

## Components of a Survey Method Plan

1. *Survey Design*
  - a. Begin by discussing the purpose of a survey and rationale for its selection as a design in the proposed study.
    - i. Discuss the purpose of survey research which is to generalize from a sample to a population
    - ii. Discuss advantages of survey design: economy, ease of data collection and analyses, etc.
    - iii. Discuss whether survey is cross-sectional or longitudinal
    - iv. Specify how data was collected (mailed, interviewed face-to-face, telephone interview, etc.), and rationale for this procedure (cost, time, availability, etc.)
2. *Population and Sample*
  - a. Describe the population in the study
  - b. Identify whether the sampling design for this population is single or multistage (clustering)
  - c. Specify how individuals will be selected
  - d. Discuss whether selection of participants was stratified and what characteristics were used in stratifying the randomly selected population
  - e. Indicate procedures used for selecting random sample (what was the sampling frame?)
  - f. Indicate the number of people in the sample and how this number was determined
3. *Instrumentation*
  - a. Identify the survey instrument used in the study (was it self-designed, a modified instrument, or an intact instrument developed by someone else?)
    - i. For existing instruments, describe the established validity and reliability of items and scales of instrument
  - b. Include sample items so readers can see actual items used (put in appendix)
  - c. Indicate major content sections in the instrument, such as cover letter, the items, and closing instructions, as well as type of scales used to measure items
  - d. Discuss plans for pilot testing survey and provide rationale for this procedure
  - e. For mailed survey, identify steps to be taken in administering and following up survey
4. *Variables in Study*
  - a. Relate variables to survey instrument by using table and discussion that cross-references the variables, the questions or hypotheses, and specific survey items.
5. *Data Analysis*
  - a. Indicate that information will be reported about the number of returns and non-returns of the survey.
  - b. Discuss method by which response bias will be determined
  - c. Report descriptive analysis of all independent and dependent variables in the study
    - i. Include means, standard deviations, and range of scores
  - d. For one's own scales in an instrument, discuss how survey items will be combined into scales on independent and dependent dimensions by using factor analysis
    - i. Discuss how reliability of these scales will be checked statistically for internal consistency
  - e. Identify the statistics used to compare groups or relate variables and answer the research questions or objectives of the study

***Checklist of Questions for Designing a Survey Method***

- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the purpose of the survey design stated?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are the reasons for choosing the design mentioned?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the nature of the survey (cross-sectional vs. longitudinal) identified?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are the population and size of the population mentioned?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Will the population be stratified? If so, how?
- \_\_\_\_\_ How many people will be in the sample? On what basis was this size chosen?
- \_\_\_\_\_ What will be the procedure for sampling these individuals (e.g., random, non-random?)
- \_\_\_\_\_ What instrument will be used in the survey? Who developed the instrument?
- \_\_\_\_\_ What are the content areas addressed in the survey? The scales?
- \_\_\_\_\_ What is the time line for administering the survey?
- \_\_\_\_\_ What are the variables in the study?
- \_\_\_\_\_ How do these variables cross-reference the research questions and items on the survey?
- \_\_\_\_\_ What specific steps will be taken in data analysis to (a) analyze returns, (b) check for response bias, (c) conduct a descriptive analysis, (d) collapse items into scales (if needed), (e) check for reliability of scales (if needed), and (f) run multivariate statistics to answer the research questions.