

Adaptive Designs – Tailoring of Contact Materials to Increase Survey Participation

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- **Leverage Saliency Theory** (Groves et al 2000)
 - **Topic saliency**
 - Tailoring of communication materials to make a survey more attractive and increase **saliency** (Groves and McGonagle 2001; Groves et al. 2000; Groves et al. 1992; Cialdini 1984; Blau 1964)
 - Improved response rates with targeted/more salient letters (especially among nonrespondents) (Lynn 2016; Tourangeau et al. 2010)
 - **Sponsorship**
 - Individuals “are more likely to comply with a request if it comes from an authority” (Groves et al. 1992) due to increased sense of
 - legitimacy
 - trust
 - potentially positive attitude towards sponsor
 - Positive effects on response rates for legitimate organizations (Edwards et al. 2014; Avdeyeva and Matland 2013; Groves et al. 2012)

- Baccalaureate and Beyond 2008/18 (B&B:08/18)
 - Longitudinal survey of individuals who completed their Bachelor's degree during the 2007-08 academic year
 - Last National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08) follow-up
 - Students are interviewed during their degree year (NPSAS:08), one (B&B:08/09), four (B&B:08/12) and ten years later (B&B:08/18)
 - Mixed-mode data collection (web and telephone)
- Field Test
 - N=1,557
 - Response Rate=75%
 - Data collection: July 17-November 7

Research Questions

- How does **tailoring** of letters and emails affect
 - response rates?
 - potential for nonresponse bias?
 - Are there differences for previous round nonrespondents?
- How does **sponsorship** in reminder emails affect
 - response rates?
 - potential for nonresponse bias?
- How do **tailoring** and **sponsorship** interact?

Experimental Manipulations

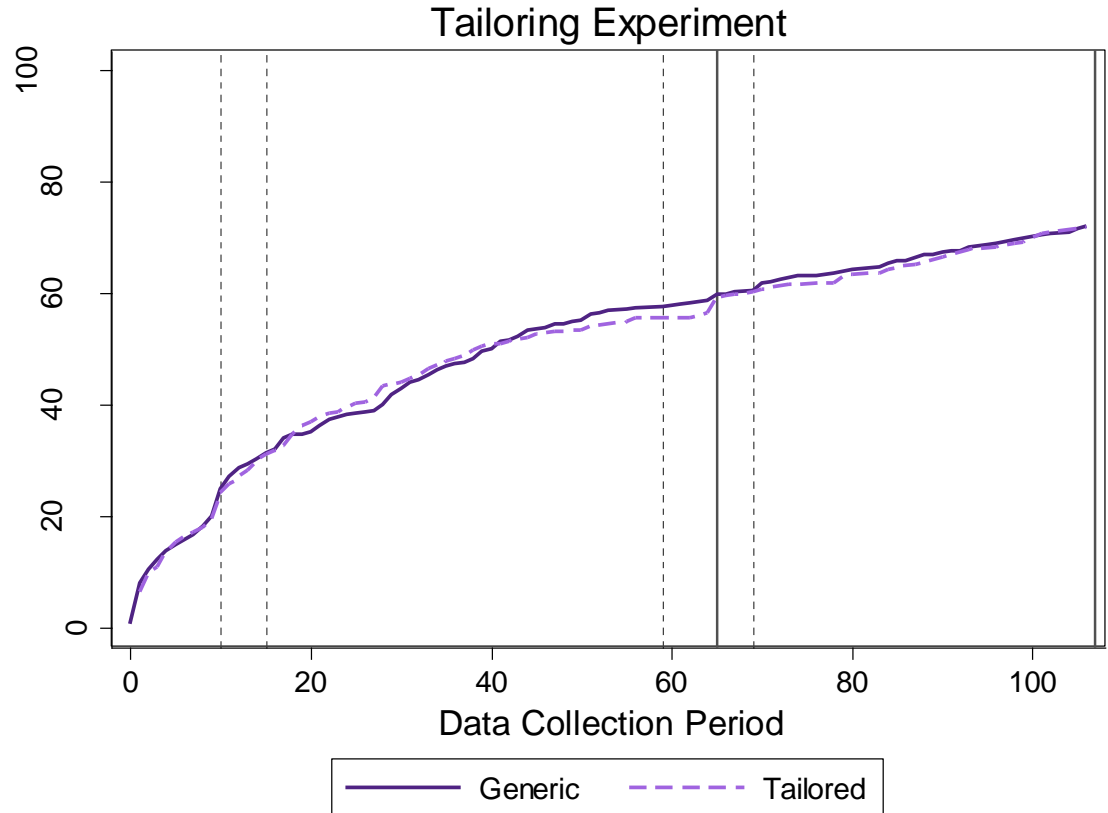
- Tailoring experiment on all letters and emails
 - Generic version – earning a Bachelor's degree impacted...
 - Tailored version – earning a Bachelor's degree in field impacted...
- Sponsorship experiment on all reminder e-mails
 - From RTI (@rti.org)
 - From NCES (@ed.gov)

