

■ GARY HACKBARTH, Feature Editor, Northern Kentucky University

2005 DSI Members Survey: A Summary of Results

by Gary Hackbarth, Northern Kentucky University

During the November 2007 DSI Annual Conference a number of discussions were held including a Town Hall meeting concerning the future of the Decision Sciences Institute. These discussions had their basis in the membership survey taken during the summer of 2005. The Member Services Committee would like to share the key findings of the 2005 DSI survey with you to aid in your understanding of recent DSI executive board decisions and future DSI initiatives. Conducted every three years, the membership survey focused on the performance of our organization. As conducted in the past, 1999 and 2002, these surveys are used by the Executive Committee to guide DSI. We would like to thank you for your participation, time and helpful comments.

There were 437 usable responses from the 2005 survey representing approximately 20 percent of our membership which was consistent with past participation. The 2005 questionnaire included questions from past surveys to maintain continuity with the past and added others based on input from the Member Services Committee and the DSI Executive Committee. We asked a number of demographic questions to validate the character of our organization, questions about the quality and congeniality of our national and regional meetings, improvements to the DSI website, and general questions related to initiatives our organization might undertake in the future.

Demographics

The average DSI member has been a member for 12.27 ± 9.43 years. Interest-

ingly, approximately 10 percent of our members have been members for 30 years or more and approximately 25 percent three years or less. The good news is that we are growing and attracting new and energetic young scholars. The not-so-good news is that many of our most senior people are approaching retirement age, creating opportunities and a need for those of us in the middle to step up and participate in the organization.

We are still a group focused on research and the development of business researchers, with 61 percent of our members tenured and approximately half affiliated with doctoral programs. One of the strengths of DSI is our interdisciplinary interests, 78.2 percent "Agreeing, Strongly Agreeing, or Very Strongly Agreeing" with this perception of our organization. Our members come from a wide variety of backgrounds, but of more benefit is where we perceive ourselves to be today. We asked respondents to choose three primary academic areas of interest to them as shown in Table 1. While difficult to interpret longitudinally because of additions and deletions of research topic areas, we do see focus areas related to the decision sciences. Of particular note is the large percentage increase in members interested in Supply Chain Management, Statistics, and Innovative Education.

The academic focus areas of our national organization are complemented by member participation in our regional DSI organizations. More than half (55.6 percent) of our membership is directly affiliated with regional DSI organizations. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of regional members by re-



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Academic Field	2005	2002	1999
Operations Management	47.1	36.5	32.6
Decision Sciences	26.8	N/A	N/A
Supply Chain Management	26.3	N/A	N/A
MIS	23.6	20.9	26.0
MS/OR	17.6	6.0	10.1
Statistics	17.2	7.2	6.0
Technology/Innovation	16.0	2.8	3.1
Innovative Education	12.4	1.8	1.5
Strategy/Policy	9.8	2.2	1.8
CIS	9.2	N/A	N/A
Organizational Behavior	8.5	2.5	2.4
E-Commerce/Business Management	8.0	4.2	N/A
Management	7.9	N/A	N/A
Management Problem Solving	6.2	1.3	1.8
International Business	6.0	1.2	0.7
Health Care Systems	4.6	1.2	0.9
Other	18.8	8.7	9.1
Marketing	4.1	1.7	1.8

Note: Not all members picked three academic areas so numbers may not sum correctly. And, not all categories were present in all surveys.

Table 1. Primary academic areas of interest to DSI members.

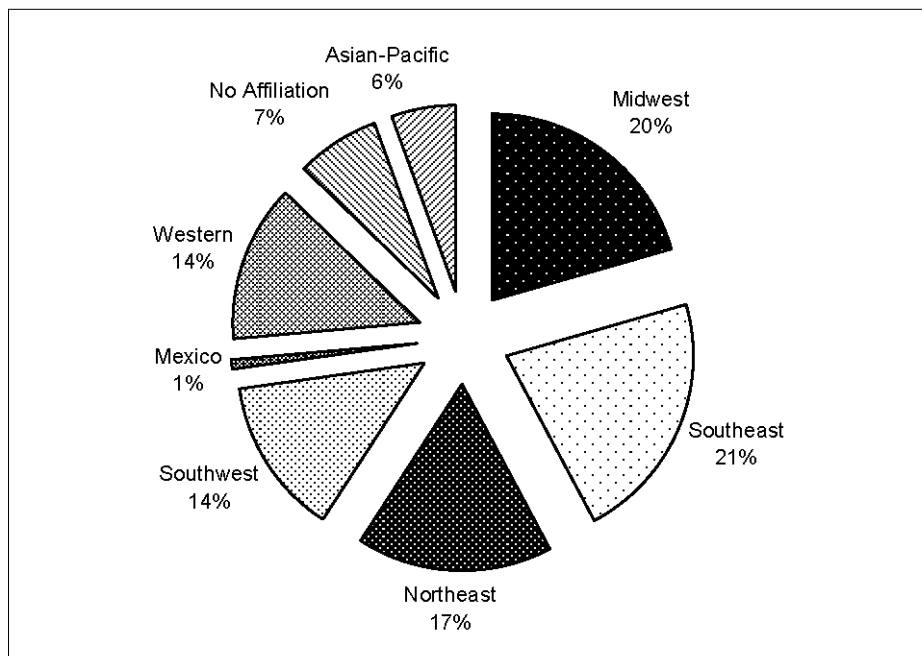


Figure 1. Breakdown of DSI regional members by region.

