

Conducting Telephone Survey Research For the
Student-Operated College Radio Station

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Abstract

Student-operated college radio stations (especially advertiser-supported ones) can benefit from survey research that reveals programming preferences and consumer habits of potential audiences. These data may be gathered through a telephone audience survey administered under the auspices of an appropriate broadcasting course. Broadcast students have much to gain from direct exposure to the technical aspects of survey research. This paper reports on the creation and selected results of one such survey (n=522) at a midwestern university in fall 1989 as an example of the possible application of applied research in the college radio station environment.

Introduction

Most college radio stations are not in a position to benefit from commercial audience research such as that provided by Arbitron, Birch/Scarborough, or custom market researchers. Yet college commercial radio stations and their student operators have much to gain by being able to inform their advertising clients about the purchasing, entertainment, social and media use habits of their potential listening audience. Even noncommercial stations would benefit from this information for both programming and program underwriting purposes. These data may be readily gathered through a telephone survey administered under the auspices of an appropriate course such as audience research, advertising, broadcast marketing or broadcast management.¹ This paper describes the development and results of one such survey at a midwestern state university in the fall of 1989.

Need For and Utility of Research

While many college stations cannot expect to draw large audiences, the financial success of commercially-supported stations will be affected by audience size. Because many student-operated college radio stations are directed at a cohort audience, student program directors and music directors may assume that they know who listens and what their cohort want to hear. Some feedback may be obtained by telephone requests, but not all listeners are equally likely to call in music requests. Music format competition from area commercial stations will also have great impact on how any particular student-run station may be programmed to attract more listeners.

Just as importantly, station sales personnel need evidence that the station audience is attractive to potential advertising clients. As is the case in the off-campus world, potential local advertisers may be more easily persuaded to buy space in the campus newspaper than to invest in the less tangible product of the student-run radio station. While radio account executives can promise results, research data grounds the sales presentation in a much more firm foundation.

From an educational perspective, there is much to be gained by conducting audience research for a student-run radio station. Clearly the technical aspects of the

survey research process can be taught in an active way via an actual research project. Perhaps more importantly, both station personnel and class members can directly see the benefits of custom research. This knowledge is being recognized as critical for those wishing to pursue a career in broadcast or other media management (Adams, 1989). They will also be in a better position to both specify research needs as well as critically analyze research reports they will encounter in the future.

A review of recent broadcast research literature reveals that little attention has been focused on radio, while television and other video technologies have attracted the energies of broadcast researchers. Examples of survey research for student-operated radio stations in particular are not readily available, possibly because of both the limited number of studies undertaken as well as the descriptive nature of the data analysis. This paper is one answer to that lack of attention.

Research Aids

The radio programming research literature is limited. Rothenbuhler (1985) studied the program decision making process at one radio station, and Fletcher (1987) cited past music and radio research. While more scholarly objectives may be woven into a radio research project, the campus station may be best served by more descriptive objectives. Wimmer and Dominick (1987) noted that descriptive research in broadcasting is useful "to determine programming tastes, changing values, and lifestyle variations that might affect programming" (p. 102). Moreover, information about consumer behavior of radio listeners can be highly useful for marketing purposes.

Wimmer and Dominick (1987) listed several advantages of survey research for the study of mass media: (1) behavior is examined under realistic settings, (2) the cost is reasonable, and (3) large amounts of data can be collected with relative ease from a variety of respondents. The main disadvantage is the inability to manipulate variables for analytic research. However, descriptive research need primarily concern itself with two addressable concerns: proper wording of questions and representative sampling techniques.

Using a broadcast research or management class to administer a listener survey of a student-operated radio station can overcome these disadvantages. First, the instructor can carefully monitor the construction, pretesting and administration of the questionnaire instrument. Second, student residence halls (dormitories) may make up the entire population of potential listeners to closed-circuit, carrier-current campus stations; where this is the case, sampling may be quite simple.² Third, student telephone directories are usually readily available, and where different exchanges are used, on-campus numbers may be easily differentiated from off-campus numbers. Because student directories may contain fewer unlisted or business numbers than city directories, sampling may also be more representative.

Telephone research is the most effective means for gathering information quickly and inexpensively from a statistically-random sample. Nonresponse rates and the proliferation of answering machines, however, may present problems.³ This paper describes how one survey was conducted by an audience research class for the closed-circuit commercial station at the university. The results of the listener survey present a snapshot of college students' attitudes and behaviors.

Telephone Research Guides

A number of sources are available for assistance in the broadcast survey research process. In their text Mass Media Research, Wimmer and Dominick (1987) provided a wealth of information on telephone survey research and data analysis. They have explained sampling techniques and cited interviewing techniques suggested by two publications available from the National Association of Broadcasters: Webster (1983) and Saxton (1983). Hiber (1987) included a chapter on telephone research for radio. Fletcher (1987) gave examples of telephone questionnaire items as well as insights into ties between program and audience types.

