

The Effect of Interviewer Experience on Item Non-Response: A Verbal Behavior Study

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Research Focus

- Interviewer experience association with
 - Interview Pace
 - Interviewer and respondent verbal behaviors during the interview
- How does this association affect data quality?
- The role of interviewer experience in two interviewing techniques
 - Namely, standardized and flexible interviews



Focus of the talk

- Interviewer experience association with
 - Interviewer deviation from standard protocols
- How does this association affect item NR?
 - In behavioral questions
- In different interviewing techniques
 - Standardized interviews
 - Flexible calendar interviews



Interviewer Experience

- **General interviewer experience***
 - Gained over lifetime
- **Survey-organization specific experience**
 - Gained in one particular survey organization
- **Within-study interviewer exposure***
 - Gained during administration of one survey fielding/administration period.



Interviewing Techniques

- **Standardized Interviews**
 - All questions are scripted in a pre-defined order
 - Aim: Limit the effects of interviewers
- **Calendar Interviews**
 - Uses structure of autobiographical memory
 - Allows conversational flexibility



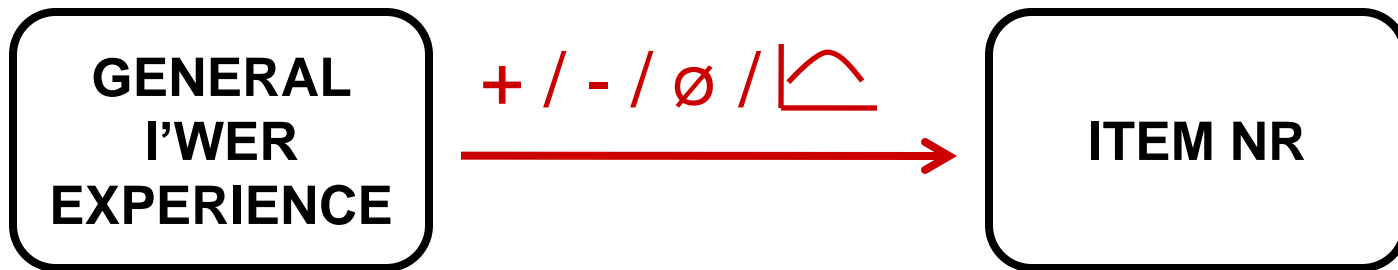
Item Nonresponse (Item NR)

- Failure to obtain responses from one or more items during the administration of the survey.
- Effect on data quality
 - Systematic differences between respondents who answer and who do not answer a particular item.
 - Incorrect survey inferences



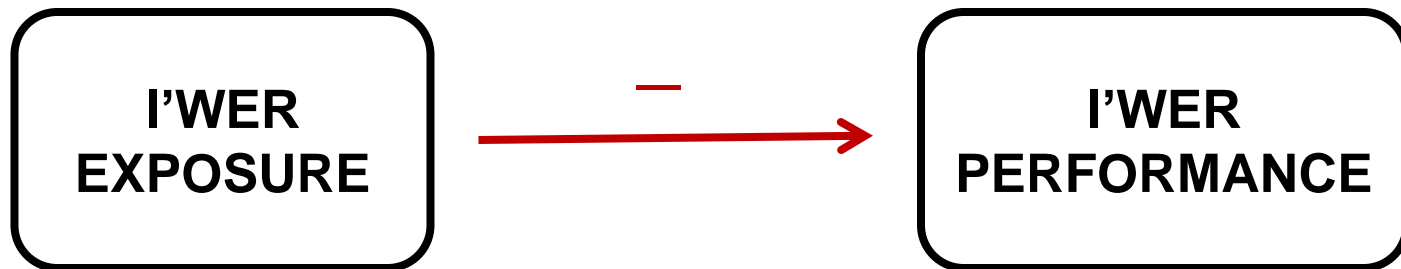
Interviewer Experience & Item NR Relationship

- Findings on the relationship between general interviewer experience and item non-response are mixed.

