

the Respondent, Summer 1998

(News Letter of the SIG on Survey Research in Education)

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The 1998-99 Membership Directory is enclosed with this issue.

The Respondent is published three times a year by the Special Interest Group on Survey Research in Education of the American Educational Research Association. (The Respondent is not an official publication of the AERA.) The purpose of the SIG is to provide a forum for educational researchers who are interested in improving survey methods, fostering communication among survey researchers, and promoting the development and dissemination of scholarly work in research methods.

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From Where I Sit ... Randy McClanahan, ACT, Inc.

Another annual conference resides now in the SIG's archives
(so good to see so many of you in San Diego), and we are
preparing now for the next, in Montreal.

I watched your SIG officers contribute much time, thought,
and energy to making the SIG "work" for its members both
during the conference and during the preceding year.
It's easy to slip into the idea that the conference
sessions are the SIG.

In fact, arranging for the collection and review of
proposals, notification of proposals, and scheduling of
the SIG's sessions along with many other tasks that are
the responsibility of the program chair; the constant
recording and updating of the SIG data files, all the
money business about membership dues, AERA dues,
bill paying, and account keeping along with many other
record keeping and reporting duties that are the
responsibility of the business secretary; and the
haranguing on the part of the Newsletter Editor to get
contributions and then the superhuman effort to create
and distribute, three times a year, an attractive,
informative newsletter that are the responsibility of
the newsletter editor -- these efforts are the SIG.

Paying dues, contributing to the Newsletter, developing
and submitting proposals, reviewing proposals, presenting
at the sessions, acting as chairs and discussants at the
sessions -- these efforts are the SIG.

I know the SIG officers and many of the members are competent
and committed to improving and strengthening our group.

However, a few dedicated folks (officers and/or members) cannot keep the SIG alive; it takes the varied efforts of many to provide a forum in which we can discuss our common interest -- survey research. Each of us needs to undertake as many of the following activities as possible if the SIG is to remain viable.

- Pay your dues. If you have not yet sent your membership dues to Lynda Idleman, I cannot strongly enough encourage you to do so at once. While it may seem minor to you at this time, it is critical as the number of sessions allocated to the SIG for the Montreal Conference is totally dependent upon the number of SIG members who are also AERA members. (As our number of sessions dwindles, so dwindle your potential opportunities to present at a major conference.)

Unfortunately, membership applications were not available for the attendees at the SIG's two San Diego sessions, so we must really count on our previous members to be certain they have paid their dues BEFORE June 26th, the deadline by which Lynda must have our SIG's membership count and list to AERA headquarters.

- Submit a proposal. Be creative in your thinking or be pragmatic. All types of proposals are welcome, and all types of accepted proposals help us favorably present ourselves at the conference.
- Volunteer to review proposals, chair a session, or act as a discussant. You'd be amazed at what fun each can be and at the marvelous people you will meet!
- Contribute material to the Newsletter. E-mail, fax, standard mail, and/or telephone snippets of survey research issue(s) you notice or review of a recent publication, results of survey work in which you are involved, or any other relevant material to the newsletter editor...it is, truly, a heavy responsibility.

See the number of ways in which you can be involved in the growth and strengthening of the SIG?

I hope each of you will continue to contribute as you are able.

Today, send an email to the program chair and offer your services as a proposal reviewer, mail a check to the business secretary and become an official member (again, in some cases), fax a copy of a pertinent survey research article to the newsletter editor, help keep the SIG growing.

1998 Program Chair's Report

Gunapala Edirisooriya, East Tennessee State University

Our call for proposals for the 1998 meeting resulted in ten

submissions. The SIG's rigorous review process led to the acceptance of nine of them. We genuinely thank the following reviewers.

Judy Boser
Marc Braverman
Patricia Busk
Andi Clements
Gunapala Edirisooriya
Lynda Idleman
Louise MacKay
Chet McCall
Randy McClanahan
Ann-Maureen Pliska
Bruce Rogers
Robbie Scholes
Steve Siera
Wanda Ward

We organized the accepted papers into two sessions:

- 1) Data Analytical Methods and Issues in Survey Research and
- 2) Some Facets of Survey Research Design We Often Overlook.