- Response Rates: t-tests on final numbers
- Nonresponse Bias: absolute relative bias
 - Region
 - Age
 - School type
 - Enrollment

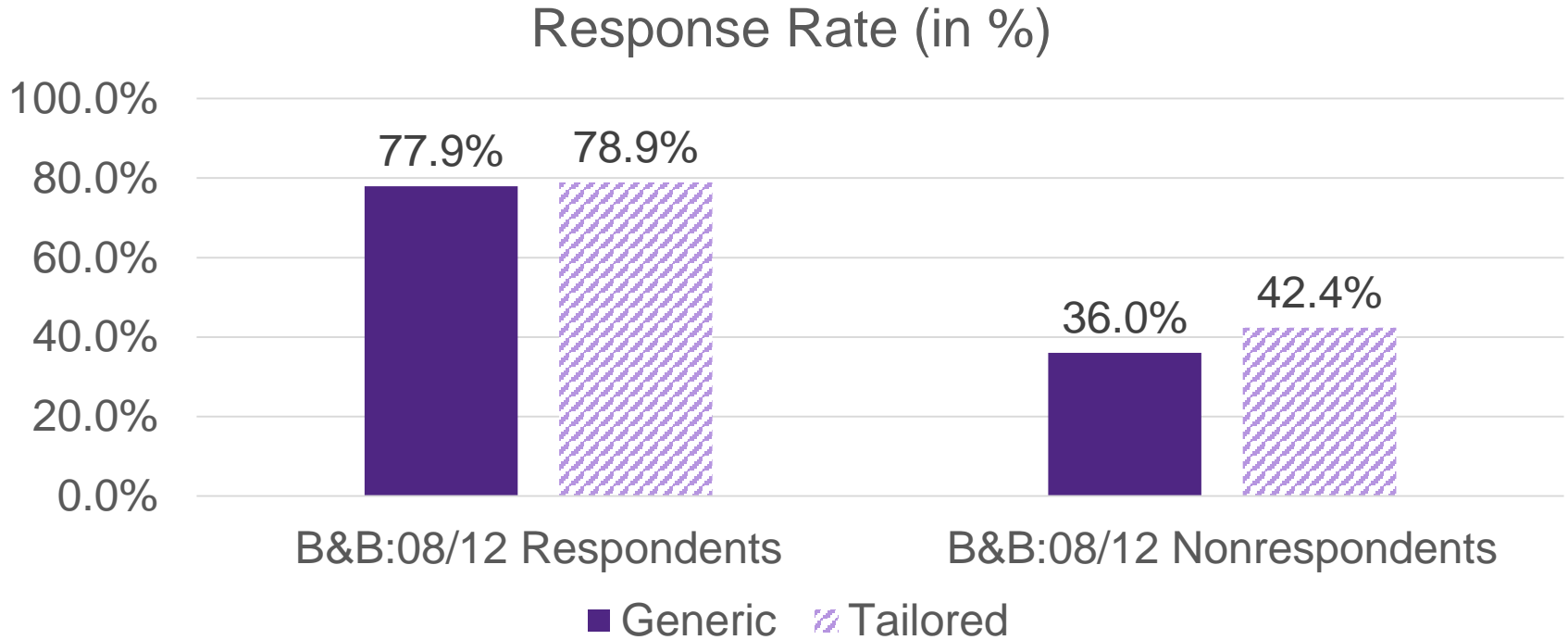
Tailoring: Overall Response Rates

Similar overall response rates ($p=.914$):