Frey (1983) presented detailed procedures and techniques for all phases of the telephone survey. He addressed questionnaire construction, sample selection, training of interviewers, and data analysis. For classes with more of a research focus, Williams (1988) is

a good description of the utility of various statistics; because calculations are kept to a minimum, this supplement should be less intimidating to the broadcast student. Adams' (1989) text is a more general overview of survey research methods and reporting.

Our Campus Radio Station: "WRCK"

Throughout this project, the class acted as a market research firm and the commercial student station, which we will call "WRCK," was treated as a client.⁴ Class members were expected to learn as much about WRCK and its research needs as possible, and station personnel were expected to point the class to the most needed information. This also allowed both parties to learn even more about the commercial research process.

WRCK is a closed-circuit radio station that may be heard by AM radio receivers in most dormitories via carrier current transmission.⁵ Campus dorm cafeterias are also hard-wired to play WRCK via their local public address sound systems, and this can be a very important source of captive listeners for "WRCK." Individual cafeteria managers (who are responsible for running their food service operations profitably in part through attracting cash-paying customers) can also select radio stations from an FM tuner instead. This places a further demand on WRCK to precisely cater to students' tastes.

WRCK has been made available to all cable television subscribers in the system's franchise area, which includes the university community and several surrounding towns. WRCK is used as the audio supplement to a sophisticated electronic cable program guide ("Preview Guide"), which is carried on the cable system's television channel 14.⁶ One key question addressed by the survey is the extent to which students are exposed to the radio station via channel 14.

WRCK competes with radio stations from a nearby, medium-sized market which offers one AOR, two CHR, three oldie, two light rock, and other popular music stations.⁷ The campus station's format is an amalgam of AOR, CHR, and classic rock formats, with frequent promotional contests and giveaways. All music requests which fit the format are played as quickly as possible. The request feature is assumed to be one strong advantage WRCK enjoys over the other stations, many of which are either automated or programmed

by format consultants with no room for actually responding to requests (Rothenbuhler, 1985, reviews the program decision-making decisions at one such station).

The most important advertising competitor to WRCK is the campus newspaper, which is distributed free four days per week (Tuesday-Friday). In an effort to enhance station awareness, raise revenues, and directly compete with the newspaper in providing coupons, WRCK publishes a monthly radio magazine called *Sound Advice*. The magazine is sent to all dormitory addresses through the (free) campus mail system.

The target audience for WRCK is undergraduate students at the university. The majority of the undergraduate student body is women (about 60%), and the vast majority of undergraduates (about 94%) are traditional students (ages 18-22). WRCK expects to attract some area high school students and university graduate students as listeners through the cable system.

Research Areas

The survey had several applied research goals in mind. Questions generally focused upon programming issues and sales-related issues. Specifically, research areas fell into six general categories: leisure-time activities, social behaviors, consumer habits, general attitudes and behaviors with regard to radio listening, specific attitudes and behaviors toward the campus station, and demographic information. These areas are detailed generally in the order in which they appeared on the questionnaire which is available from the authors.

Student Leisure Activities

Closed-ended questions were asked regarding the respondent's access to consumer electronics, cable television, and video rentals (including the most preferred source of rentals). Respondents were asked about their monthly purchases of compact discs, record albums, and cassettes. These data can be used to show advertisers how large the potential market is for these products as well as give WRCK ideas for possible promotional giveaways.

Media usage questions were included so WRCK could get some idea about both competitive media outlets and hours listened to radio. Questions regarding readership and favorite sections of the competitive campus newspaper were asked. The survey collected

responses of weekly use of the radio for news, weather and sports to aid station programmers.

Two key unknowns to WRCK were how many listeners either (1) are exposed to the station via cable without realizing it or (2) are likely to use the television set for radio listening. Thus, daily television use was of interest as an indication of potential exposure to WRCK. Respondents were also asked how often they had the television set on while both studying and doing other activities, how often they watched music videos, and about their source of television program listings.

Social Activities of Students

Respondents were asked how often they traveled to their hometowns on the weekends; these data are useful in showing advertisers how large WRCK's potential audience is on weekends as well as their availability to purchase local merchants' goods and services. Questions on social activities delved into the frequency of "partying" in general, as well as attendance at the following events: sports, plays, movies, greek events, dances, music recitals, and movies (including which theaters were most popular). The students' source of information about these events was requested to see what role WRCK did or could play in publicizing or promoting campus events.

