



Which Survey is Right for You? Guidelines to Assess Survey Suitability

Step 1: Which organization conducted the survey?

- Does the organization have a reputation for producing quality research?
- Are they a private polling company or a government agency?
- Is the organization knowledgeable about the survey subject matter?
- What methods do they use to guarantee the quality of their survey?
- Who commissioned the survey and what influence did they have on the results?

Step 2: What is the survey methodology?

- How was the survey designed?
- What data collection method was used?
- Who was the target population?
- What was the sample size?
- What sampling techniques were used?
- What issues or questions were examined in this survey?
- Is there substantial documentation about the methodology of the survey? If not, where can you find more information?
- What is the rate of non-response?
- If the non-response rate is high, how have the researchers dealt with this issue?

** Note: the User Guide or Codebook is a particularly useful source of information

Step 3: How is the questionnaire designed?

- What types of questions were asked? i.e. open ended, etc
- Where the questions problematic? i.e. ambiguous, double barreled, double negative, etc
- Were the questions biased? i.e. leading
- Were the answer categories biased? i.e. mutually exclusive, inapplicable, etc
- How were the questions ordered?
- If the questionnaire was self-administered, how was it laid out?

Step 4: Does the data meet your requirements?

- Is the sample large enough for your research?
- Does the survey reach the population you are studying?
- How recent is the survey?
- Is the survey available in a machine-readable format?
- Does the *Data Centre* have the survey?