gion. While these 55.6 percent of our members are based primarily in the U.S., we are seeing some expansion globally. Importantly, we hope to see and encourage the establishment of European affiliations among others in the future.

Annual Conference

The DSI annual conference is an important event for the Institute as members gather to present research, share ideas, renew friendships, and revitalize our excitement for what we do. As such, considerable effort is made to make the annual conference as enjoyable and effective as possible. Most members “Agree” to “Very Strongly Agree” that their DSI membership is a good value (69.7 percent) as is the DSI annual meeting (74.5 percent). Importantly, 91.1 percent of our members sometimes or usually attend the national conference, while 60.1 percent sometimes or usually attend regional DSI conferences. Compared to other organizations, 85.3 percent believe DSI offers the same or greater value. As a first choice of conferences to attend, 51.2 percent would attend the DSI annual conference.

Participation in the annual conference for many members is a necessary condition to receive funding to attend the conference. Just to attend, members must present a paper or serve on a panel or workshop (71.4 percent), have an accepted paper (34.6 percent), publish in the proceedings (28.4 percent), serve as a session chair or facilitator (22.2 percent), participate as a discussant (13.0 percent), or have no requirement at all (13.7 percent). As a result, we understand that participation opportunities at our conference are considered extremely important. Overall, 73.8 percent of the membership feels that there is “High,” “High Opportunity,” to “Very Large Opportunities” to participate at national meetings and activities while 74.3 percent find this true at the regional level.

There are many reasons our members choose to attend the annual conference. Members place a “High,” “High Importance,” to “Very High Importance” ranking on opportunities to

interact with colleagues (80.8 percent), presentation feedback on a papers (79.1 percent), learning about innovative teaching techniques (74.1 percent), general professional development (70.6 percent), opportunities to interact with international scholars (65.1 percent), the desirability of the conference location (62.3 percent), opportunities to interact with colleagues in other fields (53.9 percent), learning about curriculum changes at other institutions (51.9 percent), viewing book and software exhibits (50.2 percent), interactions with journal editors (47.6 percent), interactions with industry professionals (42.8 percent), the job placement center (42.8 percent), tutorials and professional development consortia (39.7 percent), participation as a session chair or discussant (31.9 percent), learn how obtain external funding (30.6 percent), or doctoral student consortium (30.6 percent). These reasons are consistent with past surveys and remain uppermost in the minds of those who plan and execute the annual conferences.

Each survey cycle we ask questions about the structure and timing of annual meeting sessions. Most members "Agree" , "Strongly Agree", to "Very Strongly Agree" that no more than three papers be scheduled per session (65.8 percent) as do most of us in the audience (61.7 percent). Most of us agreed that a fifth session (e.g., 5:00 – 6:00 PM) (23.4 percent) and not starting before 8:00 AM (86.6 percent) were not good ideas, while there were mixed results as to whether sessions should be shortened to 75 minutes (53.8 percent agreeing). These results suggest that we will probably just leave things as they are.

Members see leadership opportunities at the national level (45.9 percent) as "High," "High Opportunity," to "Very Large Opportunity." This percentage rises to 64.4 percent in the regional context. The leadership of DSI is committed to providing leadership opportunities to groom leaders for tomorrow.

DSI Website

An important component of the survey was questions about the DSI website.

Based on informal conversations with the membership prior to the survey, we knew we had to do it better. As we suspected, 35.1 percent of the membership "Agreed," "Strongly Agreed," or "Very Strongly Agreed" with the statement that they visited the DSI website regularly. In the same context, 61.0 percent found the DSI website easy to navigate. Clearly, we needed to identify areas that would improve interest in the DSI website. Table 2 rank-orders the summed responses from those who answered "Agree," "Strongly Agree," to "Very Strongly Agree" as to whether or not they wished to add a specific hyperlink to the DSI website. These recommendations from the members were used to prioritize improvements to the DSI website.

Journals

We would like present and interpret survey questions concerning our journals cautiously since *Decision Sciences Journal (DSJ)* experienced a change of editors and *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education (DSJIE)* had not yet completed three years of publication at the time of the survey. In this light, we see our data as a baseline.

