Using response latency paradata to evaluate indicators of data quality
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According to Krosnick's influential account, survey satisficing occurs when a respondent decides to use a lower level of cognitive effort in order to provide a satisfactory but less accurate answer than would have been produced if a greater amount of effort had been expended on the task. Satisficing theory has rapidly become the dominant framework in survey methodology for understanding response quality, with an increasing number of studies seeking to understand the causes and consequences of the decision to satisfice. However, the utility of commonly used empirical indicators of satisficing for assessing the accuracy and completeness of response data is open to question, because the prevalence of these indicators is related to a range of factors, in addition to a respondent's decision to satisfice. In this paper we use response latencies to assess whether empirical indicators of weak and strong satisficing take respondents, on average, less time to produce compared to indicators of optimized responses. Counter to what satisficing theory would predict, our findings show that the satisficing indicators were associated with significantly *longer* response latencies than optimized responses. One interpretation of these results is that a core assumption of the theory of survey-satisficing is invalid. Our less radical conclusion, however, is that variables commonly deployed by survey researchers as indicators of survey satisficing are problematic measures of the behaviour they are seeking to measure.