Student Consumer Habits

Local merchants can be impressed by data showing the spending potential of university students, and items about spending habits were written with the most likely WRCK advertising clients in mind. These included bars, restaurants, fast food outlets, pizza parlors, grocery stores, service stations, retail stores, and area shopping malls. Respondents were asked to indicate frequency of patronage, average dollars spent per visit, and usage of coupons at the various establishments.

Respondents were asked their weekly amount of discretionary income. Another indication of students' potential purchasing power was the possession and use of credit cards. Respondents were asked which credit cards they had and how often they were used. Students were also asked about use of automated-teller machines as both an

indication of cash access and a source of market information of interest to potential bank advertisers.

Radio Attitudes and Listening Behaviors

Respondents estimated daily number of hours listened to individual radio stations. Corresponding attitudes toward those stations were measured based upon 5-point Likert items (strongly agree through strongly disagree). Specific attitudes included station satisfaction generally, perceived repetition of the station's music, likability of disk jockeys, uniqueness of the station, the likability of the music, and whether the station played new artists and new releases. Students ranked their favorite and second favorite area radio stations.

Because a radio listener might only be somewhat satisfied even by a "favorite" station, respondents were later asked to contrast actual stations with their imagined, "ideal" station. With a fictional ideal station in mind, each of the local stations was rated on a scale of one (close to respondent ideal) to five (different from respondent ideal). Respondent music preferences were similarly measured on various music types with examples of typical artists given for each:⁸ music of the 60s and 70s, current hits, heavy metal, mellow, jazz/new age, reggae, and progressive. Should "favorite" stations differ from "ideal" stations, this would be an indication of some dissatisfaction with available off-campus stations.

To help the WRCK promotions staff determine the most attractive contests and prizes, attitudes toward various premiums were measured. Other specific radio listening behaviors measured included commercial avoidance, listening while studying, calling in song requests, and contest participation.

Campus Radio Station Awareness

The survey asked the respondents to name the a campus radio station via unaided recall. If the closed-circuit station (WRCK) was named, the student was asked how many hours per week were spent listening along with listening to specialty shows on WRCK. Finally, an open-ended question focused on the student's image of WRCK: "What do you think of when I say WRCK radio?"

Demographics

The final part of the survey asked demographic information: gender, age, class rank, and number of hours per week spent working if the respondent was employed. This information was gathered to see if certain students were more attracted to specific stations or music formats. It also provided data which could be cross-referenced with consumer habits and specific social behavior.

Method

A list of all active residence telephone numbers was secured from the university, and numbers were systematically selected from the list.⁹ Because the campus radio station traditionally operated via carrier-current, the assumption was made that most student listeners reside in the dormitories. Numbers from off-campus respondents were drawn from a university directory of students, also using systematic sampling. About one-third of the sample was designed to measure off-campus students who could receive WRCK via the cable system's electronic program guide (channel 14); off-campus students without cable were excluded from the survey, while all residence hall lounges have "free" cable giving all dorm residents access to cable. Because off-campus students without cable were excluded, the results are not representative of the entire student body.

Participants in the survey were told that they were completing a "survey regarding college life" and that the interviewer needed to speak to a current student at the local university, located in a midwestern town of 30,000 residents (including students). A filter question was used to determine if the person who answered the phone was an employee of a radio station. Off-campus respondents were limited to those with cable television (which put them in the campus station's potential audience). The questionnaire took about ten minutes to administer.

Because a broadcast research class was used to collect the data, there was considerable opportunity to train the interviewers in proper telephone survey techniques. Students were exposed to survey methods, sampling theory and questionnaire development in class. Student radio station staff (the client) presented programming, sales, image, and

promotional objectives to the class (the research consultant). Project groups then developed appropriate research questions followed by design of their own survey instruments to address those questions. Group questionnaires were reviewed in class and by station personnel before the questionnaires were reduced to one final survey instrument by the instructor. The questionnaire was pre-tested by class members which helped correct any problems with the instrument. Interview training and practice was also a part of class activities.¹⁰

The survey was conducted over one week in the evening from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Members of the faculty allowed the use of their office telephones for the survey, under the direct supervision of the course instructor. Students were required to log in and out of the faculty office, and signed a form indicating their assumption of responsibility for use of the office. Faculty members were encouraged to secure their offices as well as report any problems immediately; none occurred.¹¹ Use of faculty offices permitted an important degree of centralized control necessary for consistent administration of the survey by the 45 students in the class. Up to three call-backs were used to reach the sampled numbers.¹² There were 522 completed interviews.

Data entry was made by having students code the data onto familiar optically-scanned sheets normally used to record answers from objective exams; the data were then scanned with output available on either personal computer diskette or mainframe tape. The data were analyzed using SPSSX V4.0 with frequencies first being calculated. Some crosstabulations for marketing purposes are reported in this paper, and others are available from the authors. A multiple regression was run on radio listening per week for five of the six predictors (from the fourth set of research questions mentioned above).

