

WSS NEWS

WASHINGTON STATISTICAL SOCIETY

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SEMINARS

Title: **The Impact Working Memory in Survey Methodology: A Look at Response Order Effects, Question Order Effects, and the Health and Retirement Study Cognitive Measure**

Date/Time: **August 8, 2017/10:00 – 11:30 AM (ET)**

Speaker: Beth Cochran, University of Nebraska

Discussant: Robert Belli, University of Nebraska

Chair: TBD

Sponsor: WSS Methodology Section

Abstract: It has been theorized that working memory plays a role in survey methodology contributing to response order and question order effects, however, there is little empirical evidence linking working memory and survey context effects. This dissertation examines whether respondents' working memory influences response order and question order effects through incorporating working memory measures into the survey questionnaire. The sample was randomly assigned to complete the survey via telephone or web, and respondents completed a series of working memory measures and attitudinal questions.

It was hypothesized that as working memory capacity improved there would be a decrease in the likelihood of respondents of all ages selecting the options associated with response order effects. Results support the hypothesis for younger adults who became less susceptible to response order effects as working memory improves, however, for older adults the results adversely indicate that improvement in working memory leads to respondents being more likely to select the early responses in web and late responses in telephone. The results are present for questions with a short list of two responses and for questions with a longer list of six responses.

Where question order effects are concerned, it was hypothesized that respondents with higher working memory would be more likely to be influenced by the preceding question than those with low working memory. In general, the results provide only modest support that working memory has a significant impact on question order effects. In only one of three pairs of questions analyzed did working memory have

a significant effect indicating that respondents with higher working memory are more likely to exhibit contrast effects than respondents with lower working memory.

As another objective, this dissertation included a subset of the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) cognitive measures into the survey to assess whether they adequately reflect respondents' working memory. Comparing the working memory and HRS measures, the results show significant differences between the measures indicating they reflect different underlying cognitive constructs. These findings indicate that the cognitive section of the HRS, and similar studies, may benefit from including measures designed specifically for working memory.

Location: Bureau of Labor Statistics Janet Norwood Conference Center, Room 8

To be placed on the seminar attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics, you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after 'wss') by noon at least two days in advance of the seminar. Please bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station. Parking in the area of BLS is available at Union Station. For parking information see <http://www.unionstationdc.com/parking>. No validation is available from BLS for reduced parking rates.

WebEx: WebEx event address:
<https://dol.webex.com/dol/j.php?MTID=md8e524119d488c5fbcfefe84ca7141e>

For audio: Call-in toll-free number (Verizon): 1-866-865-9536 (US)
Call-in number (Verizon): 1-517-966-0857 (US)
Attendee access code: 744 124 3

Note: Particular computer configurations might not be compatible with WebEx.

Title: **A Model-Assisted Regression Tree Estimator**

Date/Time: **November 13, 2017/12:30 – 2:00 PM (ET)**

Speakers: Kelly McConville, Swarthmore College

Chair: Daniell Toth, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Sponsor: WSS Methodology Section

Abstract: Auxiliary information can increase the efficiency of survey estimators when the estimator accurately captures the relationship between the variable of interest and the auxiliary variables. Under a model-assisted framework, we present a regression tree estimator for a finite population mean. Regression trees can capture important interactive effects missed by linear regression and do not suffer from multicollinearity issues when the auxiliary variables are highly collinear. We establish consistency of the model-assisted regression tree estimator and compare its performance to other survey estimators using the US Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment Statistics data.

Location: Bureau of Labor Statistics Janet Norwood Conference Center, Room 8

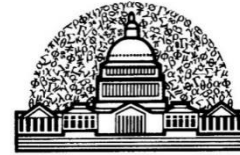
To be placed on the seminar attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics, you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after 'wss') by noon at least two days in advance of the seminar. Please bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station. Parking in the area of BLS is available at Union Station. For parking information see <http://www.unionstationdc.com/parking>. No validation is available from BLS for reduced parking rates.

WebEx: WebEx event address:
<https://dol.webex.com/dol/j.php?MTID=m595cc11bc289bb563c3981dc5a53aff>

For audio: Call-in toll-free number (Verizon): 1-866-747-9048 (US)
Call-in number (Verizon): 1-517-233-2139 (US)
Attendee access code: 938 454 2

Note: Particular computer configurations might not be compatible with WebEx.

