

METHODOLOGY REPORT NATIONAL SURVEY WAVE 7

Prepared for The Annenberg Public Policy Center
of the University of Pennsylvania

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JULY 22, 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview	3
Questionnaire Design	3
Sample Design: The SSRS Opinion Panel	3
Data Collection.....	3
Survey Sampling	3
Screening	4
Survey Administration Procedures	4
Quality Control Checks.....	4
Completion Rate/Response Rate	5
Weighting	5
Base weight (BW).....	5
Probability Panel Weighting	5
Trimming.....	6
Effects of Sample Design on Statistical Inference.....	6
Deliverables.....	6

OVERVIEW

The Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania (APPC) engaged SSRS to conduct the seventh wave of the APPC National Survey. The APPC National Survey Wave 7 was conducted via the SSRS Opinion Panel and invited U.S. adults aged 18 and older who completed the Wave 1 survey to participate. Data collection was conducted from July 12 – July 18, 2022, among a sample of 1,580 respondents in English (1,548) and Spanish (32). The web total respondents were 1,541 and there were 39 telephone respondents. Data were weighted to represent the target U.S. adult population.

This report provides information about the sampling procedures and the methods used to collect, process, and weight data for APPC National Survey Wave 7.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The questionnaire was developed by APPC in consultation with the SSRS project team. Prior to the field period, SSRS programmed the study into its Forsta Plus (formerly known as Confirmit) platform that allows data to be collected online or through Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). Extensive checking of the program was conducted to ensure that skip patterns and sample splits followed the design of the questionnaire.

SAMPLE DESIGN: THE SSRS OPINION PANEL

SSRS Opinion Panel members are recruited randomly based on nationally representative ABS (Address Based Sample) 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.¹

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

DATA COLLECTION

Survey Sampling

Sample for the APPC National Survey Wave 7 consisted of n=1,928 SSRS Opinion Panelists who completed the Wave 1 survey. The sample for Wave 1 was stratified by age, gender, race and ethnicity, education, region, party identification and language to ensure adequate representation of each.

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

Screening

Respondents were screened at the start of the survey for membership in other opinion panels. Respondents who indicated they were a member of another opinion panel were not invited to continue on with the survey.²

Survey Administration Procedures

A “soft launch” inviting a limited number of panelists to participate was conducted the morning of July 12, 2022. After checking soft launch data to ensure that all questionnaire content and skip patterns were correct, the remaining sample was released later in the day.

Web panelists were emailed an invitation to complete the survey online. The email for each respondent included a unique passcode-embedded link. All respondents not responding to their first invitation received up to three reminder emails and non-responding panelists who had opted into receiving text messages from the SSRS Opinion Panel received a text message reminder.

In appreciation for their participation, web-panelists received a \$15 incentive in the form of an electronic gift card. Telephone respondents received a \$15 incentive in the form of a mailed check.

Median survey length was 18 minutes online and 33 minutes by phone.

Quality Control Checks

For web surveys, quality checks were incorporated into the survey. For APPC National Survey Wave 7, SSRS built in three closed-ended trap questions to the web version of the program. Respondents who failed the quality checks were not included in the final data set. This included:

1. Respondents who answered two or more trap questions incorrectly (n=3);
2. Respondents with a length of interview (LOI) less than 20% of the overall mean LOI³ (n=2);
3. Respondents who skipped more than 10% the questions asked⁴ (n=3).

A total of N=7 completed surveys were removed (0.4%).⁵

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.

² A total of N=19 panelists were screened out, including N=18 web respondents and N=1 telephone respondents.

³ LOI less than 3.7 minutes.

⁴ 99% of respondents answered 100% of questions asked.

⁵ Panelists may fail multiple quality control checks, therefore the total number of removals may be less than the cumulative number of failed tests.

COMPLETION RATE/RESPONSE RATE

Table 2 details the survey completion rate for this study.

Table 2: Completion Rate/Response Rate:

Touchpoint	Web	Telephone	Overall
Invited to Participate/Total Sample	1,854	74	1,928
Screened	18	1	19
Completed ⁶	1,541	39	1,580
Survey Completion Rate	84%	53%	83%

WEIGHTING

Data were weighted to represent adults 18+ using the SSRS Opinion Panel. 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 was the final weight from Wave 1. The base weights were standardized to the total and trimmed.

Probability Panel Weighting

With the base weight applied, the probability panel was weighted to balance the demographic profile of the sample to the target population parameters.

To handle missing data among some of the demographic variables we employ 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 use an SPSS macro detailed in 'Goodbye, Listwise Deletion: Presenting Hot Deck Imputation as an Easy and Effective Tool for Handling Missing Data' (Myers, 2011).

Weighting was accomplished using SPSSINC RAKE, an SPSS extension module that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables using the GENLOG procedure.

Data were weighted to distributions of: sex by age, sex by education, age by education, race/ethnicity (for Hispanic include US born and foreign born), census region, civic engagement, internet access, and population density. The main demographic benchmarks were obtained from the 2021 Current Population Survey (CPS). The civic engagement benchmark was derived from September 2017 CPS Volunteering and Civic Life Supplement data. The population density came from Census Planning Database 2020. The internet

⁶ Excludes cases removed for quality control reasons.

access benchmark was obtained from the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) data. The below table shows the unweighted and weighted percentages.

Trimming

Weights were trimmed at the 2nd and 98th percentiles to prevent individual interviews 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" or *deff* represents the loss in statistical efficiency that results from a disproportionate sample design and systematic non-response. The total sample design effect for this survey is 1.82.

SSRS calculates the composite design effect for a sample of size n , with each case having a weight, w , as:⁷

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

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 ± 3.3 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 3.3 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.

DELIVERABLES

Final deliverables for this study were as follows:

- Weighted SPSS dataset
- Topline Report
- Methodology Report

⁷ Kish, L. (1992). Weighting for Unequal Pi. *Journal of Official Statistics*, Vol. 8, No.2, 1992, pp. 183-200.