Results

Nearly 49% of the students surveyed were 18 or 19 years old. About 55% of the respondents were freshmen or sophomores. Females accounted for 57% of the completed surveys, and this is similar to the gender make-up of the overall student population. 42% of the respondents held paying jobs, and 44% of these workers were employed fifteen or more

hours per week.

Insert Table 1 about here

Table 1 shows the presence of entertainment devices and services among the respondents. Over 92% of the sample had a television set in their rooms, with 76% color TV penetration. About 87% of the students had a stereo and/or cassette player in their rooms. Both the videocassette recorder and the compact disc player had a 30% penetration among those surveyed. Only 20% had computers and 15% had video games.

Cable television penetration (not including access to dormitory lounges) was 47% in the entire student sample (off-campus students had to have cable to be included) as compared to 67% of a separate city sample according to a more recent survey, also available from the authors. Over 21% of all respondents subscribed to at least one pay movie channel, whereas the national average is about 29.7% ("By the numbers," 1990).

Nearly 61% of the students claimed to read the campus newspaper every day, with news being the most popular item (32.8%). Radio news was tuned to regularly by about 28% of the respondents, with 50% having claimed that they never did so. Over 52% never tuned to radio weather and 66% never tuned to sports scores. The most popular response (23%) for the number of hours of TV watched daily was "between two and three," although 45% said they watched three or more hours per day; nearly 44% of the students watched TV while studying at least once per week. Almost 60% of the sample said they watched music channels (e.g., MTV) at least once per week.

Nearly 43% of all respondents said they tuned to Cable Channel 14 occasionally, with about 22% confirming daily use. When non-subscribers to cable were deleted from the responses, the percentage of daily users climbed to 42% of cable subscribers. Over 67% of the cable subscribers reported using Cable Channel 14 at least once per week.

Insert Table 2 about here

Personal social habits are summarized in Table 2. Almost 40% of the students said they go home once a month. Of the 46% who went out to local bars every week, 21% went two or three times a week and 22% went once per week. Fully 89% of the respondents who knew about two non-alcoholic bars on campus said they had never visited either of them. Sports events were very popular (82%), movies somewhat popular (42%), Greek events less so (32%), and only 20% attended at least one play, recital, or dance that semester. The main source of information on social events was the campus newspaper (66%), followed by word-of-mouth (35%) and flyers or signs (15%).

Insert Table 3 about here

Not surprisingly, because freshman and sophomores are housed in dormitories, half of the students said they eat on campus every day. Nearly 53% did not know what radio station was being played most often in their cafeteria. Over 60% ate at a casual (sit-down) restaurant in the previous month, with 80% spending under \$19 per visit. Over 68% said they ate at a fast food restaurant the previous week; the most popular such restaurant was McDonald's (45%), perhaps because it was closest to most of the dormitories. Less than 36% thought coupons were important or very important for choosing where to go for fast food, whereas 66% said they did affect where they called for delivered food. Almost 35% of the students had called out "once or twice" the previous month for food delivery. Some local supermarkets offer "double coupons" and this appears to be important as 28% viewed grocery coupons as important in their choice of where to shop.

Just under 54% of the students had an automobile in town, which may explain why fewer than half of them shopped at out-of-town malls (good news for local merchants). About 45% had at least one major credit card; of those, about 24% used one less than once a month, 33% once or twice a month and 44% three or more times a month. Three out of four students had under \$30 per week of spending money, with 30% between \$20

and \$29 and 27% between \$10 and \$19. About 58% paid to see an off-campus movie at least once per month.

Insert Table 4 about here

Table 4 summarizes the findings concerning radio listening habits. Nearly 84% never listen to AM radio over a week's time. When asked how many hours in an average day they listened to the radio, more than 64% estimated under three hours, with "one to two hours" the most popular response (25%). Close to 49% of the students "regularly" avoided commercials, whereas nearly 60% listened to the radio while studying. Over 80% of the sample "never" called in song requests and 79% "never" played radio contests. When asked to identify their favorite and second favorite stations, three FM stations emerged as dominant, accounting for nearly 84% of the responses.

The three top stations were ranked on several items: frequency of listening, percentage of first place ranking, second place ranking, general satisfaction, repetitive music, likeable disk jockeys, uniqueness, likeable music, and attention to new artists and new releases. These three stations broadcast from the medium market located 20 miles away. The album-oriented rock station, named "WAOR" here, features a long-standing, successful, nationally-consulted AOR format. The two other top stations are both high energy contemporary hit radio stations, and are labelled "WCHR-1" and "WCHR-2." The most important difference between these two very similar stations is that WCHR-2 had changed its format from a more adult contemporary sound several months earlier in direct response to WCHR-1's highly successful format.

