



## Context

Fluctuations in production, economic and demographic factors in the pig sector have radically altered the identity of the typical Irish pig farm in the last decade. This study explores management protocols on Irish pig farms, isolating factors that affect adoption of technology and the subsequent generation of accurate and efficient enterprise records with the intention to better address producers' demands for knowledge transfer (KT) and record keeping.

## Objectives

Fundamentally, this study seeks to identify potential relationships between sociological and environmental factors and presence/efficiency of production levels on Irish pig farms. Utilising the Teagasc recording system as a basis of evaluation, three objectives are defined:

- Assess quality of information previously compiled through the Teagasc PigSys recording system
- Identify factors influencing current record keeping (RK) paradigms
- Determine consequence of enrolment in PigSys/ePM and [perceived] value of comparable services from external consultants

## Preliminary Findings

- Apparent differences in preferred recording methodology follow theoretical technological adoption trends<sup>1,2</sup>

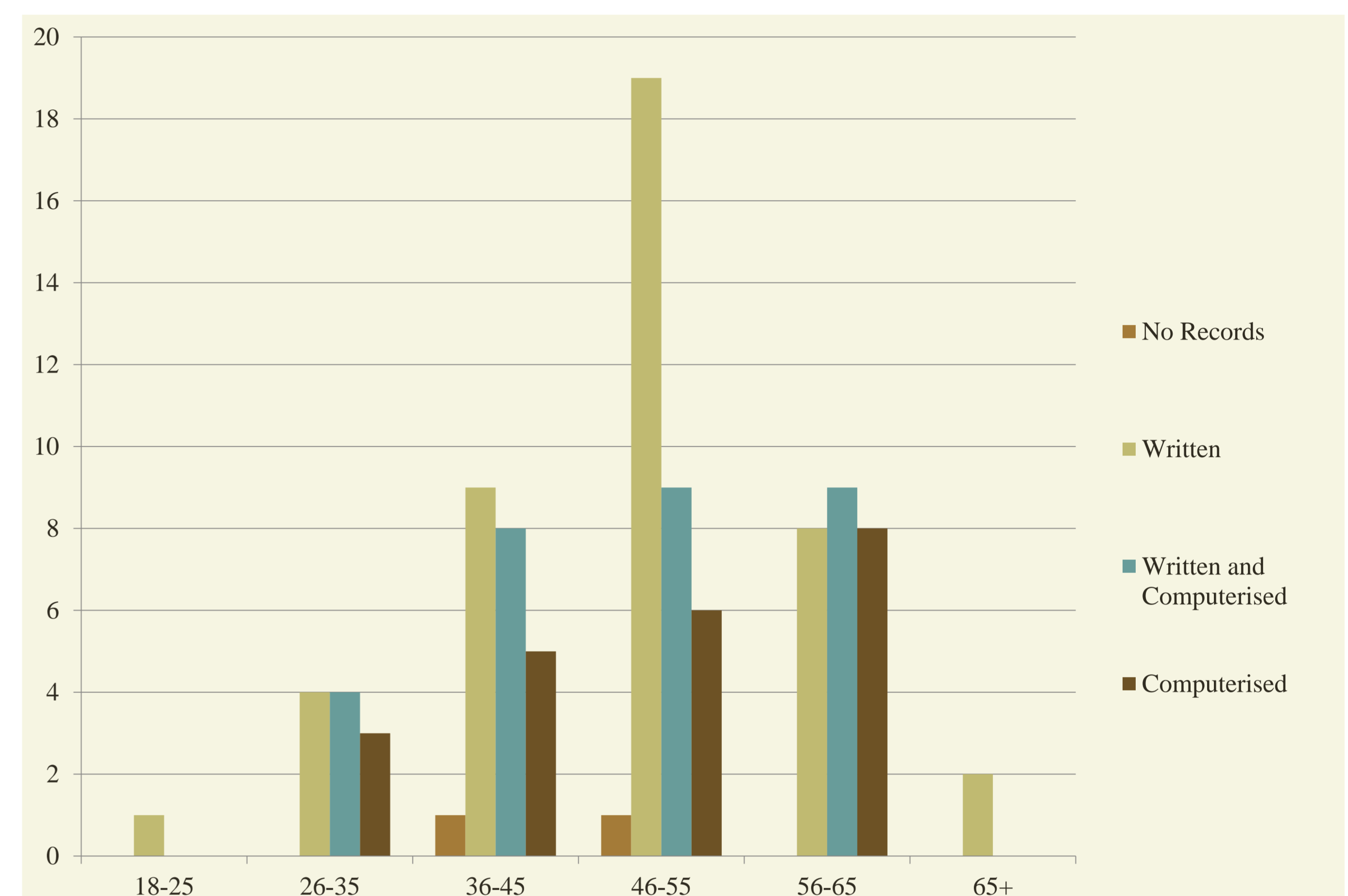


Figure 1: Age distribution of preferred methods of record keeping from 2014 FIQ. n=82

	Age	#Sows
<b>Irish – Statewide</b>	54 <sub>3</sub>	845 <sub>4</sub>
<b>FIQ – ALL*</b>	48.89	646.21 [705.06 for farms <50 sows]
<b>FIQ – Teagasc Clients**</b>	47.98	673.03 [719.45 for farms <50 sows]

Table 1: Average Farmer Age and Sow Holdings, 2013 and 2014.