Our SIG and the Division D - Measurement and Research Methodology mutually agreed to co-list two sessions from each group. We have no doubt this strategy yielded positive results for both groups. For this claim, attendance at these sessions provides some evidence. Despite the fact that both of our sessions were scheduled away from the "major headquarter hotels," our sessions were well attended. Our attendance keepers' tallies showed figures of more than 100 and 50 for sessions I and II, respectively. The principal authors of the presented papers were as follows.

Lorin W. Anderson
Steven Baldrige
Douglas R. Berdie
Susan Hutchinson
George A. Johanson
Richard G. Lambert
Chester H. McCall
Dorothy L. Swearingen
Lin Wang

Our experience provides ample testimony to the array of difficulties (from the time of sending a proposal to the actual presentation of the paper) a researcher must endure in presenting a research paper at an AERA conference.

Therefore, our SIG takes this opportunity to thank our presenters for a job well done, and we wish them continued success in their research endeavors!

Our session chairs did a wonderful job in organizing the sessions. We sincerely thank our session chairs Patricia Busk and Roberta Scholes for their contribution to the success of our sessions.

Our SIG was fortunate to secure the services of two

individuals as discussants who went for beyond the call of duty. We thank Kathy E. Green and Steve Siera for their magnificent contributions as the session discussants.

The business meeting and social hour were well attended and the participants contributed a great deal in shaping the future direction of our SIG. In organizing this event and other program activities, our SIG received invaluable advice, unwavering support, and tremendous help from the current and the former office holders. We sincerely extend our gratitude to all of those who are listed below.

Jack Anderson
James Griffith
Lynda Idleman
Chet McCall
Randy McClanahan
Tina McCoy
Roberta Scholes
Steve Siera

Our SIG learns from its past experience (I know I do!). Our aim is to deliver a much-improved program for 1999! Hence, we continue to explore approaches. If you could spare a couple of minutes, please jot down your ideas and send them via any of the following media to:

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Call for Proposals

The AERA SIG on Survey Research in Education is soliciting proposals for presentations at the 1999 AERA Annual Meeting in Montreal, Canada, Monday, April 19, through Friday, April 23. The purpose of the SIG is to provide a forum for researchers interested in improving survey methodology in the context of educational research.

We encourage graduate students' participation in the SIG sessions. If you are a graduate student involved in survey or survey-related research, consider proposing a presentation to the SIG. If you are a faculty member aware of graduate students interested in this area, advise them of the opportunity.

The focus of proposals to the SIG should be on methodological issues related to survey research in education. Examples of proposal topics that have previously been accepted for presentation include the following.

- A Further Examination of the Effects of Item Order on Response Patterns and an Investigation of the Implications of Item Revision
- Increasing the Validity of Surveys of Sensitive Behaviors: A Comparison of Two Randomized Response Models
- Simulated Nonattending Respondent Effects on Internal Consistency of Self-Administered Questionnaires
- Response Rates of Mailed Questionnaires and the Effects of Monetary Gratuities: A Meta-Analysis
- A New Approach to Attitude Scaling: Linking the Decision-Making Process to Attitude Formation
- Response sets: A Significant Threat to the Validity of Survey Research in Schools
- Extreme Responding Style and the Concreteness-Abstractness Dimension

Proposals will be evaluated through a blind review process according to the following criteria.

- Significance of the problem in general and for the SIG
- Author's familiarity with the issue and relevant literature
- Approach to the problem (novelty/originality)
- Technical adequacy (sampling, data analysis, and interpretation)
- Clarity and quality of written presentation
- Membership appeal

The SIG is especially interested in promoting alternative session formats, which are listed and described on pp.33-34, May 1998, Educational Researcher. Therefore, please consider proposals in formats other than paper presentations.

Proposals must follow the guidelines published in the May 1998 Educational Researcher on pp. 31-33.

Please direct all proposals on or before Monday, August 3, 1998, to the SIG Program Chair.

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From Chet's Bookshelf

Chet McCall

As survey researchers we should always be interested in adding to our knowledge base by keeping abreast of the research in the field. This we can accomplish by searching through journals and transactions from professional meetings.

In addition, it is important to be aware of new publications on the field that might be useful, either to us, to our associates, or possibly to our students. Successive issues of the Respondent will present brief notes on such publications for consideration by our membership.