WAOR had the largest segment of self-described daily listeners (35%). Over 66% said they listened once a week or more. Only about 22% felt that the music on WAOR was repetitive. More than 82% of the students liked the disk jockeys on WAOR.

WCHR-1 had the second largest group of daily listeners (31%). Over 65% said they listened once a week or more. In contrast to their beliefs about WAOR, students agreed

that music on WCHR-1 was repetitive (73%). Nearly 74% of those surveyed liked the disk jockeys on WCHR-1.

WCHR-2 had the third largest percentage of daily listeners (25%). Over 62% said they listened once a week or more. Around 70%, slightly less than WCHR-1, felt that the music on WCHR-2 was repetitive. Slightly fewer students (65%) liked the disk jockeys on WCHR-2 than on WCHR-1.

When asked about their "ideal" radio station, the respondents validated the ranking of the top three stations. The five-point scale measured how close each station was to the respondents' ideal station with 1, 3 and 5 representing "close," "neither," and "different," respectively. Using the aggregate of values 1 and 2 to measure a person's support for a station, WAOR had over 40% of the students' support, WCHR-1 had over 31%, and WCHR-2 had close to 25% of the scaled responses ($n=503$). These three stations clearly are the stations of choice for university students.

A less direct method of cross-validating the rankings involved a selective frequency process. Selecting out only those respondents who had mentioned a set of call letters as their "favorite" station earlier in the survey, 74% of the support went to WAOR, 72% to WCHR-1 and 74% to WCHR-2. However, when "support" was more narrowly defined as a closeness value of 1, only 23%, 28% and 21% of the respondents named their favorite station (WAOR, WCHR-1 or WCHR-2) as their ideal station, respectively.

Insert Table 5 about here

A multiple regression was run to predict the number of hours per week in which listening was reported (see Table 5). The independent variables were the five Likert items describing each of the three stations as reported above. The responses gauging satisfaction and likability of music were hypothesized to best predict hours of listening. Both variables were intercorrelated at about 67%, however, making it necessary to delete satisfaction as a predictor of daily listening. Although the independent variables did not explain much of the

variance among the total listening for each station, a couple of the stations were significantly affected by the likability of disk jockeys, after controlling for likability of the music played. WAOR, for example, showed significant ($p < .05$) increment to R^2 for likability of DJs over and above the variance explained by likability of music.

Insert Tables 6 and 7 about here

WAOR was most often ranked as favorite station (41%), whereas WCHR-1 and WCHR-2 tied for second-place station (31% each). WRCK was ranked first and second place by only about 1% and 3%, respectively. Using an unaided recall item, WRCK was identified by nearly 35% of the students as being a campus station. Of the 19% who listened to WRCK, most (56%) estimated their listening at just one hour per week. All respondents were asked directly about their image of WRCK whether they listened or not (see Table 7). Aside from the 29% who responded that they had no thoughts about the station, 17% said they liked it, 11% thought it amateurish, and 42.6% mentioned others responses. There was also evidence of confusion with the university's FM broadcast student station which features an eclectic and progressive format.

Insert Table 8 about here

Table 8 summarizes music listening preferences of the students. Overall music preferences ("most favorite") were equally split (24% each) between current popular hit songs and music from the 1960s and 1970s. The "least favorite" or "not favorite" music categories were heavy metal (60%), progressive (55%), reggae (50%), and jazz (48%).

Insert Tables 9 and 10 about here

Further analysis revealed music preferences by respondent age. A one-way analysis of variance was employed to test for these differences. As seen in Table 9, differences did

exist. Older respondents appeared to like 60s/70s and jazz/new age music more but popular music less than younger respondents. Table 10 indicates gender differences in rankings of the music categories. Men ranked 60s/70s music and heavy metal higher than women (although heavy metal was not popular among either gender), whereas women ranked popular hits and soft rock higher than men. Popular music produced the largest gender difference in music preferences ($F=48.0$, $p < .01$).

Insert Table 11 about here

Table 11 continues the investigation by examining the three top stations in the nearby market. WAOR is clearly more popular with older students in this sample whereas the converse is true for WCHR-2. Although WCHR-1 and WCHR-2 may objectively seem to have very similar formats, WCHR-2 changed formats only a few months prior to the survey. Thus, older respondents might have based their rankings more on the established perception of the stations former format.

Discussion and Implications

The results of this survey can be put to use by WRCK. Although the campus station listening was limited, there is evidence that students might tune into WRCK's programming if potential audience members are made aware of the station. WRCK can build upon the overall popularity of radio listening by competing for a significant share of the large radio listening pie. WRCK is neither an AOR format nor a CHR format entirely. By combining these two formats, which apparently appeal to two different audiences, WRCK may not be precisely targeting the college audience.

