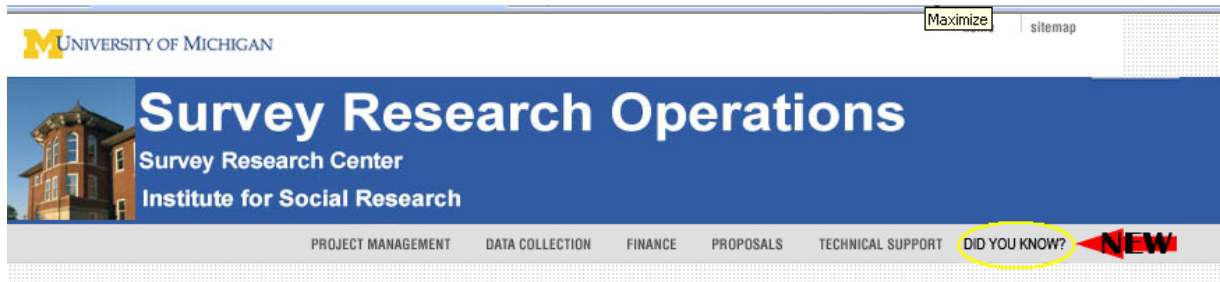


Happening in SRO

You can find this “Happening in SRO” and all similar updates on the SRO Intranet. Look for the Section titled: Did You Know?



Faculty Profiles

Lisa Holland

In order to provide projects with guidance in statistical design and sample design, the SRO Statistics and Methodology Unit works cooperatively with several of the faculty members in SRC's Survey Methodology Program. Two of the faculty members have unique positions in that they spend half of their time on their own research endeavors and teaching, and they commit the other half of their time to supporting SRO projects. James Wagner and Sunghee Lee both work closely with us on statistical design and sample design, as well as other methodological questions related to our production activities.



James Wagner has been with SRO since 2002. He completed his PhD in Survey Methodology in 2008. He works primarily on NSFG and Army STARRS, but has also worked on a variety of other projects. His research is in the area of nonresponse. Recently, he has been examining indicators for the risk of nonresponse bias and how they might be used to improve data collection. In addition, he is interested in responsive design techniques aimed at improving the quality of survey data. In his free time, he loves to read and spend time with his two awesome kids.



Sunghee Lee is a survey methodologist who has been with SRO since 2010. She is currently working on sampling aspects of HRS and Housing & Children and systematizing census data abstraction for sampling and post-survey adjustment purposes. Her major research interests focus on data collection with rare and minority populations, which presents a unique set of challenges in addition to typical challenges that any survey data collection faces. Her recent research includes measurement comparability issues with survey-based mortality predictors for Spanish speakers in the U.S. and assessments of respondent driven sampling. Away from work, she is known as an avid hockey player in recreational leagues around Ann Arbor.

James and Sunghee split their time between their faculty offices on Thompson Street, and their Stat Unit offices here in Perry. Please feel free to contact them or others in the Stat Unit with your methodological questions or ideas!

Update on the Transition of Senior SRO Project Staff on Two of Our Long Standing SRC Projects

Kirsten Alcser and Patty Maher

Early in 2013 SRO put in place a leadership transition process between the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) and the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG). Nicole Kirgis (NSFG) and Heidi Guyer (HRS) had led their respective projects for close to a decade.

Heidi and Nicole were charged with developing a plan for their transition - taking into account project schedule and needs; communicating with the scientific PIs of the projects; and, preparing a communication plan for their SRO project teams and other stakeholders.

In the course of 2013, Heidi and Nicole began the transition process by meeting with the project team of the new projects and engaging each other in key project decision-making. They both attended several high level meetings on both projects with PIs, funders and other stakeholders.

On January 2, 2014, when SRO returned after the holidays, the transition was complete.

SRO recognizes the very significant contributions that Heidi has made to the HRS project, which has grown measurably in complexity and challenges during her time as project leader. She has made a special contribution to the development and administration of biomarker measurements on that project, which is recognized in national and international research circles. She is co-author of a chapter, "The collection of biospecimens in health surveys," in Handbook of Health Survey Methods (Timothy Johnson (ed.); Wiley Series), expected to be published February 2014. Similarly, we recognize the significant contributions that Nicole has made on the NSFG project. She played a key role in the proposal effort which won SRC the current 10-year contract, as well as in the early development of the paradata dashboard here at SRO. She has presented on the use of paradata to monitor data collection quality and progress at national and international conferences, and she is a co-author of a chapter, "Design and Management Strategies for Paradata-Driven Responsive Design: Illustrations from the 2006-2010 National Survey of Family Growth," in Improving Surveys with Paradata (Frauke Kreuter (ed.); Wiley Series in Survey Methodology (2013)).

