

TPTTracker Report

The satisfaction of online survey respondents

Survey responses obtained online show generally lower levels of satisfaction than those obtained by other methods: this report investigates whether this is simply due to the age profile of the respondents using this method.

The satisfaction of online survey respondents

SUMMARY

Example data from two surveys conducted using multiple methodologies was used to compare the response rates and satisfaction levels for each survey method used, broken down by age band.

Where the two TPTracker users conducting the surveys had email addresses and/or mobile phone numbers for their target populations (c.70%), customers were sent a link to an online version of the questionnaire.

Those who did not respond online or could not be contacted by email/mobile phone were then contacted by telephone or sent a questionnaire by post.

While this is a small dataset, the results from the two organisations follow similar patterns so are believed to be an indication of general trends:

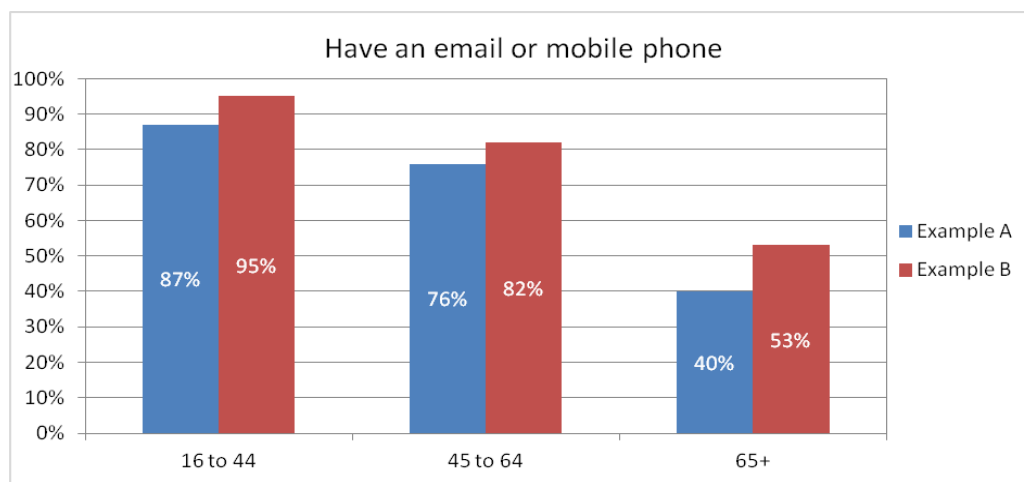
- Most of the younger population and just under half of the older population can be offered the option of completing questionnaires online: cheap, easy and fast for the landlord; quick and convenient for the customer.
- For those able to access online surveys, the response rates are still much lower than other methods.
- Over 65s responding to questionnaires are likely to express similar levels of satisfaction, whatever the method of response they use.
- Under 65s responding to questionnaires are likely to express significantly lower levels of satisfaction if they use online methodology than if they use other methodologies.
- The generally lower level of satisfaction reported from online surveys is NOT due to more of the younger (less satisfied) people responding by this method.
- This relationship between methodology, age and satisfaction levels adds further complexity to the interpretation of results and the comparability of different data sets.

KEY FINDINGS

Access to online surveys

The organisations conducting the surveys had email addresses and/or mobile phone numbers for around 70% of their target populations:

