

AJC SURVEY OF AMERICAN JEWISH OPINION 2016: METHODOLOGY REPORT

Overview

The American Jewish Committee contracted with SSRS to conduct the Jewish Opinion Survey from August 8 through August 28, 2016. 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 1,002 respondents ages 18 or older and of Jewish religion or background. The sample consisted of a landline component (n = 523) and a cell phone component (n = 479).

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 reach 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.

In preparation for conducting the Jewish Opinion Survey, SSRS conducted pretest interviews with 14 respondents of Jewish religion or background. The respondents completed the pretest on August 4. After the pretest, digitally recorded interviews were placed on a secure FTP site so AJC staff could review them with SSRS project managers.

The field period for the study was August 8 through August 28, 2016. 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 both prior to the study pretest and 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 non-response along known population parameters. Weighting involved several stages:

Adjustment for likelihood of selection (base-weight). This was calculated based on:

- A phone number's probability of being included in the landline or cell phone sampling frame
- The likelihood that a respondent would be reached by landline or cell phone
- 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 $(1/\{\text{probability of selection}\})$.

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. The balancing was done using Iterative Proportional Fitting (or 'raking'), a procedure in which the data are repeatedly weighted to the parameters until the difference between the weighted data and the population benchmarks is near zero. 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 Handling Missing Data' (Myers, 2011).

The sample was balanced to match estimates of the Jewish populations determined from 3 years of data collected through our SSRS Omnibus as well as PEW estimates for Jewish denomination. 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).

Weight truncation ('trimming'): The weights were truncated (trimmed) so that they did not exceed 4.0 or fall below 0.25.

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

Table 1: Weighted and Unweighted Sample Distributions and Population Parameters

	Unweighted (%)	Weighted (%)	Target ¹ (%)
Age			
Age 18-29	12	15	15
Age 30-49	24	20	20
Age 50-64	31	29	29
Age 65+	33	36	37
Gender			
Male	50	51	52
Female	50	49	49
Education			
Less than High School	1	2	3
High School	9	13	13
Some College	15	20	20
College+	76	65	64
Denomination			
Orthodox	8	9	10
Conservative	17	18	18
Reform	30	35	35
Other	45	37	37
Region			
Northeast	41	40	40
North Central	13	12	13
South	23	26	26
West	22	22	22
Marital Status			
Married	45	50	49
Single/Other	55	50	51
Race			
White and Other	96	90	90
Blacks	1	2	2
Hispanic	3	8	8
Phone Status			
Landline Only	4	6	6
Dual Frame	72	76	76
Cell Phone Only	24	18	18

¹ The figures correspond to the estimates of the Jewish populations determined from 3 years of data collected through our SSRS Omnibus as well as PEW estimates for Jewish denomination.

Margin of Sampling Error

Weighting procedures increase the variance in the data with larger weights causing greater variance. Complex survey designs and post data-collection statistical adjustments increase variance estimates and, as a result, the error terms applied in statistical testing. Design effect for this survey was 1.3 overall. Accounting for sample size and design effect, the margin of sampling error for this study was +/-3.57%.

Table 2: Margin of Error and Design Effect

	N	Design Effect (DEFF)	Margin of Sampling Error (MOE)	MOE with DEFF
TOTAL	1002	1.3	3.10%	3.57%

Response Rate

The response rates for this study were calculated using AAPOR's RR3. The overall response rate was 37.5%. The landline and cell components had response rates of 43.5% and 30.8%, respectively. Table 2 gives a detailed account of final sample dispositions for the principal study.

Table 3: Final Dispositions

	LANDLINE	CELL	TOTAL
Eligible, Interview (Category 1)			
Complete	523	479	1002
Eligible, non-interview (Category 2)			
Refusal and breakoff	147	190	337
Break off	123	103	226
Answering machine	19	36	55
Physically or mentally unable/incompetent	6	2	8
Language problem	6	5	11
Unknown eligibility, non-interview (Category 3)			
Always busy	3	9	12
No answer	297	311	608
Answering machine-don't know if household	147	292	439
Call blocking	30	9	39
Housing unit, unknown if eligible respondent	2	326	328
No screener completed	2	14	16
Not eligible (Category 4)			
Fax/data line	16	6	22
Non-working number	88	64	152
Business, government office, other organizations	21	32	53
No eligible respondent	103	195	296
Quota filled	0	0	0
Total phone numbers used	1533	2073	3606
Response Rate 3	43.5%	30.8%	37.5%

² 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 survey 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.

Source: AJC Website:

http://www.ajc.org/site/c.7oJILSPwFfJSG/b.9458225/k.AF41/AJC_Survey_of_American_Jewish_Opinion_2016_Methodology_Report.htm