

# 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)

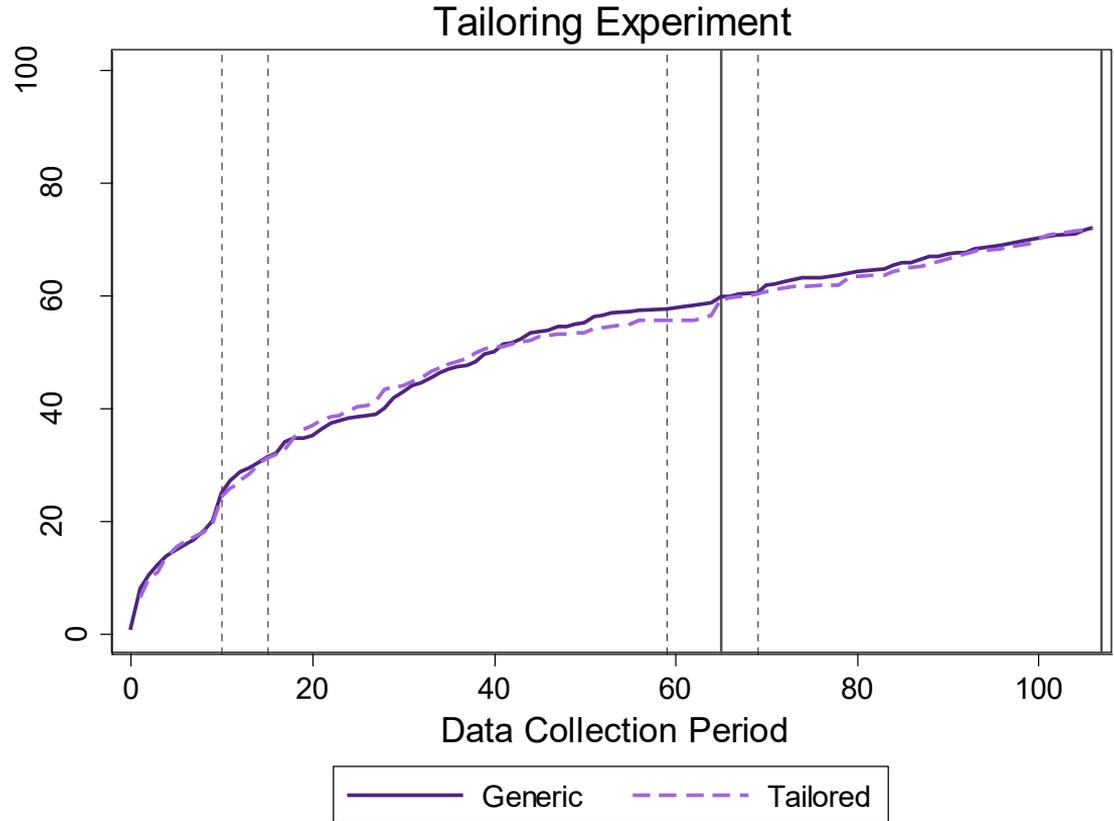
- Response Rates: t-tests on final numbers
- Nonresponse Bias: absolute relative bias
  - Region
  - Age
  - School type
  - Enrollment

