SURVEY BASICS

Presented by:
D’Arcy Oaks, Ph.D.: oaks.9@osu.edu
Alex Schaefer
Emily Slager, MSW: slager.5@osu.edu
John Tannous
Today’s Agenda

- When to use surveys
- Advantages of surveys
- The relationship between focus groups and surveys
- Research questions inform your project
- Types of survey
- Other important concepts in social science research
When To Do a Survey

- A survey is not appropriate when:
  - Asking in-depth questions
  - We don’t know much about the topic
  - The population studied is a small group of people

- A survey is a good idea:
  - If the topic is sensitive
  - If you need to collect a lot of data at once
  - If time is a factor (doing surveys correctly, however, requires more time and effort than you may think)

(Schuh and Upcraft, 2001 as cited in Newhart, 2011)
Advantages and Disadvantages of Surveys

- **Advantages:**
  - Can portray the distribution of certain characteristics of a group
  - May find or predict connections between variables (cssl.osu.edu)
  - Less intrusive than an interview or focus group
  - Can achieve unbiased representation of population with the right sampling technique

- **Disadvantages**
  - Unable to probe deeply into questions
Focus Groups and Surveys

- Focus groups often inform surveys; we learn about the topic at hand in order to compose good survey questions later on.

- Conversely, we can also use focus groups after the administration of surveys to better understand our results.
Setting Research Questions

- Your entire project is aimed at addressing the research question.
- Once you know exactly what you want to know, you can:
  - Investigate what’s already in the literature on that topic.
  - Explore using a focus group.
  - Explore using a survey.
  - Contribute to knowledge about the subject.
Types of Surveys

- Face-to-face, mail, telephone, online, etc.
- Closed (choose one) vs. open-ended (fill-in)
- Checklists (check all that apply or rank order)
- Likert-style questions

Adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Example_Likert_Scale.svg
Adapted from http://www.123contactform.com/online-survey-tool/
Important concepts

- Sampling
  - Stratified vs. other kinds
  - Population
  - Randomization

- Response rates
  - Not as important as representation
  - Tips to improve response rate
Important Concepts

- Validity is a measure of methodological soundness:
  - Internal: Reducing error in the responses given to the extent possible
    - Cognitive interviewing
  - External: how much our results apply to the “real world”
  - Construct: theoretical framework of research is well-supported and clear (Graziano & Raulin, 2000).
- Reliability: instrument gathers accurate results each time (inter-rater, test-retest)
Advanced Survey Writing

- Cognitive load
- Items
- Scales

Q4. How do you rate the following?

- Speed of service
- Cleanliness
- Parking
- Quality of product
- Choice of product

Please rate this employee’s communication skills:

- Extraordinary
- Strong
- Average
- Weak
- In Need of Serious Help

Adapted from http://www.snapsurveys.com/blog/using-image-maps-in-your-online-surveys/

Adapted from http://survey.cvent.com/blog/online-survey-experts-2/a-better-approach-to-performance-reviews
Advanced Survey Writing (cont’d)

- Operationalizing Constructs
- Formatting
- Intentionality
- Routing

Adapted from http://www.preventionsurveysystems.com/personal-touch
Thank you!

Contact:
- D’Arcy Oaks, Ph.D.: oaks.9@osu.edu
- Emily Slager, MSW: slager.5@osu.edu