DILLMAN’S TOTAL DESIGN METHOD (in a nutshell)
Dillman has examined the various ways in which researchers attempt to increase responses rates. He proposes the Total Design Method (TDM) which stresses the necessity of paying attention to all aspects of the study as opposed to one or two gimmicks. He argues that every aspect of the survey process must be examined in terms of how it can maximize the survey response rate. In general, Dillman suggests that response rates can be increased by:

1. Minimizing perceived costs of participating
2. Maximizing perceived rewards for participating
3. Convincing the potential participant that the expected rewards will be delivered

Relevant Articles:


FOUR PHASES OF RECRUITMENT
The success of research projects depends a lot on the ability of the researcher to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of research participants, yet researchers sometimes overestimate their ability to address the methodological issue of participant recruitment. Berger et al (2009) describe the research recruitment process and provides an analysis of issues and strategies. They lay out four stages of the recruitment process as follows:

1. Generating initial contacts
2. Consenting
3. Screening
4. Enrolment and retention
INFORMED CONSENT
- Potential participants are provided with all relevant information that is needed to inform their decision to participate
- Their decision should be voluntary
- They should be competent to make such a decision

HARD TO REACH GROUPS OR “HIDDEN” GROUPS
Hard to reach groups may involve individuals who are engaged in illegal or deviant practices, if their activities are of concern or disapproval by others. The Bengry-Howell and Griffin (2012) article describes three projects where they studies “Car Modifiers”, young people and alcohol use and participation in music festivals and free parties. In connecting with these hard to reach groups, they suggest it is important to recognize:
  1. The importance of establishing a credible view of oneself and one’s research
  2. The need to establish mutual trust and understanding with potential participants and gate keepers
  3. The ethical issues about how much to negotiate or “encourage” participation

Certain groups may be “hidden” due to low numbers of potential participants or the sensitive nature of the topic under study. Browne (2005) talks about how the study of sexualities is a sensitive subject because there may be risks to participants if they transgress dominant heterosexual codes. She discusses the snowball sampling approach as one method that has been used to study hard to reach, sensitive populations.
  1. Snowball sampling as a method to recruit hidden groups

Relevant Article:
2. Relying on interpersonal relations and connections both includes and excludes people
3. It’s important to recognize who it excludes and who is really hidden

Relevant Articles:


OTHER RELEVANT ARTICLES
I have found the *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* very helpful in locating information on specific qualitative and quantitative methodological issues. You might do a more refined search on your particular methodological strategies, issues or concerns or sample under study.


“This paper describes the process of recruiting participants for a qualitative interview-based study by leafleting and door knocking. It is argue that door knocking can enrich and thicken research that usually takes place “behind closed doors,” enabling researchers to engage their ethnographic imagines by observing neighbourhood interactions, familiarizing themselves with the places their participants inhabit and through the embodied, sensory experience of walking itself. By treating the recruitment process as data, it is suggested that the door knocking researcher can ensure his/her individual participants are understood as connected to the wider social, physical and sensory environment they inhabit. Door knocking is also seen as enabling researchers to find interest in an element of the research process often viewed as a somewhat irksome means to an end.”


“This article provides a candid account of the challenges two researchers faced while collecting qualitative in-depth interview data on two different studies of emotionally sensitive topics. These studies involved asking participants to describe their feelings about a difficult experience—the loss of a loved one to murder and the termination of a pregnancy. We build on the literature on feminist methodology by offering a backstage look at qualitative research on an emotional topic and with an emotionally vulnerable population. Using illustrations from our respective studies, we share some of the insights we gained on recruitment problems, interview question development and participant compensation (e.g., financial, interpersonal and follow-up contacts).
We also discuss the need for monitoring and attending to the participants’ emotions as well as our own throughout the data collection process.”


“This paper describes a flexible, multi-stage, nonprobability sampling process used in a study of persons recently diagnosed as HIV-positive (PRDH). From July 2007 to June 2008, we used venue and chain-referral sampling strategies to recruit PRDH in the US. We sought equal distributions (n = 20) of eligible PRDH from four self-identified subgroups: gay or bisexual men (GBM), heterosexual men (HM), heterosexual women (HW), and male-to-female transgender women (TGW). We categorized 30 sampling venues as websites, health clinics, or other networks. For 359 volunteer respondents, website venues proved more productive compared to health clinics and other sources. Website venues were most efficient for sampling recently diagnosed GBM and HW. Passive sampling methods were less effective in recruiting HM and TGW. Sampling approaches should be flexible and tailored to reach sub-categories within hidden populations. The sampling process itself produced valuable knowledge about social networks of hidden HIV populations.”


