

Methodology Report

To: St. David's Foundation
From: PerryUndem
Date: April 27, 2023
Re: Detailed Methodology

Overview:

A Better Death: Texan's Views and Experiences with End-of-Life Issues was conducted in 2022 among a representative sample of adults ages 18 and older living in Texas. Two methodologies were used due to low response rates on the first collection. Of the 2305 interviews in the final dataset, the majority of the responses (2,181) were collected by YouGov through their online panel. An additional 124 responses from Travis and Williamson counties were merged with You Gov's interviews and re-weighted to reflect adults in Texas. This is due to lower than anticipated responses from the address based sampling (ABS) collection by SSRS.

YouGov Sample Composition:

YouGov employs a methodology known as sample matching to achieve representative samples using opt-in panels. Sample matching is a methodology for selection of representative samples from non-randomly selected pools of respondents. It is ideally suited for Web access panels. Sample matching starts with an enumeration of the target population. For general population studies, sample selection using the matching methodology is a two-stage process. First, a random sample is drawn from the target population. We call this sample the target sample. Since this sample is a true probability sample, it is representative of the frame from which it was drawn.

Second, for each member of the target sample, we select one or more matching members from our pool of opt-in respondents. This is called the matched sample. Matching is accomplished using a large set of variables that are available in consumer and voter databases for both the target population and the opt-in panel. Because the YouGov panel is highly profiled, they are able to invite panelists based on a combination of their profiled characteristics that will most closely resemble the sampling targets.

The purpose of matching is to find an available respondent who is as similar as possible to the selected member of the target sample. The result is a sample of respondents who have the same measured characteristics as the target sample. Under certain conditions, the matched sample will have similar properties to a true random sample. That is, the matched sample mimics the characteristics of the target sample. It is, as far as we can tell, “representative” of the target population (because it is similar to the target sample).

YouGov Survey Administration:

YouGov manages an incentive program as a thank you for respondent participation, in which respondents are awarded points that are redeemable for gift cards. Respondents need to answer a number of surveys in order to earn enough points to redeem for an incentive. In general, survey reward policies and incentives are intended to be unattractive to professional survey takers but serve as a genuine token of appreciation for YouGov panelists. For this survey, participants received the equivalent of about \$0.75.

Respondents are invited using generic invitations, so they do not self-select into a survey based on interest in the topic. As a policy, panelists who are invited to a particular survey but then identified as ineligible are seamlessly rerouted to a different survey that provides incentives. This practice removes the motivation for falsifying information.

For this study YouGov interviewed 2,294 respondents from Texas who were then matched down to a sample of 2,100. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race, and education. After matching, an oversample of 81 Asians from Texas were added to this matched sample. An additional 124 cases from SSRS were then added to produce the final dataset for a total of 2,305 completed interviews. The frame is a politically representative "modeled frame" of adults, based upon the American Community Survey (ACS) public use microdata file, public voter file records, the 2020 Current Population Survey (CPS) Voting and Registration supplements, the 2020 National Election Pool (NEP) exit poll, and the 2020 CES surveys, including demographics and 2020 presidential vote.

The final dataset cases were weighted to the sampling frame using propensity scores. The final dataset cases and the frame were combined and a logistic regression was estimated for inclusion in the frame. The propensity score function included age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of education, region, and presidential vote 2020. The propensity scores were grouped into deciles of the estimated propensity score in the frame and post-stratified according to these deciles.

The weights were then post-stratified on the 2020 Presidential vote choice, and a four-way stratification of gender, age (4-categories), race (4-categories) and education (4-categories) to produce the final weight.

The YouGov data collection was conducted October 25, 2022 to November 15, 2022 with a 40 percent response rate.

The SSRS data collection was conducted August 10, 2022 to September 19, 2022.

SSRS Sample Composition:

The target population for this survey originally was adults age 18 or older living in Travis and Williamson counties. The study aimed at completing a total of 1,000 interviews, with 500 each within Travis and Williamson Counties. As a part of the sample design, the sample was stratified with the goal of completing at least 100 interviews with African American households and 100 interviews with Hispanic households total between the two counties.

SSRS drew a representative sample of the target population, using a full probability design. The sampling frame uses address-based sample (ABS) drawn from the United State Postal Service (USPS) Computerized Delivery Sequence File (CDSF). The CDSF is a computerized file that contains information on all delivery addresses serviced by the USPS.

For this effort, we sampled from all available addresses in the two-county area. We used available Census data to ensure that the addresses selected for the sample represented the entire region. Additionally, we oversampled areas with a higher prevalence of Hispanic and African American adults to help ensure we were able to obtain enough interviews with these respondents.

SSRS Field Preparations and Data Collection:

Programming

The staff of PerryUndem developed the questionnaire in consultation with the SSRS project team. Prior to the field period, SSRS formatted the questionnaire and translated the survey

instrument into Spanish. SSRS programmed the survey into its' Forsta Plus (formerly Confirmit) platform for Web administration in both English and Spanish. The program was optimized for administration via smartphone or other mobile handheld devices. Extensive checking of the program was conducted to ensure that skip patterns followed the design of the questionnaire. The Web program was checked on multiple devices, including desktop computers and handheld mobile devices, and different web browsers in order to ensure consistent and optimized visualization across devices and web browsers. SSRS provided the PerryUndem team with access to the program before launch, as well, to provide any feedback before finalization.

SSRS generated unique survey passwords that were assigned and provided via mail to potential respondents. The Web survey was accessed directly by respondents, using their unique passwords. This also gave respondents the ability to return to their survey later if they chose to suspend their interview.

Data Collection

To help ensure the desired minimum number of African American and Hispanic respondents, the ABS sample was planned to be released in two separate waves to allow for adjustments in the design between sample releases. For the first wave, roughly 40% of the anticipated sample for the full study was released (10,666 records in Wave 1).

The mailing protocol consisted of an invitation letter and a follow up reminders postcard to all households included in the sample. SSRS crafted the invitation letter and reminder postcard in consultation with PerryUndem to make each material as appealing as possible.

The initial invitation letter was sent to each household in a #10 envelope. The invitation included a one-page letter inviting a member of the household to participate in an important research study. All invitation letters were double-sided, with English on the front and Spanish on the back. The invitation letter included a link (URL), an individual passcode to log on to the study, and a QR code for easy scannable entry into the survey.

The reminder postcard included the same information provided on the invitation letter (i.e., the survey link, passcode, and QR code). Similar to the invitation letter, the postcard asked respondents to participate in this important research and included Spanish translations of the key points. Reminder postcards were sent a few days after the initial invitation letter.

Fieldwork Issues and Study Cancellation

After the mailings had been sent, SSRS began monitoring response rates, per standard procedures. However, response to the invitations was much lower than anticipated. Upon identification of this issue, SSRS immediately notified PerryUndem to discuss how to best address the remainder of fieldwork and the planned second sample release. After several conversations, the SSRS and PerryUndem teams decided to discontinue the study and cancel the second wave. **SSRS Response Rate:**¹

The response rate for this study was calculated using AAPOR's RR3.

Table 1: Response Rate

	ABS
Total records	10,666
Ineligibles	3
Returned mail	565
Valid sample	9,971
Completes	127
Response Rate	1.20%

¹ The response rate calculated represents the number of completed interviews at the time the study was cancelled.