

OSET Factsheet: Individual-level Consumption and Perception Survey

April 2012

Self-Reported Substance Use Surveys

- Self-report surveys tend to be accurate for both alcohol and illicit drugs under conditions that maximize accuracy (Harrison, 1997).
- Increased anonymity increases accuracy:
 - *Self-administered questionnaires, rather than verbal responses (Harrell, 1997)
 - *Assurance of confidentiality and anonymity (Harrell, 1997)
 - *Web surveys (McCabe, 2004)
- The more a drug is stigmatized, the more use is concealed (Harrison, 1997)
- Timeframe matters. Responses about recent drug use are more likely to be biased, while lifetime usage is more accurately reported (Harrison, 1997).

Intercept Surveys

- Studies have found that intercept studies, using self-administered paper surveys and appropriate anonymity, produce self-report substance use data that is just as valid as telephone (Aquilino, 1991; Spooner & Flaherty, 1993) and focus group studies (Spooner & Flaherty, 1993).
- Research indicates that intercept surveys are more successful if the interviewer is a peer (Spooner, Bishop, & Parr, 1997).

Methods for Hard-to-Reach Populations:

- Handing out flyers at an event where the population is likely to be (music venue, etc.) or advertise in a forum where the population communicates (local music publication, or message boards at a college, dorm, apartment complex, or laundry mat) (ISK, 2012). Posted advertisements should prominently display participation incentives, and include tags to tear off that provide study times and location.
- Advertise on Craigslist under “General Labor Jobs” (ISK, 2012).
- All advertisement materials should include a phone number, email address, or website for more information. Materials can be used to direct participants directly to a web survey.
- Portal surveys are intercept surveys that take place at the portal of a location where use takes place, such as a bar or liquor store (Voas, Furr-Holden, Lauer, Bright, Johnson, & Miller, 2006).
- Chain referral sampling is considered the best way to sample “hidden populations” (Hathaway, Hyshka, Erickson, Asbridge, Brochu, Cousineau, Duff, & Marsh, 2010). Each participant is given a number of ‘coupons’ with study information (study purpose, time, date, incentive info, etc.). Participants then recruit additional participants from the population by giving them one of the coupons. In addition to getting a participation incentive, the participant is put in a drawing each time one of the people they referred shows up and participates. The coupons contain a tracking number, allowing researchers to determine who referred a participant.
 - This procedure could be done in tandem with an intercept survey, where the interviewer gives coupons during the intercept portion that direct future participants to group survey sessions or a particular location (i.e., a booth, a particular location at a mall, etc.).

References

- Aquilino, W.S. (1991). Telephone versus face-to-face interviewing for household drug use surveys. *International Journal of Addictions*, 27 (1), 71-91.
- Harrell, A. (1997). The validity of self-reported drug use data: The accuracy of responses on confidential self-administered answer sheets. In L. Harrison and A. Hughes (Eds.), *The Validity of Self-Reported Drug Use: Improving the Accuracy of Survey Estimates* (pp. 37-58). NIDA Research Monograph 167, NIH publication No. 97-4147.
- Harrison, L. (1997). The validity of self-reported drug use in survey research: An overview and critique of research methods. In L. Harrison and A. Hughes (Eds.), *The Validity of Self-Reported Drug Use: Improving the Accuracy of Survey Estimates* (pp. 17-36). NIDA Research Monograph 167, NIH publication No. 97-4147.
- Hathaway, A.D., Hyshka, E., Erickson, P.G., Asbridge, M., Brochu, S., Cousineau, M.M., Duff, C., & Marsh, D. (2010). Whither RDS? An investigation of respondent driven sampling as a method of recruiting mainstream marijuana users. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 7(15), 1-11.
- Internet Solutions for Kids, Inc. (ISK). (2010). *Traditional vs. online recruitment strategy?* Retrieved from <http://is4k.com/blogs/traditional-vs-online-recruitment-strategy/>
- McCabe, S.E. (2004). Comparison of web and mail surveys in collecting illicit drug use data: A randomized experiment. *Journal of Drug Education*, 34(1), 61-72.
- Spooner, C., Bishop, J., & Parr, J. (1997). Research methods for studying injecting drug users in a rural centre. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 16(4), 349-355.
- Spooner, C., & Flaherty, B. (1993). Comparison of three data collection methodologies for the study of young illicit drug users. *Australian Journal of Public Health*, 17(3), 195-202.
- Voas, R.B., Holden, D.F., Lauer, E., Bright, K., Johnson, M.B., & Miller, B. (2006). Portal surveys of time-out drinking locations: A tool for studying binge drinking and AOD use. *Evaluation Review*, 30(1), 44-65.