# Tailoring: Overall Response Rates

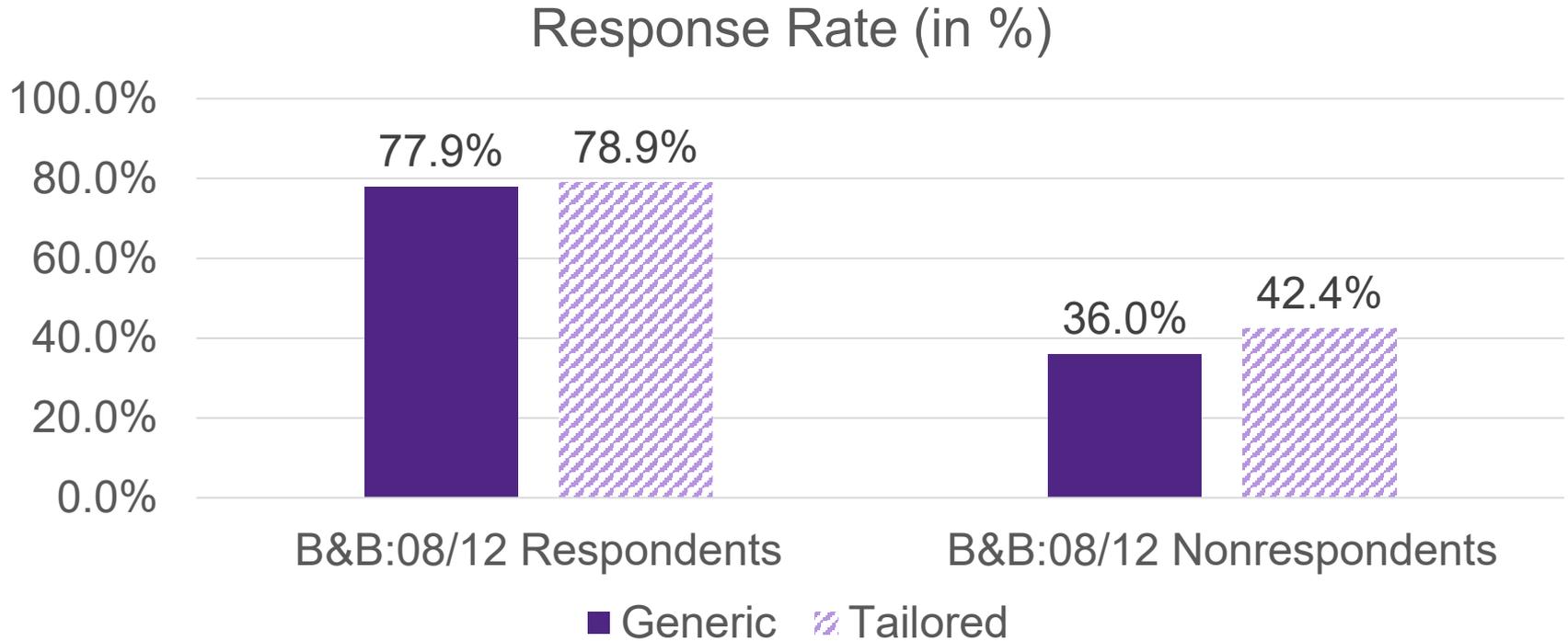
Similar overall response rates ( $\rho = .914$ ):

- Generic: 72.0 %
- Tailored: 71.7 %

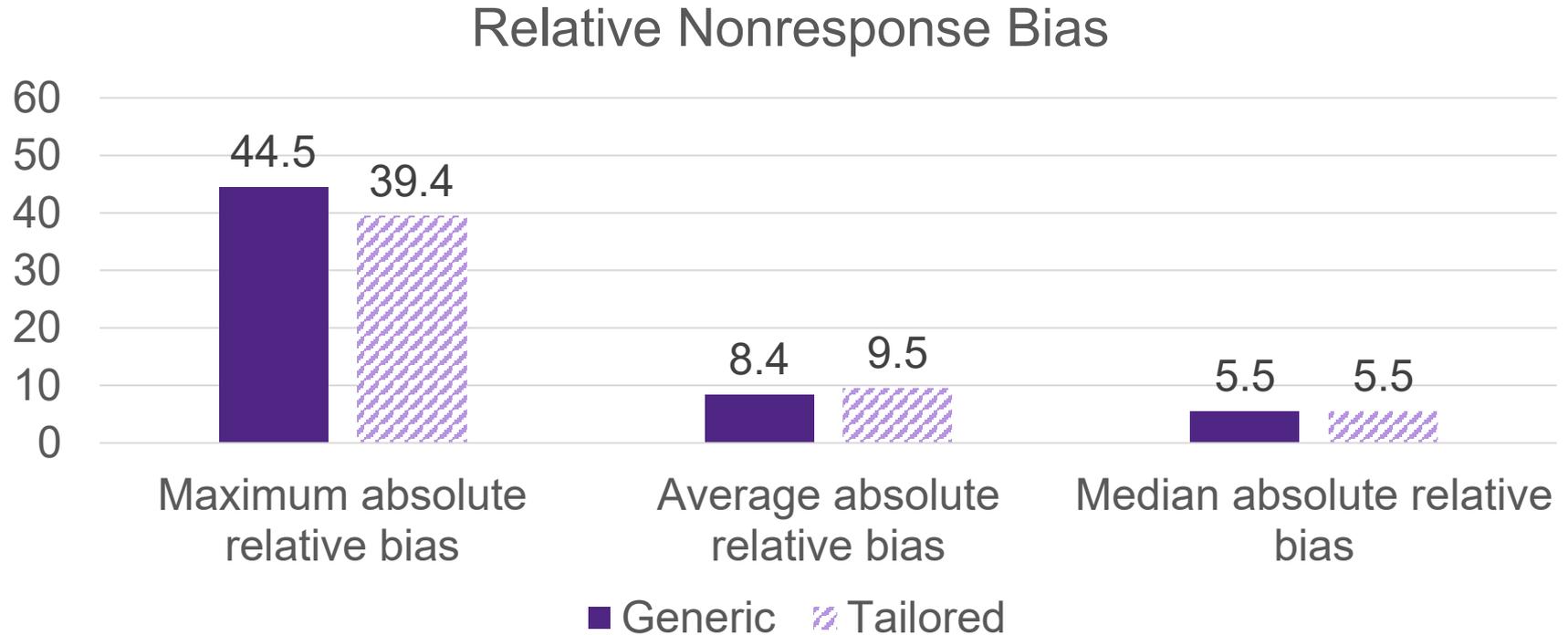
Cumulative Response Rate (in %)