Members value their DSI journal publications with 72.1 percent "Agreeing," Strongly Agreeing," to "Very Strongly Agreeing" with the statement that *DSJ* is a valuable membership benefit. As an elite journal, publication in *DSJ* should be a goal for each of us, with 89.6 percent "Agreeing," Strongly Agreeing," to "Very Strongly Agreeing" with the statement that *DSJ* publishes high-quality articles. Further, most agree that *DSJ* is an important journal in their area of interest (64.9 percent) and is a multidisciplinary journal (70.8 percent). We find it encouraging given the diversity of our organization that 58.8 percent finds that *DSJ* meets their expectations and 44.3 percent routinely reading one article every issue.

In the last three years, 7.5 percent of the membership has published at least one article in *DSJ*, 26.4 percent submitting an article, and 31.1 percent reviewing at least one article. We believe

Add these Hyperlinks To the DSI Website	Percent that Agreed, Strongly Agreed, to Very Strongly Agreeing
DSI Journals	86.2
Research Opportunities	83.6
Research Tools	82.2
Year Round Placement	79.9
Membership Renewal Site	79.9
Teaching Tips/Innovations	76.9
DSI Regional Websites	76.7
DSI Regional Meetings	76.7
Funding Opportunities	75.2
Search Databases – Working Papers	74.3
Search Databases – Syllabi	74.0
Search Databases – Presentations	71.0
Other Journals	70.8
Course Websites	68.3
Other Professional Society Sites	62.1
Practitioner Resources	62.0
Prizes and Awards for research and Teaching	61.8
Bios of officers running for positions	59.8
Books	58.9
Scholarships	58.1
Other Professional meetings	54.9
Newsroom	51.1
Information/Bios about the Home Office	50.8
Bios of DSI Officers	34.4

Table 2. Summary of responses about adding specific hyperlinks to the DSI website.

these numbers support the eliteness and vitality of the submissions to our journal. Your efforts to provide timely and valued-added reviews are important elements needed by the editor in improving the status of our journal.

Similarly, 70.6 percent of the membership feels that *DSJIE* publishes high-quality articles and is a multi-disciplinary journal (65.1 percent). In less than three years *DSJIE* is

now considered an important journal in their area of research by survey respondents (47.7 percent) with 41.5 percent reading at least one article every issue. In the last three years, 8.2 percent have published at least one article, 14.1 percent have submitted an article, and 7.3 percent reported reviewing for *DSJIE*. Furthermore, 89.6 percent "Agree," "Strongly Agree," to "Very Strongly Agree" with the statement that *DSJIE* publishes high quality articles. Not to be left out, 6.4 percent have published at least one article and 6.6 percent have submitted an article to *Decision Line*.

Since this is the first survey where we have asked these questions, it is difficult to interpret them, but we believe these percentages reflect the quality and level of effort needed to publish in top-tier peer reviewed publications. And, as with all the DSI publication, editors are working with publishers and the Institute to improve the speed and fairness of the review process.

Future Directions

What happened to the survey data? An initial evaluation of the data was undertaken and included in the Members Services Annual report to the DSI Executive committee. The initial findings were discussed at the executive Board Meeting in January 2006. Besides further study of the data, the recommendation from the Member Services Committee for DSI to incorporate website features and capabilities as ranked by the members was approved. Further, the committee was charged to develop a process for recruiting members willing to maintain website pages and sections.

Importantly, survey data is shared with other committees with their own charges and responsibilities. More recently, a strategic survey was conducted in the summer of 2007 to look hard at the direction our organization is headed. As the 2008 national convention approaches, your Members Ser-

vices Committee will be asking your help in supporting and maintaining an organization that for many is the professional organization of choice for members who are establishing or reestablishing research careers. Further, we need to encourage Ph.D. students to not only join but participate in DSI activities. Since we have a number of charges related to improving the organization, feel free to share and express your opinions and ideas. ■

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realities faced by individuals, groups, and institutions.

Perhaps most importantly, the book fails to adequately address one of the primary purposes, that is, to better explain when and if to actually trust our gut feelings or when to fall back to more complex rational decision-making models. However, although the limitations are at times frustrating, they do not sufficiently diminish the overall value of the book.

Conclusion

Gigerenzer invites the reader on a voyage of exploration that challenges assumptions about rational choice, and in that regard he delivers, providing a thought-provoking overview of an exciting, emerging paradigm of how decisions are actually made and how we can improve those decisions. His theory of gut feelings, resonates with our ex-

perience, is simple to understand and apply, and is elegantly efficient and effective. Overall, *Gut Feelings* is well worth the time and effort to explore, with opportunities for personal and professional growth for those willing to take the journey. ■

DSI members are invited to suggest books that should be reviewed in this column and reviewers to review them. Responses, suggestions or letters to the Feature Editor may be sent to: Peter T. Ittig, Feature Editor, Peter.Ittig@umb.edu.

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