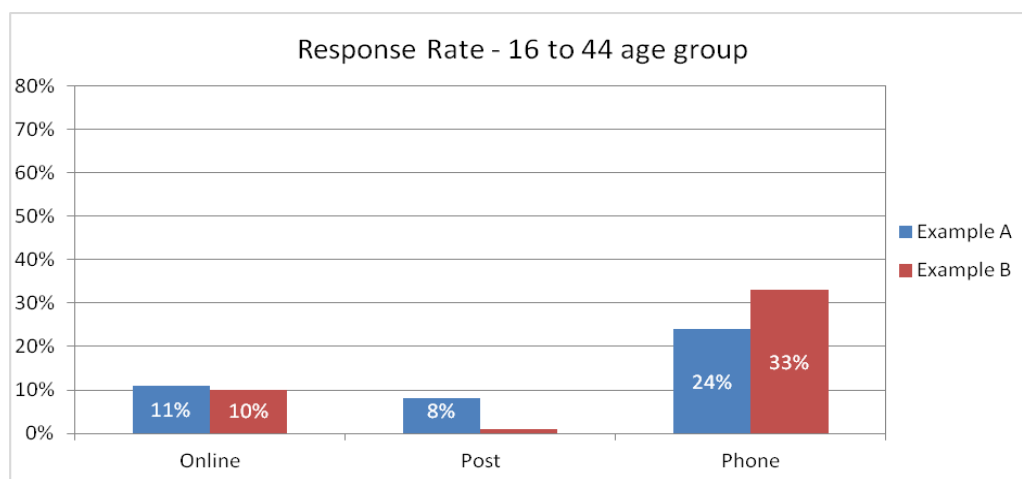
- c.90% of those aged 16 to 44;
- c.80% of those aged 45 to 64;
- c.45% of those aged 65+.



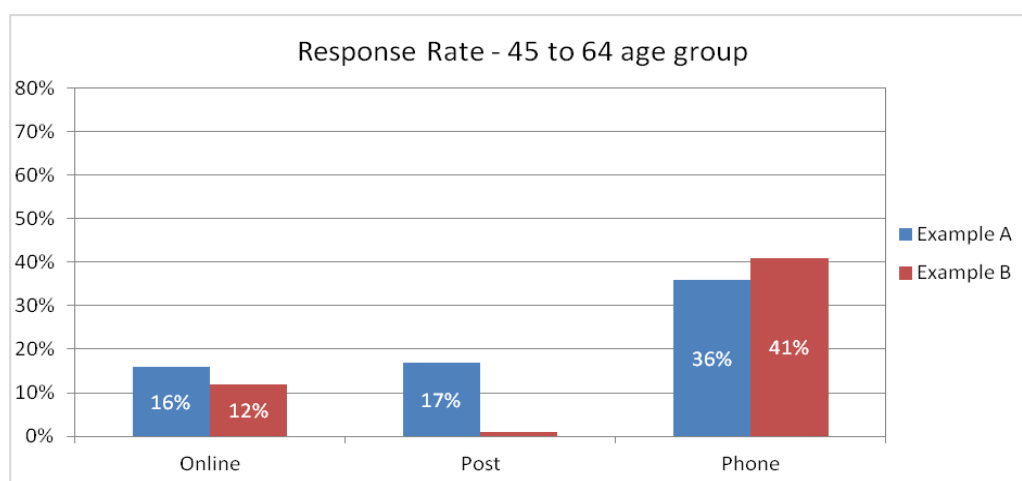
Response rates by method and age

Response rates for online surveys were similar across all age bands @ 10-14% but for other methods there were significant differences in response rates for different age groups:

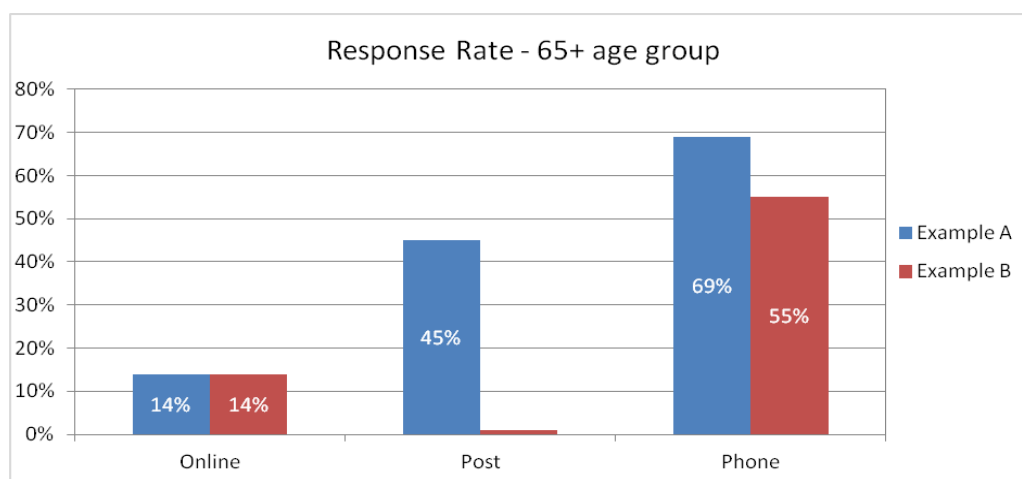
- 16 to 44 age group: c.10% Online / c.8% Postal / c.28% Phone