# Tailoring and Response Rates by Previous Response Status



# Tailoring and Nonresponse Bias

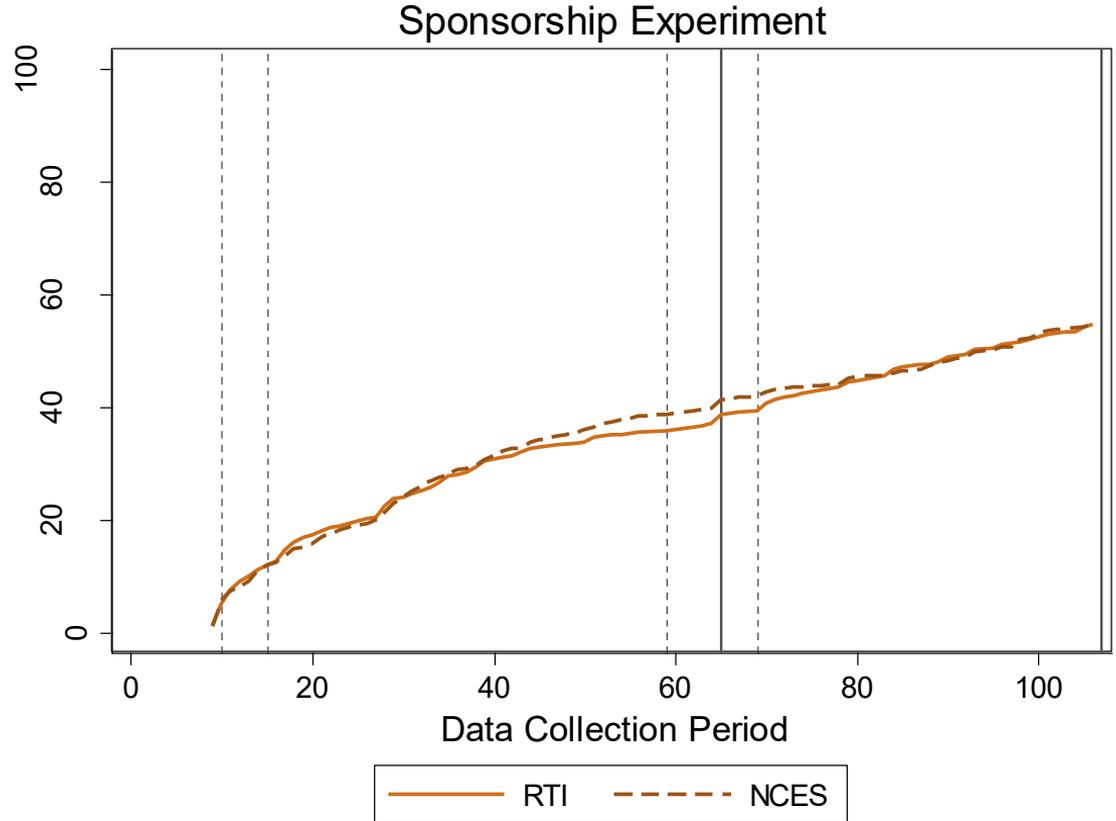


# Sponsorship: Overall Response Rates