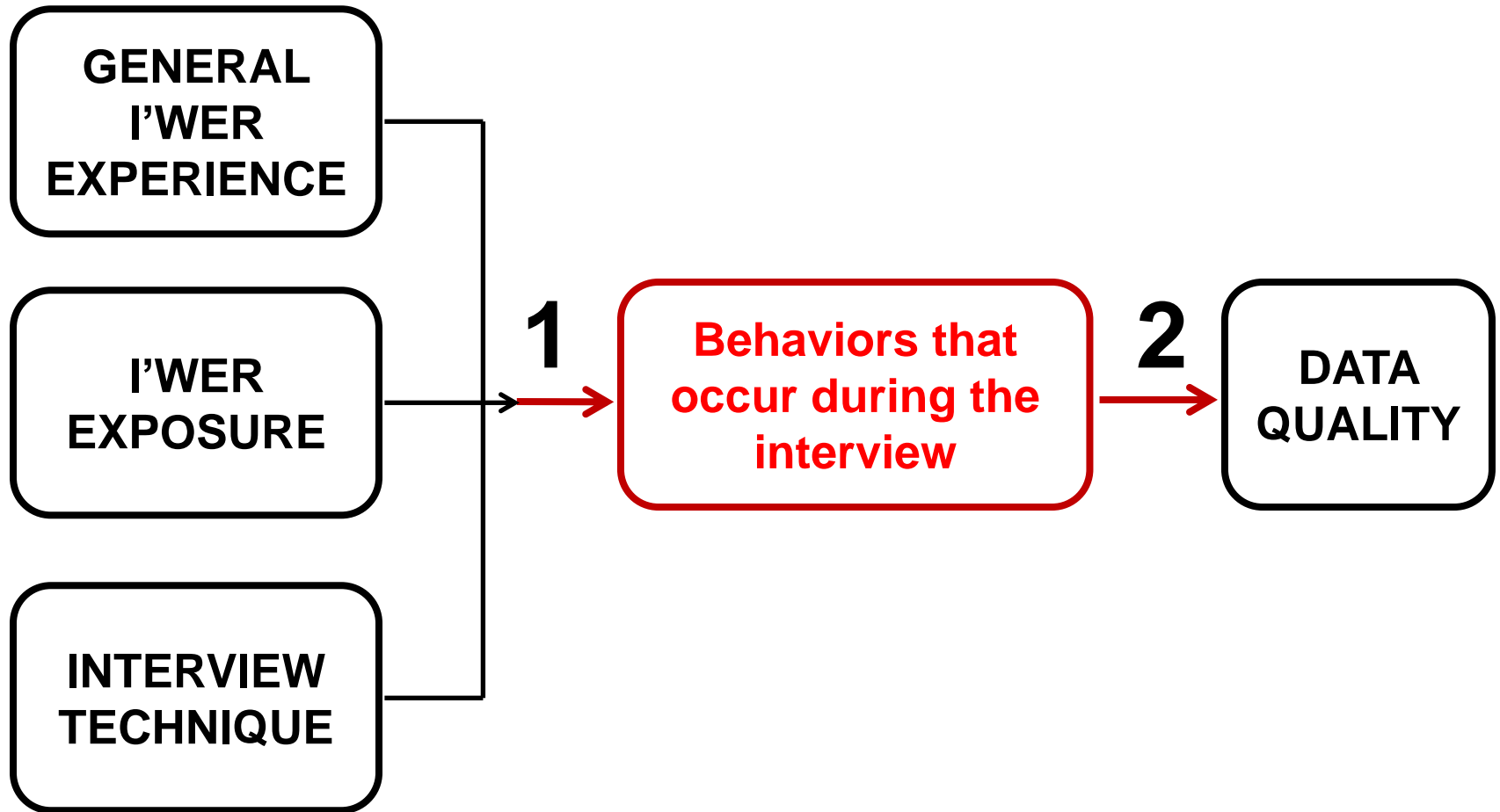


Interviewer Exposure & Item NR Relationship

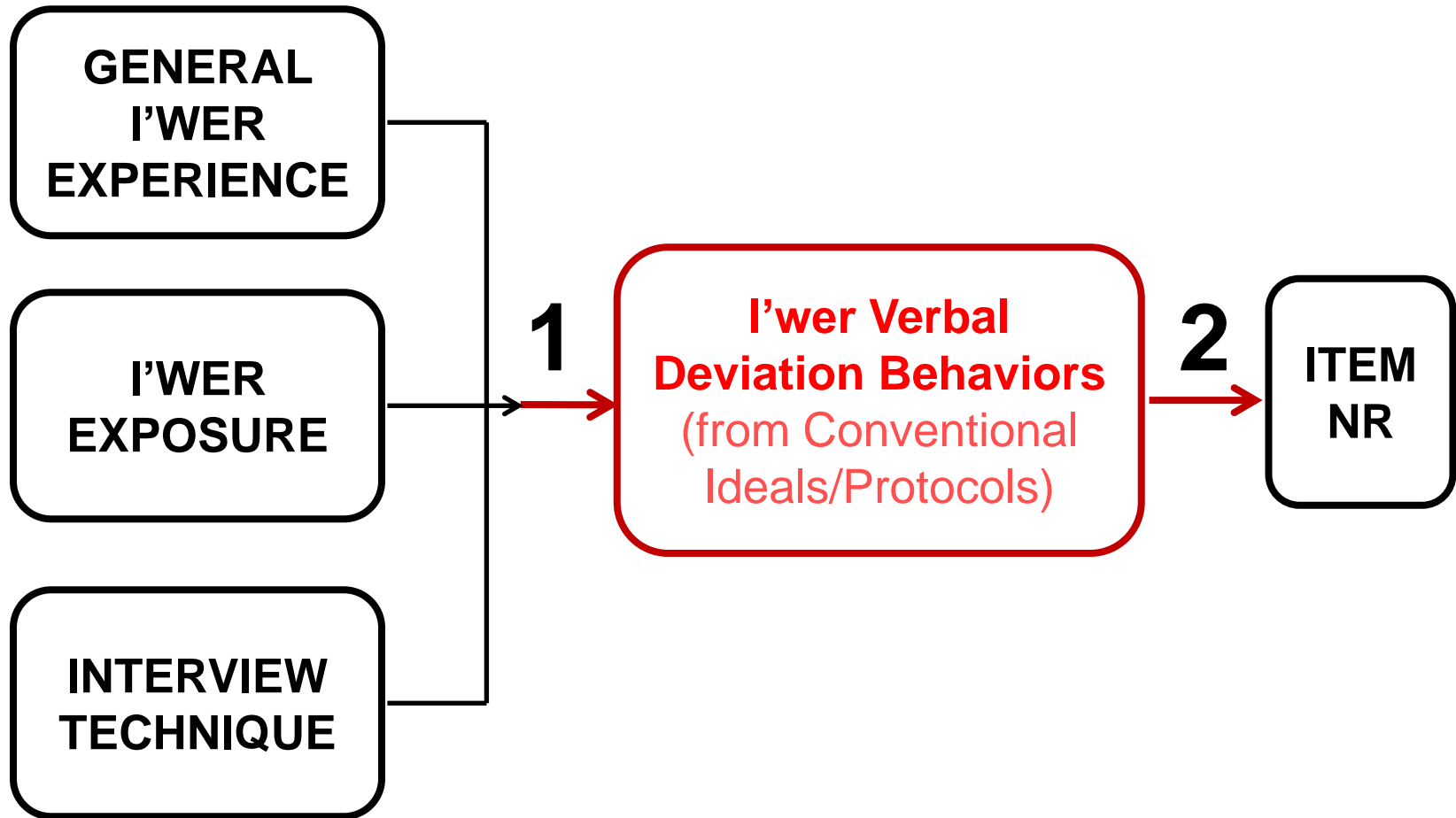
- A few studies examined the relationship between i'wer exposure and i'wer performance
 - Implications for item non-response.