- 45 to 64 age group: c.14% Online / c.17% Postal / c.38% Phone



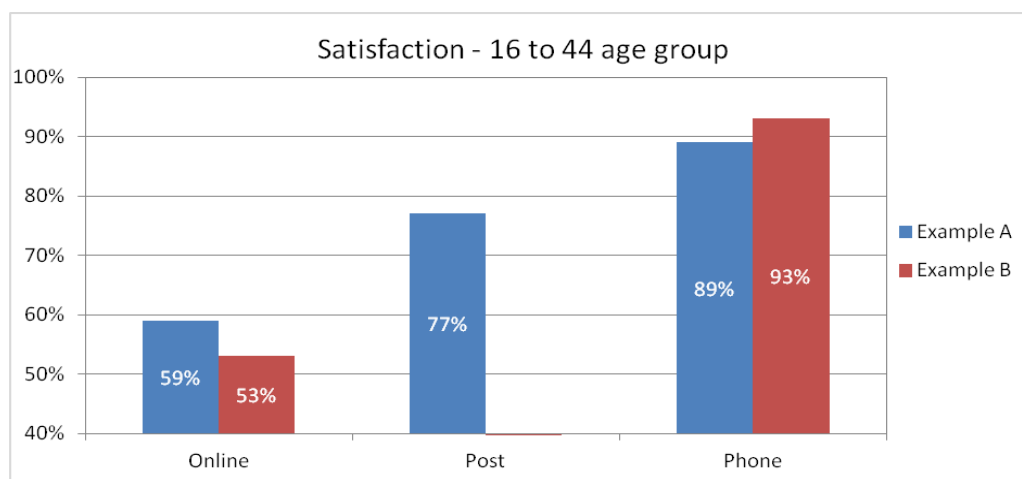
- 65+ age group: c.14% Online / c.45% Postal / c.62% Phone



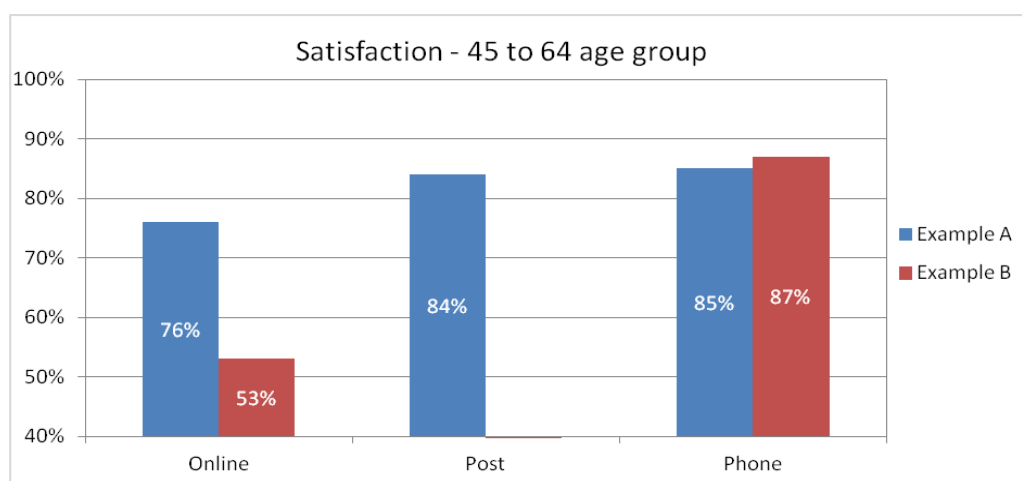
Satisfaction levels by method and age

Satisfaction rates for a given age band varied according to the methodology used. The differences were very significant for the younger age band:

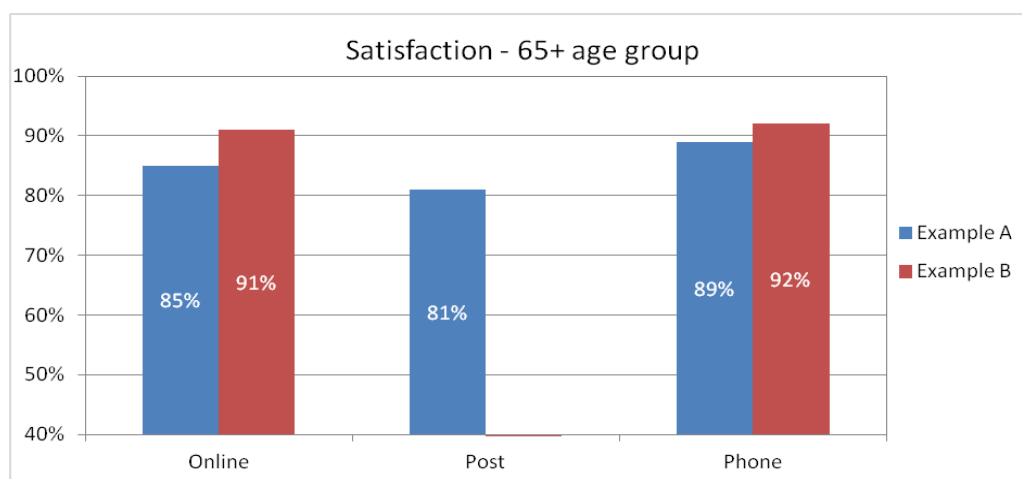
- 16-44 age band: c.56% online / c.77% post / c.91% phone;



- 45-64 age band: c.65% online / c.84% post / c.86% phone;



- 65+ age band: c.88% online / 81% post / c.90% phone;



CONCLUSIONS

1. **RESPONSE RATE v. AGE:** Survey response rates increase with the age of the respondent, regardless of the survey methodology used.
2. **METHODS v. No. of RESPONSES:** Offering a range of survey methods will increase the overall number of responses obtained, even if some methods have lower rates of response than others.
3. **RESPONSE RATES BY METHOD FOR YOUNGER PEOPLE:** For young people, the response rate for online surveys is significantly lower than that for telephone surveys.
4. **ACCESS TO ONLINE SURVEYS FOR OLDER PEOPLE:** Almost half of the 65+ age group has access to online surveys and their response rate to online surveys is (like other methodologies) higher than that for younger age groups. However, the number of older online respondents is still likely to be smaller than the number of younger online respondents because more young people have access to online surveys.
5. **TELEPHONE SURVEY DATA IS SKEWED TOWARDS OLDER PEOPLE:** Using only telephone as a survey methodology will skew the response data towards older people.
6. **ONLINE SURVEY DATA SHOWS NO SKEW BY AGE GROUP:** Using only online survey methodology will give a small but reasonably representative selection of responses; using it in conjunction with other methods will not compensate for any skew created by the other methodologies.
7. **YOUNGER RESPONDENTS ARE LESS SATISFIED ONLINE THAN BY OTHER METHODS:** When younger respondents (aged under 65) respond to a survey, 30% fewer of those responding online are likely to express satisfaction than those responding by post or telephone. This is in addition to a generally lower satisfaction rate among younger people and is entirely due to the methodology by which they respond.
8. **WHICH METHOD BEST REPRESENTS THE VIEWS OF THE WHOLE POPULATION:** There is no evidence to suggest whether the more negative views expressed online, or the more positive views expressed by telephone, are nearer to the true level of satisfaction for the whole population. The difference does however support the view that 'satisfaction' is a subjective measure which can vary depending on the circumstances in which it is expressed.
9. **MULTI-CHANNEL METHODOLOGY WILL REPORT LOWER LEVELS OF SATISFACTION:** As we move further towards multi-channel survey methodologies as a means of capturing a wider and more representative range of views, we are likely to record generally lower levels of satisfaction; this will be because of the methods used, not the age profile of the respondents.
10. **NEED TO WEIGHT DATA BY METHOD AS WELL AS AGE:** We should therefore consider whether, in addition to weighting the response data to correct for any differences in age, we may also need to adjust the data obtained to a standard mix of methodologies.

