

Special Notes

Cognitive Aspects of Surveys

Cognitive processes such as comprehension, recall, perception, and judgment are central to survey interviews; thus, findings from research in the cognitive sciences could play an important role in the improvement of survey methods. Conversely, surveys should be a useful vehicle for research on cognitive processes. Until recently, however, there has been little communication between cognitive scientists and survey researchers.

In Spring 1983 the U.S. Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT) of the National Academy of Sciences, with funding from the National Science Foundation, sponsored an Advanced Research Seminar on Cognitive Aspects of Survey Methodology (CASM), aimed at creating a dialogue between these two disciplines and developing proposals for collaborative research. The seminar, chaired by Judith Tanur, a member of CNSTAT, was composed of 22 participants, including cognitive scientists, survey researchers, applied statisticians, staff of the U.S. Bureau of the Census, The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), and CNSTAT. Many of the discussions were focused on a specific survey, the National Health Interview Survey, which is conducted for NCHS by the Census Bureau. In preparation for the seminar, participants had been interviewed in that survey, and two interviews with volunteer respondents were videotaped for seminar viewing.

Several of the participants have subsequently initiated new research activities and developed proposals for interdisciplinary research pertinent to the topics discussed at the seminar. To cite a few examples, these include a national inventory of cognitive abilities, proposals to establish cognitive psychology laboratories in connection with ongoing survey efforts, and investigation of survey respondents' confidence in their

judgments. These activities and proposals were discussed at a followup meeting in January 1984. The participants in the seminar and followup meeting found the experience stimulating, and they now consider themselves an informal network of cognitive scientists and survey researchers who will continue to collaborate on projects and activities of mutual interest and to encourage such collaboration among their colleagues.

The report of the CASM project, *Cognitive Aspects of Survey Methodology: Building a Bridge Between Disciplines*, is now available. The report includes background papers prepared for the seminar, a summary of seminar discussions, and descriptions of research activities and proposals developed by participants following the seminar. For a copy of the report, write to:

Committee on National Statistics,
National Academy of Sciences,
2101 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20418
U.S.A.
or telephone (202) 334-3096.

U.S. Committee on National Statistics
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Approaches to Developing Questionnaires

A report focused on reviewing methods used in developing questionnaires was released by the Statistical Policy Office, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, U.S. Office of Management and Budget. *Approaches to Developing Questionnaires, Statistical Policy*

Working Paper 10, was prepared by the Subcommittee on Questionnaire Design of the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology. The report discusses tools for developing questions, procedures for testing the questionnaire draft, and techniques for evaluating the questionnaire.

Copies of this report can be ordered from:

NTIS Document Sales
5285 Port Royal Road
Springfield, VA 22161
U.S.A.

or telephone (703) 487-4650; ask for PB-84-105-055, *Approaches to Developing Questionnaires* (hard copy \$16.00; microfiche \$4.50).

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U.S. Census Bureau Holds First Annual Research Conference

The U.S. Bureau of the Census held its First Annual Research Conference in Reston, Virginia, March 20-23, 1985. The Conference, organized around the Census Bureau's Five Year Research Plan, comprised an introductory session, conducted by Census Bureau Director Dr. John Keane and Associate Director for Statistical Standards and Methodology, Dr. Barbara Bailar, 11 invited paper sessions, dinner speeches by leaders of the U.S. Statistical System, and the Shirley Kallek Memorial Lecture, delivered by Dr. Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisors under President Carter. Invited paper sessions were devoted to the following topics: automation, statistical computing, survey design and estimation, census evaluation, confidentiality, time series and analysis, telephone survey methods, data analysis, nonresponse, statistical standards, and quality issues in Federal statistics.

Approximately 450 persons from government, industry, and academia in the United States and abroad attended the conference. The conference was deemed a success by those in attendance. The Second Annual

Census Bureau Research Conference, currently being planned, will be held during the spring of 1986 in the Washington, D.C. area.

The conference proceedings will be out this summer. Information on the proceedings and on the Second Annual Research Conference can be obtained by contacting

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The 38th Annual Summer Institute in Survey Research Techniques

The Survey Research Center of the Institute for Social Research (ISR), University of Michigan, U.S.A., will hold its 38th annual Summer Institute in Survey Research Techniques at ISR during the summer of 1985. Two four-week sessions, beginning July 1st and ending August 23rd, will be offered. The program emphasis is on the sample survey as a basic measuring instrument in the social sciences. Faculty in the Summer Institute are drawn from the research faculty of the Departments of Sociology and Psychology. Participants in the program gain familiarity with the application of survey research methods - study design, sampling, measurement issues, questionnaire design, field methods, data management and statistical data analysis. Ten graduate-level courses will be offered in the 1985 Summer Institute.

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Announcements from the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics

1. The results of the 1984 NHIS/RDD Feasibility Study: Final Report.

This research included investigation of the use of two telephone versions of the U.S. National Health Interview Survey questionnaire, among other issues of telephone survey research on applying telephone methodology to this complex face-to-face interview survey. Copies of the report are available from:

Division of Health Interview Statistics
National Center for Health Statistics
3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, Maryland 20782
U.S.A.

2. The Twenty Third National Meeting of the Public Health Conference on Records and Statistics will be held in Washington, D.C., August 13-15, 1985.

A special session on survey methodology including Developments in Telephone Survey Methodology will be part of the meeting. Information about the conference and copies of the proceedings of the national meeting, which are published later in a bound volume, are available from:

National Center for Health Statistics
Office of Program Support
Conference Management Branch
3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, Maryland 20782
U.S.A.

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