CONFERENCE



Call for Presentation and Poster Session Abstracts Summer Conference Preview/Review 2017

**Hosted by the DC-Baltimore Chapter of the American Association for Public
Opinion Research and
the Washington Statistical Society
Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center, Washington DC**

July 24, 2017

We know you can't travel to every conference, so DC-AAPOR and WSS are teaming up once again to bring you a sample of exemplary presentations (both talks and posters) taking place at this year's national and international conferences. At the 2017 Summer Conference Preview/Review, you will get the opportunity to share your work, hear what others are doing, and connect with colleagues.

We are currently seeking presenters (both talks and posters) who presented or will be presenting at the following 2017 conferences:

- American Association for Public Opinion Research Conference
- Joint Statistical Meetings
- European Survey Research Association Conference
- International Field Directors and Technologies Conference
- International Total Survey Error Workshop
- International Workshop on Survey Nonresponse
- Women in Statistics and Data Science Conference
- World Association for Public Opinion Research Conference
- Other survey methodology conferences

We also invite speakers whose papers were accepted but who were unable to present.

Please submit abstracts that have already been prepared, submitted, and accepted to a 2017 conference. If you would like **to submit a presentation or poster for consideration**, please fill out the following form:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2017summerconferencesubmission>. Submissions close on June 16th. Individuals will be notified of acceptance decisions by June 23rd.

Registration for the conference will open **June 23rd**, and **early-bird registration will end July 13th**. Registration is open to everyone, and presenters receive a discount. Registration prices are as follows:

- Presenters:
 - Students - \$25.00
 - Everyone else - \$40
- Early Bird (on or before July 13th):
 - Student/Retirees - \$35.00
 - DC-AAPOR and WSS Members - \$50.00
 - Non-Members - \$85.00
- Late Registration (after July 13th)
 - Student/Retirees: \$60.00
 - DC-AAPOR and WSS Members: \$75.00
 - Late Non-Members: \$100.00

For questions, please contact the conference chairs:

Paul Scanlon pscanlon@cdc.gov

Pam McGovern pam.mcgovern@nass.usda.gov

CALL FOR PAPERS

Federal Committee on
STATISTICAL METHODOLOGY

**Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology
Research and Policy Conference**

March 7-9, 2018

Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Washington, DC

Call for Papers is now open through August 29, 2017

The Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM) is pleased to announce the call for papers is now OPEN for a combined research and policy conference on March 7-9, 2018.

This three-day conference will bring together experts in the statistical community from government, private sector, and academia to discuss and exchange current research and methodological knowledge relevant to statistical programs, as well as, related issues in statistical policy.

The FCSM is accepting abstracts for individual paper submissions and organized paper sessions. The **Call for Papers** and the **Abstract Submission Template** are now available on the FCSM website. [Click here to view](#).

Please note that authors and presenters are responsible for their travel expenses, but the registration fee is waived for one presenter per paper.

QUESTIONS

For abstract or program questions, contact Andrew Zukerberg, Program Chair, at Andrew.zukerberg@ed.gov.

For other conference information or to be included on the mailing list, contact Mae Pattison, Conference Coordinator, at fcsm.conf@gmail.com.

Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology

[Visit the FCSM website](#)

fcsm.conf@gmail.com

WSS MEMBERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT!

Washington Statistical Society

Member Spotlight

Introducing your fellow members and showcasing the diversity of the WSS membership



Meet WSS Member Beth Ann Griffin...

Where do you work and what do you do?

I work at the RAND Corporation where I co-direct RAND's Center for Causal Inference (CCI). As a statistician at RAND, I collaborate with diverse project teams to tackle problems across a range of public policy areas. Currently, I am working on simulation studies aimed at understanding the statistical properties (e.g., power, type I error) of commonly used models for evaluating gun control policies. I am also leading an NIH grant devoted to finding optimal treatments for adolescent substance users by applying robust dynamic treatment models to observational study data. I also do research on understanding how neighborhoods where we live impact our health, and on military health.

What attracted you to your current position?

The people and the problems! Working at RAND as a statistician is like "being a kid in a candy store." There are so many meaningful projects to work on, and the folks who work here are wonderful to work with – smart and collegial.

