What’s in Survey Practice This Month

Survey and public opinion research is both messy and robust. We often find messy situations such as election polling when conditions change rapidly. We also find that survey methods are so robust that decreasing response rates have not necessarily produced less useful data.

In this first issue, we can see examples of both the messiness and the robustness of our practices. The Bishop and Mockabee article provides evidence that a standard public opinion question may not measure what we assumed it measured. The Tom Smith article shows that despite careful research, the transition from a four-point to a five-point scale was not as neat as hoped. In his interview, Ken Prewitt describes some messy situations that survey research may find itself. However the Keeter et al article shows how robust survey methods can help us to understand better an increasingly important group in the U.S. – Muslims.

FieldNotes has short notes that we hope are interesting. For the first month, we show some topics that could be included. Please send similar notes to Survey Practice for next month. FieldNotes also has a “Question of the Month” that readers could discuss.

This month, we list some questions that might be asked in the Ask the Experts column. Yor questions are welcomed.

Let us know what you think about the articles and the issues they raise.

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