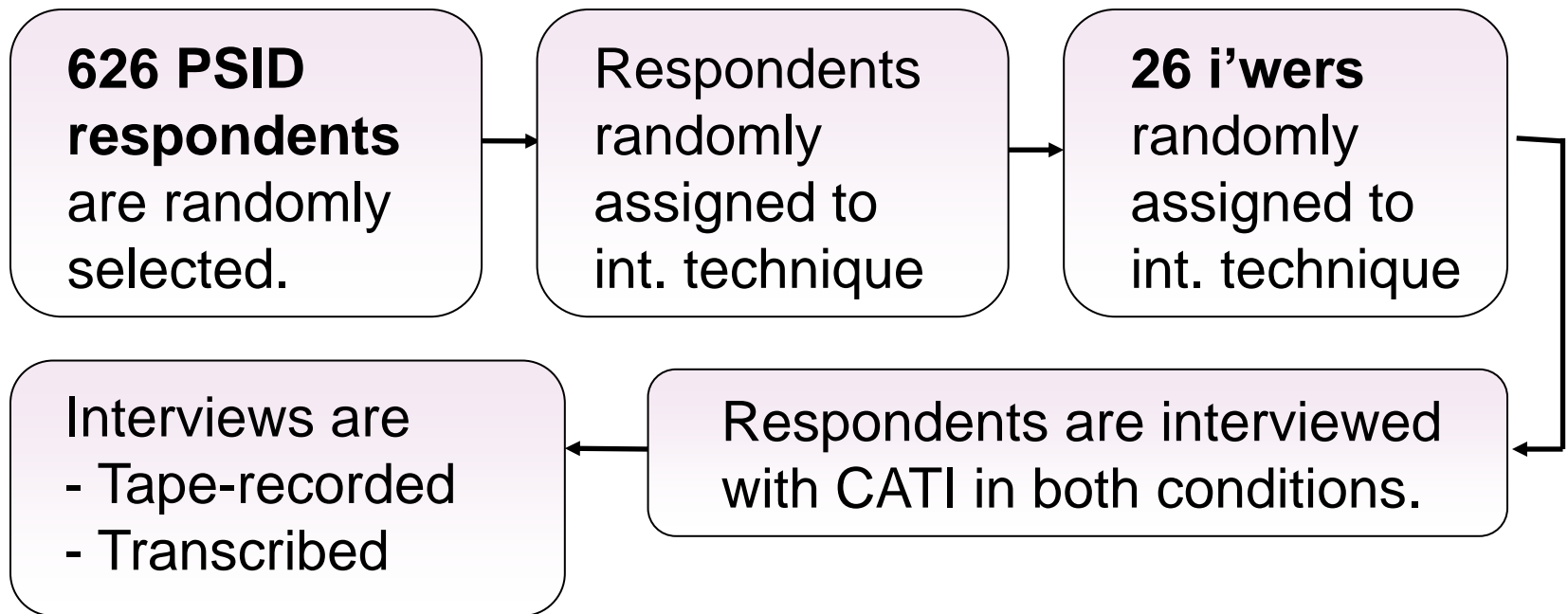
Big Picture



This talk focuses on...



Stage 1: Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI)



Stage 2: Verbal Behavior Coding

- Coding Scheme
 - Includes both interviewer & respondent behaviors
- Random sample
 - 165 Calendar + 162 Standardized
- Inter-coder reliability analyses
 - Random 10% double coded
 - w/ Kappa > 0.40 selected



Outcome

- Item Non-response
 - **Unresolved don't know (DK) Behavior**

R: Uh... see I don't even remember the year when I broke all my ankle bones. Because then I got a metal plate and 2 screws in my hip.

I: **Wow, hmm, that sounds painful.**

R: I don't remember the year though.

I: **Let's just go ahead skip to the next one then.**
 - Binary Measure (*0- Occurred, 1-Not occurred*)
 - Turn-level outcome



Predictors

- **Interviewer-Level Predictors**
 - General I'wer Experience w/ standardized interviews
(0-Less than one year, 1- One year or more)
 - Interviewing Technique
(0- Calendar, 1- Standardized)
- **Respondent-Level Predictor**
 - Interviewer Exposure (continuous)



Moderator Verbal Behavior

- **Turn - Level Moderator**

Interviewer VB Deviation Scale

– Created using the sum of following behaviors:

- Failure to probe
- Failure to probe to DK responses
- Improper Positive Feedback



I'wer VB Deviation Scale

- **Interviewer failure to probe after a DK response:** Interviewer accepts the “don’t know” response and this results in an unresolved DK response.

I: What was the address of the place you moved to?

R: Honest to Gosh, I can't remember the address.

I: Laugh-R. You are doing good. Did you ever live in a different place after that?

*<I'wer provides **improper positive feedback** rather than probing whether it was an apartment or a house>*



Methods

- **STEP 1: Experience by Behavior Models**
 - Interviewer Experience and Exposure effect on Interviewer Deviation Behaviors
 - Negative Binomial Multi-Level Models
 - Respondent-level
 - Count data (over-dispersion)
- **STEP 2: Item NR Models**
 - Unresolved DK measure
 - Turn-Level and Binary
 - Logistic Three-Level Linear Models



Hypotheses

- Increase in ***interviewer deviation behaviors***
 - Experienced > Inexperienced (both conditions)
 - Calendar > Standardized (both experience levels)

