content of Written Training Material

- 17% — GIT & Study Specific Content
- 25% — Mentioned Techniques
- 58% — Missing or Refused
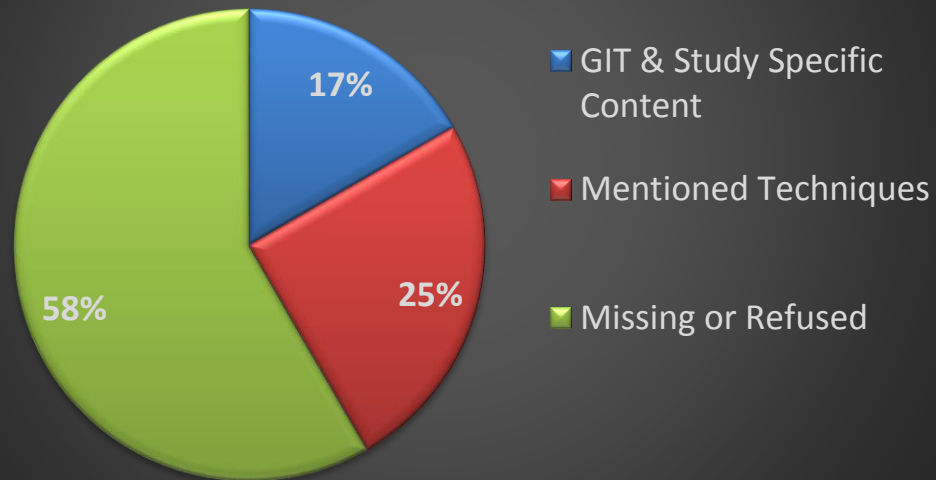
Iw has to be private so as not to affect R opinion
Emphasize confidentiality to R
Stop asking iw questions if not private setting
Code question as missing if 3rd person interfered
Reject the whole iw if 3rd person interfered with majority of the questions

Summary of Findings

- 32.8% of the firms responded to the survey

- The majority of the survey firms reported that all or some of their interviewers require a private setting
  - More than 75% mentioned topics in social science, health, or public opinion

Discussion

- While all firms reported that their interviewers are trained on requesting a private setting, only 27% mentioned specific training content

- Over half of the firms reported that their written training material discuss interview privacy; however, only 25% mentioned specific content

- What about the rest ?
    - This information might be private
    - Did not have access to this information
    - Misreporting

- Further follow-up by phone or face-to-face visit might help?

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Implications

- Rich information is lacking on interviewer training for establishing a private interview

- Need to develop training material

- Focus group discussions with respondents and interviewers on their views towards privacy in general and during survey interviews would give insightful information

- Panel discussion with survey firms on training content is needed

Limitations

- Coverage and nonresponse error not assessed
- Could not design a web survey that is modularized and that could be shared by multiple respondents in the same firm
- Method of tracking of multiple respondents within a firm was not ideal
- Detailed information on content of training and training material was minimal

Thank you!

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