

Christian Schools Australia

Community Profile Survey

Methodological report

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MELBOURNE CANBERRA SYDNEY BRISBANE

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Attachments

Attachment A: Survey Questionnaire

I. Introduction / Background

A. Background/Objectives

In November 2020, Christian Schools Australia (CSA) commissioned ORIMA Research to conduct a Community Profile Survey of parents of the approximately 65,000 students enrolled in Christian Schools across Australia.

In this survey, CSA aimed to develop a reliable quantitative profile of the parent population in relation to the key determinants of school choice. This was to be explored by analysing parents’:

- reasons for school choice;
- satisfaction with the school and their child’s learning;
- engagement with the school community; and
- personal profiles and how the above issues vary between parents with different profiles.

The survey was also conducted to provide information to individual schools about these issues; allow schools to compare their school level data with benchmarks for similar schools; stimulate discussion about how to improve parent engagement; and assist in identifying areas for improvement and professional development at schools.

The survey was conducted online, with survey distribution and communication managed by participating schools. Schools were encouraged to take part in the survey by CSA and invited to register their interest via an online registration process. During this process, schools were asked to provide details of their principal and nominate a survey coordinator. Coordinators of each school were provided with access to a secure online survey portal where they were asked to provide background information about their school, including the number of families to be sent surveys, and were provided with their school’s survey link. Schools were asked to send survey invitations to each family at their school and parents were able to complete the survey between 8 March and 16 April 2021.

This report provides information about the survey methodology and outcomes, including: the questionnaire development process; sample selection (including the registration process and participation criteria); fieldwork; data cleaning process; profile of respondents; timelines; and quality standards.

II. Methodology

A. Questionnaire development

The questionnaire used in the CSA Community Profile Survey was developed by CSA in consultation with ORIMA Research. The initial draft questionnaire was developed by CSA and provided to ORIMA for review. During the review process, ORIMA provided detailed comments and advice to CSA about question wording, ordering, response options, instructions, format and content with the aim of ensuring it would collect robust data that would address CSA's research objectives. The questionnaire underwent an iterative development process that included a questionnaire review workshop with the CSA and ORIMA project teams and input from other stakeholders in CSA.

One of the key considerations in the review process was to ensure that the survey could be completed within 15-20 minutes to help promote a high response rate, minimise respondent burden and reduce the likelihood of parents abandoning partially completed surveys. The survey was also simplified during the review process to improve ease of completion. This included adjusting questionnaire wording, reducing the length of categorical lists and substituting more complex question types (e.g. ranking questions) for simpler alternatives.

The final questionnaire was approved for programming by the CSA project team before being transferred into the online survey system. The online questionnaire was subject to testing and quality assurance by ORIMA and was approved by CSA for launch.

A hard copy version of the questionnaire can be found at Attachment A.

B. School registration and sampling

In early 2021 the CSA project team contacted 143 Christian Schools across Australia to invite them to take part in the survey. Schools were provided with information about the purpose and benefits of participating in the survey and invited to register. CSA also conducted a virtual school leaders' question and answer session to provide further information about the survey and encourage schools to register.

School survey registration process

Schools registered for the survey via an online registration process. This process involved schools:

- confirming their intention to take part in the survey;
- providing the name and contact details of their principal; and
- nominating a survey coordinator to manage survey administration at their school.

Following registration, school coordinators were sent logon details to access the secure survey portal, along with further information about the survey and the steps they needed to follow to prepare for the survey.

A total of 101 schools registered for the survey, accounting for 75% of all children enrolled in Christian Schools in August 2020.

Sampling approach

Schools were encouraged to send survey invitations to all families that had at least one child enrolled in primary or secondary grades at their school. Parents that only had children enrolled in pre-primary school (including Childcare and pre-school) were excluded from the survey¹.

Due to the nature of the survey (which included feedback on reasons for family decision-making), parents were asked to complete one survey per family. Instructions about this were included in the template invitation email provided to schools to send to parents. Parents were also asked to complete a certification step prior to accessing the online survey that involved confirming that they had a child enrolled in primary or secondary grades at their schools and that no one in their family had already completed the survey.

C. Fieldwork

The survey fieldwork process was administered by participating schools with support and guidance provided by CSA and ORIMA Research.

Survey preparation

Prior to launching the survey, school coordinators were asked to follow several steps to prepare for the survey. These included:

- Logging onto the secure school survey portal to:
 - check and confirm their school's survey contact details;
 - access and read the survey support resources (including template communication materials and frequently asked questions);
 - record the number of families that would be sent survey invitations from their school; and
 - access their school's survey link.
- Promote the survey with parents to raise awareness of the survey and encourage participation;
- Prepare an email to distribute to families at the start of the survey period; and
- Attend the coordinator information session.

