

Research Methods (HDFS 3390), Alan Reifman, Texas Tech University

Introductory Lectures

The first known survey ever conducted by Dr. Reifman:

CAFETERIA SURVEY
by Alan Reifman

I took a recent survey of the school asking people what their favorite and least favorite foods in the cafeteria are.
Here are the results:

<u>Favorites</u>		<u>Least Favorites</u>	
Taco Burger	16 votes	Chicken Salad	28 votes
Grilled Cheese	14 votes	Chili Beans	7 votes
Turkey	12 votes	Spaghetti	6 votes
Hamburger	7 votes	Sloppy Joes	6 votes
Spaghetti	5 votes	Burritos	5 votes
Burrito	5 votes	Fish Sticks	4 votes
Hot Dogs	4 votes	Grilled Cheese	1 vote
Sloppy Joes	3 votes	Hot Dogs	1 vote
Chili Beans	2 votes	Hamburgers	1 vote
Fish Sticks	1 vote		

I also found out that the favorite week consists of Spaghetti, Hot Dogs, Turkey, Taco Burgers and Grilled Cheese. The least favorite week consists of Spaghetti, Burritos, Chili Beans, Hamburgers and Chicken salad.

Among those that were interviewed were Mrs. Luchsinger, Mrs. Bray and the students of our school.

(Warner Ave. School, Los Angeles, CA, March 1974, as a 6th grader)

Ways to Approach this Class

You will probably find this class **very different** from your other classes in the HDFS department.

The other classes have **content areas** relating to some part of the lifespan (infancy, early childhood, adolescence, adulthood, etc.) or to family/close relationships.

Here, in research methods, you will learn a **set of tools** for doing studies of children, adolescents, couples, etc.

Research from the State U. of New York at Buffalo suggests that taking a course like research methods (at Buffalo it's called Methods of Inquiry) can improve your thinking skills and [raise your GPA](#).

Rather than thinking about research methods as a complex topic involving statistics and a lot of technical terms, think about research as a way to solve **practical problems and improve people's quality of life**. Here are some examples of what research has told us...

- Going for walks can improve the health of elderly persons' brains.
- Breastfeeding can reduce children's chance of getting leukemia.
- Eating ice cream may help lower women's likelihood of infertility.
- Women who experience morning sickness while pregnant have a lower chance of getting breast cancer in later years.
- Girls who play high-school sports are more likely to receive a college degree than their non-athlete counterparts.
- Do winning sports teams help universities attract greater numbers of student applicants? (This topic has acquired local relevance after the 2019 Texas Tech men's basketball run to the national-championship game.)
- Various techniques can increase restaurant servers' tips:

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tipping area of scholarly research

To the Editor: As I tell students in my research methodology courses, a vast number of topics not ordinarily associated in people's minds with scholarly research can nonetheless be studied scientifically.

Topics that have been examined empirically include country music lyrics and "beanballs" in major league baseball (batters getting hit by a pitch).

Similarly, the phenomenon of restaurant tipping (featured on the front page of the Sept. 18 *The University Daily*) has been subjected to scientific inquiry by several different researchers.

Many of these studies have been published in the *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*.

A 1990 experiment found that having the restaurant server introduce herself by name led to higher tipping than when she did not do so.

A 1995 experiment compared the results of a server writing either "Thank you," "Thank you" plus her first name, or nothing on the back of the check.

The "Thank you" raised the tip

amount compared to writing nothing, but adding the name had no further effect. A different writing technique was tested in a 1996 experiment. The server either drew a happy face on the back of the check or wrote nothing on the back. The happy face increased tips for female servers, but not for male servers. Also interesting are factors that one would think should be related to tip size, but may not actually be.

For example, a 1984 study asked a large number of diners to rate, among other things, the food and the quality of service they had just experienced.

Surprisingly, these ratings were unrelated to the amount of tip.

In other words, customers who gave the most favorable ratings of the food and service gave no higher tips than customers who were less favorable.

Servers and consumers alike may find it useful to read some of these studies to gain a greater understanding of tipping behavior.

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How We Evaluate Women with Curly vs. Straight Hair:

2008 Demonstration on Good Morning America (Partial Transcript)*

I had a photographer take my picture once with curly hair, and then once with it straight. I then had the photographer take pictures of eight actresses.

Then we brought in five men to rate the pictures -- the eight actresses, and me. We told the panel we were working with a company that was looking for the new face of a clothing line. They were to describe each picture with a single word as well as rate them from one to ten -- ten being the woman they would most like to date.

*When the **picture of me with curly hair came up**, the scores were not very generous -- a three was involved -- and the words to describe me were "teacher," "warm," "average," "frazzled" and "giddy."*

"She looks to me like she's trying to get a husband really fast," one of the men said.

*After they rated a few actresses**, my picture came up again, but **this time I had straight hair**.*

*This time, though, three out of the five men gave me higher marks. They used words like "classic," "pretty," "nice," "centered" and "friendly." My total score jumped from **25** out of 50 to **31** out of 50.*



"Good Morning America's" Taryn Brill gets to the bottom of the curly-straight hair debate.
(ABC News)

*Original full-length video no longer available online, but some information ([here](#) and [here](#)) still there.

** What do you think was the reason for mixing the reporter's pictures in with pictures of eight actresses?