DATA COLLECTION

NON-PROBABILISTIC SAMPLING

NONPROBABILISTIC SAMPLING

Nonprobabilistic sampling (NPS) methods (designs) select sampling units from the target population using subjective, non-random approaches

- NPS are quick, relatively inexpensive and convenient (no survey frame required).
- NPS methods are ideal for exploratory analysis and survey development.

Unfortunately, NPS are often used instead of probabilistic designs (problematic)

- the associated selection bias makes NPS methods unsound when it comes to inferences (they cannot be used to provide reliable estimates of the sampling error, the only component of TE under the analyst's direct control);
- automated data collection often fall squarely in the NPS camp – we can still analyze data collected with a NPS approach but may not generalize the results to the target population.

NPS METHODS

Haphazard

- man on the street, depends on availability of units and interviewer bias

Volunteer

- self-selection bias

Judgement

- biased by inaccurate preconceptions about the target population

Quota

- exit polling, ignores non-response bias

NPS METHODS

Modified

- starts probabilistic, switches to quota as a reaction to high non-response rates

Snowball

- “pyramid” scheme

There are contexts where NPS methods might fit a client’s or an organization’s need (and that remains their decision to make, ultimately), but they must be informed of the drawbacks and presented with some probabilistic alternatives.

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