Over a year ago, a small publishing firm in Los Angeles, Pycszak Publishing, began issuing some very practical materials associated with data analysis (we used to refer to this as the dreaded statistics) and research. One of these, Questionnaire Research, a Practical Guide, by Mildred L. Patten (ISBN 1-884585-07-8) may be of interest to our membership. This manual provides an excellent how to, particularly for those who have not been practitioners in the field very long.

The first chapter of the book, Planning Questionnaire Research, provides an excellent starting point for those who would embark on the questionnaire journey. Patten discusses the following important points: 1) Consider the advantages and the disadvantages of using questionnaires (what an innovative thought); 2) Prepare written objectives for the research (another creative idea); 3) Have your objectives reviewed by others (they might not be too clear); 4) Review the literature related to the objective (how novel); 5) Determine the feasibility of administering your questionnaire to the population of interest (imagine

that, considering whether or not there is a sampling frame of some type); and, 6) Prepare a timeline (not a bad idea for planning purposes).

Other valuable topics in the manual include writing items for the instrument, conducting item try-outs and item analysis, preparing the instrument, selecting your sample, describing your results, including the margins of error, if appropriate, and writing the report.

All in all, this is an excellent manual and well worth being considered by those involved in using the questionnaire as the instrument for capturing your data. Try it; you'll like it.

Pyrzczak Publishing can be reached at PO Box 39731,
Los Angeles, CA 90039.

1998 SIG Business Meeting in San Diego ... Lynda Idleman

Minutes of the SIG on Survey Research in Education

Tuesday, April 14, 1998
Convention Center
San Diego, California

Chair Randy McClanahan called the 1998 business meeting to order. We discussed and approved minutes of the 1997 SIG business meeting. Officers presented the following reports.

Program Chair, Gunapala Edirisooriya

Four paper sessions, three in conjunction with Division D and one with the SIG/Writing and Literacies, and the business meeting were presented at the 1998 conference. Presented at the paper sessions and round tables were the following titles:

- Response Sets: A Significant Threat to the Validity of Survey Research in Schools
- An Exciting Marketing Research Survey Method for Educational Research: Discrete-Choice Modeling
- A Model for Using Hierarchical Linear Modeling to Analyze Multilevel Survey Data
- Blunders and Missed Opportunities in Survey Research
- Extreme Responding Style and the Concreteness-Abstractness Dimension
- On the Efficiency of Equally Spaced Longitudinal Designs

- A Test for Linkage of Multiple Cohorts From an Accelerated Longitudinal Design
- The TEAMS Multimethod Evaluation: Using Program Logic Models to Accommodate Convergent and Divergent Data
- Words and Their Value to the Survey Researcher
- The Quantity and Quality of Data Obtained From Open and Closed Questionnaires
- Response Rates of Surveys Received and Returned via Postal Versus Electronic Mail and Returned via Facsimile
- Six Criteria for Survey Sample Design Evaluation
- The Effects of Interpretive Latitude on Persuasive Writing
- Rater, Domain, and Gender Influence on the Assessed Quality of Student Writing Using Weighted and Unweighted Scores
- Investigating Rating Scale Category
- Heightened Sensitivity of Likert Attitude Scales to Restriction of Sample Range

 (continue from previous page)

1998 SIG Business Meeting in San Diego

Lynda Idleman

- Rating Scale Analysis: Gauging the Impact of Positively and Negatively Worded Items

Business Secretary, Lynda Idleman

The account balance was \$837.91. Membership totals 48 students and 166 professional members. A large minority of these are not current members. It is important for everyone to update their membership and pay their membership dues. It is also important to indicate on the membership form whether you are an AERA member or not. The number of sessions we can have each year is based on current AERA members in the SIG.

Newsletter Editor, Tina McCoy

We published three newsletters in the last year. Submission of articles and others items for the newsletter was encouraged. Tina introduced Anji Sun, the new newsletter editor. Anji works at ACT with Tina, and we appreciate the support that ACT has given the SIG in materials and postage.

The Nominating Committee presented its slate for 1998-1999:

Chair Randy McClanahan

Program Chair Gunapala Edirisooriya
Newsletter Editor Anji Sun
Business Secretary Lynda Idleman

We unanimously approved the slate of nominees.