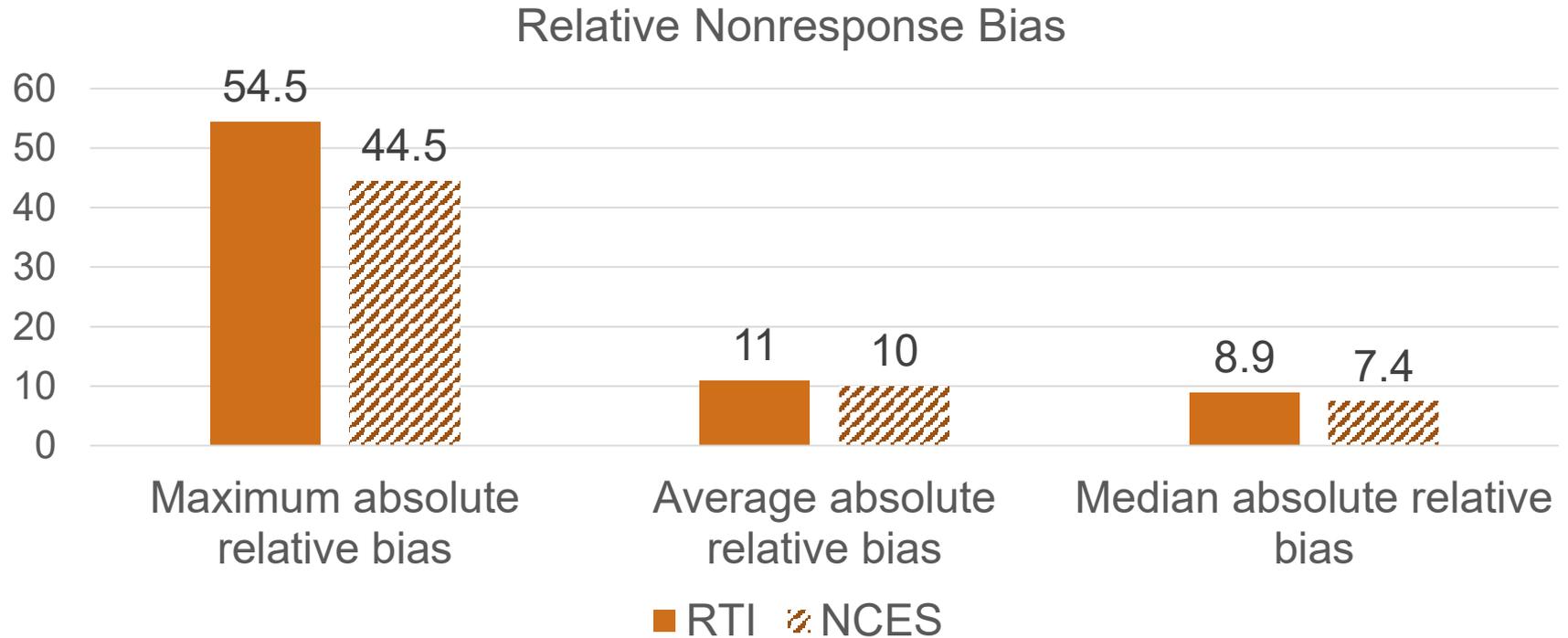
Similar overall response rates ( $\rho = .982$ ).

- RTI: 54.8 %
- NCS: 54.8 %

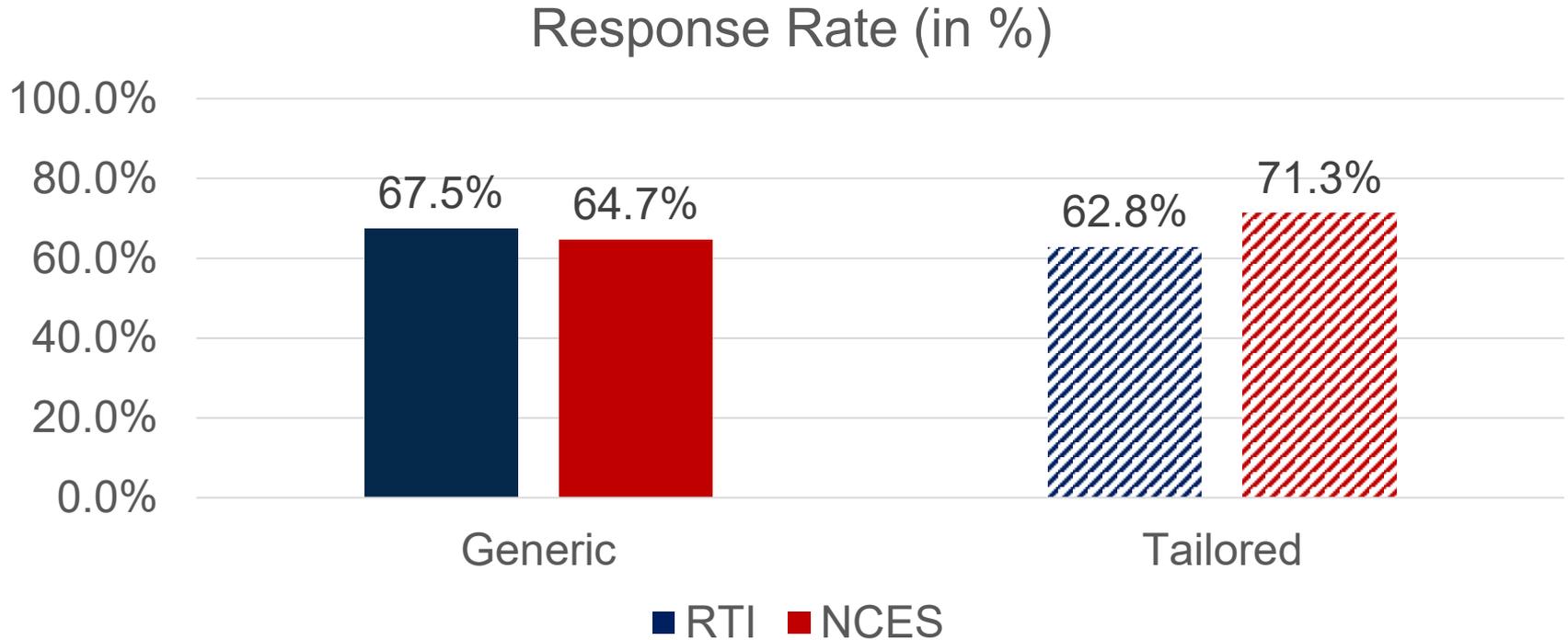
Cumulative Response Rate (in %)