“This article explores the interactions between researchers and potential respondents when recruiting for a door-to-door survey. Researchers’ reflective accounts suggest a range of tactics used to influence potential participation in research that draws upon contrasting identities and roles for researchers and participants. In examining these roles, the paper demonstrates the ways in which, while fleeting, the interactions between researcher and respondents involve impression management strategies and are entangled in negotiations of power and status. In reflecting on some of the practices behind door-step recruiting in survey research, we show how gaining consent to participate is about negotiating researcher and respondent roles. In doing so, we hope to encourage debate about the importance of identity, the ethics of consent and issues of reflexivity in survey-based research.”


“While approaches to the analysis of multiple perspectives have been explored, the earlier stage of arranging fieldwork with multiple family members has received relatively little reflection within the literature. Drawing on data from a qualitative study exploring family communication about sex and sexuality, this paper examines parents' and children's accounts of how their families became involved in the research. A key finding notes how dynamics of parent–child communication about sex were played out through families' interactions concerning research participation. Particular focus is paid to the ways in which information about the study was mediated between parents and children and also individuals' differential agendas for participation. Evidence of the persuasive practices of some parents to engage their families in
research underlines the importance of accessing all potential participants directly. The paper concludes by highlighting the importance of sensitisation to interactions between family members themselves when engaging families in research.”


“In this article, I will show how groups with low human and social capital are less likely to volunteer to participate in research, if participation entails no direct personal benefits for respondents. Consequently, if our research was to be based solely on volunteers, our knowledge of social practices would be biased. This bias would often be in favour of groups with high human and social capital, who are also more likely to have their voices heard in other arenas; while more marginalised groups remain unheard. In order to get access to all respondent groups, various forms and degrees of institutional, economic and emotional pressure are widely used to recruit respondents for interviews. Although such practices are common, it is still taboo in many research communities to acknowledge that pressure is applied. I argue that it can be defended to apply pressure in some instances, even if this reduces the respondents’ opportunity to freely consent. However, if pressure is applied, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that respondents are not put at any risk of harm. To facilitate research that is ethically sound, research communities could benefit from widening their focus, from one strongly focused on informed consent to a wider awareness of factors that can entail risk of harm for participants.”
List of Student Recruitment Attachments

Kapell Recruitment Poster

Vermeylen Recruitment Flyer
Vermeylen Questionnaire

Desjarlais de Klerk Poster
Desjarlais de Klerk Consent
ARE YOU A SINGLE WOMAN WHO HAS USED, OR IS USING, MEDICALLY ASSISTED INSEMINATION?

YOUR PARTICIPATION IS INVITED!

I am a Master’s student interested in understanding the experiences of unpartnered women who have chosen to try and conceive through the use of medically assisted insemination. I want to talk with you and learn about your journey through this process with the goal of understanding this important time in your life. Overall, this research aims to broaden the understandings surrounding this topic.

I would like to invite you to contribute your experiences to this important project.

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to take part in an interview. This interview will be conducted via Skype. If an interview is inconvenient for you, you may choose to complete a written questionnaire and submit it via email. This research is not location specific. Any single woman who has or is using assisted insemination may participate!

For more information about this study, or to volunteer, please contact:

Ms. Brandi Kapell
Department of Sociology
Faculty of Arts
University of Calgary
(587) 226-1389
bkapell@ucalgary.ca

OR

Dr. Fiona Nelson
Department of Sociology
Faculty of Arts
University of Calgary
(403) 220-5267
nelsonf@ucalgary.ca

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics approval through, The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board.
Are a parent with a child age five or younger? Are you parenting with a partner and are currently living together?

If so, would you be interested in discussing your experience with parenting advice that you have read for a research project through the University of Calgary?

I am a Master’s student at the University of Calgary conducting research towards my degree in Sociology. I am interested in the sources that parents read in regards to parenting advice and the meanings and application of these sources in their daily lives.

Participants would be asked to partake in a personal interview that would last between 30-90 minutes. This interview would be conducted where ever is most convenient for you.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this study. Your interview comments will be kept confidential and a pseudonym will be assigned to you.