- Increase in ***interviewer deviation behaviors*** due to within-study interviewer exposure
 - Inexperienced > Experienced (both conditions)
 - Calendar > Standardized (both experience levels)



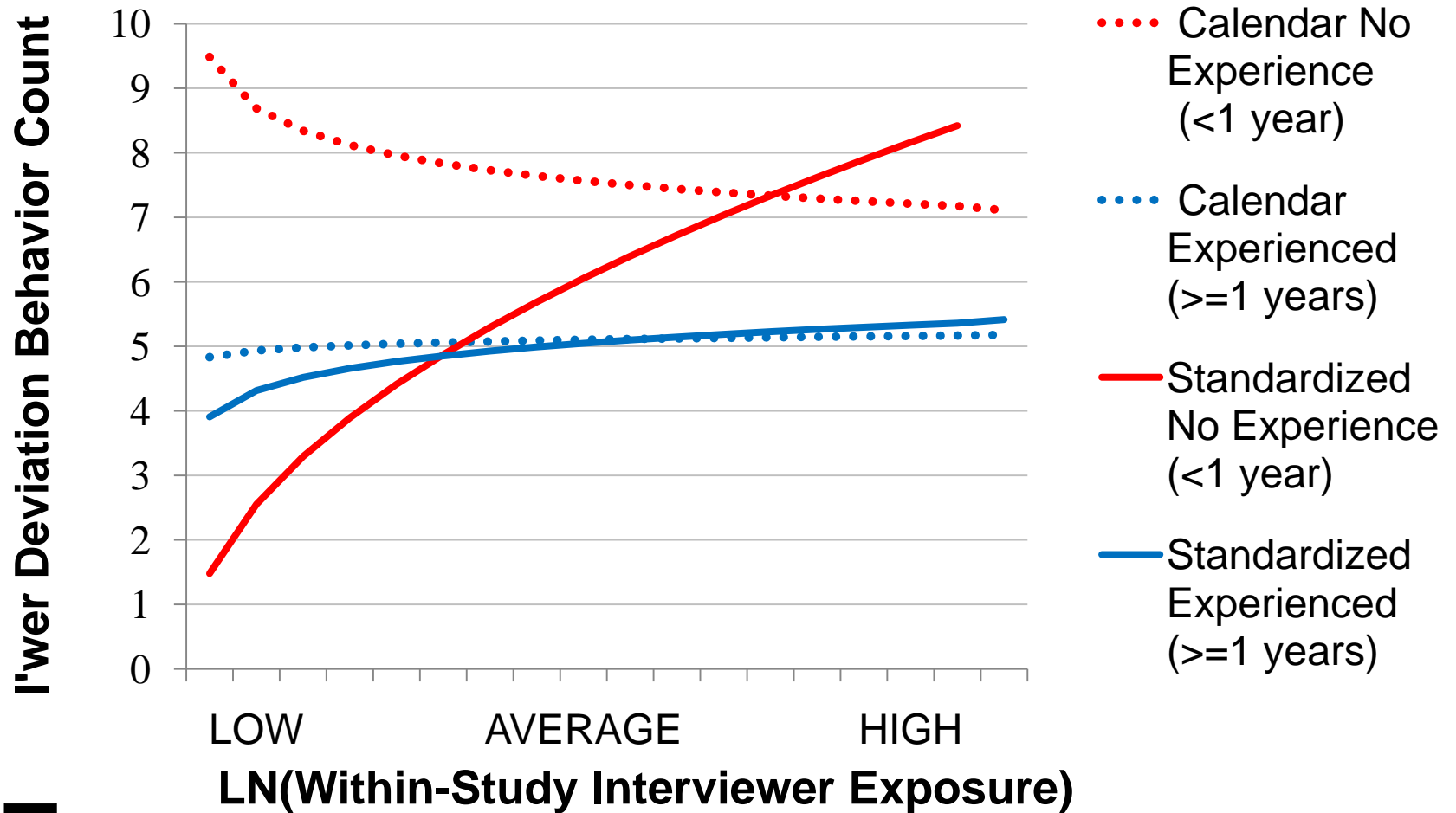
Hypotheses (cont'd)

IF the previous hypotheses hold, THEN:

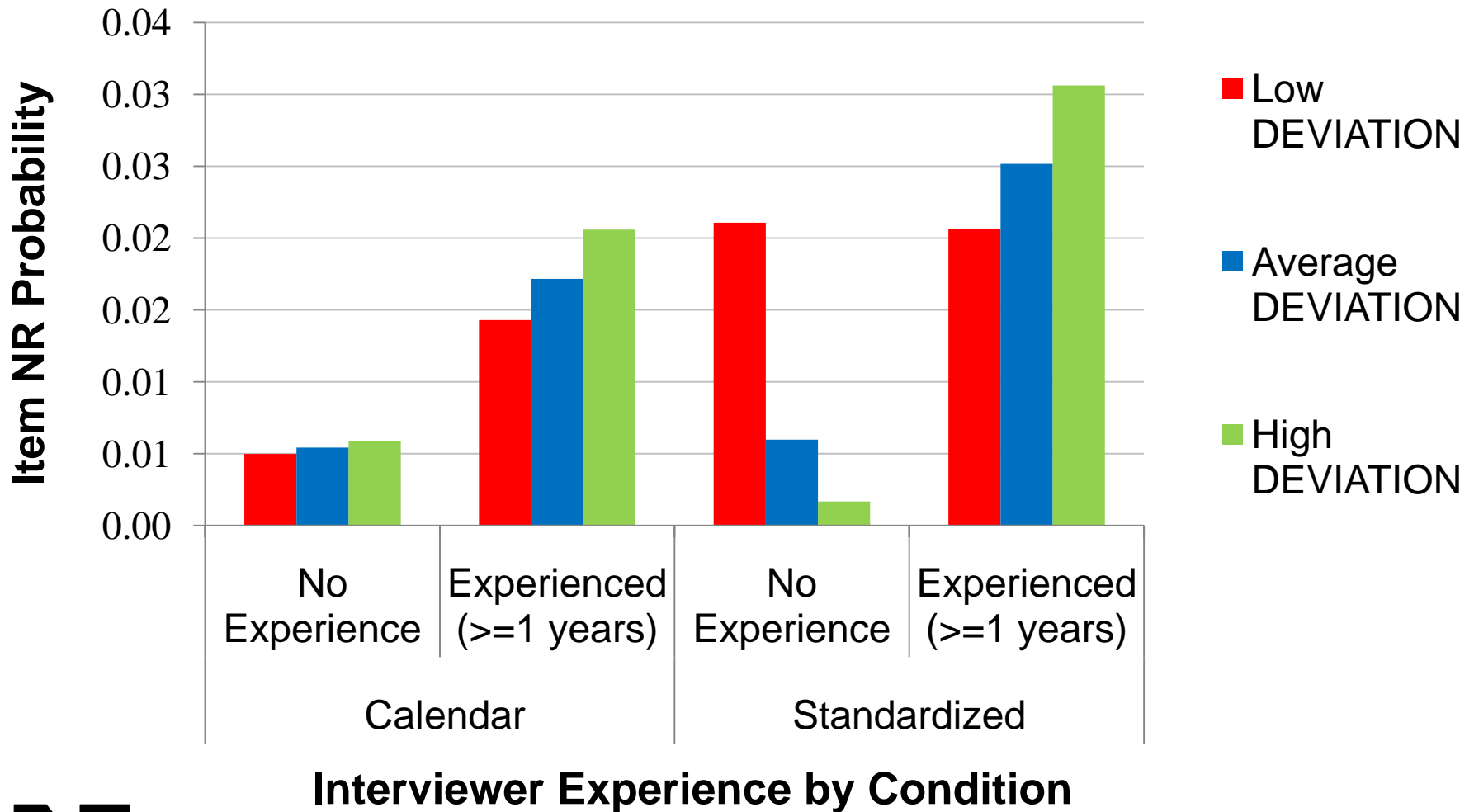
- ***Item non-response*** increase/decrease
 - Experienced > Inexperienced (both conditions)
 - Calendar > Standardized (both experience levels)
- ***Item non-response*** increase/decrease due to within-study interviewer exposure
 - Inexperienced > Experienced (both conditions)
 - Calendar > Standardized (both experience levels)



