

**Minutes for Meeting of WERA-1010
February 21-22, 2019
Best Western Tucson Inn Suites**

- **Committee Business**
 - Steve Swinford is the in-coming chair
 - We will be collecting about \$10 from everyone to help pay for the conference room
 - Lou Swanson is in Hawaii and can't be here. This is his last year as Administrative Advisor.

- **Don Dillman - Towards survey response theories that no longer pass like strangers in the night**
 - Current theories are not extremely helpful re: data collection
 - These theories tend not to interact/reference each other
 - How to bring them together?
 - 7 category table of factors that influence survey response rates
 - Theory will need to address all of these
 - Response mode - multi-mode improves response rate. Mix your modes!
 - Breaks down into contact mode and response mode
 - Contact mode is particularly important
 - Sponsorship
 - Want known sponsor - increase trust of how survey data will be used
 - Response task
 - Short interesting topic with easy to answer questions is best
 - Incentives
 - Structure of requests to respond
 - Number of contacts, multiple modes of contact, timing, specialized
 - Communication content
 - Written becoming much more common than verbal
 - Multi-step multiple modes may be important, but little researched
 - Attributes of potential respondents
 - Demographics, attitudes, etc.
 - Pre-suasion Theory needs more empirical testing
 - Conclusions
 - All theories may be relevant, but most are unconnected to specifics of survey design
 - Should find common ground and interact with each other
 - Need a clear theoretical purpose
 - Need to deal with 21st century influences - especially the internet!
 - Develop a comprehensive design and then take things away to see the affect

- **Ginny Lesser - Comparison of Online Opt-in Panels with Address-based Sample Surveys**

- Reporting on 2 experiments and 2 research areas she has been working on
- 1 - probability based sample versus panel sample purchased from Qualtrics
 - Also smaller experiment on impact of postcard (replaced postcard with an additional copy of the questionnaire)
 - Same sample size - half get all mail, half get web/mail approach
 - Postcard experiment
 - 2016 - mail got better response rate than web-mail with postcard
 - 2018 - mail better than web-mail with postcard, web-mail without postcard best (this was also least expensive - about 94% of the cost of just mail)
 - Probability/Non-probability experiment
 - Non-probability - used in 2016 and 2018, all Oregon residents 18+
 - 2016 - used Qualtrics, sample size about 7,500
 - 57% of panel estimates were outside confidence limits of the probability sample
 - 2018 - used SSI, sample size about 65,000
 - 44% of panel estimates were outside the confidence limits of the probability sample
 - In general, panel estimate tends to choose the first option, skewing the data somewhat
 - The probability-based sample had more questions where they did not give a response (makes sense cause the panel is being paid to answer it, the probability sample is not)
 - Within the probability sample, respondents who used the web mode tended to have higher income than other modes
 - Panel had a higher percentage of unemployed respondents
 - Conclusion - people in panels are just different than people in probability based samples
- 2 - are people who respond in different waves statistically different?
 - 2016 had three mailings with questionnaires (5 contacts total)
 - 37 questions
 - Three questions were significantly different at $p < 0.05$, two at $p < 0.001$
 - 2018 had two mailings with questionnaires (4 contacts total)
 - 43 questions
 - Two questions were significantly different at $p < 0.05$
- Analysis of response rates for Spanish speaking respondents
 - Mode experiment - all mail vs. web+mail
 - Language experiment -
 - Original way - English names get English only, Spanish names get separate English and Spanish
 - New way - a double-sided letter in English and Spanish to everyone
 - Combined method slightly more expensive
 - No difference in number of Spanish returns across groups
 - No negative public reaction to new combined method