For more information, or to volunteer for this study, please contact:

Ms. Laurie Vermeylen
Department of Sociology
Faculty of Arts
(403) 827-5020
lvermeyl@ucalgary.ca

Image citation: Tampa Band Photos, “Baby Waving with Parents in Background” November 22, 2009, via Flickr, Creative Commons Licence
Parenting Advice Questionnaire

Thank you for partaking in this research. This brief questionnaire is one stage of a graduate research thesis at the University of Calgary titled “Investigating Parenting Advice Literature”. Laurie Vermeylen, a Master’s Degree student in the department of Sociology, is conducting this research with her supervisor, Dr. Gillian Ranson.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you have the ability to withdraw at any time by simply discarding this questionnaire. Your comments provided below will be kept in a secure location, only accessed by the two researchers involved in this study. The data collected here will be kept anonymous and stored with no identifying details. It will be kept digitally for three years and then permanently erased. Please do not put your name on this questionnaire unless you wish to be contacted to participate further in this study.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study. If you have any comments or complaints regarding this research, please contact the Senior Ethics Resource Officer, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 220-3782 or by email at rburrows@ucalgary.ca. By submitting a completed or partially-completed questionnaire, you are indicating your consent as a participant in this part of this research study.

Which, if any, of the following types of parenting advice have you read in the last few years? Please indicate any titles and/or authors and/or sites where possible. (Check all that apply)

☐ Books? Title(s):

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

☐ Magazines? Title(s):

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
Websites? Site(s):
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Other sources?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Of the sources you listed above, which specific book/magazine/website/etc. of parenting advice would you say has been the most helpful?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Do you have any additional comments that you would like to make regarding the parenting advice that you have read?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
Do you currently have a child age five or younger? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Are you parenting with a partner and are currently living together? [ ] Yes [ ] No

If you answered yes to both of these questions, would you be interested in learning more about this study and possibly participating further in this study? [ ] Yes [ ] No

If you would be willing to be interviewed on this topic please leave your name and contact information.

Name: __________________________________________________________

Phone Number: __________________________________________________

Email Address: __________________________________________________

Thank you very much for your time. Your comments are greatly appreciated.
WHO DO YOU TALK TO?

I am a university student doing research on homelessness and I would like to talk with you about your experiences, and where you go when you need to talk to someone.

For your participation, you will receive a $25 Tim Horton’s gift card.

If you have questions or would like to participate, contact Kristen - (587) 223-7396, kdesjarl@ucalgary.ca
Verbal Consent form

My name is Kristen Desjarlais de Klerk and I am a PhD student at the University of Calgary. I’m working on my research project with Professor Wallace at the U of C.

I’m studying the experiences of homelessness and moving into housing. You were identified as someone who might participate in my study because of your connection to the SEED. As someone who has used the SEED, I was hoping you would let me talk to you about your experiences, which will be recorded, and should take about an hour. I would like to ask you some questions about your health, who you talk to if you need to talk to someone and where you are currently living. If you would like to do this, I would also like to offer you $25 Tim Horton’s coupon, as my way of thanking you for your time. Do you think you would be interested in talking to me about these things?

If you agree to talk to me, I need to go through some information that is required by the university so it’s clear what we’re going to be doing.

First, talking to me is **totally voluntary**. This means you don’t have to talk to me, if you don’t want to answer certain questions you don’t have to, or if you want to quit part way through, you can. If you choose to quit, your answers from this interview will not be used, however, any answers from previous interviews will be. The people at the SEED do not know who agrees to talk to me and they won’t be able to know what you tell me either.

Second, your **answers are private**. This means that you cannot be linked to what you tell me. Again, the SEED will not be able to look at what you tell me and when I summarize the information people tell me about their experiences, I’ll present it in such a way that you cannot be identified by what you tell me. Your name will not be identified with your information, only an id number.

Third, this recording will be kept in a **locked location** at the University. Members of the SEED, its staff, and any other clients will NOT be able to look at, read, or hear what we talk about today. Only Professor Wallace and myself will be able to listen to whatever you have to say. This recording will be typed out and stored indefinitely and may be used for future research projects or teaching, but again, you and your answers won’t be identified down the road.

Lastly, in three months and again in six months, I’ll be checking in to see if you’ll talk to me again, similar to this. Again, you’ll be asked about your experiences. Now, even if you decide to talk to me today, you don’t have to next time I ask. That is entirely up to you.

So would you like to do this?