Radio habits in this study confirmed a national trend: fewer and fewer people are listening to AM radio. Because campus stations using carrier-current technology are always on the AM band, this does not bode well for stations like WRCK. If students are somehow conditioned to avoid AM radio before they arrive at college, there is little hope for growth in listening at such campus stations. However, others may argue that compelling programming

would attract an audience. The low awareness of WRCK is a key problem, and the association with AM is not a perceptual asset. Ironically, student operators of WRCK are reluctant to give up on the AM signal which, in their view, at least makes the station available to all dorm rooms. Evidence from this survey, however, is assisting the faculty advisor in convincing WRCK personnel that a switch to cable FM stereo carriage is critical. The utility of cable FM is limited today as both awareness of its availability and promotion of the service by cable operators is very limited.¹³

The carriage of WRCK on the cable program guide appears to be a substantial asset to the station's reach. Although station personnel were dubious about the possibility of significant listening to WRCK by exposure to cable channel 14, the results showed daily exposure among cable subscribers. WRCK is in a position to take advantage of this exposure by introducing students to the station's programming and promotional activities.

News on radio generally was not desired by most students. Although the lack on interest in news from students was not surprising, the explanation could lie in the ready availability of news from other sources such as CNN and *USA Today*, although evidence is building that today's students are not interested in current affairs. The station's response to this finding has been to increase the reporting of "campus information" and activities during newscasts while reducing the amount of state and national news taken from the wire service. Another idea for the campus station is to localize state and national news by getting reactions from local professors and concentrating on stories with direct impact on students. If the station becomes known as the source for important campus information, it will have an advantage over the metropolitan stations located 20 miles away.

Judging from the evaluations of the favorite stations mentioned in this survey, college-age listeners want a variety of music and personable disk jockeys. A perceived weakness of the top three (especially CHR) commercial stations is the perception that they are repetitive. The campus station can take advantage of this perceived weakness by promoting its greater variety of music made possible by both its crossover AOR/CHR format as well as its playing requests. The fact that the respondent's favorite station was often not close to a

perceived "ideal" station means that WRCK programmers can attempt to position the station closer to that ideal, and that sales staff members can show existing radio advertisers the difference.

The popularity of music from the 1960s and 1970s was somewhat surprising. Although WAOR provides music from the era, the playlist is generally limited to classic rock standards. These results were incorporated into the campus station's program planning, and the music director has stepped up efforts to retrieve this older music, now available on compact disks, from various record labels.

The finding that having likable DJs significantly adds to the prediction of the quantity of listening to the number-one radio station would indicate that music is only a part of the formula for a successful format. The same result was not statistically significant for the idea of repetition. Frequent channel switching may be a result of the tendency of commercial stations to play the same songs repeatedly. Measuring other variables which may contribute to the prediction of radio listening could be enlightening.

The data collected in this survey are valuable for marketing purposes. The station sales staff can build a profile of its potential audience and their spending, consumption, and media habits. Some advertisers may find these data to be as much of value as the help provided by the station through advertising and other promotional activities. These data are not readily available especially in the smaller college town.

Regardless of the interpretation of the data, there are clear benefits to conducting research for the student-operated campus radio station. The programming and sales staff receive useful information. The management can get ideas about what needs to be done to increase listening. Last and certainly not least, the research class gets a chance to do a "real survey" which provides more meaningful data. Often the same students who do the research are involved with the stations. Sometimes they learn that there is more to radio than the highly visible on air positions. A telephone survey can quickly create large amounts of useful information.

Problems in gathering information in this study were kept to a minimum due to the supervision of the student interviewers from a central location. Although it may seem easier to allow students in a broadcast research class to conduct their telephone surveys from their residences, the efficiency, reliability and validity of the data collection are greater from the central location (Wimmer & Dominick, 1987).

Gathering custom research data for the advertiser-supported college station is more important today than ever. Competition for local advertising dollars is increasing as local cable systems move into providing inexpensive, localized video ads inserted into cable network avails. "Proprietary" research conducted for the campus station gives that station more ammunition for its marketing arsenal.

There is a need for more reporting on such case studies of listener surveys. Campus radio listening surveys serve to educate those who operate or supervise college radio stations. Given proper administrative controls, such work may also be used to contribute to serious scholarly study. Part of the need stems from a desire to help students find their own answers. Another aim is to find better ways to help them accomplish their goals.

