

Travel Survey Methods

TRB Committee ABJ40

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Chair Update

The first quarter of 2008 has proven to be a very busy start to an exciting year! I want to thank all subcommittee chairs and others for putting together an excellent set (and a record number) of Calls for Papers. I encourage everyone to consider submitting, on these and other topics.

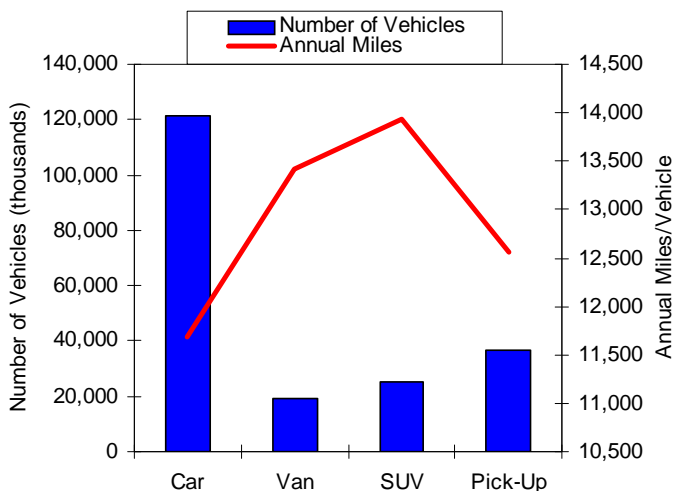
I look forward to seeing all who are headed to Anney for the International Conference on Survey Methods in Transport. Our mid-year committee meeting is from 9 to 11 am on Tuesday, May 27th. We will discuss the soon-to-emerge (on-line) Travel Surveys Manual, (a living document for your enhancements), results of the Data Section Retreat, and sessions and logistics for the 2009 Annual Meeting.

Best wishes, Kara Kockelman

Conference Watch

- ISCTSC, May 2008
- IASSIST, May 2008
- AAPOR, May 2008
- TRB Midyear, June 2008
- NATMEC, August 2008
- Tools of the Trade, September 2008
- TRB Demographics, October 2008

Focus on Transportation Data — Travel and Energy Use



Source: 2001 National Household Travel Survey

A number of factors effect fuel consumption in the U.S., such as total driving population and annual vehicle miles of travel per driver. According the National Household Travel Survey (NHTS) data series, both of these have nearly doubled since 1969.

Other factors, such as the fleet mix (varying proportion of cars, vans, and SUVs), the fuel efficiency of vehicles, and the level of use of these vehicles, effect total fuel consumption. Fuel efficiency standards are based on the fleet average of all the vehicle types that is sold. However, these standards do not take into account the amount of use for each vehicle type. For example, although more cars are sold than other vehicle types, on average cars are driven fewer miles per year than pick-ups, vans, and SUVs.

Data Section Retreat Summary

The Data and Information Systems Section held a retreat at the Beckham Center in Irvine, CA on March 19th and 20th. The focus was to develop a 3-5 year shared vision on data and information system priorities.

Mark McCourt attended on behalf of ABJ40. The Retreat resulted in the identification of 12 crosscutting issues. These included interests such as national stewardship, emerging data needs, national survey sustainability, privacy issues in data use, and extending technology. Each initiative was expanded upon to identify potential action items. If you would like to become involved in any of the Section efforts, please let Kara know.

The Retreat was a successful example of finding common interests and priorities among our Sections' 11 committees—a diverse group with many research and data interests. The full summary of the Retreat can be found on our website (www.travelsurveymethods.org)

Predicting Response Rates

A recent article by Kay Axhausen, *Predicting Response Rate: A Natural Experiment*, addresses the issue of estimating respondent burden and predicting response rates.

Currently, little guidance is available researchers to estimate the interviewer hours required to successfully conduct transportation research. In coordination with Ursula Raymann of the Zurich-based Gesellschaft für Sozialforschung, a series of self-administered surveys given a point rating for respondent burden by the type of question and required action. The natural experience found a very strong link between the independent assessment of respondent burden and the response rate for the study.

Confirmation of this approach in other surveys is needed as it would provide a real breakthrough in the accuracy of estimates when planning and designing studies. Kay's full article can be found at <http://www.ivt.ethz.ch/vpl/publications/reports/ab434.pdf>

Calls for Papers—TRB 2009 Annual Meeting

Our Committee is sponsoring the following Calls for Papers for the 2009 TRB Annual Meeting:

Passively Collected Travel Data: Issues of Access, Storage, Quality Control, Validation, and Application
Contact: Jesse Simon (simonj@metro.net)

Best Practices in Transportation Stated Preference Survey Design
Contact: Eric Molin (E.J.E.Molin@tudelft.nl) or Stacey Falzarano (sfalzarano@rsginc.com)

Household Travel Survey Design for Regional Travel Demand Models
Contact: Guy Rousseau (GRousseau@atlantaregional.com) or Jimmy Armoogu (Jimmy.Armoogum@inrets.fr)

Using New Technologies to Reduce Respondent Burden in Transportation Surveys
Contact: Elaine Murakami (Elaine.Murakami@dot.gov)

Qualitative Survey Methods for Understanding and Anticipating Energy-related Behaviors and Climate Change Opinions
Contact: Rob Sheldon (Rob.Sheldon@accent-mr.com)