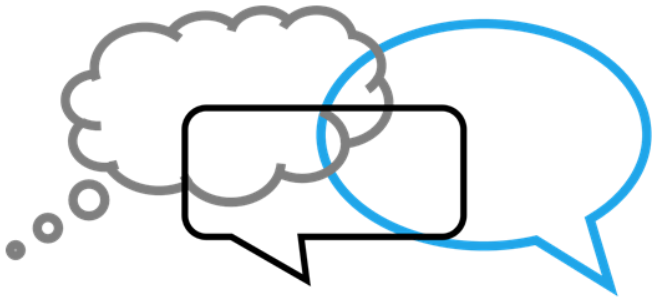
ssrs

opinion panel

omnibus

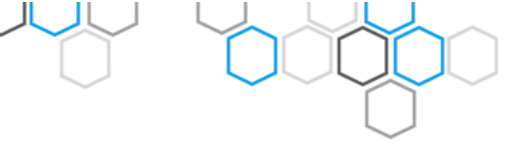


Methods Report

March 22, 2023

AAPOR Transparency Initiative

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH



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Overview

This study was conducted by SSRS on its Opinion Panel Omnibus platform. The SSRS Opinion Panel Omnibus is a national, twice-per-month, probability-based survey. Data collection was conducted March 17-18, 2023, among a sample of 1,027 respondents. The survey was conducted via the web (n=997) and telephone (n=30) and administered in English (n=1,002) and Spanish (n=25). The margin of error for total respondents is ±3.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. All SSRS Opinion Panel Omnibus data are weighted to represent the target population of U.S. adults age 18 or older.

This report provides information about the sampling procedures and the methods used to collect, process, and weight data for this study.

Sample Design: SSRS Opinion Panel

The SSRS Opinion Panel Omnibus is conducted with members of the SSRS Opinion Panel. SSRS Opinion Panel members are recruited randomly based on nationally representative address-based sample (ABS) design (including Hawaii and Alaska). ABS respondents are randomly sampled by Marketing Systems Group (MSG) through the U.S. Postal Service's Computerized Delivery Sequence File (CDS), a regularly updated listing of all known addresses in the U.S. For the SSRS Opinion Panel, known business addresses are excluded from the sample frame. Additionally, the SSRS Opinion Panel has recruited some hard-to-reach demographic groups via random digit dialing (RDD) telephone sample.[1]

The SSRS Opinion Panel is a multimode panel. Internet households participate via the web, while all non-internet households (including those who have internet but are unwilling to take surveys online) participate via phone.

Survey Sampling

All samples for this study were drawn from members of the SSRS Opinion Panel who are U.S. adults age 18 or older. The samples were selected to ensure representation by age, gender, race and ethnicity, education, census region, party identification, and preferred survey language.

Questionnaire Design

The SSRS Omnibus includes a series of question inserts contracted by our clients. These inserts may range from a single question to a several-minute battery of open- and closed-ended questions. Our staff reviews each insert to ensure that the questions, as worded, will provide clients with the desired information. SSRS reviews questions to identify potential problems that might increase respondent burden, cause respondents to refuse or terminate the survey, create problems with respondent comprehension, or pose practical challenges for mode-specific administration, such as complex skip patterns. For each survey wave, clients are given exclusivity for their subject area and inserts may be randomized to reduce bias.

[1] Prior to July 2019, the SSRS Opinion Panel was recruited entirely from RDD sample.

Data Collection

Web Contact Procedures

A "soft launch" inviting a limited number of panelists to participate was conducted on Friday, March 17, 2023. After soft launch data was checked to ensure that all questionnaire content and skip patterns were correct, an additional sample was released to ensure that the final sample met the study goals.

Web panelists were emailed an invitation to complete the survey online. The email for each respondent included a unique password-embedded link. All panelists who did not respond to the email invitation received up to three reminder emails, and panelists who had opted into receiving text messages from the SSRS Opinion Panel received up to three text message reminders.

In appreciation for their participation online, panelists received compensation in the form of an electronic gift card, sent via email immediately after completion of the survey. Panelists with less than a high school education or who completed the survey in Spanish were offered a larger payment to encourage participation.

Phone Contact Procedures

For SSRS Opinion panelists who participated via telephone, interviewers asked by name to speak with the person at that number who is a member of the SSRS Opinion Panel. Interviewers verified that the person was in a safe place before administering the survey.

All telephone interviews were completed in English using the Forsta Plus (formerly known as Confirmit) computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system. The CATI system ensured that all call attempts were recorded.

CATI interviewers received written materials about the survey instrument and received formal training for this particular project. The written materials were provided prior to commencement of data collection and included an annotated questionnaire that contained information about the goals of the study, detailed explanations about why questions were being asked, the meaning and pronunciation of key terms or names, potential obstacles to 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.

All respondents who completed the survey via telephone were compensated with a mailed check.

Programming, Data Processing, and Integration

Programming

Prior to the field period, SSRS programmed the study into its Forsta Plus web/CATI platform for administration in English or Spanish. Extensive checking of the program was conducted to ensure that skip patterns and sample splits followed the design of the questionnaire.

