Title: RAPID/Collaborative Research: Investigating Attitudinal and Behavioral Changes in US Households Before, During, and After the COVID-19 Pandemic

Deborah Salon CIC Database Profile

NSF Award #: 2029962

YouTube Recording with Slides

August 2021 CIC Webinar Information

Transcript Editor: Macy Moujabber

Lauren Close:

I'd like to now hand it over to Deborah Salon who is coming to us from Arizona State University. Please go ahead and share your screen.

Deborah Salon:

Slide 1:

Thanks so much. Here we go. I'm an Associate Professor here at the School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning at ASU [Arizona State University] and together with colleagues at the University of Illinois at Chicago and folks here we have been working on trying to understand behavioral changes in households between, you know, before the pandemic to during the pandemic and also how people expect any behavioral changes that they might have experienced during the pandemic to perhaps persist even after the pandemic is no longer a threat. So that's what I'll be talking about today. We were funded through a RAPID grant through the CMMI [Civil, Mechanical and Manufacturing Innovation] program at NSF [National Science Foundation] and a few other places as well have helped support this work.

Slide 2:

So COVID-19 has required most of us to really make big changes to our daily lives.

Slide 3:

And our research is trying to understand both what those changes were how large they were and also, but perhaps more importantly, will some of these new behaviors really stick?

Slide 4:

So we conducted a national survey. The survey we call the COVIDFUTURE Survey and you can learn a lot more about our work at our website www.covidfuture.org.

Slide 5:

This is just to show you I'm obviously not alone. I have a working with a large research team. This doesn't even actually - we've added more more team members recently so this is not even fully representative of the group. It's a big it's a big effort.

Slide 6:

The survey- we've collected- we've- one of the full wave one of the surveys, it's a multi-wave survey. The full wave one was nearly 10,000 respondents from across the U.S. Today, I'll be reporting results on a subset of those people, a bit over 7000 of them. So the survey sections- we're transportation researchers most of us and so we were interested in how this pandemic has affected transportation related behaviors. Actually, I was quite interested in the previous presentation thinking about movement, you know. But anyhow our survey looks at how people are accessing these different activities: employment working and studying shopping and dining, how they you know conduct their transportation on a daily basis during the pandemic pandemic, and expectations for the future.

Slide 7:

The survey took between 15 and 30 minutes.

Slide 8:

It was- wave one was implemented starting in April of 2020 and went through October. The data I'll be presenting today is really more from the July through October period. That sample size was about 9,000. We've actually collected an additional around 1,000 since then.

Slide 9:

Wave two was implemented from November to April. About 3,000 people responded to that. I'll just make a couple of comments on what we found in wave two today, but I don't have any formal findings on that.

Slide 10:

Wave three we're going to be implementing in about a month starting mid-September to mid-October and we're currently applying for funding to conduct two or three additional survey waves. We had originally imagined that one year would be enough time to- or maybe a year and a half would be enough time to really understand the effect, you know, during the pandemic and post-pandemic but obviously that has not unfortunately happened and so to understand the more long-term impact on people's behavior we really need to continue following folks into the future.

Slide 11:

Just to give you an idea of where our respondents came from. They're from all over the US although there is an over-representation in Arizona as you can see.

Slide 12:

We do- you know to account for regional differences and also differences between our sample and the U.S. population as a whole, we do use a weighting scheme and these are the main variables we weight on, plus region of the country.

Slide 13:

More details about a lot of the results I'll be presenting in a minute are available in our recently published brief report in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences and I'll put a link to that. It's open access so I'll put a link in the chat after this presentation.

Slide 14:

So, a couple of things. One of the big questions we had was really you know would you like to continue any of the things that you're doing now after COVID-19 is no longer a threat? And this is a pie chart just showing how people answered that question. And we were maybe not surprised but interested to see that the vast majority said either yes or maybe to this question.

Slide 15:

So there are definitely some things that people are experiencing during this crisis time that they find that they like and that they might want to continue. And so here's just a chart showing what some of those things were and the top thing is WFH means works from home working from home at least some of the time, but you can see some of these other items are perhaps some of the things you've been enjoying during the pandemic: spending more time with family, taking more walks, spending less money, cooking a bit more etc.

Slide 16:

So just honing in on a couple of these main results. So working from home- our data forecast not only that we've seen a large increase in working from home but they forecast a large continuation of increased work from home. So you can see here the pre-COIVD, actual percentage was about 23 percent of people work from home at least a few times a month. So these aren't people that work from home every day but regularly and somewhat frequently. So then that has gone up to over 40 percent during the COVID period and people expect to continue this. Now, this is a little misleading that there isn't that much of a drop here because these people are working from home mostly almost every day whereas this percentage is more of an indication of like a couple times a week is more of what people are generally saying, but in any case people are planning to continue this behavior.

Slide 17:

This chart shows a little bit more detail on that, but I don't think I have time to go into it that much more.

Slide 18:

Looking at a second kind of related big behavior that we're very interested in is car commuting. So, we see that our data forecasts a related decrease in car commuting perhaps which is- you know if people are working from home at least a couple days a week, you can imagine that this would happen right? They're commuting a couple days less so that's what this is reflecting.

Slide 19:

We asked a lot of our questions and about what they expect in the future and then we asked why. And so this is an example of kind of the type of question we were asking looking at you know if people said they anticipated to be traveling less by air after COVID-19 was no longer a threat. We said well why? And gave them a bunch of possible reasons that they could select from.

Slide 20:

And then we divided those reasons into things that were like new realizations like I realized I could conduct my business meetings using video conferencing or pandemic related reasons which were more like: oh I don't want to fly because I'm worried about getting sick right. So we think that these new realizations might be more long lasting than the pandemic related reasons for a lot of people but in any case what we can see here is that the blue which is the new realization, the darker blue, the things that were sort of neutral is the medium blue, and then the light blue is the pandemic related reasons that we think might disappear if COVID-19 really does become not a threat. But in any case we can see on the business side there's a lot of people saying they're going to be flying less. Not so much on the personal flying side but a little bit.

Slide 21:

And the last- or maybe not the last one of the last things I wanted to talk about was mentioning that one thing. You know in the earlier slide I was saying- highlighting things that people said they wanted to keep from the pandemic time period and one of the things was taking more walks and that's reflected in another aspect of the survey where we asked people you know how often they wanted to do different-use different modes of transportation. And a lot of people said that they wanted to walk more.

Slide 22:

The next slide shows a little more detail on this.

Slide 23:

And then I think this is really the last thing I was going to talk about which is dining and shopping. So we asked about how many times people dined in restaurants pre-COVID and how many times they expected to dine in restaurants, you know, on a weekly or monthly basis post-COVID. And you can see that these frequent diners- the people who said they dine in restaurants a few times a week or more are really expected to drop and that's something that I think is likely of concern to the restaurant industry.

Slide 24:

And so not only can you find more information about our survey and our publications at covidfuture.org but there's also a link to our data which is freely available for download. Right now wave one is available we'll be posting wave two in the coming weeks and wave three once we've collected it and cleaned it and weighted it.

Slide 25:

So thanks so much and let me know and look forward to conversation later.

<u>Lauren Close:</u>

Thank you so much Deborah and it's really interesting to hear that there is already like a little bit of a dialogue and an overlap between some of the work you're doing and from Zhenlong who you know went right before you did. So that's- I mean that's the whole point of the CIC [COVID Information Commons] webinar and we're so glad to see those connections happening in real time.