

# Dissertation Defense

## **Response Style of Rating Scales: The Effects of Data Collection Mode, Scale Format, and Acculturation**

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Rating scales are popular for measuring attitudes, but response style, a source of measurement error associated with this type of question, can result in measurement bias in important attitudinal measures. Although numerous research efforts have been devoted to this topic, there are still some overlooked areas. This dissertation intends to fill three gaps in the literature of response style. Chapter 1 investigates the effects of face-to-face and Web surveys on acquiescent response style (ARS) and extreme response style (ERS) using the 2012 American National Election Studies (ANES) data. Using the latent class analysis approach, I find that: 1) both ARS and ERS exist in both face-to-face and Web survey; 2) face-to-face respondents demonstrate more ARS and ERS than Web respondents; 3) the mode effect on ERS is larger for black respondents than for white and Hispanic respondents, while for ARS, the mode effect is similar across the three racial/ethnic groups. Chapter 2 compares ERS with respect to the format of response scale, specifically agree-disagree (A/D) scale and item specific (IS) scale. This study analyzes a between- and within-subject experiment embedded in the 2012 ANES. Using latent class factor analysis, I reached the following three major findings: 1) ERS exists in both A/D and IS scale formats; 2) ERS shows a slightly different pattern between the two scale formats; 3) when analyzing ERS within subjects across two waves, there is only one single ERS latent class variable for both scale formats, after controlling for the correlation within respondents. Chapter 3 utilizes the 2003 Detroit Arab American Study to examine the impact of acculturation of Arab Americans on ERS. The results indicate that less acculturated respondents are more prone to ERS than more acculturated respondents, and this is especially true for the 5-point rating response scales as compared to 3-point rating scales. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that less acculturated respondents identify more strongly with honor-based collectivist cultures that value decisive and assertive answers since this is a way of showing one's unambiguous attitude and standing, an important quality in such culture. The language of interview primes the relevant cultural norms and therefore mediates the relationship between acculturation and ERS.