



A Cognitive Interview Evaluation of the Proposed Combined Race and Ethnicity Question for Statistical Policy Directive 15, Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity: Findings from the National Center for Health Statistics

Presenter: Stephanie Willson, Collaborating Center for Questionnaire Design and Evaluation Research (CCQDER)

Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology, Session F-5
October 25, 2023

Arriving at Results Required a Total CCQDER Team Effort

- Timeline = February – June 2023 (5 months!)
 - Clearance
 - Interviews
 - Analysis
 - Report to ITWG
- Operations team
 - Multiple recruiters
 - Technical support (Q-Notes)
- Interviewers
 - Nine CCQDER interviewers
 - Two Research Support Services (RSS) interviewers

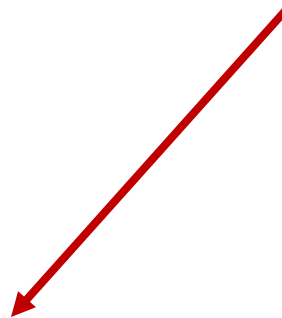
Methodology

- 150 Cognitive Interviews
 - 100 in English
 - 50 in Spanish
- Question evaluated in the context of other topics
 - Gender identity
 - COVID-19
 - Cancer screening
- Question evaluated in 2 modes (half received each version)
 - Self administered
 - Interviewer administered

Self Administered Version:

What is your race or ethnicity?

Select all that apply **AND** enter additional details in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.



What is your race or ethnicity?

Select all that apply **AND** enter additional details in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.

WHITE - Provide details below.

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> German | <input type="checkbox"/> Irish | <input type="checkbox"/> English |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italian | <input type="checkbox"/> Polish | <input type="checkbox"/> French |

Enter, for example, Scottish, Norwegian, Dutch, etc.

HISPANIC OR LATINO - Provide details below.

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mexican or Mexican American | <input type="checkbox"/> Puerto Rican | <input type="checkbox"/> Cuban |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Salvadoran | <input type="checkbox"/> Dominican | <input type="checkbox"/> Colombian |

Enter, for example, Guatemalan, Spaniard, Ecuadorian, etc.

BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN - Provide details below.

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> African American | <input type="checkbox"/> Jamaican | <input type="checkbox"/> Haitian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nigerian | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethiopian | <input type="checkbox"/> Somali |

Enter, for example, Ghanaian, South African, Barbadian, etc.

ASIAN - Provide details below.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese | <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese | <input type="checkbox"/> Korean | <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese |

Enter, for example, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, etc.

AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE - Enter, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Tribal Government, Tlingit, etc.

MIDDLE EASTERN OR NORTH AFRICAN - Provide details below.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lebanese | <input type="checkbox"/> Iranian | <input type="checkbox"/> Egyptian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Syrian | <input type="checkbox"/> Moroccan | <input type="checkbox"/> Israeli |

Enter, for example, Algerian, Iraqi, Kurdish, etc.

NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER - Provide details below.

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian | <input type="checkbox"/> Samoan | <input type="checkbox"/> Chamorro |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tongan | <input type="checkbox"/> Fijian | <input type="checkbox"/> Marshallese |

Enter, for example, Palouan, Tahitian, Chuukese, etc.

Interviewer Administered Version:

What is your race or ethnicity?

Select all that apply. Are

you...*[read main categories]*

Follow Up: Please provide more

detail. Are you...*[read*

subcategories]



What is your race or ethnicity?
Select all that apply.

WHITE - *Provide details below.*

<input type="checkbox"/> German	<input type="checkbox"/> Irish	<input type="checkbox"/> English
<input type="checkbox"/> Italian	<input type="checkbox"/> Polish	<input type="checkbox"/> French

Enter, for example, Scottish, Norwegian, Dutch, etc.

HISPANIC OR LATINO - *Provide details below.*

<input type="checkbox"/> Mexican or Mexican American	<input type="checkbox"/> Puerto Rican	<input type="checkbox"/> Cuban
<input type="checkbox"/> Salvadoran	<input type="checkbox"/> Dominican	<input type="checkbox"/> Colombian

Enter, for example, Guatemalan, Spaniard, Ecuadorian, etc.

BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN - *Provide details below.*

<input type="checkbox"/> African American	<input type="checkbox"/> Jamaican	<input type="checkbox"/> Haitian
<input type="checkbox"/> Nigerian	<input type="checkbox"/> Ethiopian	<input type="checkbox"/> Somali

Enter, for example, Ghanaian, South African, Barbadian, etc.

ASIAN - *Provide details below.*

<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Filipino	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian
<input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese	<input type="checkbox"/> Korean	<input type="checkbox"/> Japanese

Enter, for example, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, etc.

AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE - *Enter, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Tribal Government, Tlingit, etc.*

MIDDLE EASTERN OR NORTH AFRICAN - *Provide details below.*

<input type="checkbox"/> Lebanese	<input type="checkbox"/> Iranian	<input type="checkbox"/> Egyptian
<input type="checkbox"/> Syrian	<input type="checkbox"/> Moroccan	<input type="checkbox"/> Israeli

Enter, for example, Algerian, Iraqi, Kurdish, etc.

NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER - *Provide details below.*

<input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian	<input type="checkbox"/> Samoan	<input type="checkbox"/> Chamorro
<input type="checkbox"/> Tongan	<input type="checkbox"/> Fijian	<input type="checkbox"/> Marshallese

Enter, for example, Palouan, Tahitian, Chuukese, etc.

Respondent Demographics by Language

	English (n=100)	Spanish (n=50)	Total (n=150)
Race/Ethnicity*			
White	37	21	58
Black	12	2	14
Asian	20	0	20
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	1	3
Middle Eastern or North African	29	0	29
Hispanic	9	50	59
Gender			
Female	55	14	69
Male	43	11	54
Transgender, non-binary, or another gender	2	25	27
Age			
18-29	28	8	36
30-49	51	30	81
50-64	15	12	27
65 and over	6	0	6

*Numbers do not add to denominators because respondents could choose more than one category.

Research Questions

1. What is the response process for the combined question?
2. How do respondents interpret the question?
3. Are there any subgroup patterns?
4. Are there any differences by mode?
5. Is the question wording (stem & instructions) clear? (Are respondents confused by the merging of race & ethnicity?)

Findings

1. Response Process for the Combined Question

- Reflexive answer
 - Little or no thought/easy to answer
 - Same answer given in any situation or on any form
- Answers require some thought
 - Race is a multidimensional concept (people can think of themselves different ways)
 - Thought is given to how to answer depending on **question intent**

2. Interpretations of Question Intent

- A. Question is asking for a **personal assessment** of race and ethnicity
- B. Question is asking about **genealogy**

A. Question Intent = Personal Assessment

- Cultural: feelings of connectedness to a group arising from shared experiences, language, customs, and/or place of birth
- Social: the way others in society view and define a person
- Administrative: how a person answers in an official capacity
- Ancestral: based on genealogy

B. Question Intent = Genealogy

- Question structure (subcategories) prompted this interpretation
- Especially prominent among White respondents (prompted over-reporting)
 - Tendency to report findings from DNA tests, irrespective of personal identity
- Also prominent among Hispanic respondents (prompted under-reporting)
 - Subcategories defining 'White' seen as European-only ancestry

3. Group Patterns

- a) MENA
- b) Hispanic
- c) Afro-Latino/a
- d) Black/African American

a) MENA

- Respondents easily chose this category
- The term resonated with respondents
- Category may be missed by those unaccustomed to seeing it
- Some continued to also mark 'White'
 - Administratively accustomed to choosing 'White'
 - Socially accustomed to choosing 'White' based on others' perceptions
- Most chose only 'MENA'
 - Personal, cultural identity
- May be some reluctance to report MENA, given perceived prejudice towards the group

b) Hispanic

- Category was easily chosen and seen as most appropriate
- Some respondents continued to also mark 'White'
 - Administratively accustomed to choosing 'White'
- Most respondents chose only 'Hispanic'
 - Personal, cultural identity
 - White subcategories defined the main category as European (and, therefore, not related to those with Hispanic backgrounds)

c) Afro-Latino/a

- Small number (6) due to time constraints & recruitment difficulty
- Recruitment based on
 - Those who marked both 'Black' and 'Hispanic' on screener
 - NOT necessarily those who self-identify as Afro-Latino/a
- Question captured 2 respondents as intended (mark 'Black' and 'Hispanic')
 - Answers based on ancestry
- Other 4 respondents chose only 'Hispanic'
 - Based on personal cultural identity
 - Social answer based on perceived US custom to identify as 1 race

d) Black/African American

- Question intended to capture both descendants of enslaved people and recent immigrants
- Subcategories can be **confusing**
 - Respondents don't necessarily intuit that the subcategories relate to recent immigrants and that
 - The subcategory 'African American' is intended to apply to descendants of enslaved people
- Subcategories are **potentially insensitive** for Black Americans who are descendants of enslaved people
 - People don't know from what country their ancestors were taken

4. Mode Effects

- Self Administered
 - Misunderstanding the relation of main category to subcategories
 - Failure to check a main category
 - Misunderstanding of the open field for unlisted subcategories
 - Failure to add ethnicities not represented by a check box
 - Difficulties could be managed in, for example, a web format
- Interviewer Administered
 - Cumbersome to read
 - Need to repeat subcategories
 - Difficulties could be managed with better wording to improve flow

5. Clarity of Wording & Instructions

- Question stem and instructions had little bearing on how respondents understood and answered the question
- Respondents paid little attention to the actual question and more attention to the categories with check boxes
- Categories defined the question intent