We are grateful for their leadership on these important SRC projects.

Congratulations to PSID!

Stephanie Chardoul



Congratulations to the PSID Core team for a successful finish to the 2013 data collection! PSID always has a hard deadline of December 31st, and the team pushed again this year to meet that goal, ending with 9107 completed interviews and a solid 92% response rate. The final interview was completed at 9:18pm Pacific time -- one of 20 interviews done on that last day! The project started with a large team across both the Field and the SSL, and ended with a core group of ~20 Field interviewers who squeezed as much production out of the panel respondents as possible. It was definitely an exciting finish!

From the Archive: Industrial Mobility in Michigan, Project 82

Kelly Chatain

Today, we are no stranger to stories of states fighting to attract and retain businesses. Michigan's struggle in this regard is well documented. But did you know that the Survey Research Center was involved from the very beginning? Even though America as a whole experienced a post-WWII economic boom, in 1950 the Michigan Economic Development Commission noticed that a few companies had left the state in recent years. They hired SRC to conduct a survey that would dive a bit deeper into the motivations for doing so and gather information on possible strategies for business retention. The Commission also appointed a task committee comprised of state business leaders to assist SRC and was led by Walker L. Cisler, Executive Vice President of The Detroit Edison Company.

Objectives of the Study

- I. To study the opinions and attitudes of Michigan industrialists about advantages and disadvantages of location in Michigan, and to compare these opinions with data available from other sources;
- II. To study the factors contributing to decisions to move plants out of Michigan, to move plants into Michigan, to abandon such plans, to enlarge existing facilities, and to build new plants in Michigan.¹

The majority of the respondents, 75%, were from companies in industries deemed to be of particular importance in Michigan: Furniture and Fixtures, Chemicals and Allied Products, and Metal Products (machinery, motor vehicle parts, etc.). To broaden the base, the remaining 25% of the respondents were spread across a wider group of industries, such as food, textiles, and lumber. Automotive manufacturers were not included because of their size and the complexity of their decision making processes. Small companies of less than 12 employees were also eliminated. Due to cost constraints and the relatively low density of manufacturing in the northern part of Michigan at the time, selected businesses were found south of a line drawn between Ludington and Bay City. The remaining companies that fell within these parameters were weighted according to the number of employees, which the Center believed to be a good indicator of economic importance. The sample was then randomly selected and an executive of each company was interviewed.²

The study achieved the hallowed 100% response rate both as a result of advance contact efforts made by Rensis Likert and Walter Cisler, and high-quality interviewing. The detailed personal interviews were conducted almost exclusively by field supervisors. It was thought to be necessary to use them instead of part-time interviewers in order to induce high-ranking executives and business owners to give over an hour of their time and their honest opinions.

The study found that some of the main reasons for staying in Michigan were distance to materials, distance to customers (the market), worker productivity, and general inertia. But companies were not entirely satisfied, citing higher labor costs, among other reasons, particularly in the Detroit area. Reasons for leaving were mainly focused on expanding market coverage and moving closer to materials, such as steel. Based on the results of the study, the Commission recommended that the state focus on increasing steel production, attracting companies for whom a trained production workforce was important (which Michigan had), proximity to existing Michigan industry and supply, and the general good quality of life in the state. It was also recommended that particular attention should be paid to the labor situation in Detroit.³

The Details:

Directed by Rensis Likert, George Katona, James Morgan Funded by the Michigan Economic Development Commission	Budget – estimated \$6,200 188 interviews, 60-90 minutes 100% response rate
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¹ "Outline of Research Plan on Mobility and Location Preferences of Michigan Industries", Project 82, SRO Archive.

² "A Preliminary Report of the Results Obtained in the Study of Industrial Mobility in Michigan, Project 82, SRO Archive.

³ University of Michigan, Survey Research Center. Industrial Mobility in Michigan: a Sample Survey of Michigan Manufacturers. [Ann Arbor], 1950