ADDENDUM

June 2017

In the first quarter of 2017, another TPTracker (Example C) user conducted a general satisfaction survey of its customer-base using two methodologies only:

- ONLINE: Those customers contactable by email were sent a link to the TPTracker online survey portal and were invited to complete the questionnaire online.
- POSTAL: Those customers who were not contactable by email were sent a questionnaire by post, with a covering letter and Freepost return envelope.

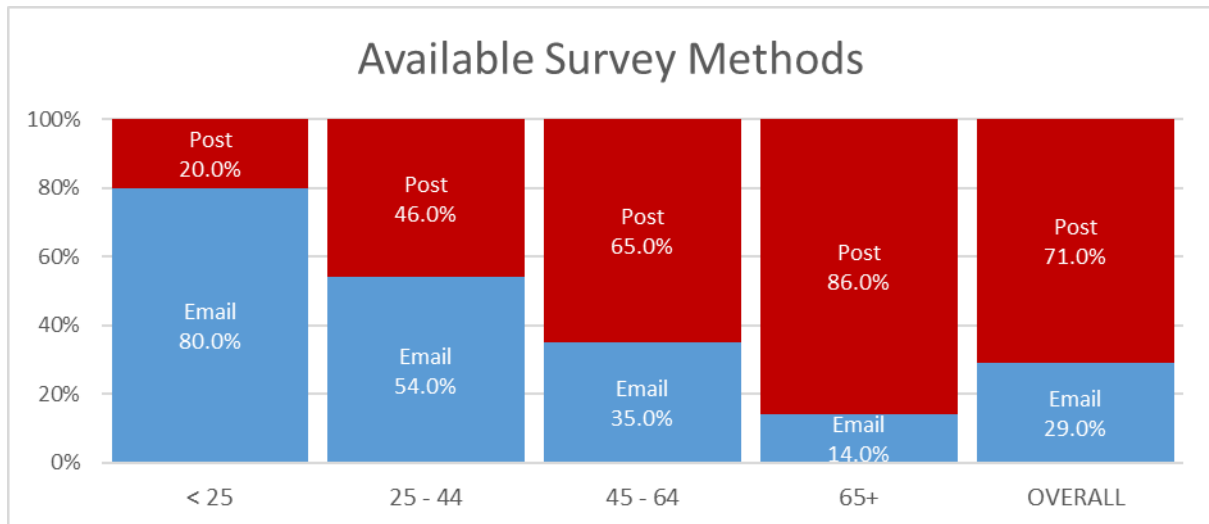
SUMMARY

The evidence from this further study broadly supports the previous findings:

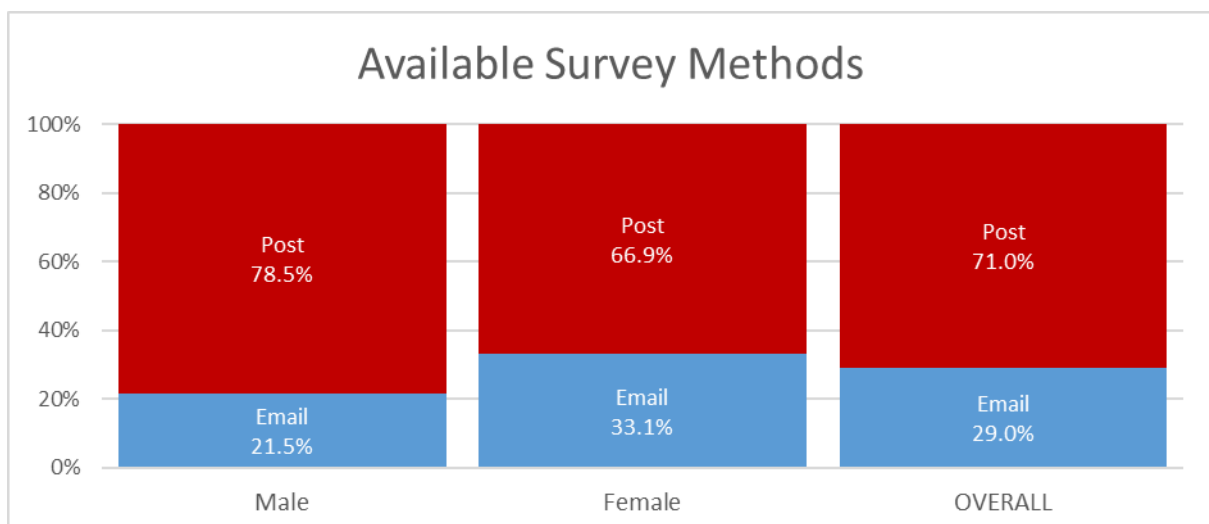
- The availability of email continues to grow as a method of conducting surveys.
- Although the availability of this method is greatest with the younger age group, their response rate (whatever the survey method) is very low.
- Although the availability of this method is lowest with the older age group, it is still significant and their response rate is surprisingly high.
- Men seem to express the same levels of satisfaction, whatever the survey method.
- Women express significantly lower satisfaction if responding by email/online rather than post.
- Across all age groups, ignoring gender differences, respondents express significantly lower satisfaction if responding by email/online rather than post.
- There is no evidence from this data to suggest the reasons for this difference, and it would be worth investigating further:
 - Whether a single respondent is more likely to express their dissatisfaction if responding by email/online than they would if responding by post.
 - Whether dissatisfied customers may respond by email/online but would be less likely to respond by post.
- Whether satisfied customers may respond by post but would be less likely to respond by email/online.
- If one assumes the negative views are genuine, then postal surveys are clearly not picking up these responses and are therefore not accurately reflecting the views of customers, if used in isolation.

AVAILABLE SURVEY METHODS

Analysed by age, the proportion of customers who provided an email address ranged from 80% (younger) to 14% (older):



