Rapport, Sensitivity, and Proxy Reporting: Questions about End-Of-Life Planning and Interviewer-Respondent Interaction

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Rapport in the survey interview—previous research

- Rapport varies in its conceptual definition
  - Perceptions of actors, e.g., affiliation
  - Individual utterances and behaviors, e.g., empathy, laughter
  - Properties of the interaction, e.g., coordination in talk
- Unclear when rapport enhances or inhibits data quality
  - Task-oriented vs. personal style of interviewing
Rapport in the survey interview

- Rapport requires a comprehensive conceptual and operational review
- Attention to opportunities for creating and maintaining rapport within constraints of standardization
Rapport as an interactional phenomenon

• We examine interactional rapport as:
  • Content of utterances
  • Sequence of utterances
• We examine the contexts in which the dimensions of rapport act in concert with the goals of standardization in order to obtain codable answers
Dimensions of interactional rapport

- Global concept of rapport refined to recognize different roles and goals of actors
- We focus on two actor-specific concepts
  - The interviewer’s responsiveness
  - The respondent’s engagement
- Distinct concepts are inherently interactional
  - Interaction reveals where opportunities arise to display these orientations
Conceptual model: Components of rapport, response, and participation

Interviewer’s (responsive) behavior

Interviewing practices: Standardization

Conversational practices

Future survey participation

Respondent’s behavior

Data quality

Respondent’s engagement

Respondent’s motivation to perform task

Respondent’s motivation to affiliate

Responding practices
End-of-life planning and preferences

• Questions about
  • Estate planning
  • Health care plans and preferences
• Complex questions
  • Jargon
  • Complicated response options
  • Past, present, future
  • Multiple family members
  • Proxy reports
• True value may have changed over time
End-of-life planning and preferences

• Sensitive
  • Unpleasant thoughts
  • Questions imply expectation
  • Age makes this a timely topic
  • Asymmetry in ages of INT and R and disclosure of information
Data

• 2004 wave of the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study
• Analytic sample for quantitative analysis
  • Criterion: Provided a saliva sample when requested a few years later
  • Simulated case-control design matched on propensity to provide saliva sample
• Use first random replicate of 15 pairs for descriptive analysis
Methods

• Descriptive analysis
  • Line-by-line coding of
    • Content of utterances
    • Structure and placement of utterances
  • Contextualized description of dimensions of interactional rapport
    • The interviewer’s responsiveness
    • The respondent’s engagement
Results

• The interviewer’s responsiveness
  • Verifications and linkages across questions
  • Following up uncertainty
  • Following up uncodable answers
  • Accounting for behavior
• The respondent’s engagement
  • Reports and elaborations
    • Uncertainty
    • Topic
    • Project line of questioning
• Continuer tokens
• Emphatic or double answers
2 I have you discussed your health care plans and preferences with anyone?

2 R my husband and the kids

3 I ok so who would the first person be you said your husband?

3 R yeah
11 I have you made any legal arrangements for someone to make decisions about your medical care if you become unable to make those decisions yourself?

11 R uh you know I did a few years ago but I don't know if that would it it you know things have changed

11 I mhmm

11 R over the years so probably na it's not up to date

11 I so would you say yes or no then

11 R um no

11 I ok
I is there anyone else with whom you've discussed these preferences and plans?

R our children

I ok and who um just all your children in in general?

R yes

I ok

R I don't know that we discussed it as much as we made them aware of it

I ok

R no decision on their part
I and how strictly would your spouse want you to follow her wishes?

R strictly

I ok I I have to read the rest of the question

R ok

I'm sorry um would she like you to strictly follow her wishes or do what you think is best even if your preferences are different from her own? and you said strictly follow is that correct?

R mhmm
I uh now I am going to ask some questions about the later years in life um have you made plans about the types of medical treatment you want or don't want if you become seriously ill in the future?

R yeah I don't want you know I don't wanna keep ya alive you know I got a what do ya call it a living will

I oh ok uh all right so all right we'll ask some more questions about those

I um have you discussed your healthcare plans and preferences with anyone?
I um now I am going to ask two questions about your end of life treatment preferences. Suppose you had a serious illness today with very low chances of survival. Uh first what if you were mentally intact but in severe and constant physical pain? Would you want to continue all medical treatments or stop all life prolonging treatments?
Joking and laughter
Excerpt 20, INT=M, R=M (continued)

24 R well if I didn't have no chance I wanna stop everything yeah
24 I uh ok just says a very low chances of survival?
24 R yeah man
24 I so
24 R I always say throw me in the river you know
24 I {L}
24 R {L}
24 I so for with very low chances you've wanna stop too is that correct?
24 R yeah
24 I ok
Summary

• Examine rapport displayed within the content and sequential nature of the interaction
• When and where the opportunities arise—or are missed—for interviewers to be responsive and respondents to display engagement
  • Operationalization of both presence and absence of interactional rapport
Summary

• Mutual influence of the interviewer’s responsiveness and respondent’s engagement
• The interviewer’s responsiveness
  • Align with or enhance goals of standardization when employed skillfully
  • Increase the motivation of respondents to work hard, display misunderstandings—which may lead to more nonparadigmatic interactions
• Implications for rapport, standardization, and data quality depend in part on how interviewers handle conversational practices that enter the survey interview
Next Steps

- Code features of responsiveness and engagement (among others) and compare against criteria of
  - Continued survey participation: participation in later saliva sample
  - Data quality: compare reports about spouses’ end-of-life treatment preferences to spouses’ reports
Next steps

- Within- and between-person heterogeneity in the force behind behaviors that are displayed—or not
  - Nonparadigmatic sequences offer opportunities to display responsiveness and engagement
  - “Mhmm” displays listening
  - Reciprocated laughter
- Baseline measure to account for differences across actors
- Code micro-level, but aggregate to describe interaction-level rapport
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Thank You!

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Additional excerpts
Missed opportunity to follow up uncertainty
Excerpt 8, INT=M, R=M

19  I  and do you have a revocable trust?

19  R  um revocable trust oh I I I don't
um I don't know I forgot what that was

19  I  ok
7 I and how well does this person understand your preferences and plans for future medical treatment?
7 R very well
7 I mkay so would you say extremely well or somewhat well?
7 R extremely well he has a copy
9 I so who would the next person be and?
9 R that would be (FF)
9 I (FF) ok
9 R and extremely
9 I ok
9 R would be his answer to
9 I ok and I'm sorry to ask you with a question but I can do it quickly
10 I how well does this person understand your preferences and plans from future medical treatment? and you said extremely well is that correct?