Additional steps were employed to ensure a quality experience in survey administration regardless of the device utilized by respondents, whether a desktop computer, tablet, or phone. The web program was optimized for administration via smartphone or other handheld mobile devices. The web program was also checked on multiple devices, including desktop computers and handheld mobile devices, as well as on different web browsers, to ensure consistent and optimized visualization across devices and web browsers. The web survey was accessed directly by respondents, using their unique survey links with embedded passwords. This program also gave them the ability to return to their survey later if they chose to suspend it.

Quality Control Checks

For web surveys, quality checks were incorporated into the survey. Respondents who failed the quality checks were not included in the final data set. These quality control measures included checks for speeders, a high number of questions left unanswered, and the administration of questions designed to ensure respondents were reading each item.

For telephone surveys, interviews are closely monitored by interviewing staff for quality control. In addition, select recordings are reviewed by supervisors to monitor quality and interviewer procedures.

Weighting and Design Effects

Data were weighted to represent adults 18 or older in the United States. The data were weighted by first applying a base weight, then balancing the demographic profile of the sample to target population parameters.

Base weight (BW)

The base weight for the SSRS Opinion Panel Omnibus accounts for the panelists' probability of selection into the current week's Omnibus sample using the following formula:

$$BW = W_{hi} \times (N_h / n_h)$$

where W_{hi} is the panelist weight, N_h is the size of stratum h, and n_h is the number of panelists selected from stratum h.

Raking

With the base weight applied, the data were weighted to balance the demographic profile of the sample to the target population parameters.

Data were weighted to distributions of sex by age, sex by education, age by education, race/ethnicity, census region, civic engagement, population density, frequency of internet use, voter status, religious affiliation, and party identification. The following table shows the data sources used for calibration totals.

Table. Calibration Variable Sources

Dimensions	Source
Sex	

Age **Education** **Race** **Hispanic Nativity** **Census Region**	2022 Current Population Survey[2]
Population Density	2021 Census Planning Database[3]
Religion Affiliation **Party Identification**	Pew Research Center's National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)[4]
Civic Engagement[5]	September 2019 Current Population Survey (CPS) Volunteering and Civic Life Supplement[6]
Voter Registration	Aristotle Voter Data 2022 and Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for the United States: April 1, 2020, to July 1, 2021, from the U.S. Census Bureau[7]

Panelist demographics used for weighting are those collected on the most recent Opinion Panel registration survey, with the exception of education, frequency of internet use, and Hispanic nativity, which are included on the Omnibus questionnaire each week.

Trimming

Final calibrated weights are trimmed at the second and 98th percentiles to prevent individual surveys from having too much influence.

Effects of Sample Design on Statistical Inference

Post-data collection statistical adjustments require analysis procedures that reflect departures from simple random sampling. SSRS calculates the effects of these design features so that an appropriate adjustment can be incorporated into tests of statistical significance when using these data. The so-called "design effect,"

[2] Sarah Flood, Miriam King, Renae Rodgers, Steven Ruggles, J. Robert Warren and Michael Westberry. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey: Version 10.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2022. https://doi.org/10.18128/D030.V10.0
[3] https://www.census.gov/topics/research/guidance/planning-databases/2021.html
[4] https://www.pewresearch.org/methods/fact-sheet/national-public-opinion-reference-survey-npors/ - May 23 to Sept. 6, 2022.
[5] Civically engaged respondents are defined as those who have volunteered in the past 12 months or who talk to their neighbors daily.
[6] https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/about/supplemental-surveys.html
[7] https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-national-detail.html

or *deff*, represents the loss in statistical efficiency that results from a disproportionate sample design and systematic nonresponse. The total sample design effect for this survey is 1.33.

SSRS calculates the composite design effect for a sample of size n, with each case having a weight, w, as:[8]

$$deff = \frac{n \sum w^2}{(\sum w)^2}$$

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%. For example, the margin of error for the entire sample is ±3.5 percentage points. This means that in 95 out of every 100 samples drawn using the same methodology, estimated proportions based on the entire sample will be no more than 3.5 percentage points away from their true values in the population. Margins of error for subgroups will be larger. It is important to remember that sampling fluctuations are only one possible source of error in a survey estimate. Other sources, such as respondent selection bias, questionnaire wording, and reporting inaccuracy, may contribute additional error of greater or lesser magnitude.

[8] Kish, L. (1992). Weighting for Unequal Pi. Journal of Official Statistics, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1992, pp. 183-200.

Sample Disposition and Response Rate

Table 1 details the completion and response rates for this study.

Table 1: Completion Rate/Response Rate

Completion Rates/Composite Response Rates	Total
Total Sample (Invited to participate)	2,744
Screen-outs	0
Total Eligible	2,744
Quality Control Removals	1
Incompletes	139
Quota Full	161
Completions*	1,027
Incidence/Eligibility Rate	100.0%
Survey Completion Rate (Completions/Total invited to participate)	37.4%
Weighted Survey Response Rate 3 (RR3)	39.3%

*Excludes screen-outs and data quality removals that completed the survey.

Cumulative Response Rate

Cumulative response rate takes into consideration the response rate for the panel recruitment survey, percent of recruitment survey respondents that agree to join the panel, and the Omnibus survey response rate. The cumulative RR3 comes to 2.2%.