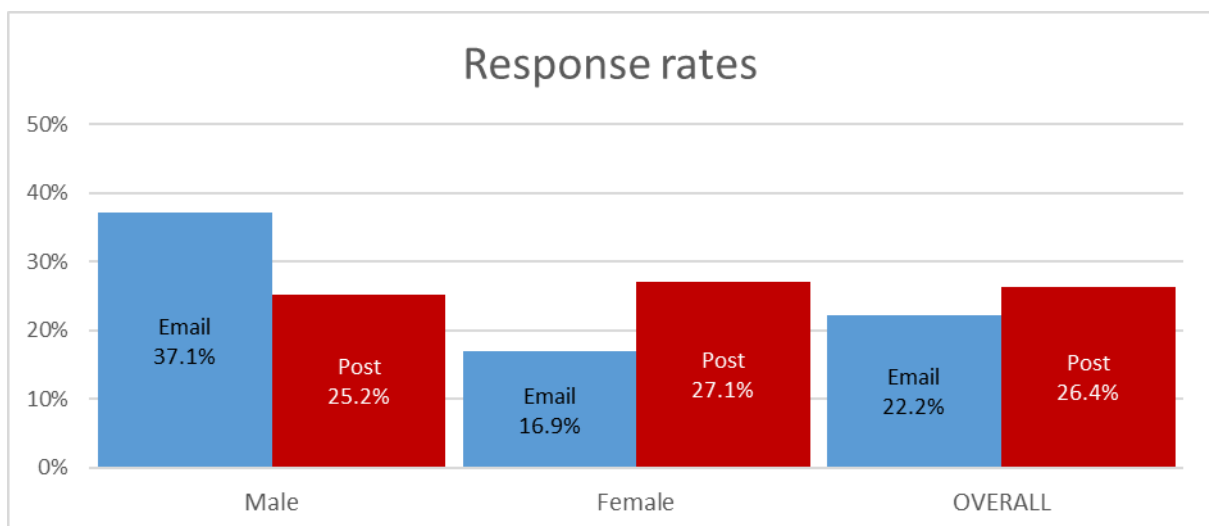
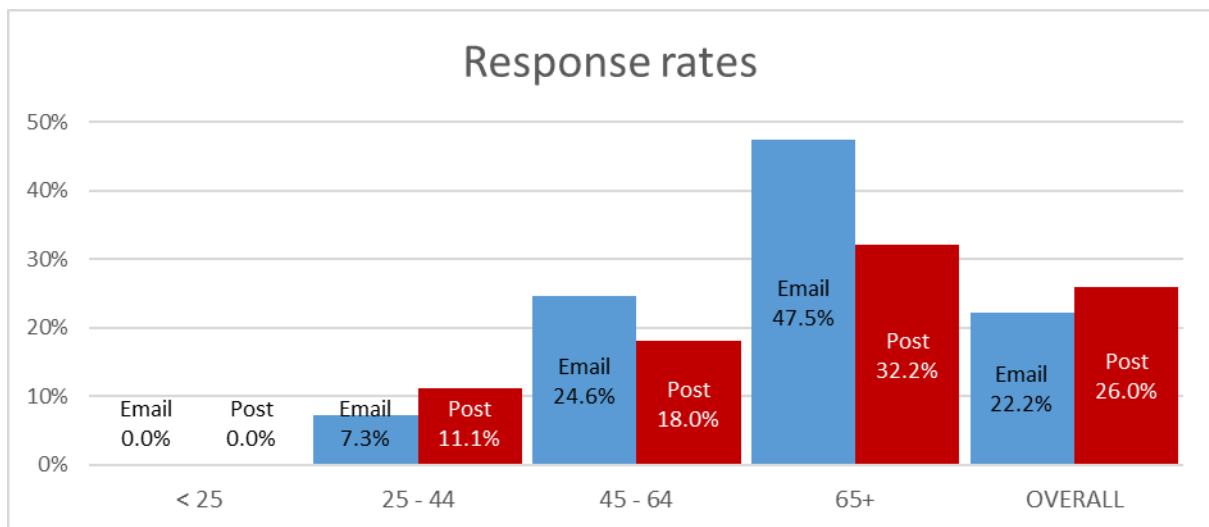
And analysed by gender, a higher proportion of females (33%) than males (21.5%) had provided an email address:



RESPONSE RATES

For younger age groups, the response rate to email/online surveys is lower than for postal surveys. This is also true for female respondents.

However, for older age groups and for males, the response rate to email/online surveys is higher than for postal surveys.