Old Business

A discussion of ways to enhance membership ensued. The allocation of program slots at AERA depends on number of SIG members who are AERA members. One paper session is allocated to a SIG for every 43 AERA members.

New Business

- A change in dues was discussed. A committee with Patricia Busk, Steve Sierra, John Anderson, Lynda Idleman, Marsha Niebuhr, and Gunapala Edirisooriya was selected. A proposal for a new dues structure will be made in the ensuing months.
- A proposal to let AERA manage the bank account was defeated. The current financial arrangement was deemed satisfactory.
- The possibility of joining with another SIG for our social at next year's AERA meeting was discussed. Randy and Gunny will look into it.
- Members were encouraged to submit articles and other relevant materials to the newsletter.

A social hour followed the meeting's adjournment.

1997-1998 Financial Report Lynda Idleman

Balance as of March 24, 1997	\$	857.90
Balance as of March 31, 1998	\$	837.91

Summary of Revenue & Expenses

Balance (3/24/97)	\$	857.90
Revenue		
Dues received \$	432.00	
Interest	13.12	\$ 445.12
Expenses		
Chicago meeting\$	354.11	
AERA Dues	100.00	
Check writing fees	11.00	(\$ 465.11)
Balance (3/31/98)	\$	837.91

Note. The funds are in a bank that has restrictive commercial account fees and a high minimum account balance for non-profits. The best deal was a savings account with unlimited deposits and check writing privileges. The check writing fee is nominal and on more than one occasion the teller did not charge me when I requested funds be withdrawn and a check written.

Call for Contributions

The editor welcomes contributions for the Respondent from all of the SIG members. Starting from this issue, a few new columns will be added to make the newsletter more informative and fun for our readers. These new columns are:

Featured Article. A place for members to publish their research findings and/or comments on important issues in survey research.
Book Review. A place for members to share their experience or encounter with a past or current (bad, so-so, or good) publication in the area of survey research.

Member's Corner. A place for members to introduce themselves and to share their work and lives with other members. Contributions to this column could be in the form of a biography, a short story, or a news clip about you or any SIG member. The Top Ten List. A fun zone for members to share their laughs and an opportunity to show your humor and comedic talent. Each issue will list the topic on which the next issue's top ten list will be composed. You may contribute one or more items or the whole list.

Deadlines for newsletter submissions are:

September 5, for the fall 1998 issue;
February 5, for the spring 1999 issue; and
May 25, for the summer 1999 issue.

Send your contribution to the Respondent to:

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solas For Missing Data Analysis

SOLAS for Missing Data Analysis, a fully Windows-based

statistical software package, incorporates the latest industry accepted techniques for treating missing values. SOLAS Imputation techniques include:

Multiple Imputation

Based on techniques developed by Rubin, et al. Generates multiple imputations using propensity scores and the approximate Bayesian bootstrap. Imputations are independent repetitions from a Posterior Predictive Distribution for the missing data given the observed data. Allows for analysis of longitudinal and single observation survey data.

Single Imputation

Last Value Carried Forward - Allows the user to impute Missing Values based on the last value observed.
Group Means - Imputation of group mean (or mode in the case of categorical data.)
Hot Decking - Allows the user to specify and prioritize all combinations of variables for 'closest match' imputation.

The techniques available in SOLAS can be used to treat for missing data in longitudinal or single observation (e.g., surveys) studies and applies to both continuous and categorical data.

For demos, order details, and further information on SOLAS, please contact:

Statistical Solutions
Stonehill Corporate Center
Suite 104
999 Broadway
Saugus, MA 01906
Toll-Free: 800.262.1171
Phone: 781.231.7680
Fax: 781.231.7684
E-mail: info@statsolusa.com
Web site: <http://www.statsolusa.com>

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the Respondent, Summer, 1998

Top Ten Signs You Are Having Problems with Your Survey

By the time you edit the expletives from the respondents' comments, there isn't anything left to print.
When your survey designers reach a stalemate on whether

to use "gender" or "sex" to preface the male/female response options. Instead of your original survey instrument, you received a pamphlet about birth control methods in your postage-paid survey return envelope.

Your data entry person has just been diagnosed as dyslexic. You have been invited to appear at the Jerry Springer Show entitled "How to put an end to those annoying mail surveys the message: "Recipient is having an extended out-of-body experience. "The sampling frame your client sent to you is a list of names from the local cemetery. The cover letter of your survey started with "Dead Sir/Madam." The follow-up letter of your survey says: "Just fill out the damned thing!" You hired Ted Kaczynski to stuff the survey envelopes.