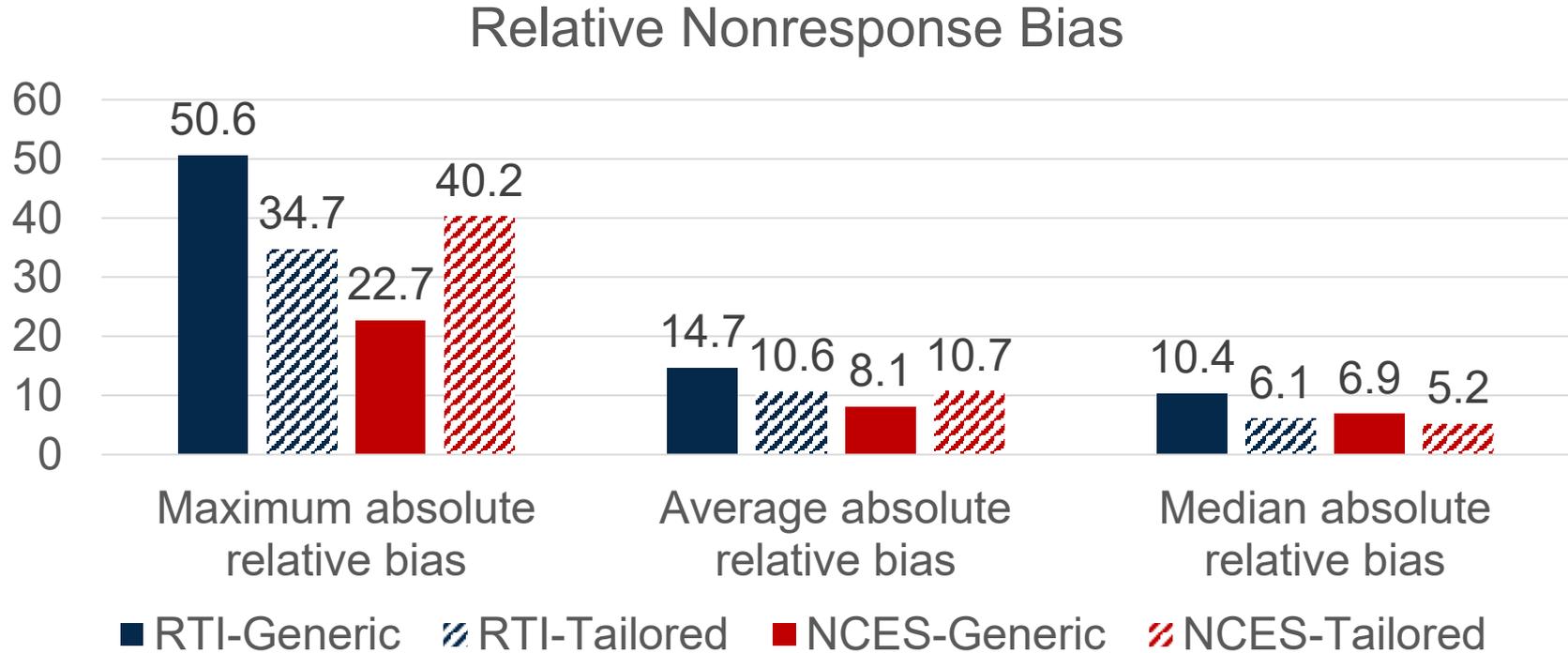
# Sponsorship and Nonresponse Bias



# 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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