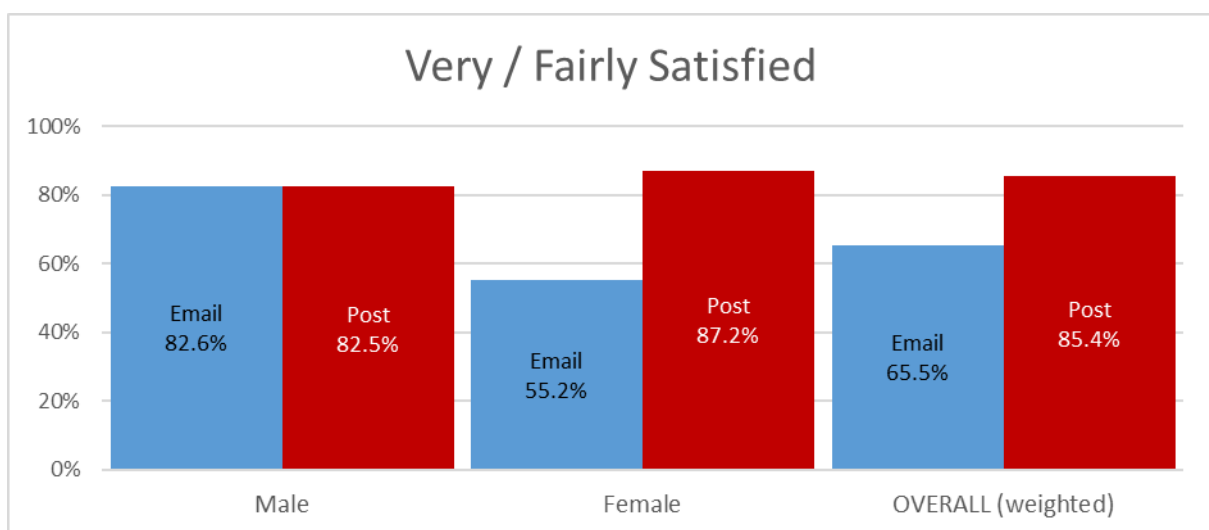
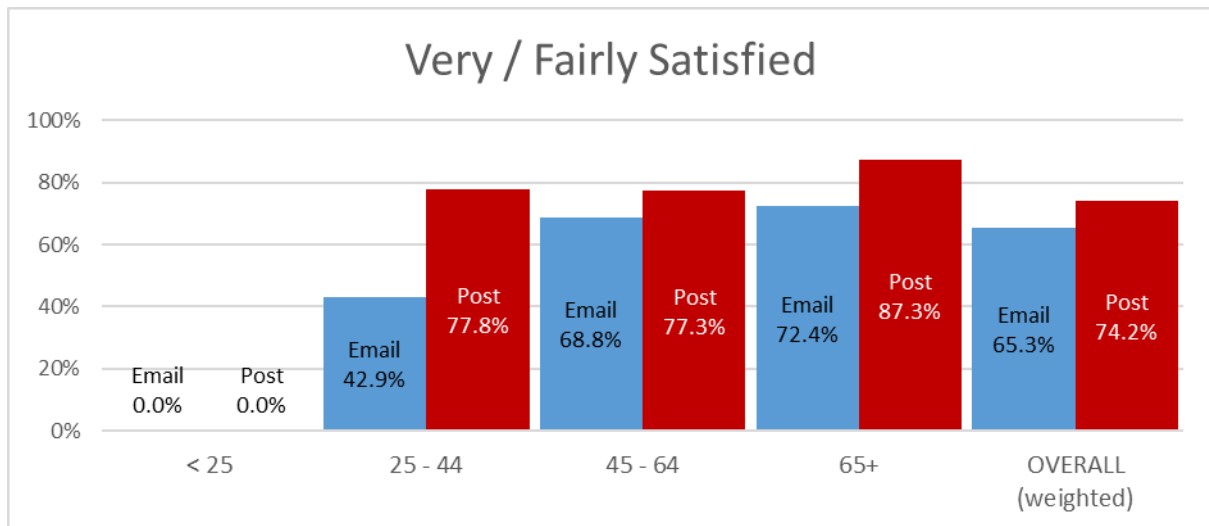


SATISFACTION

For males, satisfaction ('Very satisfied' + 'Fairly satisfied') is the same (82%), whether obtained via email/online or via post.

For females, satisfaction is very significantly lower if obtained via email/online (55%) rather than via post (87%).

For all age groups, satisfaction is also significantly lower if obtained via email/online (65%) rather than via post (74%).





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