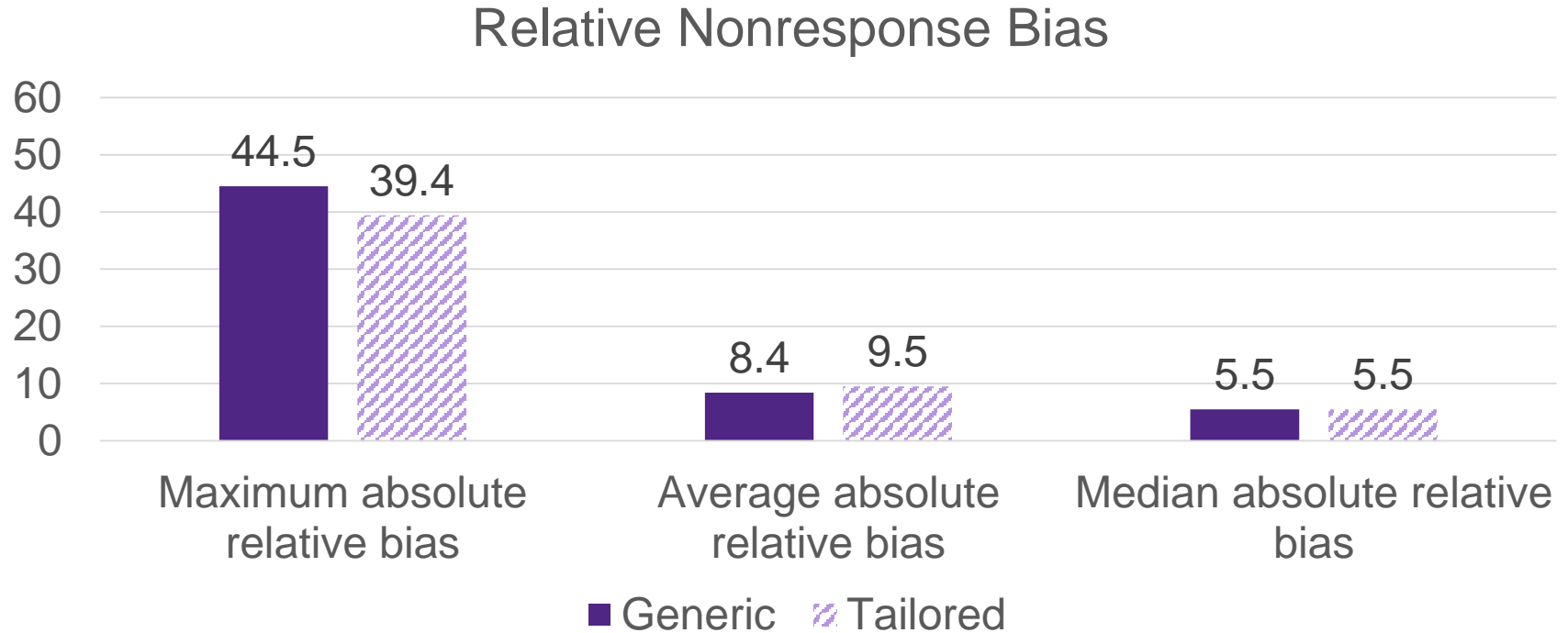
- Generic: 72.0 %
- Tailored: 71.7 %



Tailoring and Response Rates by Previous Response Status



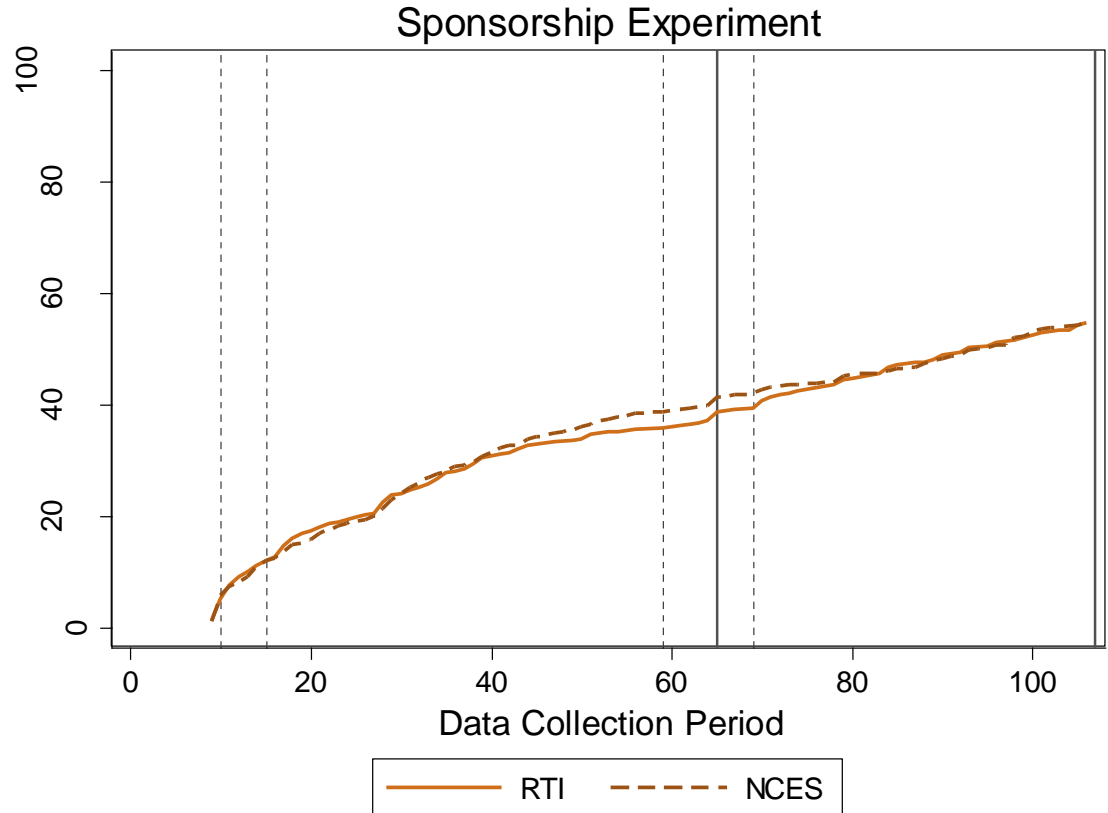