Endnotes

1. Even in smaller programs where the number of broadcast classes may be limited, students may be trained as interviewers. Indeed, many techniques for broadcast announcing are applicable to telephone interview training.
2. Permission was required from our university's residence life director to conduct this survey, and this was readily given to us. The main concern was that our survey was not intended to sell residents any product or service, and that the survey was for research purposes.
3. Another survey conducted by one of the authors in the spring of 1990 found that answering machines accounted for 28% of non-completions from contacted, eligible telephone numbers.
4. The university has two campus radio stations that are both student operated. The one not included in this study is a non-commercial, progressive station which receives university funding.
5. This campus radio station will not be able to depend upon its carrier current transmission much longer. The vacuum tube-based transmitters are not expected to be replaced. Instead, the station will be upgraded to full stereo transmission capability over the cable television system's cable FM service. The university also houses a noncommercial, progressive music, broadcast FM station, further reducing the already slim chances of getting a broadcast license for the carrier-current station. Should cable systems choose to both deliver and promote new "digital" audio services, this untapped medium may become a viable medium for distribution of campus radio programming.
6. Although relations between the campus station and the local cable operator have been excellent, the distribution of WRCK on channel 14 was included in the contract which allowed the cable operator to offer service to dormitory residents along with fraternity and sorority houses on campus.
7. The university also has a student-run FM broadcast station with a progressive format; research conducted in 1985 suggested some confusion among campus residents in distinguishing the identity of the 2 stations.
8. While this can lead to possible validity problems, artists were chosen which the 45 class members agreed were indicative of the music categories. These artists were also part of the pretest of the survey instrument.
9. This was only possible through written assurance that the survey was for research purposes and responses would be kept anonymous. Some campuses may not be as cooperative in giving out residence numbers.
10. Interestingly, students were originally quite skeptical of the respondents' willingness to participate in a 10-minute survey. Because survey terminations were not a problem, students learned that telephone surveys may be more valid than they originally believed.
11. This survey was so successful that another survey using the same procedure was conducted in the spring 1990. Only one faculty member refused use of an office due to an apparent theft which had occurred the previous year (not during a telephone survey). In programs where graduate students are available, they may assist in the administration (and other areas) of the survey.

12. An oversight in the design of this instrument was the exclusion of a question concerning respondent use of a telephone answering machine. The proliferation of these devices along with their utility as a screening device is having serious implications for telephone survey research. Strategies must be created to encourage participation by those who choose not to take calls until they know who is calling.

13. The availability of "digital radio stations" on cable FM may make this neglected medium more appealing to cable subscribers (e.g., Carter and Kobb, 1990). Harmon (1989) detailed the problems of cable FM from both the subscriber and cable operator's point of view.

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Table 1

Presence of entertainment devices and services among college students (n=522)

Device or Service		Percentage
Television		92.1
Black and White		33.0
Color		76.4
Stereo Receiver		86.8
Audio Cassette Player		87.9
VCR		29.7
Compact Disc Player		30.4
Personal Computer		20.4
Video Games		15.0
Cable TV		47.1
Pay Channels		21.3
Campus newspaper	(daily)	60.8
Radio news	(daily)	27.6
weather	(daily)	29.3
sports	(daily)	10.6
TV	(two to three hours daily)	22.7
Ch. 14 exposure	(daily)	21.6

Table 2

Personal social habits among college students (n=522)

Activity	Percentage
Trips home (monthly)	39.7
Bar visits (weekly or more)	46.5
Once a week	22.0
2 to 3 times per week	21.4
Visits to non-alcoholic bars	11.5
Sports	82.1
Movies	42.7
Greek events	31.7
Dances	18.5
Plays	19.1
Music recitals	19.5

Source of information

Campus newspaper	66.1
Friends	35.5
Flyers	15.1

Table 3

Eating and financial transactions among college students (n=522)

Activity	Percentage
Cafeteria attendance (daily)	49.3
Casual restaurant (monthly)	60.3
Spend less than \$19	79.9
Fast food (weekly)	68.2
Food delivery (monthly)	54.6
Once or twice monthly	34.8
Finances	Percentage
At least one major credit card	45.4
Spending money (weekly)	
Less than \$10	19.2
\$10-19	27.4
\$20-29	30.0
\$30-39	8.6
\$40-49	6.0
\$50 or more	8.8
Paid movie attendance (monthly)	58.7

Table 4

Radio listening habits among college students

Activity		Percentage	
AM radio (once in a while)		16.4	
Radio hours per day			
Less than one hour		18.0	
1 to 2 hours		25.0	
2 to 3 hours		21.4	
3 to 4 hours		13.0	
4 or more		22.6	
Commercial avoidance		49.2	
Call-in requests		19.9	
Play contests		21.0	
Station	Daily Listeners (%) n=500	Too Repetitive (%) n=355	Likable Disk Jockeys (%) n=343
WAOR	35.0	21.9	82.2
WCHR-1	31.2	73.0	73.6
WCHR-2	24.7	70.4	64.9