OSET Factsheet: Suggestions for Conducting In-Person Self-Administered Surveys

April 2012

1. Anonymity

This tip is for coalitions that are collecting surveys and raffle stubs for an incentive simultaneously. The tip may also be modified if your coalitions is just collecting surveys.

Try to make the survey experience feel anonymous. An example would be: use two big baskets/reusable grocery bags (easier to carry than a ballot box) with one for surveys and one for raffle stubs. Prefill the baskets with envelopes and stubs so the respondent feels their survey will get mixed in with other responses. Try to make a show of it by shaking up the envelopes in the bag/basket when explaining the process to the potential respondent.

2. Security

One method to assure anonymity and security when collecting data publically (such as at a booth set up in a public places) is to have respondents place their completed surveys in a locked box. You may want to consider providing envelopes that respondents could seal their surveys in.

3. Instrument Development

Keep the survey short – less than 10 questions – and with a light cognitive demand. Many researchers believe you can't get valid responses to surveys that are more than a few questions and require much thinking with the intercept method.

4. General Tips for Deploying an Intercept Survey

Sharon Roebuck, Consumer Insights, Universal Orlando

Source: American Association for Public Opinion Research List-Serv (March 2012)

Currently our field research is mainly in-person self-administered surveys and we have to train our interviewers extensively in how to properly recruit and screen the guests. We also put all of our team through a RAT training as refusals can be quite frustrating for interviewers when cold intercepting. If there is an nth count methodology we have a designated line of demarcation of where/how the nth count should start so that our team has a standard from which to go by. We also have our interviewers track their initial refusals, qualified refusals, and terms by screening criteria, and demographic information for all respondents. Our coordinator's (in-field supervisors) find this useful as they can easily monitor for interviewer bias in intercepting. We have found that for projects where there is a continual random intercept methodology the female in the group is more likely to participate than the male so interviewers are trained to monitor their gender splits so that they are intercepting based on park representation and not "easy intercepts". The same would apply for ages, etc. I know these are all very common concepts, but we have found that even if someone thorough knowledge and understanding of survey research if they have never actually done cold intercepts they can struggle with these things.

Also, if you will be using paper surveys I highly recommend that each interviewer have minimum two clipboards at least. One clipboard will be used solely for their individual tracking sheets and any completed surveys. The second clipboard will have blank surveys. When conducting paper surveys our interviewers typically use anywhere from 4-6 clipboards so that they can intercept and pass out multiple surveys at a time. Since they carry that much equipment they generally will have a shoulder strap bag so that when they are intercepting they will only have their

tracking sheet and one clipboard with blank surveys out when trying to intercept. The bag also contains additional pens and folders.

I know that you will be working with grad students who will have a basic understanding of research, but you may find some of the intercepting tips we give our interviewers when training beneficial.

- The most difficult aspect of your job will be approaching guests and asking them to participate in a survey. The key to being a successful interviewer is maintaining positive body language. Studies have shown that people perceive what you are trying to say more from your body language than your actual words. [Trainer note: the % effect interpersonal communication- 38% tone of voice, 7% words, 55% body language]
- The number one factor in trying to intercept is: Know what you are going to say! There are many different ways to initially ask guests to stop. Find one that works for you and use it. It may take you several attempts at first, but you will eventually become more comfortable.
- Speak clearly and distinctly. If guests are not able to understand you they will not stop to hear what you have to say. Always be polite when you ask a guest to participate in a survey.
- Act confidently. If you stand out there timid and insecure in what you are doing the guest will sense it. Approach them knowing that they are going to want to participate. Be enthusiastic.
- When intercepting use hand gestures and open body language. When speaking with a potential respondent angle yourself so that your body aims or squares up with them. This conveys a general attitude of agreement or likeness.
- When intercepting utilize the 10/5 rule. At 10 feet make initial eye contact and smile. Do not wait for the respondent to reach you, gradually move forward and begin introducing yourself at 5 feet, once again using simple hand gestures. If you are stationary and wait until the respondent has almost reached you before making eye contact and/or speaking they are more likely to keep walking or refuse.
- People tend to do one thing at a time. When intercepting do not attempt to approach the potential respondent while they are attending to other things. Wait until the respondent has finished the task at hand and you will find they are more apt to listen to you and participate in the survey.