

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development

EDUC 797
Survey Research Design in Education
Fall, 2010
Thursday, 4:30 – 7:10, Innovation 139

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Office hours: M/T/Th 2:30 – 4 and by appointment

Prerequisite: EDRS 810 and 811.

Course Description and Relationship to Program Goals: A doctoral-level methods class in designing and administering surveys, and analyzing and reporting survey data in education.

Course Goal

The main objective of this course is to develop a comprehensive understanding of survey research.

Course Objectives

The learner will:

- Explain the place and role of survey research within education research
- Distinguish between different survey designs and sampling techniques.
- Describe the strengths and weaknesses of different types of surveys.
- Compare different methods of survey data collection in terms of advantages and disadvantages.
- Design a simple questionnaire for a specific purpose.
- Understand the use of interviews as an aid to developing questionnaires.
- Describe the difference between composing individual questions and creating item scales to measure constructs.
- Establish reliability and validity for items and for the survey.
- Understand the contributions of item response theory.
- Analyze data and report results for a specific survey questionnaire.

Required Readings

Fowler, F.J. (2009). Survey research methods, 4th ed. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Suggested Readings (*and more on blackboard “course content” and “weblinks”*)

Dillman, D., (2007). Mail and internet surveys, 2nd ed. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & sons.

Recommended Text:

Publication of the American Psychological Association. 6th ed. (2009).

Additional readings posted on <https://gmu.blackboard.com>

Additional Online Resources

I will add items to our blackboard site, as we proceed.

Supplies

Computer with Internet access and current GMU email account.

CEHD Course Expectations

The College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) expects that all students abide by the following:

- **Professional Dispositions:** Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/teacher/professional-disposition>
- **Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory, as the discussions that take place in this class are essential to achieving the course objectives.
- **Tardiness:** Prompt arrival for the beginning of class is expected.
- **Participation:** Each student is expected to complete all the assigned readings and participate in the discussions. It is expected that each student will be attuned to group dynamics in order to ensure the active participation of all in the class.
- **Absence:** If you must miss a class, you are responsible for notifying me (preferably in advance) and for completing any assignments, readings, etc. before the start of the next class.
- **Assignments:** All assignments must be completed in MSWord and sent to me as an attachment via email prior to class on the date each is due. Late assignments will not be accepted without making prior arrangements with me.
- **University Honor Code:** Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/> for the full honor code.
- **Students with disabilities** who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.
- **Computing Use:** Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See: http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=1045#resp_use_comp_poli

Course Delivery

This is a research methods class and will primarily follow a lecture-discussion format. Along the way, we'll be doing some exercises in class that will allow you to practice your skills in pairs and small groups. As with all of my classes, your questions are welcomed and your participation is expected.

Assignment: Due date: December 9.

I would like you to find a setting where a survey will be useful to that setting. It can be anything in your professional or personal life. The purpose of this assignment is to give you a chance to work with people on the development, distribution, analysis, and reporting of the results that would be informative to that setting so that you have experienced how survey research is done.

Along the way, I will ask you to submit pieces that keep your work moving forward. On **September 23**, I would like to know where you'll be gathering your data. On **November 4**, I would like a draft of your instrument. You are free to send me drafts of any of these in between for additional feedback. The final paper is due on **December 9**.

All assignments must be completed in MSWord and sent to me as an attachment via regular email prior to class. Late assignments will not be accepted without making prior arrangements with me.

Evaluation and Grading

I am testing this rubric. It is generally consistent with the rubrics used by research journals in education. Please see the rubric below the tentative schedule.

(Very) Tentative Schedule

September

| | |
|----|--|
| 2 | Introduction to the Course Overview of the survey process; types of surveys; role of measurement |
| 9 | Scales, Surveys, and Variables Read Ch. 1 Read PDK survey results (blackboard course content) |
| 16 | Designing Questions to be Good Measures Read Ch. 6 |
| 23 | Types of Errors in Surveys Evaluating Survey Questions and Instruments Read Ch. 2 <i>Identification of survey setting due</i> |
| 30 | Sampling and Representativeness Read Ch. 3 |

October

- 7 Planning for and Addressing Non-Response
Read Ch. 4
- 14 Methods of Data Collection
Read Ch. 5
Read “Mixed-mode surveys” (blackboard course content)
- 21 Evaluating Survey Questions and Instruments
Read Ch. 7
- 28 Survey Interviewing
Read Ch. 8

November

- 4 Preparing the Survey for Data Analysis
Read Ch. 9
Due: Final draft of your instrument
- 11 Analyzing Survey Data
Read Ch. 10
- 18 Estimating Reliability and Validity
- 25 Thanksgiving

December

- 2 Ethics, Reporting, and Error
Read Ch. 12-13
- 9 Presentation of your Findings
Final Report due

Scoring Rubric for Final Paper

1. The purpose of the survey is clearly presented.

Not Clearly Presented Somewhat Clear Clearly Presented

2. The presentation of related literature is appropriate and objective.

Not Clearly Presented Somewhat Clear Clearly Presented

3. The research questions are clearly identified.

Not Clearly Identified Somewhat Clear Clearly Identified

4. The focus of the research fits easily into a survey methodology.

Yes No

5. The nature of the respondents is clearly described.

Not Clearly Described Somewhat Clear Clearly Described

6. The setting where the survey was conducted is clearly described.

Not Clearly Described Somewhat Clear Clearly Described

7. The choice of survey design was appropriate for the problem under study.

Yes No

8. If a model was hypothesized, the methods were appropriate for investigating the model.

Yes No

9. There is sufficient detail in the final report that it could be replicated.

Yes No

10. The instrument was evaluated for its reliability and it was reported.

Yes No

11. The findings are reported clearly.

Not Clearly Presented Somewhat Clear Clearly Presented

12. The findings are discussed in relationship to previous literature.

Not Clearly Presented Somewhat Clear Clearly Presented

13. The conclusions follow logically from the results.

Yes No