

# QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTRATION AND ITS EFFECT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND SUBJECTIVE SOCIAL STATUS ANSWERS

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## INTRODUCTION

### QUESTIONNAIRE ORDER MATTERS

- Interest levels in politics are increased when participants are first queried about salient topics (McFarland, 1981).
- People are less likely to report on socially undesirable behavior after being asked about their level of disapproval for such behavior (Standing et al, 2010) or their religiosity (Rodriguez, 2014).
- When asked health questions before life satisfaction questions, the correlation between health and life satisfaction was doubled (Lee et al. , 2016).

### THE CURRENT STUDY

- Does the order of questionnaires affect the strength of the relationship between subjective social status (SSS) and indicators of socioeconomic status (SES)?



## METHODS

### PARTICIPANTS

- 2,280 young adults recruited online
- M<sub>age</sub> = 21.5 years old (SD 2.5)
- 54% Female, 35% Male, 11% Non-binary
- 51% White Non-Hispanic, 10% White Hispanic. 9% Black, 16% Asian, 2% Native, 11% Multiracial, .5% Other

### SUBJECTIVE SOCIAL STATUS MEASURE

MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status

- Instructs participants to rank themselves on a ladder representing where they are compared to other people in the United States.

### SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS MEASURES

- Individual income
- Monthly expenditures
- Average Parent Education
- Health Insurance
- Healthcare quality

### PROCEDURE

Participants were randomly assigned to one of two groups:

- Complete SES questions first
- Complete SSS question first

## CONCLUSION

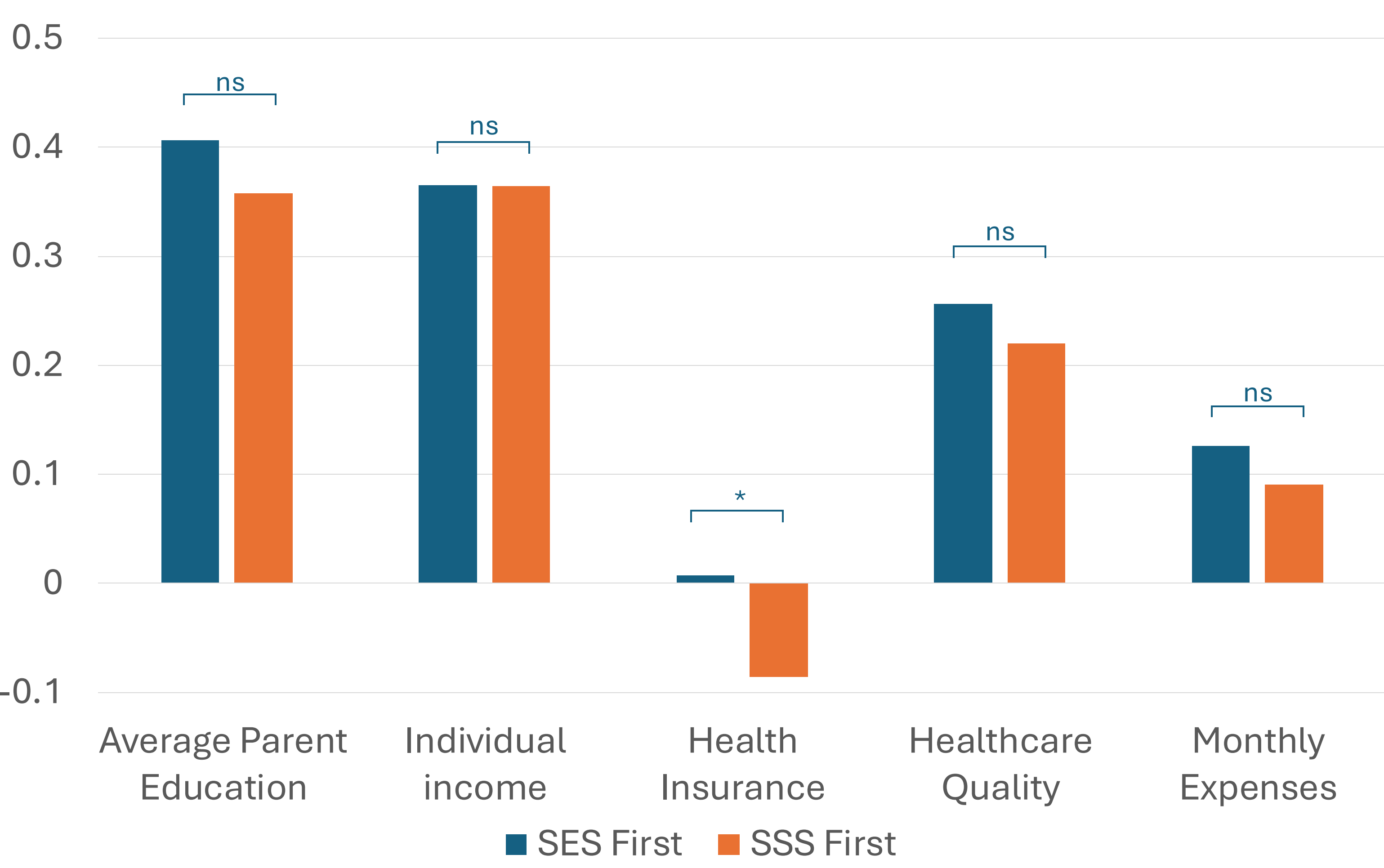
Our results revealed limited evidence in support of the claim that the order of questionnaire administration influences the covariation between subjective report and socioeconomic indicators.

Future work should continue to explore ordering effects in questionnaire administration. Indicators in this project are quite stable within a person and may therefore be less vulnerable to contextual influences. Other questionnaires assessing more fluid traits, such as psychopathology symptoms, may be more affected by contextual influences. More work in this domain is necessary to increase the rigor of psychological science.

Lee, S., McClain, C., Webster, N., & Han, S. (2016). Question order sensitivity of subjective well-being measures: focus on life satisfaction, self-rated health, and subjective life expectancy in survey instruments. *Quality of life research*, 25, 2497-2510.  
McFarland, S. G. (1981). Effects of question order on survey responses. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 45(2), 208-215.  
Rodriguez, L. M., Neighbors, C., & Foster, D. W. (2014). Priming effects of self-reported drinking and religiosity. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 28(1), 1–9.  
Standing, L. G., & Shearson, C. G. (2010). Does the Order of Questionnaire Items Change Subjects' Responses? An Example Involving a Cheating Survey. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 12(3).

## RESULTS

### CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SES INDICATIONS AND SUBJECTIVE SOCIAL STATUS



Plot shows correlations between Subjective Social Status and various SES indicators for groups that answered either SES or SSS questions first.

Inferential statistical analyses were conducted using linear regression models. We specifically probed for an interaction between questionnaire order and social indicators.

The interaction terms for 4 out of 5 models were not significant. There was a significant order effect for health insurance ( $p = .022$ ), but this did not survive correction for multiple comparisons