

ONLINE SURVEY TOPICS



Image Credit: [Craig Taylor](#)

IMPORTANT: Assess your access to participants BEFORE selecting your survey topics.

Typically researchers identify their research questions first; then, the researchers identify the population that would be the best to sample to answer their research questions.

However, for your survey in this class, you should assess your access to research participants before deciding on your topics. Simply put: If you don't have enough access to the research participants that you need, you won't be able to answer your research questions.

How much access do you need? You will be required to pilot test your survey with **three pilot participants** from the same population as your actual participants.

You will then be required to administer and collect data (using your survey) from a different set of **10 (non-pilot, actual) participants**. Your data from these 10 (non-pilot, actual) participants must be complete. That is, if one participant agrees to complete your survey, but drops out (or otherwise fails to complete your survey), you will need to replace that participant.

Therefore, you will need access to approximately 15 participants.

IMPORTANT: You are not allowed to solicit as research participants people you do not already know (or ask instructors for access to students in their class).

Researchers usually ensure their research sample is not biased by, among other factors, being relatives or friends with the researcher. However, for your survey in this class, you should only solicit as participants people you already know.

Do NOT ask instructors (including the instructor of this class) if you can solicit research participants from their class. Your research participants can be other members of this class, but you must already know the students (do not 'cold-call' other class members).

Do you have better access to college students than to members of the general population?

If so, you should select from the "**Survey Topics with College Students as Participants.**"

Do you have better access to members of the general population than to college students?

If so, you should select from the "**Survey Topics with General Population Participants.**"

Survey Topics with College Students as Participants

Multi-Tasking while Studying

Do college students multi-task while studying? If yes, why? If no, why not? Do students think their multi-tasking helps or harms their studying? Do students think other students' multi-tasking helps or harms those other students' studying?

If you choose this topic, you'll need to have clear operational definitions of multi-tasking, studying, the construct of "harm," and the construct of "other students."



Working while Attending College

Do students work at paid jobs while attending college? If so, why? If no, why not? If students do work at paid jobs while attending college, do they think their paid jobs facilitate or impede their progress in college?

If you choose this topic, you'll need to have clear operational definitions of paid jobs, attending college (e.g., full-time versus part-time), and facilitating versus impeding progress.



Paying for Textbooks

How much do students pay for textbooks (on average) each semester? Do they think the cost of textbooks is reasonable? If yes, why? If no, why not? What do students do to control textbook costs? What do students think about classes that don't require textbooks or classes that require textbooks but don't fully use those required textbooks?

If you choose this topic, you will need to have clear operational definitions of textbooks (and not fully using textbooks), along with good metrics for gathering expense and costs data.



Choosing a Major

When do students choose their major (before they enroll in college, during or after their first, second, third, or fourth year)? What factors influence students to choose different majors?

If you choose this topic, you will need to have clear operational definitions of what it means to choose a major and good metrics for identifying influencing factors.



Motivations for Attending College

Why do students attend college? What are their motivations? Are their motivations intellectual (and scholarly), financial (future job prospects), social, societal, or even familial (e.g., their parents expected them to attend college)?

If you choose this topic, you'll need to have clear operational definitions of the types of motivations (e.g., intellectual, financial, etc).



Student Organizations

Are students involved in student organizations on their college campus? If yes, why? If no, why not? What benefits do students think they (or other students) derive from their involvement in student organizations?

If you choose this topic, you'll need to have clear operational definitions of student organizations, what it means to be involved in a student organization, and what it means for student government to be effective.



Student Debt

How much debt do students anticipate incurring before they graduate? How much debt have students already incurred? How do students feel about college-debt? How do they plan to pay off the debt? Do they think the debt is worth it? If yes, why? If no, why not?

If you choose this topic, you'll need to have clear operational definitions of debt, paying off debt, and debt being "worth it." You might also want to distinguish between students incurring debt and their parents or guardians incurring debt.



Stereotypes about Majors

What stereotypes do students have about students who are various majors (e.g., Psychology, Engineering, Business, Physical Education, Math, History)? Do students think these stereotypes are accurate? If yes, why? If not, why not?

If you choose this topic, you will need to have a clear operational definition of what a stereotype is and good metrics for assessing stereotype accuracy.



Survey Topics with General Population Participants

Texting while Driving

Do people text while driving? If yes, why? If no, why not? Do people think their texting interferes with their driving? Do people think other people text while driving?

If you choose this topic, you will need to have clear operational definitions of texting, driving, and what it means to “interfere with driving.”



Job Satisfaction

Are people satisfied with their jobs? If yes, why? If no, why not? Do people think that other people are satisfied with their jobs? If yes, why? If no, why not? What factors do people think are associated with job satisfaction?

If you choose this topic, you will need to have clear operational definitions of jobs and job satisfaction.



Dream Vacations

Where are persons' dream vacations? Why are these vacations their dreams? What characteristics (e.g., climate, geography, activities, etc) contribute to the vacations being persons' dream vacations?

If you choose this topic, you will need to have clear operational definitions of vacations and dream vacations.



Online Reviews

Do people use online reviews? If yes, why? If no, why not? Do people think online reviews contribute to their purchasing decisions? If yes, why? If not, why not? Do people think other consumers use online reviews?

If you choose this topic, you will need to have clear operational definitions of online reviews; you might also want to collect frequency data (how frequently do people use online reviews).



Apple versus Windows (or iPhone vs Android)

Do people prefer Apple (computers) or Windows (computers)? If people prefer Apple, why do they prefer Apple? If people prefer Windows, why do they prefer Windows? What demographic or other variables (characteristics) might account for people's preferences for Apple versus Windows?

You can instead conduct this survey to measure iPhone versus Android preferences, but you cannot do both topics (both Apple vs Windows AND iPhone vs Android) for your two surveys - just one of the topics.



Food Speed versus Food Quality

Do people prefer food speed (quick to cook or quick to purchase) or food quality? If people prefer food speed, why? If they prefer food quality, why? What demographic or other variables (characteristics) might account for people's preferences for food speed versus food quality?

If you choose this topic, you will need to have clear operational definitions of food that's quick to cook or obtain and food that's high quality.



Diet Soda versus Water?

Do people prefer diet soda or water? If people prefer diet soda, why? If people prefer water, why? What demographic or other variables (characteristics) might account for people's preferences for diet soda versus water?

If you choose this topic, you might want to ensure that you also collect frequency data (how frequently do people drink diet soda vs water) as well as preference data.



Dogs versus Cats?

Do people prefer dogs as pets or cats as pets? If people prefer dogs, why do they prefer dogs? If people prefer cats, why do they prefer cats? What demographic or other variables (characteristics) might account for people's preferences for dogs versus cats?

If you choose this topic, you will need to have clear operational definitions of what it means to have a pet.