- General population survey vs. specific populations and their behaviors on web versus mail responses (in progress)
 - General population was adults in Oregon
 - Specific population was owners of registered Oregon marine boats
 - Within this population, significant differences in boat ownership, boat use, and fuel questions between mail and web respondents. Fuel question particularly important! Determines where Oregon money goes.
- **Zhengyuan Zhu - Machine Learning Methods and Remote Sensing Data**
 - Desire for smaller, quicker, cheaper surveys for ag and natural resources
 - National Resource Inventory Survey
 - Assessing land cover and agro-environmental conditions
 - Serves as the sampling frame for many other land surveys
 - Aerial photographs are taken and interpreted (1 mile by 1 mile squares)
 - Taken year after year so changes can be interpreted as well
 - There will be gaps between years - some areas will not have images for each year, or not equivalently quality images.
 - Potential to combine NRI survey data with other administrative data such as FSA, state DNR, other imagery sources, etc to fill gaps
 - Have developed a statistical package to help impute missing images/images contaminated by cloud cover
 - GIS imaging to map and determine land type, changes in land use
 - Particularly good at looking at water
- **Todd Rockwood and Melissa Constantine - Bladder Health Study**
 - Nation wide general population study of English speaking women
 - Will randomly assign participants to one of two groups
 - Paper and pencil OR
 - Push-to-web
 - Group discussion about pre-notice: should we send a small cash incentive?
 - Group Discussion: In the web primary iteration, send a couple email invites, then send a paper survey, and then another one or two email reminders.
- **Katie Dentzman - Asking Questions about Sensitive and Illegal Behaviors**
 - Biodegradable mulch films and horse carcass disposal
 - What to do when we ask these things
 - With poaching, use indirect measures and avoid wording that is accusatory
 - RRT – randomized response technique...seeking feedback on use of technique. Hard to explain to people and hard to analyze the data.
 - Nominative technique – report on friend’s behavior
 - Bean method
 - Biodegradable Plastic Mulch Films – disposal
 - Herbicide Resistant Weeds – didn’t ask about illegal spraying.

- Have them admit to talking to their neighbors first and then asking more specific items.
- Horse carcass composting - limited number of legal ways to kill and dispose of horse. Very specific laws around this. Animal abuse is an issue closely related to this.
- **Ashley Yopp - Resurrecting Researcher Engagement**
 - Create gamification of students going to the fair and doing research
 - Data collection as a zombie apocalypse
 - Zombies - people wearing cowboy hats, etc.
 - Survival determined by how many contacts made and/or surveys completed prior to 'rescue'
 - Ground Zero - barns, places you don't want to go
 - Safe Zones - more general public areas since this is their population of interest
 - Report zombie infected friends

Friday, February 22nd

- **Glenn Israel - Instruction Influence on Response to Numerical Open-ended Questions in Self-Administered Surveys**
 - Customer satisfaction survey
 - Asking about using extension services
 - Non-response around 10-15%
 - 2015 - Add instructions to indicate format for responding
 - Worked a bit
 - *(Additional instructions are in italics and parentheses after the question, suggest a numeric response)*
 - 2016 - Tried something else
 - Referenced name of the workshop
 - Worked less (instructions were wordier - was this maybe a cause?)
 - Overall item response smaller than 2015 or 2016
 - One item had significant increase in item response when instructions were included
 - Went back to trying the first way again
 - LOTS of lit on visual design's impact on item response, but not that much on the impact of verbal design
 - 2018 Survey
 - Email and mail, mail only, and email only
 - 32.1% responded from a mobile device - increasing
 - Same additional instructions as the 2015 survey, slightly reformatted the layout of questions
 - Break-off and uncoded responses were both very low (for 2018 and 2015)
 - Item non-response was relatively low - lower than in the 2015 survey

