

WERA 1010 minutes from meeting on February 16th and 17th, 2023.
Tucson, AZ

Thursday, February 17th

Discussion of the history of the committee. Formation dates back to 1987 with areas of focus evolving over time to reflect changing landscape of rural survey methodology. Survey methodologists work collectively on similar issues and approaches to share and improve work.

Introductions with attendees describing their work and connection to the focus of the group.

General committee business

Arizona

Presented methodology and results from the SCENA survey conducted in 2022. The purpose was to collect data for extension administrators to use to inform future directions. Part of the statewide needs assessment for strategic planning for cooperative extension

Identification of issues at the county-level with the results identifying a variety of topics. Five topics per county initially and data used data to guide framework development.

Center for the future of Arizona, Techonomy and land grant impacts were discussed.

Survey included 99 items plus 19 demographic items.

Extension employees in state provided feedback on initial design and content. They wanted it to be shorter but not many suggestions on what to remove.

In field for 8 weeks 9/19-11/14. Online and paper options. English and Spanish

About 10% came in on paper

Targeted survey recruitment

Extension consumers

Topical experts

General public

Stratified by rural/urban

ESRI Tapestry Segmentation – provided estimates of types of people who lived in zones

Zip codes to identify geographic areas

Over 3000 completed surveys.

Discussed imputation of missing data on respondent self-identified race. Discussed sampling plan. Discussed split survey design (there were missing data concerns). They randomized the blocks.

Iowa

Developing Data Commons for Iowa Small Rural Towns

Multiyear effort and NSF funded. Goal to overcome rural data deficit to improve quality of life and community services.

Integration of survey/census/admin records/geo-spatial data to build scalable predictive models for small rural communities.

Estimate satisfaction with seven key community features.

Statewide survey only conducted every ten years. This effort would fill the data gap to inform planning. Overview of modeling provided and 2024 design discussed. Split questionnaire approach being planned.

Washington

Discussion of paper “Towards Survey Response Rate Theories That’s No Longer Pass Each Other Like Strangers in the Night”. Most theories are singularly focused, but survey response depends upon linking multiple influences on design together. Need to revise theories to account for contact mode, survey modes, incentives and attributes of respondents.

Two articles on Survey design: Greenberg and Dillman—Mail Communications and Survey Response—a test of Social Exchange and pre-suasion theories and Bretschi, Schaurer and Dillman—Experimental Comparison of three strategies for converting mail respondents to the web.

Discussion of article on converting mail to web respondents.

Discussion of European Social Survey work and attempts to move from interviews to self-administered web-push methods.

Discussion of changing landscape of survey distribution. Competition with marketers.

Florida

Qualtrics panels and ABS surveys on Climate Change - Completed publication of a paper addressing the topic of interpersonal communication about climate change and a second paper examining the relationships among religious identification (with a focus on Christian evangelicals), religiosity, political affiliation and climate change knowledge, belief, and risk perceptions. These papers used only the ABS data.

Comparison of communication protocols for the FCES Client Experience Survey
Replicated study 3 from the series conducted in 2020 and 2021. The series of three experiments compared the standard survey protocol with one involving an organizational leader (who stresses the importance of the survey and provides legitimation) in the communication messages. Study 1 (conducted in 2020) tested replacing emails from the survey director with ones from the FCES Director along with adjustments to the timing of the contacts. No significant differences in the final response rate were found. Study 2 added a link to the survey in the email messages from the FCES Director and re-ordered the contacts of the survey director and the FCES director for the treatment. Again, no significant differences were found in the final response rate for either the email then mail or email only protocols. Finally, study 3 revised the number and timing of the contacts in the protocol involving the FCES Director. In this study, the early bump in the response rate from the FCES Director’s email with the survey link occurred and this advantage was maintained through the remainder of contacts (which mirrored the standard protocol). This result was marginally significant ($p=.056$) for the email then mail protocol but not for the email only protocol. Interpretation: the combination of the leader’s email with survey link led to a higher response in the short term and the mode switch

to mail may have re-enforced the importance message leading to the higher response rate over the time in the field.

Tests of protocols using an address-based sample for a survey on contentious issues
Study on the intersection of climate change and religion. This is primarily a mail survey using an address-based sample (n=6,000) with embedded pilot tests using a web-push protocol. Survey design, supply procurement, and data collection were started in 2021 and data collection was completed in 2022.

Friday – February 18th

Katie – Survey Burden project

Survey tragedy of the commons

Survey Diary experiment description

Established issue and reviewed examples of email-based prompts to participate in surveys.
Presented updated typology of purpose/use/goals/format

Example of Tumblr polls

Discussed new potential hypotheses and future questions.
Description of new survey request diary study.

Oregon

Two OSU studied with experiments. Probability sample and non-probability panel – compare demographics, responses and data quality. Interest in comparing data quality between modes. Discussion of panel response rates and availability of data from vendor.

Discussion of demographic differences between probability sample and non-probability panel.
Marine survey – is web/mail approach obtaining same results as all mail? Is it possible to move to all web survey or will it impact the results? Discussion of response rates by mode.

Higher percentage of web respondents claimed to have used their boat. Challenge is to get web responses from non-boat users.

Minnesota

Discussed map of simple random sample and how rural areas are not included in draw.

Conducted pilot of 1000 emails with only 50 opened leading to zero responses. Only 60 bounces but the concern is the request elicited no responses. Survey topic around youth sports involvement with intention to track participation and injury, over time.

Discussion of what constitutes a “long survey”.

WERA Planning – ideas discussed moving forward

Trust and survey work.

Evolving nature of survey research

Marketing surveys – changes the feel/landscape of data collection efforts

Data commons – other states? Tied to extension in low

Nonprobability panels – where the industry is going – compare side by side

Communications – importance of their role in response rate in probability samples

Can our respondents tell the difference between marketing and academics?

How do the small surveys influence perception of longer, academic surveys?