Interviewer Deviation Behaviors



Item Non-Response

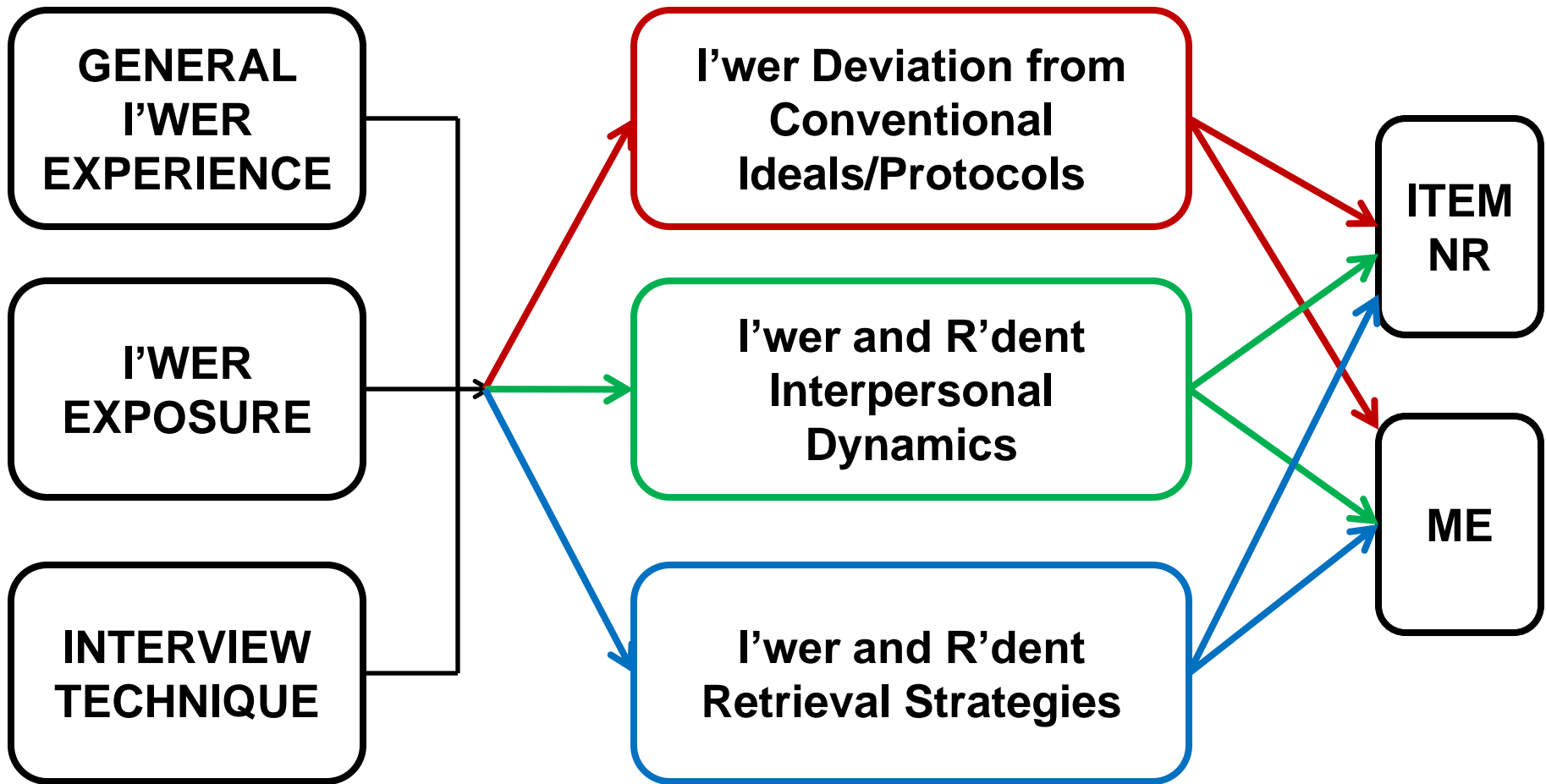


Conclusions

- I'wer experience and item NR relationship
 - Moderated by i'wer deviation behaviors
 - I'wer exposure do not play a role in this relationship.
 - **Overall item NR**
 - Experienced > Inexperienced
 - Standardized > Calendar
 - **Overall, item NR increase due to deviation**
 - Experienced > Inexperienced
 - Standardized > Calendar (among experienced)
 - **Item NR decreases due to deviation**
 - Among inexperienced i'wers in standardized interviews



Future Direction



Discussion

- Interviewer experience and item NR relationship may be moderated by several different i'wer verbal behaviors
 - This may explain the equivocal results in the literature
- Implications for interviewer training and monitoring, depending on...
 - Interviewing technique



Questions?

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