UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

UNECE Expert Meeting on Statistical Data Collection – Towards a New Normal?

26 to 28 October 2022, Rome, Italy

Session 1

17 October 2022

Adapting collection strategies for optimal results

Rock Lemay (Statistics Canada)

rock.lemay@statcan.gc.ca

Abstract

Statistics Canada embarked on an Electronic questionnaire self response first approach sometime ago. Paper is no longer used for most surveys and personal interviewing has been reduced greatly. During the pandemic, we saw a decrease in the number of completed units due to various factors. To rectify the decline in response rates, an increase in sample was utilized to ensure we had enough completed cases for analysis and dissemination purposes. This approach ensured a reasonable quality but did not consider the bias introduced in units who responded. The first 30% response using an EQ first approach followed by non-response follow up is easily attainable. At first glance, we determined that the units who responded did not well represent the overall population. To reduce bias, working with our methodologists, we will embark on a study to determine what is the highest response rate we can achieve with a smaller sample, with the plan of attaining 75-80% response rather then using our current model using a large sample with a 40-50% response rate.

The presentation will touch on the collection strategy and methods used to achieve a higher response rate, while managing costs thru smaller samples and more in person collection to ensure harder to reach populations are well represented.

The questions we will try to answer is: Are smaller samples with a higher response rate more representative, are they achievable and at what cost?

Use of responsive design to improve response

Rock Lemay (Statistics Canada)

rock.lemay@statcan.gc.ca

Abstract

Responsive design has been used at Statistics Canada in the collection process for many years. There are various degrees of sophistication when it comes to using Para data intelligence to determine the best course of action in getting a respondent to complete the survey. Prior to the pandemic, we had embarked on a review of the model used. For example, the previous month's outcome and mode of completion of a case would determine the approach to use for the next cycle. We also used the best time to call at a macro level, and in some instances at the micro level.

As respondents are becoming more difficult to reach, a more sophisticated approach is now required to maintain response rates. We started looking at other sources of data available to determine a new course of action. The Census is one great source of information, but there are also other private suppliers of information that bring alternate insights. As an example, these data sets might provide information on the predominant type of media or social media used in a small geographic area. Using this information would provide us the opportunity to create specific personas for each case and then determine what actions would be taken for active collection.

The current practice is to use a single letter format and message to reach out to all the selected respondents, and this approach is also used for our reminder letters. All units in the sample are in essence treated equally. As an example, a younger individual does not communicate the same way as a senior. Should we use the same format for both? Should we reach out to them via a SMS immediately after sending a hard copy of the letter?

The presentation will touch on what has been done at Statistics Canada with results achieved in the past and our plans to further our sophistication in terms of strategy for the coming year.