

Florida Cooperative Extension Service's Client Experience Survey Protocol

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In 1997, thirteen or fourteen counties were randomly selected for the annual Client Experience Survey (a.k.a., customer satisfaction survey (CSS)) for each year (see Table 1) until all 67 counties were assigned to the 5-year rotation. Currently, staff in each selected county are responsible for assembling the sampling frame, which is comprised of clients who 1) attend a planned activity including, workshops, seminars and field days, 2) visit the extension office to obtain information or is visited at the farm or other site by the Extension agent, 3) telephone for information, or 4) use e-mail to obtain and receive information during a 30-day period. A systematic sample of 120 names will be selected for each county (but a larger sample size may be used as resources allow) with about half from the list of workshop attendees and half from the list of "walk-in" and telephone clients. Faculty in the Program Development and Evaluation Center (PDEC) will conduct the sampling process, which includes editing the sampling frame to enter missing information, correct typing errors and remove duplicates, as well as selecting the final sample using systematic sampling.

Table 1. County rotation for the annual client experience survey.

Year ending in 2 or 7	Year ending in 3 or 8	Year ending in 4 or 9	Year ending in 5 or 0	Year ending in 1 or 6
Baker	Bradford	Alachua	Broward	Bay
Calhoun	Brevard	Miami-Dade	Collier	Charlotte
Duval	Clay	DeSoto	Columbia	Citrus
Glades	Dixie	Escambia	Franklin	Hardee
Highlands	Hendry	Flagler	Gadsden	Hillsborough
Holmes	Lake	Gilchrist	Indian River	Jackson
Jefferson	Liberty	Gulf	Leon	Lafayette
Okaloosa	Madison	Hamilton	Orange	Levy
Osceola	Monroe	Hernando	Pinellas	Manatee
Pasco	Palm Beach	Lee	Putnam	Marion
Polk	St. Johns	Martin	St. Lucie	Nassau
Seminole	Sumter	Suwannee	Santa Rosa	Okeechobee
Volusia	Wakulla	Taylor	Walton	Sarasota
			Washington	Union

Survey Procedures

The survey is sent to the sample of clients via postal mail or e-mail. The survey included questions on: overall customer satisfaction with the services provided by Extension, clientele's satisfaction on four dimensions of quality, outcomes of the use of Extension service, and demographic attributes of the respondents. The survey has been conducted annually since 1997 using telephone (1997-2004), mail (2003-2011), web-hosted and mixed-modes (2008-2019) (see Israel, 2010a; 2011; 2013a; 2013b; Israel & Lamm, 2012; Newberry & Israel, 2017).

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For the 2016 survey, a sample of 2,737 was selected from lists of extension clients in 13 of Florida's 67 counties. Of the 2,646 who could be reached, 52.4% responded to the survey. Similarly, 2,779 clients were included in the sample for 2018. Of the 2,752 who were deemed eligible for the survey, 1,407 responded (51.1%). In 2019, 2,004 clients were selected for the sample. Of these, 1,934 clients were eligible for the survey and 966 responded (49.9%).

The mail and Internet versions of the survey were constructed to follow Dillman et al.'s (2014) unimode design principles. This included using the same questions and question order and, more importantly, working to minimize differences in visual design (see Figure 1 in Israel, 2010a). The 2-page mail questionnaire had 21 items and utilized gray shading to distinguish blocks of related questions. Similarly, the Internet survey presented questions in groups or singly on a separate screen (see Israel, 2010a).

The Web survey switched to Qualtrics survey software in 2011. Clients who had received the invitation via e-mail could click on the link to access the URL and then enter the personal identification number (PIN). Upon entry, the informed consent information was presented. When the "Agree to participate" button was selected, the screen containing the initial questions was presented.

The correspondence was constructed to provide the same verbal and visual presentation to clients. A series of four or five contacts were used to implement the survey. Clients are usually sent a pre-letter announcing that they will receive the survey shortly. This is followed 3-5 days later by the survey packet containing a cover letter, questionnaire, and business reply envelope. A week after the survey is sent, a reminder post card is mailed. Finally, two weeks after the post card, a replacement questionnaire, cover letter and reply envelope is sent to nonrespondents. Similar procedures are used for clients who provide only an email address with the exception that a link to the Web version of the survey is provided with each of the contacts.

Completed surveys are entered into a database and analyzed using SAS for Windows, version 9.4 (SAS Institute Inc.). Aggregated results for each county and the state-wide total are presented in tables and charts. These are provided to each county participating in the survey. In addition, special analyses are conducted to assess data quality and improve the questionnaire's design (see Israel, 2010b; Kumar Chaudhary and Israel, 2016; Smyth et al., 2019).

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