MORI Teachers' Omnibus 2004 (Wave 3)

Report (20.12.2004)

Research Study Conducted for the Sutton Trust

November–December 2004

Contents

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Introduction

This document contains the summary report, computer tabulations and topline results (in the form of a 'marked-up' questionnaire) from the Autumn 2004 Teachers' Omnibus, carried out by Market & Opinion Research International (MORI). The Teachers' Omnibus is a multi-client survey, conducted on an ongoing basis at regular intervals. One section of the survey was commissioned by the Sutton Trust.

Background and Objectives

Questions placed on the survey on behalf of the Sutton Trust looked at teachers' attitudes towards new initiatives in education, specifically:

- the use of Academies to raise standards of education in deprived areas; and

- the Tomlinson proposals.

Methodology

The sample comprised 3,500 state primary and secondary schools in England and Wales, with probability of selection proportionate to size. Size of school was determined by the number of pupils on roll and was used as a proxy for the number of teachers per institution. This sampling approach was used to ensure that all teachers had an equal chance of participating in the survey. The sampling universe included county, voluntary aided/controlled and foundation schools, but excluded nursery schools, special schools and PRUs, FE and sixth form colleges.

A letter was sent to headteachers informing them of the research. Interviewers then contacted schools by telephone and attempted to secure an interview with one or more members of staff in each school (depending on the number of times the school was selected). Quotas were set on Government Office Region (GOR), phase (primary or secondary), sex and age to reflect the proportion of teachers in England and Wales known to be in each category. In addition, minimum quotas were set on subject specialism (for secondary teachers), teaching experience and most senior level of responsibility, to ensure that a broad range of teachers was interviewed.

Fieldwork for the study was conducted between 5 November and 8th December 2004.

At the analysis stage, data have been weighted by GOR, phase, sex and age. The effect of weighting is shown in the computer tables.

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Questions for the Sutton Trust were asked only of teachers in secondary schools, giving an achieved sample size of 364.

Guide to Computer Tabulations

Basic Table Structure

The accompanying tables set out the findings from the study. They present the number of respondents, expressed as percentages, who gave a response to each question and are analysed against a breakdown of other key questions to show which types of teacher have given each response.

Each table contains:

- the wording of the question and the question number;
- a description of who answered each question (the 'base' or 'N');
- headings for the downbreak categories (or 'items');
- headings for the crossbreak categories (or 'crosstabs');
- the number of respondents in each crossbreak who answered the question (the sub-group base);
- total figures.

Bases

The 'base' is the number of respondents answering the question.

The Downbreaks

The downbreaks are listed down the left-hand side of each table and include the range of all possible responses to a particular question. They include all the pre-coded responses which were available to the respondent (plus, where appropriate, additional 'other' responses given by respondents).

Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know' categories, or multiple responses. An asterisk (*) denotes a value of less than 0.5%, but not zero.

Some tables also include combination scores. These are combined responses to two or more response categories on the same "side" of a scale. For example, very satisfied and fairly satisfied gives a combination score of "satisfied".

Net scores may also be provided. This reduces the findings for each question to a single figure in every column. The net score is calculated by subtracting the negative score from the positive score. For example, if 65% are satisfied and 20% dissatisfied, then the "net satisfied" score is +45 points.

The Crossbreaks

The crossbreaks are found across the top of the table as column headings. For this survey, the crossbreaks include:

- Weighted total;

- Phase (Primary, Secondary);

- Sex of teacher (Male, Female);

- Age of teacher (24 or below, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55 or above);

- Government Office Region (North East, North West incl. Merseyside, Yorkshire and Humberside, East Midlands, West Midlands, Eastern, London, South East, South West, Wales; all England);

- Years' Teaching Experience (Newly Qualified Teacher/in first year of teaching, 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-25 years, Over 25 years);

- Subject Specialism – secondary teachers only (English, Maths, Science, ICT, Humanities, Modern Foreign Languages, Other);

- Most Senior Level of Responsibility (Classroom/Subject Teacher, Curriculum Co-ordinator, Assistant Head of Department, Head of Department, Key Stage Co-ordinator, Assistant Head of Year, Head of Year, Assistant/Deputy Headteacher incl. acting, Headteacher incl. acting);

- Key Stage(s) taught (Foundation, KS1, KS2. KS3, KS4, post-16)

- Unweighted total.

Viewing the results in this way can highlight any notable differences in the responses of these different types of respondent. Cross tabulations can also be used to show relationships to different questions.

Confidence Interval

When interpreting the findings it is important to remember that the results are based on a sample of teachers, and not the entire population. Therefore, we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if everybody had been interviewed (the 'true' values). However, we can predict the variation between the sample results and the 'true' values from a knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given.

