Erratum

Erratum concerning the article "Are They Really Too Busy for Survey Participation? The Evolution of Busyness and Busyness Claims in Flanders" by Anina Vercruyssen, Bart Van de Putte, and Ineke Stoop published in Journal of Official Statistics, Volume 27, Number 4, 2011, pp. 619–632.

The unusually high odds ratio for the SCV 2002 dummy variable in Model 2 of Table 5 in the article is caused by the age of the 2002 survey respondents being missing from the merged data file with the data of the three surveys – an unfortunate error. The statistical analysis with the correct data file shows that the models actually provide even better support for our hypotheses. In contrast to Table 5 in the article, the effects of free time on week/workdays on busyness claims are robust (Table 5). We now also find significant and robust effects for claims of temporary busyness (Table 6), whereas the old table did not have any effects. In other words, there is stronger support from the data that respondents' doorstep statements on time pressure are true.

Corrected version of pages 627-629

Is this co-occurring decrease in leisure time and increase statements of (temporary) busyness coincidental, or is there truth behind the time concerns of respondents? Table 5 shows that those respondents who have less free time on work/week-days are indeed significantly more likely to have busyness claims and claims of temporary busyness, even when controlling for the interviewer effects, employment status (as an indicator of objective busyness), socio-demographic variables and possible interviewer effects. As for the interviewer effects, none of the variance components were significant (Table 5, Table 6). Both Table 5 and 6 also show that respondents who have a paid job are significantly more likely to make busyness statements and statements of temporary busyness. These results are in line with the literature on time and combination pressure: Those with a job are those who can experience combination pressure alongside to time pressure. These results show that the opportunity cost hypothesis and the bad timing hypothesis seem to apply for the SCV surveys.

5. DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to determine whether the proclaimed increase in time and combination pressure in Western societies affects survey participation by investigating busyness claims ("too busy", "have no time") and statements of temporary busyness ("come back at another time") as statements made to decline survey participation. We found that these busyness related doorstep reactions increased significantly since 2002 in the investigated SCV surveys in Flanders (APS, 2002; 2005; 2007) and that the use of such reactions seems to be associated with a higher likelihood of also being a final refuser in these Flemish surveys. Moreover, we found that there is truth to these busyness claims: respondents with less free time are significantly more likely to state they are too busy or have no time, even after controlling for other indicators of time and combination pressure

Table 5.   Two-level logistic regression for predicting busyness claims with objective indicators of busyness, controlling for interviewer effects

Busy	Model 1				Model 2			
	Odds ratio	Sig.	Random component	Sig.	Odds ratio	Sig.	Random component	Sig.
Level 1 predictors								
Intercept	0.076	***	2.162	n.s.	0.079	***	1.762	n.s.
Free time work-day	0.947	***	0.007	n.s.	0.979	*	0.026	n.s.
Free time non-work day	1.014	n.s.	0.015	n.s.	1.003	n.s.	0.022	n.s.
Paid job					1.358	***	0.451	n.s.
Age					1.005	n.s.	0.000	n.s.
Sex					1.273	n.s.	0.137	n.s.
Cohabiting					0.888	n.s.	0.835	n.s.
Children					1.042	n.s.	0.543	n.s.
Level 2 predictors								
SCV 2002					1.098	n.s.		
SCV 2005					1.077	n.s.		
N level 1	3552				3552			
N level 2	297				174			

*Note: *$p \leq 0.05$, ***$p \leq 0.001$; n.s. = not significant.*

Table 6.   Two-level logistic regression for predicting claims of temporary busyness with objective indicators of busyness, controlling for interviewer effects

Temporarily busy	Model 1				Model 2			
	Odds ratio	Sig.	Random component	Sig	Odds ratio	Sig.	Random component	Sig.
Level 1 predictors								
Intercept	0.181	***	1.821	n.s.	0.202	***	2.357	n.s.
Free time work day	0.961	***	0.001	n.s.	0.982	*	0.001	n.s.
Free time non-work day	0.998	n.s.	0.003	n.s.	0.998	n.s.	0.004	n.s.
Paid job					1.119	**	0.054	n.s.
Age					1.001	n.s.	0.000	n.s.
Sex					1.044	n.s.	0.067	n.s.
Cohabiting					0.960	n.s.	0.342	n.s.
Children					1.020	n.s.	0.355	n.s.
Level 2 predictors								
SCV 2002					0.931	n.s.		
SCV 2005					0.927	n.s.		
N level 1	3552				3552			
N level 2	297				179			

*Note: *$p \leq 0.05$, **$p \leq 0.01$, ***$p \leq 0.001$; n.s. = not significant.*

such as employment status and having children. The same is found for claims of temporary busyness ("come back at another time").

These results suggest that when sample units claim they are too busy or have no time, or when they express to the interviewer that he/she needs to come back at another time, it can be a genuine signal of busyness that needs to be taken into account in order to try to find a more suitable moment for participation in data collections. It also indicates that for these "converted" initial negative participators with busyness claims in the SCV surveys, the Newtonian hypothesis could be the most fitting: although they seem to be genuinely busier, these busy sample units still somehow find the time to participate regardless if a more convenient moment is found. As for the statements of temporary busyness, we also found an effect of lack of time on week/workdays. The latter also points to chronic busyness but does not really allow us to determine whether there also was a temporary moment of extra busyness when the specific reaction to come back at another time as response to the survey request was uttered.