Survey research methods can be used for a variety of research purposes and is an effective way to efficiently collect information about many individuals in a particular population.

Self-administered questionnaires are one form of survey research. Issues related to self-administered questionnaires include the following:

- mail distribution and return remains the basic method of obtaining responses
- electronic surveys are now possible
- a cover letter is an integral part of the mailed questionnaire
- it is important to monitor the returns
- follow-up mailings can increase the response rate
- it is important to maximize the response rate; 50% or more is generally considered an acceptable response rate
- self-administered questionnaires have a number of advantages and disadvantages (see attached sheets)

Face-to-face interview surveys are a second form of survey research. Issues related to face-to-face interviews include the following:

- the survey interviewer affects the quality of the interview
- general rules for survey interviewing include 1) maintaining an appropriate appearance and demeanor, 2) being familiar with the survey instrument, 3) following question wording exactly, 4) recording responses exactly, and 5) probing in a non-directive manner
- maintaining coordination and quality control for interviewers is critical
- specifications on how interviewers should handle difficult situations are useful
- face-to-face interviews have a number of advantages and disadvantages (see attached sheets)

Telephone interviews are a third form of survey research. Issues related to telephone interviews include the following:

- most households now have telephones, eliminating some of the historical sampling issues presented by this method, but cell phones create new biases
- telemarketing has led people to be less willing to respond to telephone interviews unless special steps are taken
- computer assisted telephone interviewing is more efficient
- telephone interviews have a number of advantages and disadvantages (see attached sheets)

When choosing a survey research method, it is important to compare the advantages and disadvantages of each form of survey research and select the best form for the situation.

New technologies (including online surveys) can assist survey research (see pp 380-81).

Each survey method has strengths and weaknesses

Qualitative and quantitative research methods can be incorporated into one survey research project (pp 386-387).