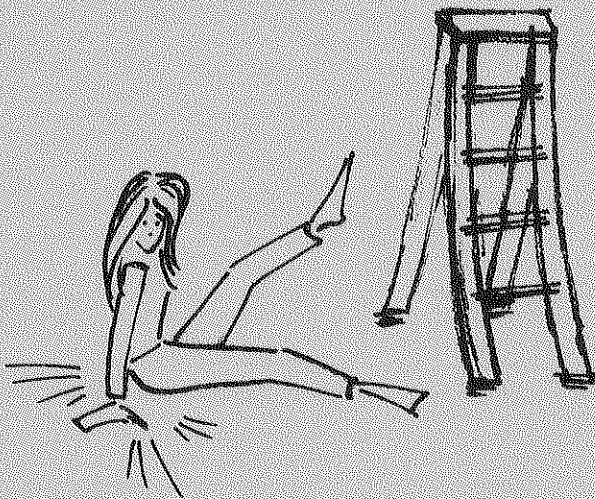


Survey Research Laboratory



Fall 1968 Newsletter

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Most of the blame for this Newsletter should be placed on Linda Spence.

University of Illinois, November, 1968.

NEW PROJECTS

Project 030, Panel on Consumer Decision Processes. This is a panel study of 300 newly married couples (some living in Peoria and the others in Decatur), who will be interviewed every two to six months. Most of the sample has been selected, and interviewing is now being done in both cities.

The project will study adjustments to married life, especially changes in economic circumstances. This focus is important because money management is a frequent cause of marital difficulties. Emphasis will be given to saving-expenditure decisions and to how decisions are made to purchase durable goods, such as refrigerators and washing machines. The study will also observe how couples develop distinct personal and family styles of life.

The project is supported by grants from the Ford Foundation and the Educational Foundation of the American Association of Advertising Agencies. It is being steered by Robert Ferber, Director of SRL.

Project 031, Dental Patients. This is a study of why patients use the dental clinic at the U. of I.'s College of Dentistry in Chicago. The study will also try to determine the future patient load at the clinic and how Medicare and insurance coverage of dental care costs will affect patients' use of the clinic. (Medicare does not cover dental care costs now, but it may in the future.) The Chicago office will attempt 350 telephone interviews with patients registered at the clinic.

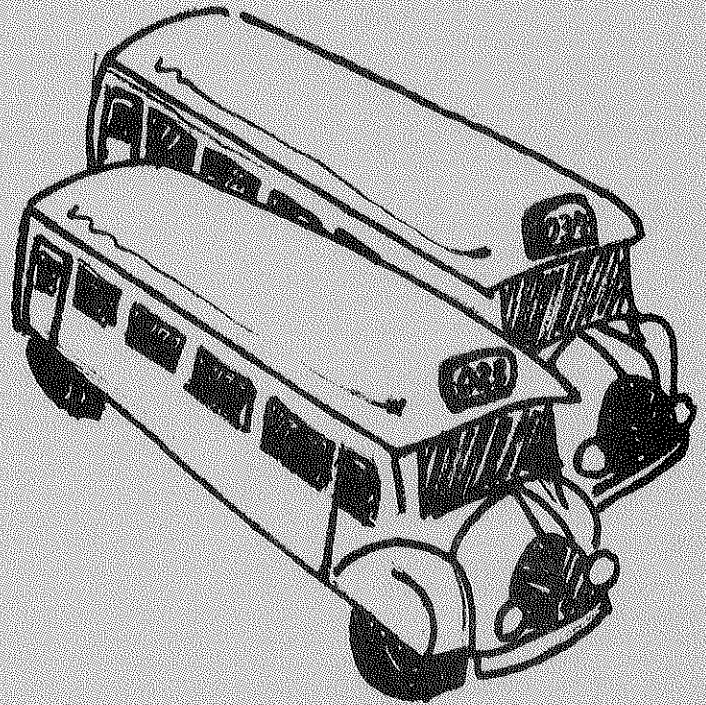
Project 033, Commuter Space Committee. This survey of undergraduates at the U. of I.'s Chicago Circle campus will be conducted by the Chicago branch office this fall. Since Chicago Circle is a commuter school, students need adequate places to eat, rest, and study. SRL will mail questionnaires to a sample of 1,200 students to determine how students use available space on the campus and find out what the space needs are as the students see them.

Project 035, Chemistry Teachers. The Chemistry Department at the U. of I. is considering a new advanced degree program for training prospective chemistry teachers. A mail questionnaire sent by SRL will gather reactions to this program from junior colleges and universities (as future employers of the program's graduates) throughout the state.

This new degree will require a broader study of chemistry and research into the teaching of chemistry to undergraduates, rather than specialized research into a single chemistry problem as now required for a Ph.D. thesis.

Project 036, Occupational Mobility. This study will investigate similarities and differences in the labor mobility of workers in the United States and Japan. The role national culture plays in labor mobility will be studied by comparing these two industrialized countries.

The survey is sponsored by Professor Joseph R. Gusfield, Department of Sociology and Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, University of Illinois. Subjects to be covered in the study include career patterns, recruitment mechanisms, major occupation of father and children, and attitudes toward work, mobility and employer.

