American Jewish Committee's Jewish Opinion Survey

METHODOLOGY REPORT

2018

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Contents

Overview

The American Jewish Committee contracted with SSRS to conduct the Jewish Opinion Survey from April 18 through May 9, 2018. The goal of the survey was to elicit opinions on political and religious attitudes and beliefs from people of Jewish faith or background.

This report provides information about the methods used to collect the data and report the survey results.

The study collected data from a nationally representative sample of 1,001 respondents ages 18 or older and of Jewish religion or background. The sample consisted of a landline component (n = 517) and a cell phone component (n = 484).

Sample Design

The Jewish population is a very low incidence population. In order to obtain the number of interviews needed in a timely manner, SSRS used pre-screened sample from our Omnibus survey, which is a national, weekly dual-frame bilingual telephone survey designed to meet standards of quality associated with custom research studies. For this study, SSRS utilized sample where someone in the household had been identified as Jewish in a previous Omnibus survey. If there was no longer anyone Jewish in the household, the interview was terminated.

Additionally, in order to obtain a representative sample for age, SSRS removed a random 25% of respondents aged 55 to 64 and a random 50% of respondents aged 65 or older prior to the beginning of the field period.

Field Preparations, Fielding and Data Processing

The questionnaire was developed by the staff of the American Jewish Committee in consultation with the SSRS project team.

Prior to the field period, SSRS programmed the study into CfMC Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) software. Extensive checking of the program was conducted to assure that skip patterns followed the design of the questionnaire.

The field period for the study was April 18 through May 10, 2018. All interviews were done through the CATI system. The CATI system ensured that questions followed logical skip patterns and that complete dispositions of all call attempts were recorded.

CATI interviewers received both written materials on the survey and formal training. The written materials were provided prior to the beginning of the field period and included an annotated questionnaire that contained information about the goals of the study as well as detailed explanations of why questions were being asked, the meaning and pronunciation of key terms, potential obstacles to be overcome in getting good answers to questions, and respondent problems that could be anticipated ahead of time as well as strategies for addressing the potential problems.

Interviewer training was conducted immediately before the survey was officially launched. Call center supervisors and interviewers were walked through each question from the questionnaire. Interviewers were given instructions to help them maximize response rates and ensure accurate data collection.

Weighting Procedures

The data from this project was weighted to reflect nationally representative estimates of the adult Jewish population. The survey data were weighted to: (1) adjust for the fact that not all survey respondents were selected with the same probabilities; and (2) account for systematic nonresponse along known population parameters. Weighting involved several stages:

1. Adjustment for likelihood of selection (base-weight). This was calculated based on:
   a. A phone number's probability of being included in the landline or cell phone sampling frame
   b. The likelihood that a respondent would be reached by landline or cell phone
   c. The likelihood that a respondent will be selected if their household's landline phone was reached.

   For respondents answering cell phones only, the probability of selection was calculated as the number of cell phones they personally answered multiplied by the ratio between the total cell phone numbers dialed and the total possible cell phone numbers in the state (CellProb). For respondent answering landlines only, this was calculated as the number of landlines their household answered multiplied by the ratio between the total landline numbers dialed and the total possible landline numbers in the state, divided by the number of adults in their household (LLProb). For respondents answering both cell phones and landlines the probability combined CellProb and LLprob. The weighting adjustment at this stage was calculated as (1/{probability of selection}).

2. Post-stratification weighting (Raking): With the base-weight applied, the sample was balanced to reflect the distribution of the adult Jewish population along known population parameters. Weighting was accomplished using SPSSINC RAKE, an SPSS extension module that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables using the GENLOG procedure. To handle missing data among some of the demographic variables we employed a technique called hot decking. Hot deck imputation replaces the missing values of a respondent randomly with another similar respondent without missing data. These are further determined by variables predictive of non-response that are present in the entire file. We used an SPSS macro detailed in 'Goodbye, Listwise Deletion: Presenting Hot Deck Imputation as an Easy and Effective Tool for Handing Missing Data' (Myers, 2011).