Table 5

Multiple regression of radio station attributes on hours of listening

WAOR

Dependent variable: WAOR listening each week (six-point scale)

 $\bar{M} = 2.71$ $\bar{SD} = 2.10$ Step 1 Likability of Music $R^2 = .122$ $F = 46.90$ Step 2 Likability of DJs $R^2 = .134$ $F = 26.08$ $N = 338$ R^2 change = .012 F change = 4.74 Significance of change = 0.03

Note: The six-point scale used 1=daily and 6=never. WCHR-1 and WCHR-2 did not have variables which were positively related to weekly listening.

Table 6

Radio station rankings among college students

Station	First place (n=481)	Second place (n=436)
WAOR	40.5	16.5
WCHR-1	28.1	31.2
WCHR-2	15.2	31.2
WRCK	1.2	0.0

Table 7

Attitudes toward the campus station

What do you think of when I say "WRCK" radio? (N=508)

Attitude	Percentage
Clueless	29.3
Like it	17.3
Amateur	10.8
Talk/News/Sports	7.7
Contemporary hit radio	6.3
AM	2.0
Poor reception	0.8
Other	25.8

Table 8

Music preferences among college students (n=515)

Format	Percentage				
	Most favorite	Favorite	Neutral	Not favorite	Least
60s/70s music	24.3	31.1	24.7	13.8	6.2
Popular hits	24.1	29.9	21.6	12.2	12.2
Heavy metal	7.4	15.5	16.7	18.1	42.3
Soft rock	10.1	34.8	29.8	18.7	6.6
Jazz/new age	7.6	16.8	27.3	28.3	20.1
Reggae	7.0	19.2	24.0	22.9	26.9
Progressive	12.2	14.9	18.2	23.9	30.8

Table 9

Mean Scores for Music Formats by Age

Music Format	Age					F
	18	19	20	21	22	
60s/70s music	2.70 _A	2.65 _A	2.38 _{AB}	2.32 _{AB}	2.06 _B	4.92**
Popular hits	2.27 _A	2.44 _A	2.66 _A	2.64 _A	3.19 _B	6.92**
Heavy metal	3.55 _A	3.61 _A	3.77 _A	3.83 _A	4.01 _A	1.84
Soft rock	2.70 _{ABC}	2.83 _{ABC}	2.97 _B	2.52 _C	2.77 _{ABC}	2.17
Jazz/new age	3.59 _A	3.52 _A	3.48 _A	3.29 _A	2.80 _B	6.50**
Reggae	3.41 _{ABC}	3.56 _B	3.54 _{ABC}	3.54 _{ABC}	3.07 _C	2.18
Progressive	3.54 _A	3.54 _A	3.54 _A	3.58 _A	3.08 _A	1.92
$n =$	515	515	515	515	515	

Note: Cell entries are mean scores based on music preference ranging from 1=most favorite to 5=least favorite.

In each row, means coded with a same letter do not differ significantly at the $p < .05$ level, based on a Tukey/Kramer test.

F-tests result from one-way analyses of variance among the five group means for each variable.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 10

Mean Scores for Music Formats by Gender

Music Format	Gender		F
	Male	Female	
60s/70s music	2.24	2.63	13.50**
Popular hits	3.04	2.26	48.00**
Heavy metal	3.51	3.88	10.04**
Soft rock	2.90	2.67	5.51*
Jazz/new age	3.31	3.40	0.60
Reggae	3.48	3.43	0.17
Progressive	3.45	3.47	0.02
n =	510	510	

Note: Cell entries are mean scores based on music preference ranging from 1=most favorite to 5=least favorite.

F-tests result from one-way analyses of variance among the two group means for each variable.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 11

Association Between Favorite Station and Age

"What is your favorite radio station in this area?"

Station	Age					χ^2
	18 <u>n</u> =105 26.1%	19 <u>n</u> =105 26.1%	20 <u>n</u> =75 18.6%	21 <u>n</u> =69 17.1%	22+ <u>n</u> =49 12.2%	
WAOR	35.2%	40.0%	56.0%	60.9%	65.3%	29.59***
WCHR-1	38.1%	35.2%	36.0%	24.6%	28.6%	
WCHR-2	26.7%	24.8%	8.0%	14.5%	6.1%	

Association Between Favorite Station and Gender

	Gender		χ^2
	Male <u>n</u> =151 37.9%	Female <u>n</u> =247 62.1%	
WAOR	68.2%	36.8%	38.02***
WCHR-1	23.2%	40.1%	
WCHR-2	8.6%	23.1%	

*** p < .001