- Including instructions increased item response significantly for several variables in both the 2015 and 2018 versions
- By mode
 - For mail questionnaire
 - Mixed - sometimes instructions made a significant difference and sometimes did not
 - For Web and Mobile
 - Verbal instructions always had significant impact on item nonresponse
 - Confounding issue - slightly different format/boxes for writing in answers than was in the paper survey
- Conclusions
 - Verbal instructions indicating desired format does prompt more people to respond to the question.
 - They don't have to think about what the answer format needs to be - easier to answer
 - Seems to help more on mobile
- **Comparing an Online Opt-in Panel and a Mail Address-based Sample**
 - Probability Survey - mail and web/mail mixed mode
 - Took several months (17% response rate)
 - High item response rate (95%)
 - Nonresponse to open-ended question was higher, BUT longer and more substantively relevant comments
 - Got a higher percentage of true/false questions correct
 - Different relationship between climate change knowledge and concern compared to Qualtrics sample
 - Additional differences in other variable relationships, too
 - Non-probability Survey - through Qualtrics
 - Took about a week (6% response rate)
 - Very high item response rate (99%)
 - Likely due to panel incentives
 - Higher response to open-ended question, BUT much shorter and less relevant comments
 - Had a bias towards more positive responses
 - Cheap and quick, but sizeable limitations
 - Evident that respondents were taking the survey very quickly
 - Different conclusions were obtained with different data sets
 - Don suggests that Glenn and Ginny collaborate on an article - they have similar experiments comparing probability and non-probability samples. Could do a comparison of Ginny's results in Oregon and Glenn's results in Florida.
- **Steve Swinford - Improvements During MSU Football Games - Substance Abuse Study**
 - Montana State University
 - Review of tailgate policies at MSU and peer schools

- Policies vary - no cross-school consensus
- Observations at 2016 home football games
 - Mostly safe event
- Interviews
 - Certain stakeholders support more alcohol sales at a variety of events
 - Facilities directors would like to offer more variety, etc.
- Surveys (design based on group)
 - Students (only group with incentives offered - possibility to win gift card), alumni, season ticket holders, and rodeo boosters (web only, emailed)
 - Community members (paper only, mailed)
 - Findings
 - Most people at tailgates drink alcohol, about half drink at other events too (i.e. concerts)
 - Most people have seen someone drunk and unruly, but tend not to say it's a big problem
 - People who don't go to events overestimate alcohol consumption/problems
 - People said they will go to an event regardless of alcohol availability
 - People generally were unaware of alcohol policies on campus
 - Most people except students disapproved of underage drinking
 - Majority of underage students said they did drink at tailgates
- **Bunny Willits and Kenny Wallen - Effects of Follow-Up Contacts on Sample Characteristics and Substantive Research Findings in Surveys: An Exploratory Analysis**
 - Three surveys - 2 mail, 1 online
 - 1 in Pennsylvania (mail), 2 in Texas (1 mail, 1 online)
 - RQ 1 - what are the effects of follow-up contacts on the numbers of survey responses received?
 - Follow-ups help!
 - Mode of data collection makes a difference - get more return on multiple contacts when the survey is online
 - RQ2 - how socio-demographics are different between different waves?
 - PA Study
 - No significant differences in gender, age, marital status, years lived in area, income, and political beliefs
 - Years lived in the area, gender, and political beliefs were nearing significance at the $p < 0.1$ level
 - Significant differences (at $p < 0.1$) include education and employment status, but for such a large sample this might mean it doesn't matter
 - Education level is lower in subsequent waves (0.07)
 - Percentage employed is higher in subsequent waves (0.09)

