

OREGON OMNIBUS ANNUAL SOCIAL INDICATORS SURVEY 1998

SUMMARY OF SURVEY METHODOLOGY

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INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 1998, the University of Oregon Survey Research Laboratory (OSRL) invited a select group of state agencies and private research organizations to take part in the first Oregon Omnibus Annual Social Indicators Survey (OASIS). OASIS' overarching goal each year is to obtain statistically valid and reliable information on a variety of social, economic and public policy topics required by clients. The omnibus survey format allows organizations who cannot afford, or who do not need, an entire survey to purchase question modules on a collective instrument with a standard methodology and high quality procedures.

The clients for OASIS '98 and their question modules' subjects were:

- Bob Whelan, ECONorthwest, Portland – casinos and gambling
- Chris Havel, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Salem – Oregon state parks image and camping as a leisure activity
- Paul Slovik, Decision Research and University of Oregon, Eugene – smoking behavior

Working closely with these clients, OSRL conducted a representative telephone survey of 805 adults November 18, 1998 through January 11, 1999. This report summarizes the survey design, data collection, and sampling methodology for OASIS '98.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

In designing the survey instrument, OSRL used a multi-path approach which included: drawing from OSRL's survey archives and professional networks for questions related to clients' needs; creating original survey questions; and extensively pretesting individual questions and the entire survey instrument. Specific survey questions were developed and pretested in close consultation with the clients. Most of the survey questions were OSRL originals, but special care was exercised to ensure that certain questions were direct parallels to those on prior state and national surveys.

The survey instrument comprised the following subject areas:

1. Belief about the importance of Oregon parks' public campgrounds, easily accessible beaches, and well-maintained trails; most important item;
2. Belief about the importance of Oregon parks' family-oriented outdoor activities, historical places, and ability to learn about state flora and fauna; most important item;
3. Belief about the need to restrict building next to Oregon rivers;
4. Overall rating of Oregon state parks' quality;
5. Camping behavior as a child, in the past 12 months (in Oregon and elsewhere), and compared to 5 years ago; how and where respondents camp;
6. Perceptions of Oregon campgrounds' prices, crowding, upkeep, and looks;
7. Smoking behavior – ever and currently;
8. Gambling behavior in Oregon and outside Oregon in the past 12 months, number of times, and money set aside;
9. Visits to nine particular Oregon casinos, and what respondents like best and least about Oregon casinos;
10. Demographic and background items, including sex, age, race/ethnicity, education, urban/rural, newspaper subscribership, liberalism/conservatism on social and economic issues separately, and income.

Survey subject areas 1 – 10 represent clients' information needs and were asked of all 805 respondents. OASIS '98 also was adopted as a class project for the University of Oregon sociology graduate seminar Soc 613 "Survey Methods and Design" Fall term 1998. Students in the class took part in all aspects of the survey and sample design and implementation, meeting with clients and working side-by-side with regular OSRL employees. Only trained OSRL interviewers, however, actually conducted the survey interviewing. Survey subject areas 11 - 15 represent students' interests, and each attendant question module was randomly asked of just half the sample.¹

11. Attitudes and beliefs about Oregon public schools and school reform; school-children in the home;
12. Newspaper reading habits;

¹ Participating students included: Clyde Bentley, Carlos Castro, Kuang-Kuo Chang, Vikas Gumbhir, Lauren Lindstrom, Niame, Paul Prew, Tony Silvaggio, Deanne Unruh, and Brian Wolf. During Winter term 1999, some of these students will conduct in-depth analyses of their survey data.

13. Attitudes toward international trade and the international economy, and perceptions of their effects on Oregon's economy;
14. Environmental attitudes and behaviors, including vegetarianism, buying habits, Measure 64 vote, who should manage the environment, and environmental vs. economic growth tradeoffs;
15. Religious participation and belief.

The survey instrument was pretested using OSRL's standard three-pronged procedure, involving (a) potential members of the survey population, (b) OSRL's Questionnaire Review Committee, comprised of survey experts from our staff and university-wide advisory committee, and (c) users of the data. Individual questions were pretested for clarity, accuracy, validity, and variability of response. The entire instrument was pretested for flow, length, comprehensiveness, and factors which affect respondents' cooperation and attention. Based on these pretests, the survey instrument was revised several times and then finalized.

The survey was then programmed into OSRL's computer-aided telephone interviewing system (CATI), and further pretested. A facsimile of the survey instrument is provided in Section 2 of this documentation. All interviews were completely confidential. Human subjects approval was obtained from the University of Oregon's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects.

DATA COLLECTION

Interviewer training was conducted October 17, 1998; see Section 3 for the interviewer instruction summary. Interviewing was conducted at all times of the day and all days of the week October 18, 1998 to January 11, 1999 until the target sample size was achieved. Altogether, OSRL interviewers made 15,688 telephone calls to complete 805 interviews with adults age 18 and older. All households in Oregon had an equal chance of being selected, except those without telephones (4.5% according to the 1990 U.S. census). Up to 25 calls were made to each valid telephone number to avoid nonresponse bias. Interviewing was conducted 9:00 AM – 9:00 PM all days of the week (except Sundays, 1:00 PM – 9:00 PM). CATI automatically schedules calls which do not result in interviews for different times of the day and different days of the week, or interviewers can schedule interviews for respondents at more convenient dates and times.

The overall CASRO response rate was 68.0% (see Section 4).² The average length of interviews was 9.8 minutes.

² The response rate was calculated in following manner: Completed interviews / (Eligible sample + ((Eligible sample / (Eligible sample + Ineligible sample)) * Sample with unknown status)).

SAMPLING

OSRL's sampling procedure employs an random-digit-dial (RDD) algorithm that is used in conjunction with CATI system. Sampling is pre-programmed and accomplished without interviewer intervention. Telephone numbers are generated randomly by the computer and appear automatically on interviewers' computer screens. Telephone calls are placed with a computer keystroke, effectively preventing dialing errors.

Survey sampling errors are calculated to assist data users in assessing how much confidence to place in a particular survey result. Large random samples, as in this study, reduce sampling error. Results for survey items in which there is low variability also have less sampling error. For example, a variable with a 50/50 proportional split has wider confidence intervals than a variable with a 5/95 proportional split.

For this study, the margin of error for a variable from the entire sample (n=805) with a 50-50 proportional split is 3.45 percentage points, at the 95% confidence level. This means readers of the data can be 95% sure that the true population figure is between 46.55% and 52.45% (i.e., $50\% \pm 2.8$ percentage points). For a variable from the split sample (n=400), the sampling error is 4.90 (i.e., $50\% \pm 4.9$ percentage points).