Template versions of various communication materials were provided on the portal for use by schools including: survey promotional text for inclusion in school newsletters; an email to invite parents to take part in the survey; an email and SMS to remind parents to complete the survey by the due date.

¹ Schools were asked to only send the survey to families with children in primary or secondary school and the online survey screened out parents who only had children enrolled in pre-primary.

All coordinators were sent invitations to take part in the school coordinator information session, which was conducted one week prior to the launch of the survey. This session was conducted as a live webinar involving presentations by CSA and ORIMA Research on survey background and administration, a step-by-step walk through of the online survey portal and questions and answers.

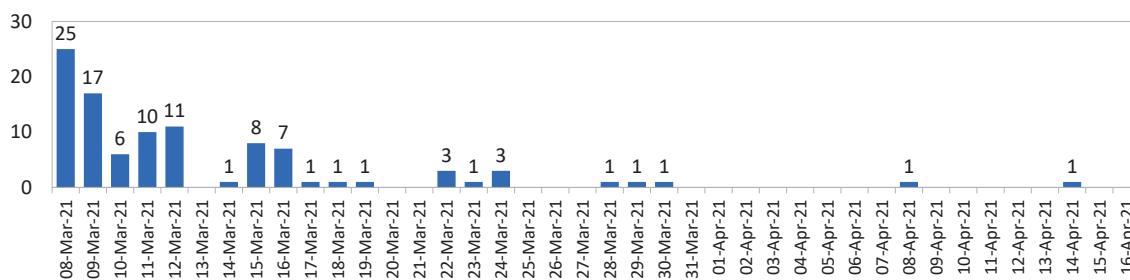
Survey launch and fieldwork period

The online survey was opened on 8 March 2021. Schools were encouraged to distribute invitations to the survey from this date, although in practice, many schools started sending out surveys later during the fieldwork. Communications with schools during the survey period suggested reasons for these delays included:

- the initial public holiday on 8 April in Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and the ACT;
- absence of principals, coordinators or other staff;
- the impact of floods in parts of NSW and Southern Queensland in the second half of March; and
- other priorities, events and commitments.

While CSA and ORIMA Research did not collect systematic data on when schools distributed their survey invitations, Figure 1 provides some indication² of this variation by showing the date that different schools received their first survey response. This figure shows that 70 schools received their first response within a week of the survey opening, 18 in the second week, eight in the third week and four after the third week (including one on the third last day of the fieldwork).

Figure 1: The number of schools that received their first survey responses on specific days throughout the survey period



The survey fieldwork period was originally scheduled to close on 1 April 2021. However, an extension was provided to all schools until 16 April 2021 to provide further time for schools that had not recorded sufficient survey responses.

² While the chart provides some indication of the variation in dates when surveys were distributed, it is not a direct relationship as there can be a delay in when the first parent completes the survey. In some smaller schools that only received a few responses the delay between survey distribution and receiving their first response was significant.

Survey administration

Survey distribution and all other direct communication with parents was conducted by schools rather than CSA or ORIMA Research to avoid providing personally identifiable parent information to organisations outside the school.

Separate generic survey links and template emails were provided to each school to send to parents. This allowed schools to send the same link to each family in their school while automatically linking survey responses to the correct school.

A validation step was included in the survey access process, where parents were asked to confirm that they currently had a child enrolled in primary or secondary grades at the school and that no one in their family had completed the survey prior to accessing the survey form.

After parents accessed the survey they were provided with a unique PIN to allow them to access their survey again at a later time if they were unable to fully complete the survey in one sitting.

Parents were advised that the survey should take 15-20 to complete. The final median survey response time for fully completed surveys was 16 minutes and 15 seconds, with 67% of surveys completed in less than 20 minutes.

Schools were encouraged to provide support to parents from their school who had questions or issues completing the survey. Schools were able to seek technical assistance and other support from ORIMA Research and CSA where required.

Response rate monitoring and promotion

Schools were provided with access to a live online monitoring page on the secure survey portal to allow them to track the number of survey completions and survey response rate by families at their school. Schools were encouraged by CSA to regularly monitor their survey response rate and send reminder emails, reminder SMS text messages and other communications to parents throughout the survey period to boost survey responses.