Tailoring and Nonresponse Bias



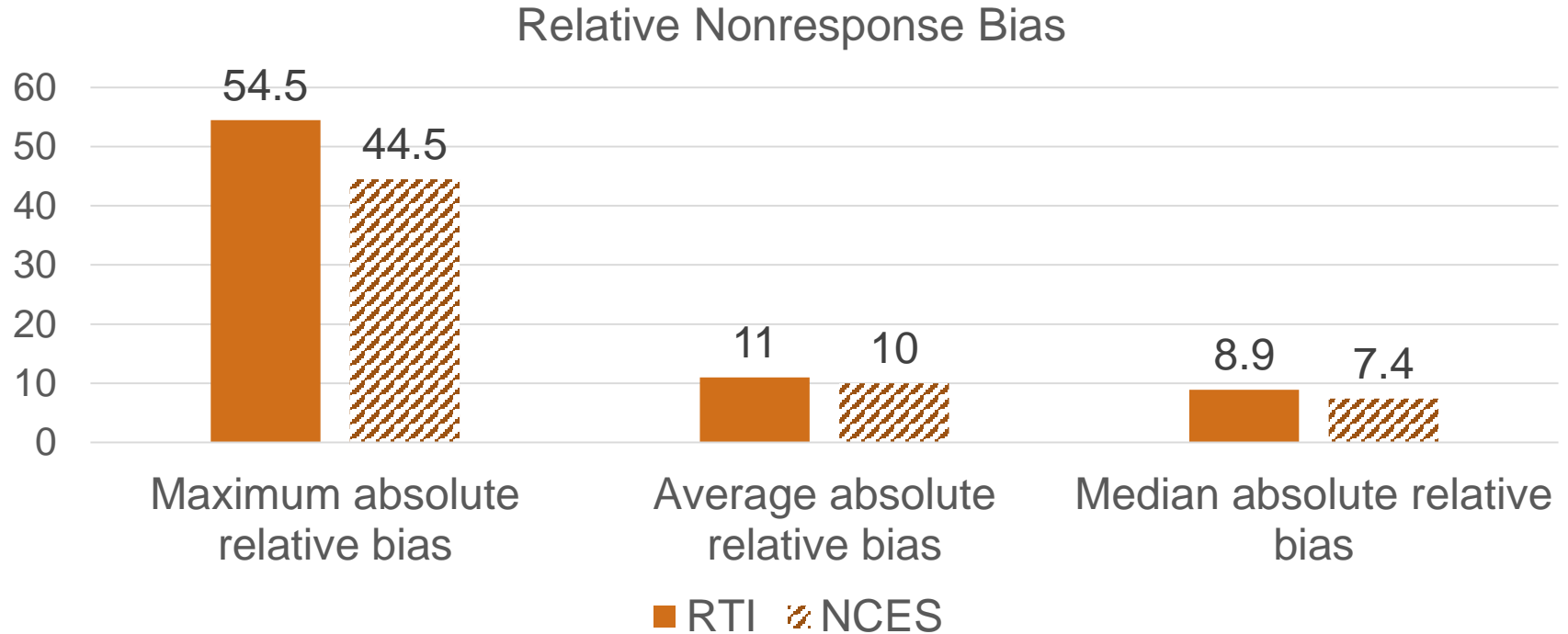
Sponsorship: Overall Response Rates

Similar overall response rates ($p=.982$).