Finish the sentence: "I joined WSS to..."

have a local network of statisticians and enhance my professional development.

What was your first job?

My first job when I was a teenager was at Funland – a small amusement park in Rehoboth Beach, DE.

Why did you join the statistics profession?

I originally thought I would pursue pure mathematics but soon realized that statistics was a better fit for me. I like that statistics is tied to something real and that there is a sense of urgency behind the work we do.

What skills are most important for the next generation of statistics professionals?

Communication skills! It is critical as a statistician to be able to communicate well to non-statisticians, for example, to the individuals in the community who consume our work.

What profession other than your own would you like to attempt?

Professional Modern Ballet Dancer and Choreographer. I started taking ballet lessons when I was three years old and truly love performing and taking dance classes. I also enjoy choreographing my own pieces. I have created over a dozen pieces for my dance troupes in high school, college, and graduate school.

What is your favorite daily ritual?

Snuggling with my children before they go to bed.



What is your favorite meal or local restaurant?

Komi. It is definitely worth a once-in-a-lifetime splurge! From the sashimi starters to the delicious main entrée (goat shoulder or lamb usually), every dish melts in your mouth. The chef at Komi designs the menu and plans the meal for his guests. Also, I highly recommend the wine pairing to compliment the meal and make for a truly special evening.

What is your favorite vacation spot?

Thailand. The beaches and scenery are absolutely gorgeous.

Have you had any great career mentors? If so, what made them great?

I have had so many great mentors who have impacted my work. They were great because they cared, they listened, and they were great teachers.

Washington Statistical Society

Member Spotlight

Introducing your fellow members and showcasing the diversity of the WSS membership



Meet WSS Member Will Cecere...

Where do you work and what do you do?

I am currently a Senior Statistician in the statistical group at Westat and have been here for almost four years after working 8 years for the National Agricultural Statistics Service. I primarily work on sampling and weighting activities but try to do some Small Area Estimation and other modeling when I get a chance. I have enjoyed working on a variety of projects in transportation, education, Veteran's affairs, and health.

What attracted you to your current position?

I was initially impressed with the collection of senior statisticians as a great group to learn from and the management organization. The more I learned about it and talked with people that worked there, I felt it was a great fit for me from both a technical and personality standpoint.

Finish the sentence: "I joined WSS to..."

keep connected to friends and former colleagues in addition to meeting new statisticians. I had been attending seminars prior to being a member but I felt it would be better to be an active participant in the community. So far, it has been the best avenue to stay professionally connected in the area.

Why did you join the statistics profession?

I had always loved math growing up but felt it would be difficult to make a career in pure mathematics once I got to college. I had a particularly influential undergraduate advisor at Virginia Tech named Michelle Marini who convinced me that statistics was the way to go. I had always loved many of the sciences in school but could never decide which one I liked best. I think that statistics is a great option for someone who would like to dip their hand in many fields of science.

What other profession would you like to attempt?

I was very close to majoring in music performance. I had spent much time growing up playing the Viola. I participated in orchestra and chamber music settings and attended several music festivals in preparation for a

career in music. I think I saw a more stable career path in the statistics profession but I still enjoy playing on occasion as an amateur.

If you could have dinner with 3 people from history, who would they be?

After a recent family trip to Italy, I was pretty enamored by the works of the great artists and architects from the renaissance period. I would have to pick the underrated Filippo Brunelleschi for his invention of linear perspective, Raphael Sanzio for clarity of composition and, of course, Michelangelo Buonarroti for his mastery of the human form.

What was the last book that you read?

The Origin of Science and the Science of Its Origin. This was a fascinating read from a physicist named Stanley Jaki, who spent the later part of his career as a historian and philosopher of science. He took an interesting approach to his studies by examining past cultures and diagnosing why modern science arose when and where it did.

What is your favorite vacation spot?

I've always been a big fan of the National Park Service. Among my favorites that I have visited would be the Grand Tetons, Zion, and Yosemite National Parks for their hiking, camping, and general grandeur.

How do you like to spend your free time?

I have two daughters, ages 2 and 9 months. Almost all of my spare time is spent with them and my lovely wife. We enjoy musical activities, hiking, and trips to the beach.