\*n= 73 (non-respondents omitted)  
\*\*n= 57 (non-respondents and non-clients omitted)

## Preliminary Conclusions

1. 'Habitual' producer activity impedes effective management adaptation and technology adoption.
  - Age may not be the prohibitive factor in efficiency of KT/RK
2. Producers experience little influence from external advisory sources (<30%)
  - Teagasc best positioned to most effectively deliver KT
3. Empirical 'Top-Down' approach to KT/advisory has been largely unsuccessful
  - Adaptation to industry communication model would promote increased KT efficiency/legitimacy

**RK/KT in pig industry does not follow typical agricultural communication model.**

## Methodology

### Farm Visits

- Qualitative assessment of Teagasc advisor-producer interaction
- Standardised advisor questionnaire template for perceived efficiency of production and recordkeeping activities

### Questionnaire

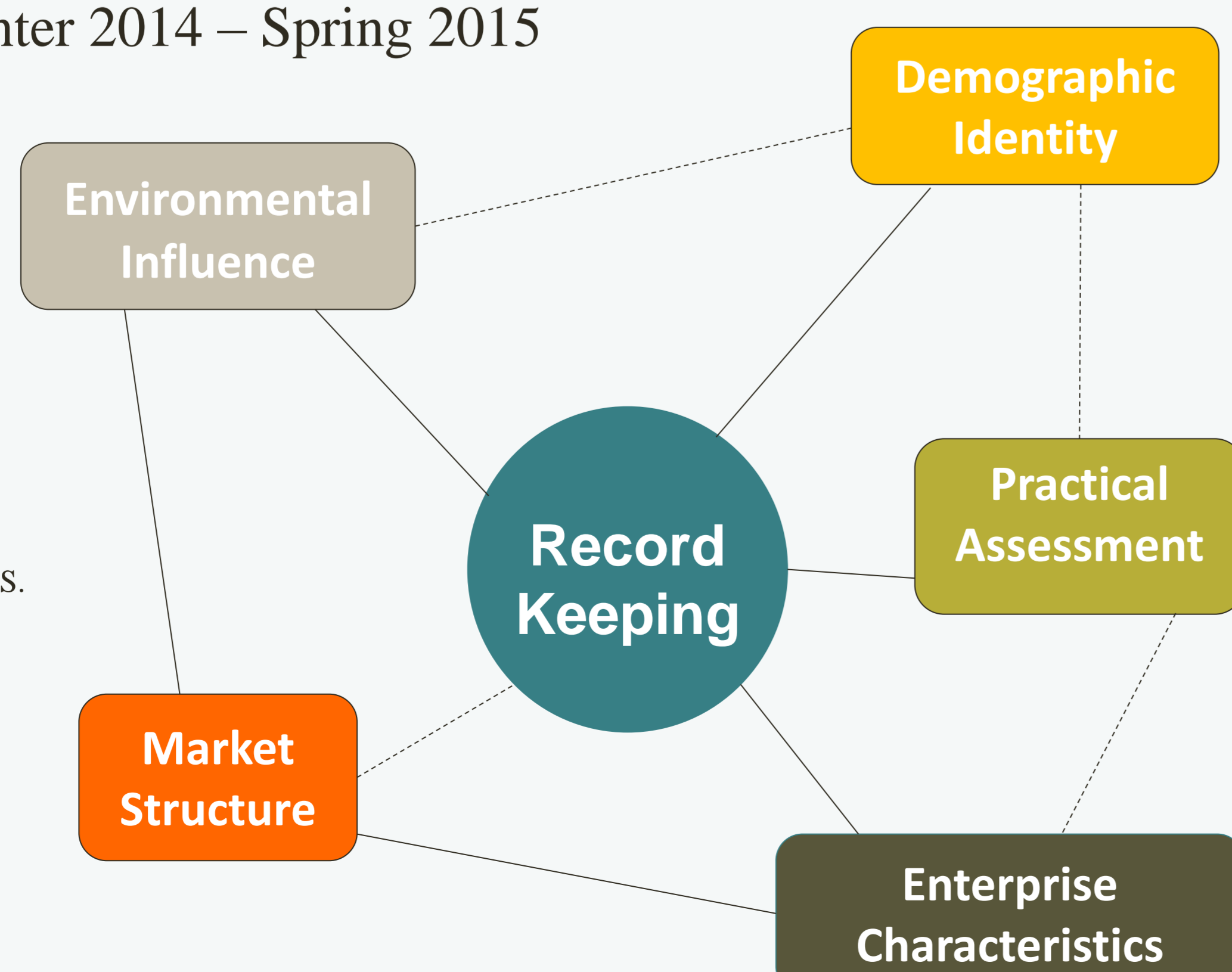
- 415 Farmer Innovation Questionnaires distributed (302 individual farmers) estimated first distribution non-delivery rate of 37%
  - second distribution closing date 3 Oct. 2014
  - 82 returned to date (n= 82)
- 328 Irish commercial farms, of which 189 active PigSys clients (c. 74,000 sows)

### Questionnaire Follow-on Interviews

- Interview request included in distribution of questionnaire
  - Willing respondents to be contacted Autumn 2014 regarding external factors affecting technology adoption and farm management behaviours

### Focus Groups

- Forthcoming : Winter 2014 – Spring 2015



Data analysis to be conducted through SPSS.