

Discussion notes, Session 6

Tuesday, June 16, 2009

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Quality Monitoring in Cross-National Survey Research: A Framework

Presented by Lars Lyberg

Paul Biemer asked where adjustment can be placed in the presented framework. Lars Lyberg explained that baseweights are nonresponse and coverage. He exposed the problem of differences between countries in terms of adjustment, arising especially due to different resources.

During the discussion, it was also pointed out that ESS has a number of methodology groups (e.g. on sampling, questionnaire design etc.), which are also concerned with preparation of appropriate standards. However, the ESS have also a request of 70 % response rate – which might, as Lars Lyberg suggested, be more about the organizational sufficiency.

Leyla Mohadjer

Minimizing Total Survey Error in an International Assessment of Adult Competencies

Presented by Leyla Mohadjer

Frauke Kreuter asked about recommendations for countries to analyze the nonresponse. Leyla Mohadjer agreed that a nonresponse analysis is important, because the countries will likely not be able to achieve the requested 70 % response rate. This is especially due to the fact that the questionnaire is relatively long and burdensome for respondents. She told that so far they have given some general criteria on the type of nonresponse analysis to conduct; however, they will extend this to more concrete recommendations. A general rule will be: the lower response rate, the more extensive nonresponse study. She also added that countries will need to perform some nonresponse analysis even if they meet the requested response rate in order to implement appropriate weighting procedures.

Yehuda Dayan asked whether they prefer standardized adjustment procedures for all countries or individual procedures, implemented in the best way each country can achieve. Leyla Mohadjer expressed the preference for the latter approach. The main reason is that there is no realistic way to standardize the procedure because of large differences in resources and sampling frames between countries.

Lars Lyberg added that it is like a paradox, since in international surveys national interest often overshadows the international one. These surveys are very expensive and all countries

simply cannot afford doing it the best way and it is not likely that other countries would lower the established standards.

Matt Schonlau asked for some further information on the battery of items about assessment. Leyla Mohadjer explained that the questionnaire consists of background information and the assessment test. Some new batteries were developed and tested through focus groups as well as a field testing. In addition, there are several components that will be further tested and respondents will be randomly assigned to different batteries of questions.

Clyde Tucker addressed some issues of dropping standards and nonresponse bias analysis. He stressed that even in the US federal statistical agency there are many employees without expertise to conduct such analysis on their own. In addition, he expressed a belief that there are considerable variations between countries. He therefore recommended developing some kind of road courses to teach those responsible for such analyses in different countries. Leyla Mohadjer found this recommendation to be a good idea and mentioned that they already started preparing different workshops, the first already in March 2009. There will be also a workshop on nonresponse bias analysis. In addition, through the quality control and monitoring they will ask the countries to provide information during the data collection, which will potentially enable early identification of data collection problems.

During the discussion Layla Mohadjer also told that the guideline with the requested 70 % response rate was in discussion from the beginning. Some countries argument was to step from the nonresponse rate and focus on the bias. However, they decided to keep the requested response rate, since higher response rate means a higher likelihood of higher data quality. At the end of the discussion, Paul Biemer exposed that 70 % response rate is a high pressure for countries, which might lead to differences in outcome classifications. For examples, countries might define more nonresponses as “status unknowns” in order to keep closer to the requested response rate. He therefore advised to assure adequate quality control.

Jost Kappelhof

Measurement Equivalence vs. Representativeness: The Influence of Response Enhancing Measures on the Comparability of Answers

Presented by Jost Kappelhof

Frauke Kreuter asked about the number of interviewers in the study and mentioned the potential of complex sample design. Jost Kappelhof explained that there were around 30 of them. Regarding the complex sample design he agreed and told that they have a lot of variables to use, but they need to be continuous.

Paul Biemer asked the presenter what is intended to be estimated by the study – is this reliability, validity or something else. Jost Kappelhof explained that the main purpose is to estimate the bias occurring due to language differences.