SRAM Happenings

Antje Kirchner joined the SRAM team as a Post-Doctoral Research Associate in August 2013. Previously she was a senior researcher on the Research Department Panel “Labour Market and Social Security” and “Statistical Methods” at the Institute for Employment Research (IAB), Germany. She completed her master’s degree in Public Policy and Management at the University of Konstanz, Germany, in 2008. Antje successfully defended her doctoral thesis “Techniques for Asking Sensitive Questions in Labor Market Surveys” at the Department of Statistics of the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich (LMU) in November 2013 under the supervision of Frauke Kreuter (LMU) and Thomas Hinz (University of Konstanz).

At SRAM Antje is contributing to all three research objectives of the NCRN grant. Using survey and paradata her research focuses on assessing response quality in web surveys as well as interviewer experience in telephone surveys. Other areas of research within the field of survey methodology comprise the investigation of measurement and nonresponse error in mixed-mode surveys, question formats and questionnaire design. Furthermore Antje has conducted research in comparative politics.


SRAM Student Happenings

The fall semester always kicks off the academic year with preparations for a dynamic conference season. Fall 2013 was no exception. SRAM continued the tradition of an excellent showing of student participation with papers and posters presented at the Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research (MAPOR) conference. The papers presented are as follows:

Papers Presented - Fall Semester 2013:

Respondent Processing of Images in Web Surveys
Authors: Mathew Stange and Nuttirudee Charoenruk
MAPOR. November 2013 - Chicago, IL, USA.

Using eye tracking to evaluate the impact of visual design on speeders
Authors: Kay Ricci, Kristen Olson and Jolene Smyth
MAPOR. November 2013 - Chicago, IL, USA.

The effect of the graphic layout of question stems and rating scales on respondents’ behavior
Authors: Quan Zhou, Jolene Smyth and Kristen Olson
MAPOR. November 2013 - Chicago, IL, USA.

Using "No-opinion" Responses to Detect Satisficing: An Analysis of Paradata
Author: Mengyang Wang
MAPOR. November 2013 - Chicago, IL, USA.

Student Internships (Summer 2013):

Mia Wang (MS) did her internship this past summer with Dr. Ian Newman in the Department of Educational Psychology Department and the Nebraska Prevention Center for Alcohol and Drug Abuse as a Data Analyst. Mia’s work centered on the cleaning of data, data management, and analyzing data. Her responsibilities primarily focused on analyzing data from population transportation records of teenage drivers in Nebraska. Currently, she has completed a manuscript that will be submitted based on the results of this work.

SRAM Announcements

Fundraising:
In December 2012 the Survey Research and Methodology Program began a fundraising campaign for the SRAM Student Development Fund, which is being maintained by the University of Nebraska Foundation. The purpose of this fund is to enhance the educational experience of SRAM students. To date we have received donations in the amount of $400.

Using the input of current students, combined with suggestions from several alumni, the purpose of the
fund will be to start a student library of “must-have” research books to keep on hand for student use. Accordingly, we have developed a top twenty-six list, the top ten are titles you will no doubt recognize:

1. Survey Nonresponse (Groves et al.)
2. Measurement Errors in Surveys (Biemer et al.)
3. Survey Methodology (Groves et al.)
4. Internet, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method (Dillman et al.)
5. Improving Surveys with Paradata (Kreuter)
6. Psychology of Survey Response (Tourangeau et al.)
7. Practical Tools for Designing and Weighting Survey Samples (Valliant et al.)
8. Survey Errors and Survey Costs (Groves)
9. The Science of Web Surveys (Tourangeau et al.)
10. The Little SAS Book (Delwiche and Slaughter)

With the funds available, we will be able to purchase the top six titles. The current students have decided that the library will be managed by the SRAM Student Representative. And so, at the present time, Tim Oltman will be responsible for monitoring and circulating the collection, ensuring that only SRAM students will have access to these books and that the collection remains intact.

We hope to expand the library in the near future and this is where you come in! If you are interested in making a donation to the Student Development Fund to expand the library, you can do so here. Donations are tax deductible, and any and all amounts, no matter how large or small, are greatly appreciated. Additionally, if you have any books (on the list or not) that you would like to donate to the library, we are happy to accept them.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued support of students in the SRAM program! We always welcome your input on ideas on how this fund can be used; please direct your correspondence to Renae Reis at rreis2@unl.edu.

**SRAM Alumni Information**

The following news comes from SRAM alumni and includes everything from citations to paper presentations and job updates. Please feel free to share any information you think would be of interest to the SRAM program.