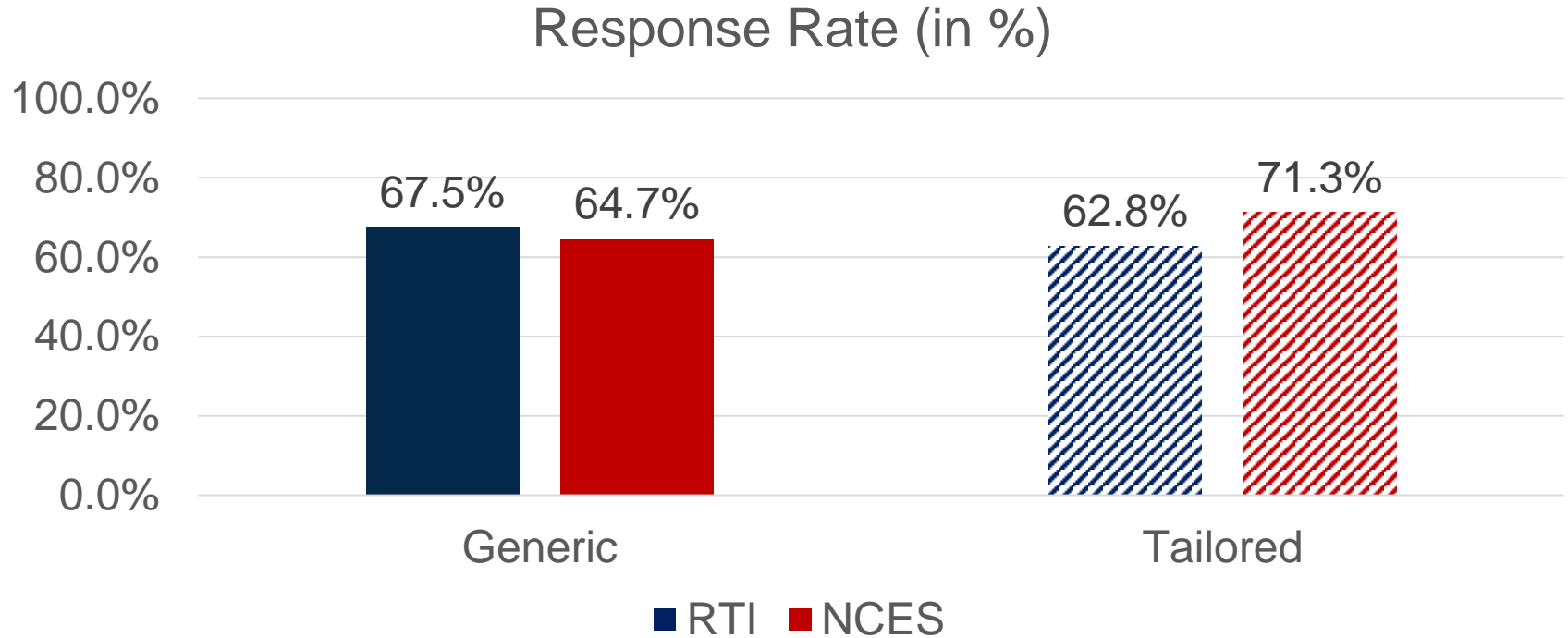
- RTI: 54.8 %
- NCES: 54.8 %



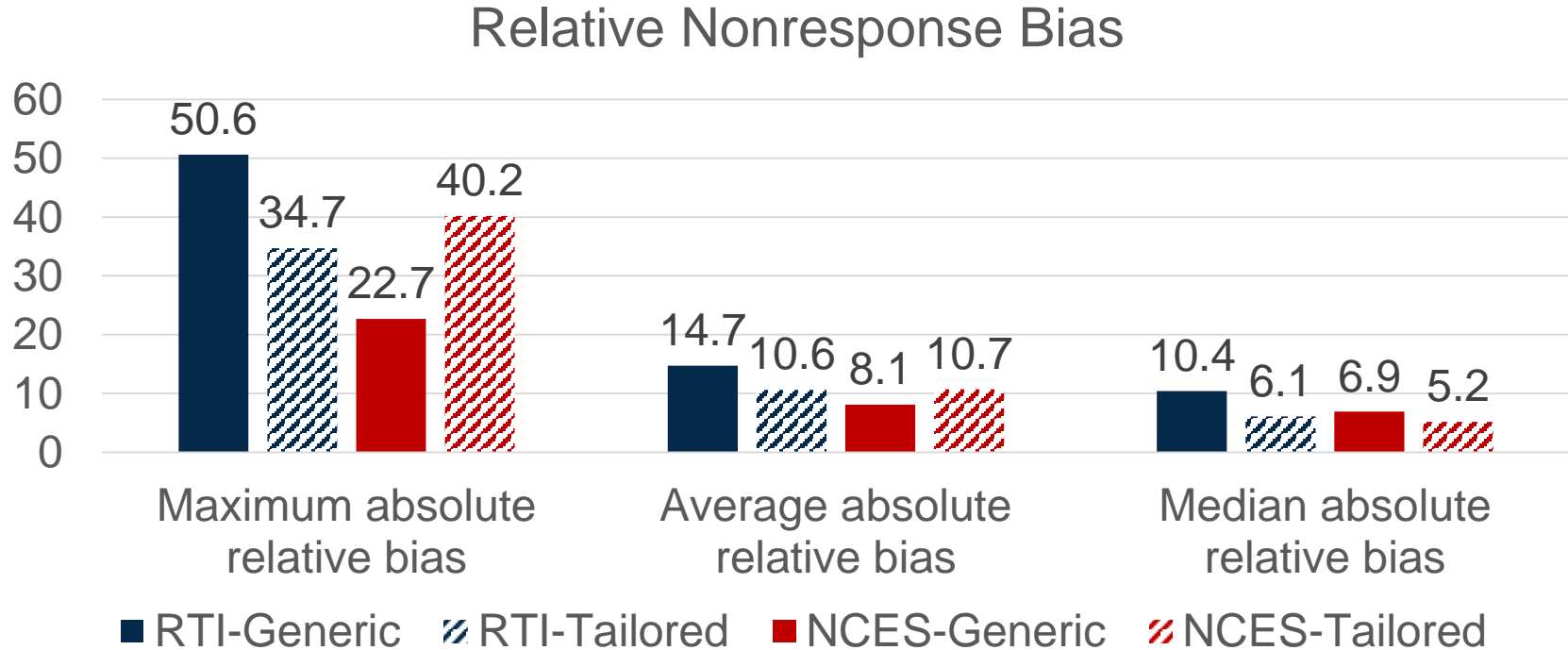
Sponsorship and Nonresponse Bias



Interaction Response Rates



Interaction Nonresponse Bias



Conclusions

- Tailoring seems to help with nonresponse
 - Response rates among previous round nonrespondents
 - Absolute relative bias
- NCES sponsorship seems to increase response rates when combined with tailoring
- Analyses underpowered, but results in the expected direction

Thank you!

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