

Florian Griese, Marcel Hebing, Janine Napieraj, Marius Pahl, Carolin Stolpe

MOTIVATION

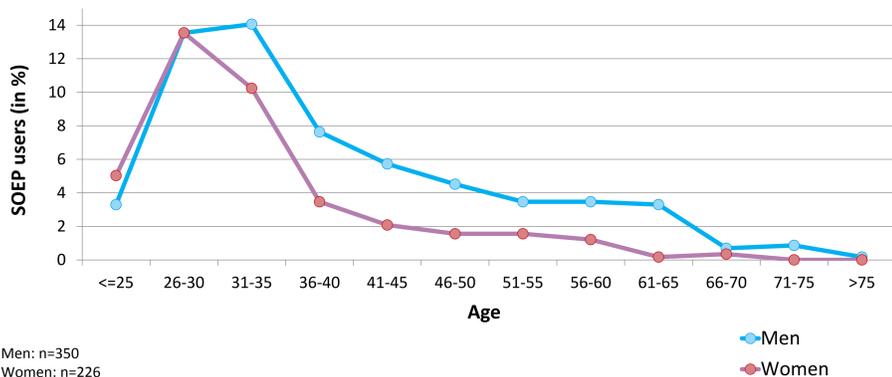
As part of our quality control activities, the Socio-Economic Panel invited users to participate in the SOEP User Survey again in 2013. After 2004, 2011 and 2012, this was the fourth time data users had been asked for their opinions about the various services provided by the SOEP research-based infrastructure (data, documentation, etc.). In 2013, the SOEP had over 200 new orders for data.

METHODOLOGY AND EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

The research project was carried out as an online survey using the web-based instrument LimeSurvey®. In November 2013, the online survey was conducted under strict adherence to data protection regulations. Among our invited SOEP contract holders, other users also had the option of taking part in the survey outside the framework of the LimeSurvey® by clicking on a link on the DIW Berlin webpage. A total of 585 anonymized responses were obtained for analysis. In 2012, for the first time, the user survey also included a small selection of questions from the annual main SOEP survey. The goal was to find out how SOEP data users differ from the approximately 20,000 SOEP respondents.

COMPARISON OVER TIME

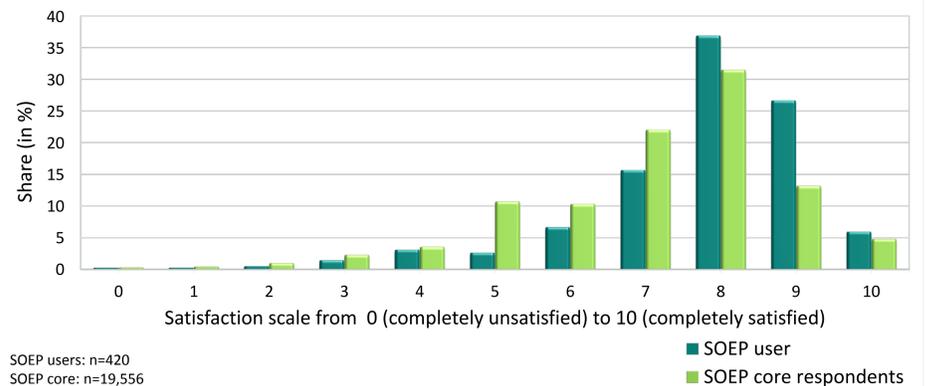
Age distribution among SOEP users



Under the age of 30 there are more female than male data users. Above the age of 30, this statistic is reversed. In 2013, approximately 61% of all users were male.

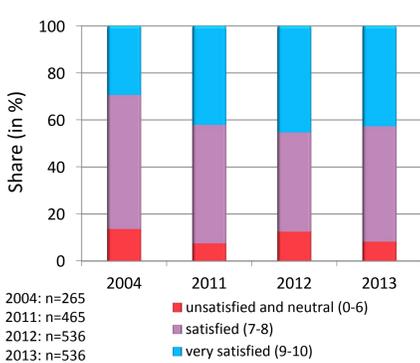
COMPARISON BETWEEN SOEP USERS AND SOEP RESPONDENTS in 2012

Life satisfaction



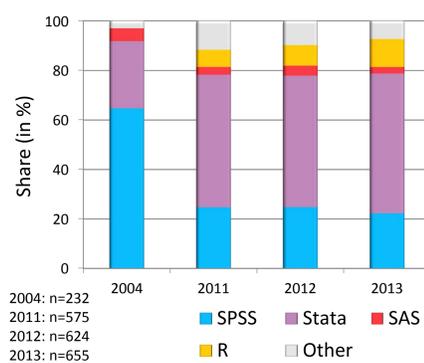
A comparison of SOEP users with SOEP respondents wouldn't be complete without the question on life satisfaction. The results show that SOEP users are more satisfied with their lives than the average.