Have you had any great career mentors?

I have been fortunate in having help from many great individuals. Phil Kott and Jaki McCarthy were very helpful to me when I worked at NASS and encouraged my work there. I was fortunate enough to work with Malay Ghosh when he was a contractor with NASS and he offered a great balance of teaching and independent exploration. He also helped guide me to Westat. Finally, David Morganstein at Westat has been very helpful with career guidance the last few years.

SPOTLIGHT A WSS MEMBER!

Washington Statistical Society's Spotlight on Members Program

The WSS Board of Directors has established a program to highlight members who have made or are making notable contributions to the work of their organization or their professional field of expertise. We know that WSS members are doing interesting work in the fields of statistics, survey methodology, and the social sciences. Through this program, we hope to spotlight the accomplishments of our fellow WSS members.

This is our first request for nominations, to be featured in an upcoming issue of WSS News. We are interested in featuring members at all levels of the employment spectrum including recent graduates, mid-career employees, and those seasoned veterans.

Please feel free to nominate more than one person or a team working together. You may also nominate yourself as well. The nominees must be members of the WSS and not currently affiliated with the Board.

Please provide us with the following information about your nominee or nominees.

1. Your name, email address, and telephone number
2. Name or names of nominee(s)
3. Organizational affiliation
4. Job title
5. Their contact information including email address and telephone number
6. A brief narrative describing the reasons for your nomination
7. A photo of the nominee, although not required, would be greatly appreciated

Please submit your nominations or direct any questions to, Wendy Barboza (Wendy.Barboza@nass.usda.gov), member of the WSS Board.

We look forward to hearing from you.

SHORT COURSE

Power and Sample Size for Multilevel and Longitudinal Study Designs

A Short Course for Researchers



OVERVIEW

The **Georgetown-Howard Universities Center for Clinical and Translational Science** is delighted to sponsor and support a three-day power and sample size workshop. The short course, taught by **Keith E. Muller**, Ph.D., professor in the University of Florida College of Medicine, and **Deborah H. Glueck**, Ph.D., associate professor in the University of Colorado School of Public Health, will give scientists training for selecting a valid sample size for longitudinal and multilevel study designs. The workshop is accessible to all, from graduate students to senior researchers, and requires only basic statistical background.



OBJECTIVES

- Understand a framework and strategy for study planning
- Write study aims as testable hypotheses
- Describe a longitudinal and multilevel study design
- Write a statistical analysis plan
- Ensure sufficient sample size for subgroups for studies of disparities
- Demonstrate the feasibility of recruitment
- Describe expected missing data and dropout
- Write a power and sample size analysis that is aligned with the planned statistical analysis
- Write the design, analysis, power and sample size sections for a grant



LOCATION

Louis Stokes Health Sciences Library, Room 138..... August 28-30, 2017 (9a.m.-5p.m.)
501 W Street NW, Washington, D.C., 20059

Visit ctsi.ufl.edu/SampleSizeCourse for more locations and information.



The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health. Materials for the course were developed with support from NIH OBSSR and NIGMS via IR25GM111801-01, "A Master Course on Power for Multilevel and Longitudinal Health Behavior Studies," 08/25/2014-06/30/2018. Additional support was provided by the Center for Bioethics and Humanities of the University of Colorado Denver, the University of Florida (UF) Clinical and Translational Science Institute, the UF Department of Health Outcomes and Policy, and Federal funds (UL1TR001409) from the National Center for Advancing Translational Services (NCATS), National Institutes of Health, through the Clinical and Translational Science Awards Program (CTSA), a trademark of DHHS, part of the Roadmap Initiative, "Re-Engineering the Clinical Research Enterprise.

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FROM THE WSS NEWS EDITOR

Items for publication in the **August, 2017** issue of WSS NEWS will be accepted thru the **30th of the preceding month.**

Email items to wss.editor@gmail.com.

The authors are responsible for verifying the contents of their submissions. Submissions requiring extensive revisions on length and/or contents will be returned. Announcements with track changes will not be accepted.

Please submit all materials as an attachment in **MS WORD** or **plain text**. Submissions in any other format will be returned.

PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT YOUR ITEMS IN PDF OR IN THE BODY OF AN EMAIL.