

Soc351 – Week 14 – Assignment and Paper 4

Answer each question in your own words. For questions about readings, or when you refer to material in a reading, indicate where in the reading you located an answer or the material you are summarizing by giving a citation. (Giving a citation teaches good research practice and helps us to diagnose misunderstandings.) Page number alone is fine if it is clear what source you are referring to. If it is not clear which article you are referring to, or if you are preparing the final draft of a paper, use this form for citations in the text: (author, year, p. #). Be sure to use quotes around material from your sources when appropriate.

1. Questions about Readings

In writing your answers, practice precision: Say correct things. Do not say incorrect things! For each answer, give number of the page where you located information you used in your answer.

- a. Read BCB Chapter 12 - Postsurvey Statistical Adjustments and the Methodology Report.

In your own words, what is the importance of a methodology report?

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- b. Read Vardigan, Mary B. and Peter Granda. 2010. "Archiving, Documentation, and Dissemination." Pp. 707-29 in *Handbook of Survey Research, Second Edition*.

- i. List and very briefly define six different types of missing data.

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- ii. What systems for naming variables do the authors discuss? Briefly describe each.

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2. Soc351 - Week 14 - Paper 4 - “Designing Advance Letters That Improve Participation” - Due Friday 14 December at noon.

In this paper you propose a split ballot experiment involving the advance letter for a study about news consumption. In the experiment, you vary an element in the advance letter in order to try to increase participation. The experiment has two conditions, both of which you design. You drafted letters for both conditions in Week 13. You may further refine your letters this week. The two conditions are:

- Control condition: This is the advance letter that was in Appendix A for Week 13. It is based on the draft letter that you improved in Week 13
- Experimental condition: This is the letter that was in Appendix B for Week 13. This letter varies a single feature of the letter in the control condition. Your variation should be based on your review of literature about experiments with the components and content of advance letters. Make a change to the letter that you think will increase participation.

The target population is Madison area residents and the mode is a web survey. The letters will be addressed to the household, and any adult will be allowed to answer.

Many of the components listed below will be familiar from previous assignments and you should incorporate feedback you received as part of those assignments where relevant. Use the section headings below. Some of the sections will be short, but the headings ensure that you cover needed topics.

Notes about writing: *This is a formal—not “fancy”—proposal. Show that you know what is important by what you include and what you leave out. Use simple words and simple sentences, avoid jargon, and get right to the point. This report may be no longer than 1250 words of text (excluding tables, references, and appendices).*

Here is the outline:

Word Count for Text = #

Research Question

- Give a brief statement of the research question: why it is important and what you will examine in your study.
- Your statement of the research question should be clear enough that it will tell your reader what articles are relevant to include in your literature review.

Literature

- Summarize 3-5 articles for your literature review. Focus just on the information you need to present. Focus on points that are relevant for your experiment. Be sure to address features of the studies you summarize (e.g., target population, mode, question type) that could make the results of the article more or less relevant for your experiment. Note that an article can be relevant even if it uses a different mode, different target population, and so forth. You need to make clear why you think the paper is still relevant, though.

Methods

- Describe your two versions of the advance letter in words. Show that you understand how a split ballot experiment like this is conducted. Include clear statements about the experimental manipulation and random assignment.
- Outcome measures: How will you measure your outcome(s) of interest in your analysis? Explain why your measures are appropriate.

Hypotheses and Criterion

- Draw on the literature review and your description of the experiment to present your

- hypotheses about how the variations will affect the outcome(s) you measure.
- Identify a theory in one or more of these articles that you can use as a basis for making a prediction about the change to the advance letter that you are proposing. If the theories in the articles you reviewed are not relevant, explain why not, and provide a justification for your experimental variation.
 - Describe how you will decide which letter is “better.”

Analysis Plan

- Describe how you will analyze the data.
- Make shells of any tables you will prepare. Give the tables full titles (following what you learned earlier in the semester). These must be titles that it would be possible to produce with the experiment.

Conclusion

- Provide a brief summary of your proposal and discuss any problems you anticipate.

References

- Give full references in the style used in POQ.
- Include only articles that are relevant to the topic.
- Include only articles that you have read.

Appendix A: Text of letter for control condition

Appendix B: Text of letter for experimental condition