Satisfaction with the SOEP



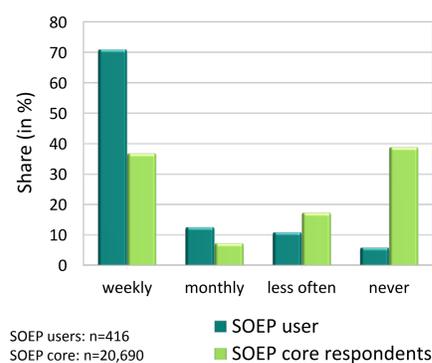
General satisfaction with the SOEP has increased since last year.

Use of statistical software



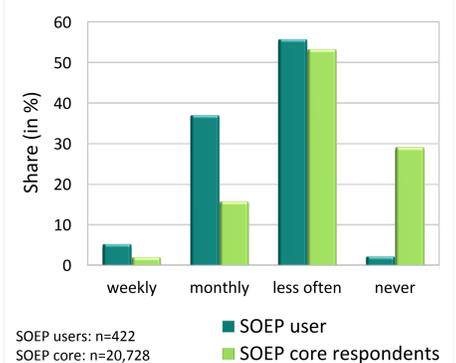
The most statistical software used most frequently with the SOEP data is Stata. R signifies potential.

Frequency of exercising



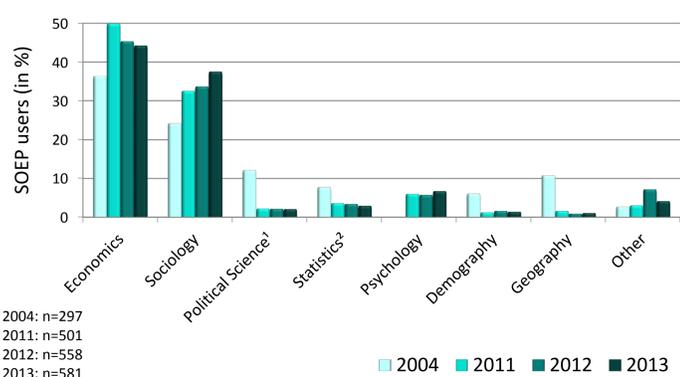
Twice as many SOEP users as SOEP respondents exercise at least once a week.

Attendance of cultural events



SOEP users also appear to attend more cultural events than SOEP respondents.

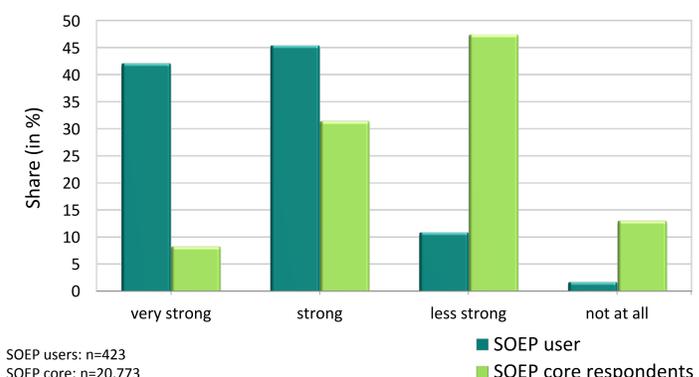
SOEP users' research areas



Economists and social scientists have established themselves over time as the main groups of researchers in the SOEP and in 2013 made up over 80% of all data users.

¹ Includes public health, other social sciences, and in 2004 also psychology.
² Also includes information science.

Interest in politics



The SOEP data form the basis for competent political advice. One can therefore hypothesize that SOEP users have a higher interest in politics than SOEP respondents on average. The indicators in the chart at left clearly confirm this hypothesis.

CONCLUSIONS

- Several characteristics of SOEP users remain relatively unchanged (e.g., research areas), but new trends have appeared, e.g., in the increased use of data by younger women.
- The SOEP team is pleased by the positive response to its service provision activities, since user satisfaction is among the most important goals of the SOEP infrastructure.
- The SOEP team is currently considering whether repetition of the SOEP User Survey at two-year intervals would be sufficient.

WHO ARE „FAMS“?



The 2013 SOEP User Survey was carried out under the direction of SOEP researcher Marcel Hebing by three students currently completing degrees as Specialists for Market and Social Research. During a period of in-house training lasting three years, the trainees gain experience with statistical programs, a range of evaluation methods, and approaches to quality and plausibility control. The program of "dual-track vocational training" also includes courses in the theoretical foundations of descriptive statistics and project-related application of methodologies at the school they are currently attending. At the end of the three years the students will be examined by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Berlin (IHK). Upon completing their training, "FAMS" (German acronym) serve as a link between service and research and provide support to researchers in the areas of project management, data preparation, and documentation. The profession was created in 2006 by "goFAMS," a non-profit organization aimed at promoting training and education in market and social research. The SOEP has been providing in-house training to FAMS students since November 2011.