Thanks to Peggy Loveless, Tina McCoy, Matt Schulz, Anji Sun, and Bob Ziomek for their contributions to this issue's Top Ten List.

Topic for next issue's Top Ten List: The most weird responses you ever received in a survey (send in both the responses and the corresponding survey items).

Do you have an idea ...? The AERA Professional Development and Training Committee have asked all SIG chairs for feedback that will help them plan their program for next year. They indicate they would be "...pleased to experiment with new formats, including problem oriented sessions in which diverse viewpoints are presented or debated."

If you have ideas, please send them to our SIG chair, Randy McClanahan, so she can forward them to the Committee prior to their meeting on September 20-21, 1998.

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From the series Current Population Reports: Population
Characteristics

Household and Family Characteristics: March 1998
By Ken Bryson and Lynne M. Casper

An interesting, informative, and useful report from
the Census Bureau. If you're not on the mailing list
for these reports, you should be.

Of general interests to survey research in this particular
report are the narrative discussions and graphic displays
of the "...demographic changes in the composition of
families and household that occurred from 1970 to 1997,
highlighting the period from 1990-1997."

Of more specific interests are the definitions used by
the Census Bureau for terminology such as "household,"
"family," "own children," and "family group."

The report indicates that while there were dramatic
changes in the American family between 1970 and 1990,
those changes were much less dramatic between 1990-1997.

For a copy of the report and/or to be put on the mailing
list for future Census Bureau reports contact:

Chief, Population Division, U.S. Bureau of the Census,
Washington, DC 20233, E-mail: pop@census.gov

Dear New Members:

We welcome each of you to the SIG, and we welcome the
energy and new ideas we hope you'll contribute. You'll
find opportunities for participation throughout the
newsletter ... go ahead, jump in - you're most welcome!

Just in case you haven't heard, the findings of a new
study indicate that individuals (at least male adolescents)
may be more likely to give accurate responses to questions
about "highly embarrassing subjects" (e.g., "adolescent
homosexual experiences") when subjects respond via computer
rather than paper/pencil. A brief review of the study can
be found in the Chronicle (May 15, 1998; p. A29). The full
report can be found in the May 15, 1998, issue of Science.

Summerized by Randy McClanahan

News from the Association for Institutional Research (AIR)

Seeking Research on Undergraduate Use of Credit Cards

Jacqueline King

American Council on Education

The American Council on Education is interested in holding a symposium on undergraduate use of credit cards and is looking for any research that may have been done on how much undergraduates use credit financing, the effects of credit card debt on student persistence, or any other issue relevant to this topic. ACE hopes to conduct an invitational symposium in the fall or winter and produce a volume summarizing the research on this topic. If you or a colleague of yours have conducted research in this area, or have a project in the working, please contact:

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American Council on Education
Phone: 202.939.9355
E-mail: jacqueline_king@ace.nche.edu

Interested in sharpening your skills as a survey researcher?

Here is an good opportunity. A workshop entitled "Analyzing & Reporting Questionnaire Data" will be held by Anderson, Niebuhr & Associates, Inc. on October 15 & 16 in Philadelphia at the Holiday Inn Select, and October 29 & 30 in Minneapolis at the Radisson Plaza Downtown Minneapolis.

This is a "down to earth," practical workshop using a case study approach that teaches participants to understand statistics, develop a data analysis plan, write effective research reports, select appropriate computer software, understand the application of multivariate statistics, and present oral reports of research results.

For more information, please contact:

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Fax: 612.486.0536

A Note From the Editor. For those of you who are interested in serving as a SIG reviewer of proposals for the 1999 AERA conference in Montreal, please contact the program chair: Dr. Gunapala Edirisooriya, ELPA Department, Box 70550, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN 37614-0550, phone: 423.439.4255, E-mail: edirig@access.etsu.edu

If you presented at one of the SIG's sessions during the 1998 AERA Conference in San Diego, please send a copy of your paper to the SIG's Archivist: Judy Boser, University of Tennessee, 215 Claxton Addition, Knoxville,

TN 37996-3400

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