

VALUEGENESIS DATA COLLECTION

V4 Newsletter #2 • December 2021

As a preliminary report, this newsletter describes the method, procedure, and sample attributes of the schools participating so far in the ValueGenesis 4 (V4) project. More results will come in later newsletters. Data collection for this fourth ValueGenesis research project started early in October, 2021, and continues until mid-January, 2022, because of requests for a time extension to accommodate local causes and tight schedules. Wherever principals agreed to participate, all 6th through 12th graders were invited to complete the survey, and this provided the cluster sampling for the study.

SURVEY PROCEDURE

To begin, we sent all SDA school principals in the North American Division (NAD) a short web survey asking their preference between paper or web surveys for their students. The 444 schools that responded represented 61% of those contacted. Most of them, 362 or 82%, chose web-based surveys. The remaining ones chose paper surveys or found it hard to choose.

Accordingly, in late September paper questionnaires were mailed to schools choosing that method and to those that marked the hard-to-decide option. All the other schools, including non-responders, received direct links to web-based survey questionnaires. QR codes were provided as well containing a direct link to the survey. Students could scan the QR codes to access the survey using their smartphone or tablet.

Between September 15 and 25, we (e)mailed a cover letter along with an endorsement letter from Dr. Arne Nielsen, V P for Education in the NAD to all school principals. The cover letter gave instructions about getting parental permission for student participation and originally asked that the surveys be completed between October 11 and November 11, 2021. This completion date was later extended to January 20, 2022.

Directions called for the surveys to be completed on the one day chosen by school administrators. With a maximum of two breaks, students were to complete the surveys on the same day as started and were not allowed to access questionnaires from home, take them home, or consult with anyone—peers, teachers, or parents—about the questions or their answers. When completed, web surveys were sent when students clicked the submit box at the end of the survey. Principals collected the paper surveys, put them in one box or envelope, and mailed them with the prepaid shipping label provided in the original package.

Between October 11 and November 15, 2021, principals were reminded five times by email request to participate in the V4 survey. Concerns from principals and parents came to light during this time about questions on LGBTQ, suicidal ideation, sexual relation, and substance abuse, especially as asked of the younger students. To encourage more participation, two adjustments were made in late October: (a) removal of or allowance to skip eight questions on LGBTQ and (b) classification of 20 additional questions on suicidal ideation, sexual relation, and substance abuse as optional, based on each school's perceptions of appropriateness.

RESPONSE RATE

Of the 24,055 NAD 6th-12th graders enrolled in a total of 732 schools in 58 local conferences, 23 schools had no 6th-12th graders, 28 reported only one, and error messages came from 29 schools due to factors such as incorrect or corrupted email addresses or slow transition to new school administration. In the end, 653 schools were valid choices for the V4 project, accounting for 89% of NAD schools.

As of November 30, 2021, 240 schools had completed the survey, providing 8,626 sixth through twelfth grader samples. These figures represent approximately 37% of the valid schools and 36% of the students enrolled in 6th-12th grades in the schools, an acceptable response rate percentage when compared to other areas of study. While slightly smaller than two of the previous three ValueGenesis survey response rates, it compares favorably with them.

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS

To understand what factors link with participation or non-participation in the survey, the principal investigator performed a logistic regression. NAD database gave school size (number of teachers), organizational level (PK to 8th, 10th, or 12th grade, or 9th-12th), and number of enrolled 6th-12th graders.

Results showed schools in Canada had a higher participation rate than those in other regions (Northeast, Midwest, South, West). Response to the method choice survey indicated the school was more likely than non-responding schools to participate in the Valuegenesis survey. Method chosen also influenced participation. We discovered that principals who opted for a paper-based mode were 1.44 times more likely to participate in the survey compared to those who ignored the method-preference survey while those with web-survey preference were 1.33 times higher.

School size also appeared as an influential factor. The chance for a school with 4 or more teachers to complete the survey were higher than those with 1 or 2-3 teachers. When compared to schools with 4 or more teachers, the probability of these smaller schools to participate decreased by 57% for the 1 teacher schools and 51% for those with 2-3 teachers. Two other factors, number of students enrolled and school organization level, showed no statistical significance.

A look at the attributes of the schools that completed the survey reveals that, of the 240 participant schools, 65% had 4 or more teachers, a percentage greater than the 46% found in the NAD. For organization level, PK-8 schools represented 53% of participating schools. All five regions of NAD schools were well represented with the southern and western regions providing 28% and 31% of participating schools.

Despite PK-8 schools making up a large percentage of those participating, they are underrepresented based on their number in the NAD as are the 1-3 teacher schools. This is not unique to the V4 project as it appeared in the past three studies as well. Therefore, caution may be in order when applying data and analysis results to 6th-12th graders in smaller K-8 schools.

So far, the sample size of 8,626 students from 240 schools provides a statistically sufficient representation of the overall NAD 6th-12th grader population. When data collection ends in January, 2022, data analysis will start, and results will be reported in future newsletters.

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