D. Data cleaning

All data collected via the survey was checked and cleaned to ensure its quality and integrity. Data validation procedures conducted included:

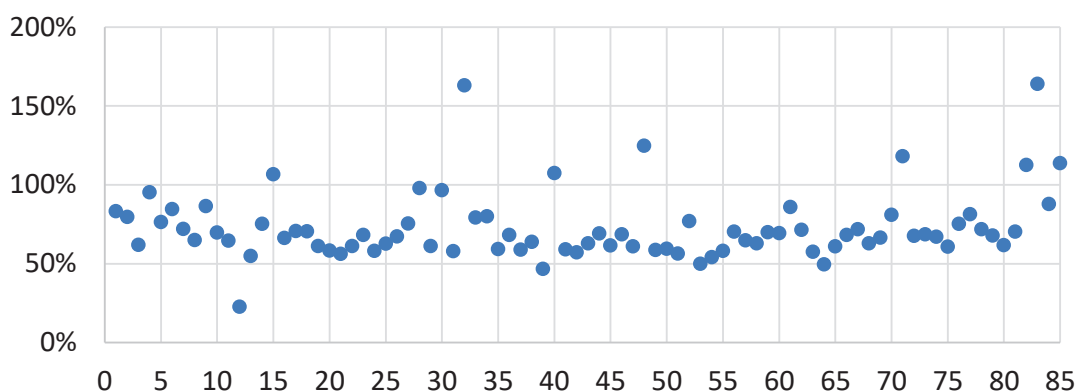
- Removal of 185 survey responses where parents were excluded from answering the majority of the survey because they did not have any children that were currently enrolled in primary or secondary grades at their school (i.e. the only children that were enrolled in the school were in 'pre-primary' grades such as Childcare or preschool)
- Removal of seven survey responses where parents answered between one and four basic profiling questions (e.g. about the number of children enrolled in the school and the grade(s) in which their children are enrolled).
- Validation of questionnaire filtering to ensure survey questions were only answered by appropriate respondents.
- 'Back-coding' of verbatim survey responses (within 'other (please specify)' response options) into pre-existing survey response categories for applicable questions.

E. Number of invitations and response rate

The response rate for the survey is not directly measurable due to the nature of this survey and the absence of information about the number of families that were invited to take part in the survey by participating schools.

During the survey preparation stage schools were asked to enter the number of families that their school will invite to participate in the survey. However, they were also advised that if they do not know the exact number of families, they could enter an approximate value or leave the field blank. A total of 88 schools entered data about the number of families sent invitations. A comparison of the ratio of the number of invitations entered by schools with their enrolment data as at August 2020 is shown in Figure 2. While most schools sent out invitations between 50% and 90% of their enrolment figures (average was 71%), there were a number of outliers, ranging from 23% to 164% of enrolments. This suggests that some schools may not have sent invitations to all families and some may have sent more than one invitation to families (e.g. one to each parent).

Figure 2: Ratio of survey invitations divided by the number of enrolled students
(Participating schools that recorded the number of invitations, n=85)



Using a calculation of 70% of enrolments to estimate the number of invitations sent by the 12 schools that did not specify the number of invitations they sent provides an estimated total of 34,563 invitations for the survey. A total of 8,595 surveys were retained in the final survey data, including 7,782 fully completed survey and 813 partially completed surveys. This represents a robust overall response rate of 25%.

Table 1: Overall survey response rates

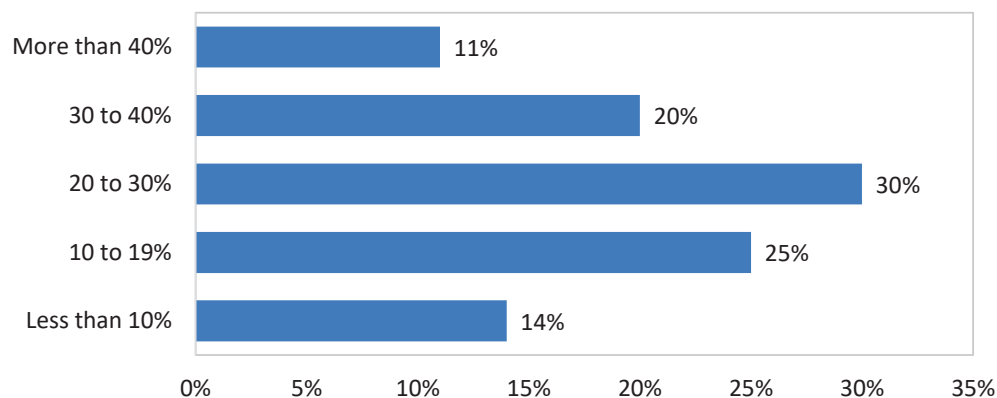
(Response rate based on number of surveys in analysis divided by estimated number of invitations)

Number of surveys included in analysis	8,595
Fully completed surveys	7,782
Partially completed surveys	813
Estimated number of invitations	34,563
Response rate	25%

The response rate for individual schools ranged from only 3% to 63%. Figure 3 shows that half of all schools recorded response rates between 20% and 40%, one quarter recording response rates of 10% to 19%, 14% recorded response rates below 10% and 11% recorded response rates above 40%.

Figure 3: Response rate breakdown by school

(Proportion of schools. Response rates based on number of surveys divided by actual/estimated number of invitations, n=100)



F. Quality standards

The project was conducted in accordance with the international quality standard ISO 20252, the international information security standard ISO 27001, as well as the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cath)*.