- Doesn't seem like we're getting very different people to reply in subsequent waves
 - Not getting different people - just getting more of the same
- Texas Community Survey
 - Age (0.07) more younger people in subsequent waves
 - Gender (0.1) more women in subsequent waves
 - Education (0.016) Education level lower in subsequent waves
 - None of this is highly significant
- Texas Boating Survey
 - Gender (0.06) more women in subsequent waves
 - Boat usage past year (0.03) more people who used their boat less in subsequent waves
- RQ3 - do relationships between characteristics and reported knowledge differ between different waves?
 - PA Study
 - Bivariate correlations - knowledge of gas drilling and support for gas drilling with sociodemographic characteristics
 - Best predictors of gas drilling knowledge were gender, education, and income
 - In all three waves these were the strongest predictors
 - Each wave is picking up the same pattern of relationships
 - Each wave does increase our confidence at least...but is that worth it?
 - But...should we just put more money into a larger initial sample with no follow-up contacts?
- **Melissa Constantine - Bladder Health Study Part 2**
 - Community based recruitment at 7 sites with eligibility screening
 - Complex, multi-method sampling and enrollment process
 - They will be committing to the full study
 - Need to decide on mailing all materials at once or one at a time
 - General consensus is to send it all in one box
 - We are going through this process and we're sending you everything you need.
 - Because this is so important we are giving you this \$ incentive
- **Zhengyuan Zhu - 'Science Under President Trump' and 'Pet Ownership and Survey Demographics'**
 - Pet Ownership Survey - Number of pets and how much you spend on them
 - National Panel Survey
 - Estimates of pet ownership much higher than previous estimates
 - Questions of accuracy - are panel respondents over reporting?
 - To try and weed these out, looked at accuracy of spending estimates. If you do own a dog, you should know about how much their food costs
 - Looked at how quickly each question was answered

- Google one question survey to calibrate
 - Just asks about whether you have a pet
 - Likely to be unbiased compared to other questions
 - Based on this percentage removed suspicious cases from panel study
- Weighted important variables
- Horse ownership was much much lower than previous estimates
 - Might be because they were measuring pet horse ownership, not other types of horse ownership
- Sent the next survey to new respondents and to previous respondents
 - About half of previous respondents responded again to the new survey
 - Those who responded twice answered the same way - reliable
 - In the new survey they also asked about rural/urban to help address the horse ownership issue
- **Science Under President Trump**
 - Survey of federal scientists across 16 federal agencies
 - This survey has been happening for years, not just because of Trump. But in 2018 they did up the number of agencies.
 - Union of Concerned Scientists website has the report available
 - Very low response rate was an issue
 - Questionnaire
 - Very similar to what was used in previous years
 - About 50 questions total
 - Only 2 questions required answers
 - Tried to send survey to employees directly involved in science
 - Might not have been super accurate - contributing to low response rate
 - Want to have people self-identified as scientists
 - Multi-mode approach
 - Web, paper downloadable pdf, or phone interview
 - Most used web version
 - Used an informational website to add greater credibility
 - Included detailed FAQ about the survey
 - Could not use a government computer to answer the survey
 - But the survey request was sent to a government email
 - 5 times contacted
- **Hua Qin - Survey Methods Review in Ag and Enviro Social Sciences**
 - Agricultural social science, Environment and natural resource social science, and community-based studies
 - Bibliometric analysis of...
 - Published studies found using search terms:
 - Survey/questionnaire AND response rate AND agriculture/environment/community

- Search terms were actually more detailed than this but you get the idea
 - Also searched journals of particular interest
 - Analysis
 - Descriptive and bibliometric/network
 - So far has found 120 articles - about half way through collection process
 - Many have had medicine as a main category
 - Social science second most frequent category
 - A limited number of institutions and countries represented all authors
 - Three main clustering areas of journal coupling networks that all overlap and cite each other
 - Medical
 - Interdisciplinary
 - Ag Econ
 - Lots of really interesting networks of coauthorship, keyword occurrence, etc.
- **Ashley Yopp - SOGI Question Inclusion and the Impact on Survey Responses**
 - Sexual orientation and gender identity were removed from national aging survey
 - They did a randomized survey blocks in two surveys (one about beef, one about public media consumption)
 - One with two gender options
 - One with multiple gender options that expanded into more options
 - The public media one had even more gender options
 - Got the categories from the Human Rights Campaign
 - Prelim results
 - 13 people took advantage of the expanded gender item out of 882 respondents
 - 1.5% - about 6% of U.S. population id as transgender, non-binary, etc.
 - 3 people put stupid stuff in for 'other'
 - But it was also an intercept survey where the surveyor was present
 - Interested in looking at difference between rural and urban respondents in the beef survey
 - We should consider adding these options to our surveys so we have more data that we can compare