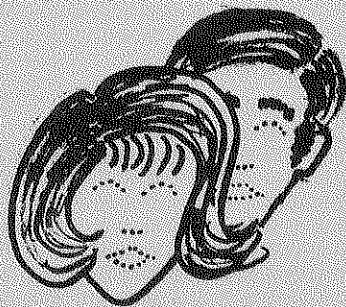


A FLEET OF OMNIBUSES

SRL may soon have to purchase a parking lot for its planned fleet of omnibuses. The first Omnibus Survey (023) was so well received that a second one (034) is planned for the spring of 1969, and omnibus surveys will probably be repeated annually.

Information from the more than 2,000 interviews of the 1968 Omnibus Survey is already beginning to aid research in education, mental health, automobile insurance, vocational training and other areas. Results also contributed timely information to the discussion of a constitutional revision for Illinois.

We know that combining a number of subjects in a questionnaire makes interviewing more difficult, so we plan to have fewer sections in the 1969 survey. But for now, all who took part in the 1968 Omnibus Survey should take satisfaction in knowing that it resulted in a wealth of valuable information.



NEW FACES AT SRL

Single girls working for SRL must cross Chuck Gallant (research assistant in Data Processing) off their list: He's married. When asked if he has any children, he said he has three but added, "We found out what was causing it so we won't have any more!"

Chuck is from Nova Scotia and received his B.S. and M.S. in math at Canadian universities. He was director of the Computer Center at St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia for five years. He is presently working on his Ph.D. in math education and plans to teach in Canada.

The young man with the untamed beard is Bruce Grimes, a programmer in our Data Processing Section. He is presently improving the IBM cleaning program which finds data that are incorrectly coded. He is also learning a new computer language for SRL that combines the best attributes of the business and scientific computer languages.

After getting his bachelor's degree at Pepperdine College in Los Angeles, he worked for the Systems Division of TRW, Inc., in California. He is now working on his master's degree in urban planning at the U. of I.

While Bruce lived in California, one of his favorite pastimes was sailing in the Pacific. He sails in the Boneyard Creek here on weekends!

Padmini Ramaswamy heads the Control Desk to set up procedures for processing and editing new studies. She hopes to establish a general control procedure that can be used for all studies.

In India, Padmini received a B.A. and an M.A. in English plus an M.A. in sociology. She worked in all aspects of survey research at Hindustan Lever (a division of Lever Brothers) and came to work for SRL to learn more about the techniques of survey research.

After getting a Ph.D. in marketing, she plans to return to India where she will do research for universities or projects of her own.

It is said that busy people get the most done and are the happiest. Tulsi Saral proves this to be true. He works half time for SRL as a project coordinator, half time for the Institute of Communications Research at the U. of I., is working on his Ph.D. in communications (which he plans to complete by June), and is raising two daughters.

Tulsi's long list of accomplishments show he's always been busy. He received an M.A. in English literature (in India) and another M.A. in communications (at the University of Pennsylvania). He has published 14 books in Hindi which include collections of plays, poems, short stories, and essays. He has held many positions including assistant editor of a magazine, and instructor and head of the Department of Mass Communications at the Literacy House in Lucknow, India.

If your burdens are heavy, stop in and talk to Tulsi. His smile and genuine interest in you works like an instant cheer-up pill.

Marlene Simon is director of the Chicago area field operations. She is responsible for the hiring, training, and supervising of the Chicago field staff.

continued

She received her B.A. in sociology at Wayne State University in Detroit and went on to work in survey research.

Because survey research is often used in sociological research, several universities include survey research as a major area of study for advanced sociology degrees. Instead of writing conventional masters' theses, students conduct surveys and write research papers on some aspects of the surveys. Marlene worked in the field section for such a program at Indiana University.

Marlene also worked for the National Opinion Research Corporation in Chicago as associate field director.

Here is a resume by Ted Swartz about Ted Swartz submitted to the editorial offices of the SRL Newsletter:

- Hometown: Clarendon Hills, Illinois (suburbia, U.S.A.)
- Past: B.S. in economics, Iowa State University.
- Present: Research assistant in the Field Section while working on a master's degree in business administration.
- Future: Law school, doctorate in business administration, or Australia.
- Interests: World travel--"until no stone remains unturned."
 Politics--"Let's hear it for the Republicans."
 Girl-watching--"It's better here than at Iowa State, but not as good as Chicago."
 Remaining a happy bachelor--"I love my freedom; why get married?"
 Free lance photography--"They don't call me 'America's David Hemmings' for nothing."

WHAT INTERVIEWERS THINK OF INTERVIEWING

URBANA, Ill. (SRL)--Interviewers believe interviewing to be "quite big," Judy Fielder of the Field Section revealed.

