Transcript

Chapter 10: Sampling

It is every student’s nightmare that they can’t get access to their sample. It can not only be frustrating but also very time consuming. However, there are ways to contend with the challenges of sampling and strategies you can adopt if you did not initially achieve the sample you wanted.

In some cases, a solution to this challenge may be about ***broadening your sample***. For instance, it may necessary to increase your population, meaning you can sample from a greater number of participants. For instance, if you initially wanted to undertake research on attitudes towards crime amongst older people in a particular city and you don’t receive the amount of responses you require, you may choose to broaden your sample, and look at the region rather than just the city. You’d want to consider any differences between the city and the broader region in any decision making around this process.

You may also want to consider ***other approaches to accessing your desired sample***. These may include reflecting on any useful personal contacts or colleagues. For instance, if you are trying to access teachers, have you considered your friends’ parents or people your parents know? Can you approach gatekeepers in organisations who can help you access the sample you need? Some gatekeepers will simply grant you permission, whereas others may assist you with the recruitment process. They are often influential and in a position to encourage people to participate as well. Are there any networks you can approach that you hadn’t initially considered? For instance, are there any online groups you could advertise through? At the same time be aware of the limitations of any approaches to the sampling you take. For instance, if you are accessing an online group you’ll, by the very nature of the sample, be excluding those who do not have internet access. Consult your supervisor; see if they’ve any relevant contacts that could assist with the sampling? Could you place an advert online or in a relevant paper? As you can see there are a number of different strategies you could use in terms of identifying a sample.

If your university allows it, you may choose to ***use incentives*** to encourage people to participate. Now, different types of incentives you might consider to try and increase   
your sample size include:

* Providing access to your findings
* Food with the research
* A prize draw
* Charitable donations

It is also worth noting that the wrong incentive can also bias your sample and the types of participants involved in your sample. Also be aware that different universities my various have restrictions on the kinds of incentives you can employ, and in particular in relation to cash incentives.­