   The sample was balanced to match estimates of the Jewish population determined from 2 years of data collected through our SSRS Omnibus as well as informed by PEW estimates. The population parameters used for post-stratification are: age (18-29; 30-49; 50-64; 65+), gender (male; female), Census region (Northeast, North-Central, South, West), Education (less than high school, high school graduate, some college, four-year college or more); race/ethnicity (White non-Hispanic or Other non-Hispanic; Black non-Hispanic; Hispanic); marital status (single; married; other), denomination (Orthodox; Conservative, Reform, or other, and phone-usage (cell phone only, landline only, both).

3. Weight truncation ('trimming'): Weights were trimmed to prevent individual interviews from having too much influence on the final results. The Jewish sample was truncated at the top/bottom 1.5% percentiles.

Margin of Sampling Error

4. Weighting procedures increase the variance in the data with larger weights causing greater variance. Complex survey designs and statistical adjustments in post-data-collection increase variance estimates and, as a result, the error terms applied in statistical testing. Design effect for the AJC 2018 Annual Survey of American Jewish Opinion Survey was 1.60 overall. Accounting for sample size and design effect, the margin of sampling error for this study was +/-3.9%. The survey's *margin of error* is the largest 95% confidence interval for any estimated proportion based on the total sample— the one around 50%. This means that in 95 out every 100 samples drawn using the same methodology, estimated proportions based on the entire sample will be no more than ±3.9 percentage points away from their true values in the population

Below we compare the distribution along various demographic lines between the unweighted sample and the weighted sample.

Table 1: Weighted and Unweighted Sample Distributions

	Unweighted	Weighted	Parameter
Age			
Age 18-29	8.3%	18.1%	20.1%
Age 30-49	20.0%	25.9%	25.4%
Age 50-64	28.6%	26.0%	25.5%
Age 65+	43.2%	29.9%	29.0%
Gender			
Male	48.0%	50.4%	51.6%
Female	52.0%	49.6%	48.4%
Education			
Less than High School	1.1%	3.9%	4.9%
High School	7.3%	17.1%	18.5%
Some College	17.0%	19.5%	18.9%
College+	74.6%	59.5%	57.8%
Denomination			
Orthodox	8.3%	10.3%	10.3%
Conservative	21.0%	14.7%	14.2%
Reform	33.4%	29.8%	29.6%
Other	37.4%	45.2%	45.9%
Region			
Northeast	40.7%	36.9%	36.3%
North Central	11.9%	12.0%	12.4%
South	25.0%	26.8%	27.6%
West	22.5%	24.3%	23.7%
Marital Status			
Single/Other	43.7%	48.1%	47.9%
Married	56.3%	51.9%	52.1%
Race			
White and Other	95.9%	91.4%	89.9%
Blacks	0.5%	1.9%	3.5%
Hispanic	3.6%	6.7%	6.6%

Phone Status			
Cell Phone Only	26.7%	29.3%	28.7%
Dual Frame	68.1%	66.1%	66.6%
Landline Only	5.2%	4.6%	4.8%

Response Rate

The response rates for this study were calculated using AAPOR's RR3. The overall response rate was 34.9%. The landline and cell components had response rates of 32.4% and 37.6%, respectively.[1] Table 2 gives a detailed account of final sample dispositions for the principal study.

Table 2: Final Dispositions

	LANDLINE	CELL	TOTAL
Eligible, Interview (Category 1)			
Complete	517	484	1001
Eligible, non-interview (Category 2)			
Refusal and breakoff	331	18	349
Break off	106	12	118
Answering machine	296	10	306
Physically or mentally unable/incompetent	9	2	11
Language problem	7	0	7
Unknown eligibility, non-interview (Category 3)			
Always busy	15	11	26
No answer	574	249	823
Answering machine-don't know if household	186	237	423
Call blocking	1	2	3
Housing unit, unknown if eligible respondent	58	601	659
No screener completed	8	19	27
Not eligible (Category 4)			
Fax/data line	27	8	35
Non-working number	429	85	514
Business, government office, other organizations	31	58	89
No eligible respondent	106	212	318
Total phone numbers used	2701	2008	4709
Response Rate 3	**32.4%**	**37.6%**	**34.9%**

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[1] Note that the response rate for the SSRS omnibus averages about ~9% overall and thus the total response rate would be the product of the original response rate and the study response rate.

Deliverables

At the end of the field period SSRS delivered a fully labeled SPSS dataset, fully labeled Excel dataset and weighted tables. In addition, a full topline for all weighted survey responses and combination tables was provided.