Ipek Bilgen (2011), Survey Methodologist at NORC at the University of Chicago, has recently been elected Associate Secretary-Treasurer of the Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research (MAPOR) for 2014. Following her post in 2014, she will be the Secretary-Treasurer in 2015.

Ipek is involved in research projects related to coverage error and frame construction, the role of memory in surveys, and sampling and questionnaire design issues in web surveys. Her broad research interests include Methodological Issues in Public Opinion Research, Questionnaire Design, Survey Communication, and the Use of Web and Technology in Surveys. She has published and co-authored articles in several journals including Public Opinion Quarterly, Survey Practice, Quality and Quantity, and Journal of Official Statistics.

After spending two years as a survey researcher at Mathematica Policy Research, Jamie (Marincic) Griffin (2011) returned to academia in September 2013. She is currently a senior research associate at the University of Michigan where she assists child and adolescent health researchers in the Youth and Social Issues Program at the Institute for Social Research with grant writing, survey data analysis, and manuscript preparation.

Ashley Richards (2011), is co-author on the article *Methodological Considerations in Analyzing Twitter Data*, with Annice E. Kim, Heather M. Hansen, Joe Murphy, Jennifer Duke and Jane A. Allen. (Journal of the National Cancer Institute Monograph. Vol. 2013 (47): 140-146). Their paper introduces investigators in cancer research to the logistics of Twitter analysis. “It explores methodological challenges in extracting and analyzing Twitter data, including characteristics and representativeness of data; data sources, access, and cost; sampling approaches; data management and cleaning; standardizing metrics; and analysis.”

SRAM alumni, Ana Villar (2009) and Mario Callegaro (2007), along with UNL graduate Yongwei Yang, have published the article *Where Am I? A Meta-Analysis of Experiments on the Effects of Progress Indicators for Web Surveys*, Social Science Computer Review, December 2013, vol. 31 no. 6, 744-762. From the online abstract: “The use of progress indicators seems to be standard in many online surveys. Researchers include them in surveys in the hope they will help reduce drop-offs. However, there is no consensus in the literature regarding their effects...Our results show that, overall, using a constant progress indicator does not significantly help reduce drop-offs and that
effectiveness of the progress indicator varies depending on the speed of indicator.”

Karen Nylund Gibson (2002) is co-author of the article *Deciding on the Number of Classes in Latent Class Analysis and Growth Mixture Modeling: A Monte Carlo Simulation Study* in Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal (2007: 14(4), 535–569). The article is now the third most cited article in the journal over the last three years. The abstract explains: “Mixture modeling is a widely applied data analysis technique used to identify unobserved heterogeneity in a population. Despite mixture models’ usefulness in practice, one unresolved issue in the application of mixture models is that there is not one commonly accepted statistical indicator for deciding on the number of classes in a study population.” The article can be found, in its entirety here.

Chad Bennett (2000) is now a Research Consultant at IBM (formerly Kenexa) in Lincoln.

**SRAM Faculty Notes**

SRAM faculty are busy researching, publishing, presenting, and teaching. Here are a few of the highlights from the past semesters.

Over the past summer, Dr. Allan McCutcheon taught in spring and summer programs in Montreal, Canada, Istanbul, Turkey, and at the University of Essex in the UK. He was also appointed to a 2-year term on the Methodology, Measurement, and Statistics (MMS) Advisory Panel of the National Science Foundation.

Other publications and presentations by faculty include:


The journal Public Opinion Quarterly published a special issue in 2013 “Topics in Survey Measurement and Public Opinion.” In September 2013, the DC Chapter of AAPOR held the Public Opinion Quarterly Special Issue Conference: Topics in Survey Measurement and Public Opinion in Washington, DC. Authors of articles published in the special issue were invited to present their research in the day-long gathering. Dr. Robert Belli presented his research on *Memory, Communication, and Data Quality in Calendar Interviews* and SRAM alum Jamie (Marinicic) Griffin presented *On the Use of Latent Variable Models to Detect Differences in the Interpretation of Vague Quantifiers.*


**Calendar Notes**

**January 31:** Final day to apply for a degree in May
**March 17:** Early registration for Summer Sessions
**March 23-30:** Spring Break (University is open)
**March 31:** Priority registration starts for Fall 2014
**April 28-May 3:** Last week of classes
**May 5-9:** Finals Week
**May 9:** Spring Semester Graduate Commencement
**December 24-January 1:** Holiday Closedown (UNL offices closed)

The entire academic schedule can be found here.