The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95% - that is, the chances are 19 in 20 that the 'true' value will fall within a specified range. The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentages results at the '95% confidence interval', based on a random sample. For example, with a sample size of 364 where 30% give a particular answer, the margin of error/specified range will be plus or minus 5 per cent. In other words, results would lie in the range 25% to 35%, but would be most likely to be 30%, the actual finding.

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Sample Size	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
100	6	9	10
200	4	6	7
364	3	5	5
500	3	4	4

Source: MORI

Thus, the confidence interval (or margin of error) is the amount by which the survey result could increase or decrease and still be considered to reflect the 'true' result that would have been recorded if everyone in the population had been surveyed.

Tolerances are also involved in the **comparison of results** from different parts of the sample, and between two samples. A difference, in other words, must be of at least a certain size to be considered statistically significant or 'real'. At the same time, though, it should be noted that statistically significant data need to be interpreted to see whether they make reasonable sense[1].

The following table is a guide to the sampling tolerances applicable to comparisons.

Differences required for significance at or near these percentages			
	10% or 90%	**30% or 70%**	**50%**
	±	**±**	**±**
Size of sample on which survey result is based			
100 and 100	8	13	14
150 and 150	7	10	11
180 and 180 *(e.g. approximate number of female versus male respondents)*	6	10	10
200 and 200	6	9	10

Source: MORI

Caution should be exercised when comparing percentages derived from base sizes of 99 respondents or fewer, and particularly when comparing percentages derived from base sizes of 50 respondents or fewer. In the reporting that

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[1] For example, research conducted by MORI on behalf of Edexcel 'shows' that female parents are significantly more likely to have a child in a mixed sex school than male parents (91% versus 84%). Needless to say, we can reasonably assume that, in reality, male parents are as likely as female parents to have a child in a mixed sex school. Though statistically significant, therefore, it is unlikely that this finding *"will generalize (sic) (i.e. recur under other conditions, for other populations or samples from them) … [statistical significance] only tells us that the observed sample result most probably reflected the particular population sampled".* From EHRENBERG, A.S.C. (1986). *A Primer in Data Reduction. An Introductory Statistics Textbook.* Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

follows, percentages which derive from base sizes of 50-99 respondents should be regarded as indicative.

Reading the Data

When looking at the data, it is often helpful to start with the overall picture and then look at specific details. Look first at the total column, decide whether there appears to be anything particularly interesting and look to see whether anything is different to what you had expected. Then look at the rest of the table. Are there any major differences between sub-groups? Are there similarities where you expected to find differences? Where there are significant differences between sub-groups, these are highlighted with the use of letters on the computer tabulations.

Publication of Data

As with all our studies, findings from this survey are subject to our standard Terms and Conditions of Contract. Any press release or publication of the findings requires the advance approval of MORI. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misrepresentation.

Acknowledgements

It is clear that schools are increasingly working under great pressure from a number of different sources. They also receive numerous requests to participate in surveys such as this. Consequently, we wish to record our gratitude to the many schools which took part and we are indebted to all the headteachers and staff who made this survey possible.

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Summary of Findings

Teachers are split on whether they agree that *Academies are an appropriate way of raising standards of education in deprived areas*: nearly four in ten teachers (36%) agree, but the same proportion (37%) disagree. A significant minority (20%) do not appear to feel strongly either way about the planned roll-out of Academies.

- Male teachers are more likely than female teachers to disagree that academies offer a good way of raising standards in poor areas: 43% of male teachers disagree, compared to 33% of their female colleagues. However, there is no difference in male teachers' likelihood of *agreeing* that academies offer a suitable method of raising standards.

- Support for Academies tends to be lower amongst older, more senior, teaching staff than in younger and less experienced teachers. Nearly half (47%) of teachers under 35 agree that *Academies are an appropriate way of raising standards of education in deprived areas*, compared to just a third (32%) of those aged 35 or over. Correspondingly, those with under 11 years' teaching experience are more likely to support Academies than teachers with 11+ years' experience (42% vs. 28% agreeing).

In line with the generally positive – if sometimes cautious – public response which they received when published, a majority of teaching staff agree with the Tomlinson proposals. Three in five teachers agree, although a significant minority – one in five – disagree with the proposed shake-up of the 14-19 teaching and examination system.

- Enthusiasm about the Tomlinson proposals is consistent across teachers at all levels – those involved in post-16 education are no more or less likely to support the proposals than teachers of Key Stages 2, 3 or 4. Support is also largely consistent across teachers of different ages and experience.

- Interestingly, there is no correlation between teachers' support for the two methods of raising standards of secondary education. Teachers are equally likely to agree with the Tomlinson Proposals regardless of whether they agree or disagree with the roll-out of Academies.

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Marked-up Questionnaire

Computer Tabulations