

Sexual Orientation Question for Experimental Testing with Businesses

Overview

In support of Executive Order 14075 ([Advancing Equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Individuals](#)), the Census Bureau and the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) are evaluating how to ask about sexual orientation of business owners as part of the Annual Business Survey. Census and NCSES plan to include a question on owner sexual orientation to gather more information regarding how to collect data on this topic. Initial cognitive testing results found that respondents are reluctant to provide this information to the government on behalf of the business owners. The ABS collects owner information from up to four owners having the largest share or stock of the business. Often, respondents are reporting on behalf of themselves or other owners. This proxy reporting creates a unique complication for collecting such information from the business population. Of note, this question will not be tested with nonprofit organizations because the ABS does not ask nonprofit organizations to report any owner demographics. Fielding this test question will allow Census and NCSES to gather more information to evaluate the performance of the question. Census and NCSES plan to continue testing this topic using moderated and unmoderated cognitive testing, as well as experimental testing in production, to determine the best methods to implement in future survey cycles.

Census referred to the [Recommendations on the Best Practices for the Collection of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Data on Federal Statistical Surveys \(whitehouse.gov\)](#) to draft the proposed sexual orientation question for testing. Results of the cognitive testing for SOGI are included in Attachment E. page 29.

Question Test Plans

- The sexual orientation question will be presented at the end of the survey (just before the contact information section). Only businesses reporting at least one owner with 10% or more ownership in the business for question **'A.6 Business – 10% or More Ownership'** will be eligible to receive this question.
- The questionnaire will include an aggregated question that will appear once, rather than asking of each owner reported for question **'B.1 - Percent Ownership'**.
- Respondents will be presented with a note introducing the question and explaining the purpose and use of the results. Next, they will be presented with the question along with additional explanatory text. We are testing 2 versions of the explanatory text and will split the panel evenly to determine which respondents will see which version of the text.
- Census and NCSES will evaluate the responses to the question to inform future research and testing. This will include understanding if respondents drop off the questionnaire at this question and using the results to help target respondents for additional cognitive testing.

Proposed Note and Question

Note:

The next question is being used for research purposes only. Data collected from the next question will not be used and disseminated in any aggregated form for official statistics.

Test Sexual Orientation Question and Explanation for Panel 1

Do any of this business's owners identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual?

- Yes

- No
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

The Annual Business Survey is asking a sexual orientation question to be more inclusive in our understanding of business owners in the United States.

Test Sexual Orientation Question and Explanation for Panel 2

Do any of this business's owners identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

The Annual Business Survey collects demographic information to gain a better understanding of business owners in the United States.