Interviewers evaluated the concept of "interviewing" during training sessions for the Omnibus Survey (O23) in a practice run with the Semantic Differential rating scale which they later used in the field. The rating scale looked like this:

Interviewing

big__:_:_:_:_:_: little

Interviewers checked one box between the 13 adjective-pairs depending on how well one or the other of the words described interviewing. The other 12 pairs of words were:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| strong-weak | good-bad |
| powerless-powerful | old-young |
| deep-shallow | slow-fast |
| unhelpful-helpful | alive-dead |
| nice-awful | quiet-noisy |
| sour-sweet | familiar-unfamiliar |

Other earthshaking results showed interviewers think interviewing is "quite alive" and "quite strong" but only "somewhat sweet" and somewhat quiet." These revealing findings have made great inroads in the understanding of interviewer psychology.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

Questionnaire design is a delicate art. If questions are not carefully worded, they may elicit inaccurate, biased answers. If a respondent does not understand a question, it is most likely not the interviewer's fault; the question may be at fault.

Both interviewers and respondents are taken into account when a questionnaire is designed. Clear-cut instructions and easy-to-follow skip patterns for questions are important to the interviewer. For respondents, questions must be stated so they can be understood and so respondents know the answers and are willing to give them.

continued

Let's look at some of the hypothetical pitfalls of questionnaire design. (Of course, please keep in mind that SRL's questionnaires are always perfect.)

Questions may assume background knowledge the respondent does not have. No one likes to admit ignorance. So respondents may pretend to understand and answer with a mental "eenie, meenie, minie, mo...." If a respondent is asked "Should a person save money in mutual funds?" he may not know what a mutual fund is but still answer the question.

The answer choices may not include all possible alternatives. If so, the answer chosen may not be the correct one. If you are asked, "What if your favorite Saturday night drink--coffee, tea, or milk?" and you prefer martinis, how do you answer? Maybe (Irish) coffee is the best alternative!

Technical terminology must be either toned down or clearly defined to avoid misinterpretation. For example, a respondent may think a woofer is a St. Bernard and a tweeter is a canary. But woofers and tweeters are actually stereo loudspeakers, not dogs and birds, and the questionnaire would do well to define the terms.

If a questionnaire is too long, a respondent may become bored. Or she may want to hurry the interviewer because the fifth rerun of "I Love Lucy" is almost on. In either event, a respondent may give haphazard answers that aren't correct.

INTERVIEWERS GO ON STRIKE

Word leaked out to interviewers that SRL is engaged in certain functions that do not require their help.

The staff has been giving free advice to campus departments and various state and local agencies. This consulting advice on many aspects of surveys takes from a few minutes to several hours. The office in Chicago has been especially guilty of this extracurricular activity.

Picket lines throughout the state demanded interviewer involvement in this activity.

OUR THANKS TO NORTHERN ILLINOIS GAS COMPANY Alex Berndt

In August, as part of our Master Sample work, we experimented to see whether a "roof count" of housing units from aerial photographs could be an accurate means of estimating housing units per city block or country-road block.

The experiment indicated that for certain areas, such as unincorporated areas of a township, an aerial photo-count is the best alternative. Aerial photographs helped keep accuracy high in terms of a truly probabilistic sample.

The use of recent aerial photographs of the Chicago suburbs was possible through the kind permission of Mr. Ray Wachter, the general coordinator of public affairs at the Northern Illinois Gas Company. We also thank Mr. Russ Sault and Mr. Rod Jendrysik, who promptly found the aerial maps we needed.

OUR SECOND MASTER SAMPLE Alex Berndt

Large studies done by the Lab use samples drawn from a large sample called the Master Sample. This saves time because we can quickly draw a sample for a survey from the Master Sample.

The Master Sample consists of approximately 40,000 housing units in Illinois. A statewide study uses a sample of 2,000 to 4,000 housing units, so we are able to use the Master Sample for at least ten studies.

SRL has exhausted its first Master Sample so the Sampling Section is presently working on a second one. SRL is improving upon the first by prelisting housing units. Now an interviewer is sent directly to the sample addresses to interview. Before, he first had to list a certain number of addresses and then return to interview in only some of them.

continued

The drawing of the Master Sample was divided into three stages: (1) Chicago suburbs, (2) Chicago city, and (3) the rest of the state. We have already listed the Chicago suburban area and are now listing the Chicago city housing units.

To obtain a truly probabilistic sample in the Chicago suburbs, many sources were used: zoning and land use maps, building permits, aerial photo-count, updated census city-block statistics, street address directories, etc. Seymour Sudman, head of the Sampling Section, said, "We probably have one of the best suburban samples."

SUGGESTED READING

Stephen A. Richardson, Barbara Snell Dorenwend, and David Klein, Interviewing: It's Forms and Functions (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1965), 380 pages, \$7.50.

This book discusses personality characteristics of successful interviewers, as well as the interviewer's involvement and his effect on respondent participation. The book also discusses methods of data collection, purposes of the interview, and effects of various questions on respondent participation. (The word "participation" was used rather than "cooperation" because of its broader meaning.)

Correction:

Due to bureaucratic processes in this mammoth organization, we made a mistake: The Water Quality Study is Project 032 (not 031 as in our last newsletter). Study 031 is now, and forever, the Dentistry Patients Study being conducted in Chicago.



"I'm sorry to break down like this, but you're the first person who ever took any interest in who I favored."

Drawing by Robt. Day; c 1965
The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.