Data Collection Initiatives for the International Study of Adults
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Delivering insight through data for a better Canada
Outline

• International Study of Adults (ISA) Overview
• Challenges
• Active Management Actions
• Other Collection Initiatives
• Summary and Lessons Learned
International Study of Adults (ISA)

- Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) in Canada
- Collecting information on literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills of adults
- Gathers information and data on how adults use their skills at home, at work and in the wider community
- Conducted in 32 countries around the world, including Canada
- The interview consists of two main parts:
  - The first part covers questions about education, work experience, technology use, etc.
  - Participants are then given a tablet and asked to complete exercises similar to everyday life, such as reading a flight schedule at the airport, choosing a car route, or returning a product
- First post-pandemic survey being conducted with regular Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) as a main collection mode
- Collection dates: September 2, 2022 to July 16, 2023
Challenges

• Timing: did not have a chance to fully reintroduce CAPI in regular collection activities before this survey
  • Impact of the pandemic on the desire of Canadians to complete personal interviews was unknown

• Massive hiring required for this survey in particular
  • For those hired during the pandemic: requirements different for conducting in-person interviews

• Length (4 different components)
  • More than 2 hours on average
  • Refusals: At least 15% of cases with one refusal outcome and 4% coded as final refusals (3+ refusals) as of May 16th

• Regulated by an International Consortium
  • Positive to harmonize between countries for comparable results
  • But cannot take advantage of our own collection systems compared to when a survey is managed entirely internally
Active Management Actions

• Focus on training and monitoring by using and sharing best practices
  • Built new interviewer-level reports
• CATI for the first component (with agreement of Consortium) to be more efficient starting mid-November 2022
• Paused collection for cases when Consortium standards were met for # and timing of attempts
• Sent email and SMS reminders on an ongoing basis
  • People could not remember having received an introduction letter
  • Lead to many calls back
  • Outreach initiative good for survey promotion
  • Facilitate the task of CAPI interviewers when contacting respondents
• Travel teams were set up in April to help provinces that had more difficulties hiring
Other Collection Initiatives

• Offered compensation for respondents’ time
  • Not common practice at Statistics Canada
  • Test with limited number of interviewers from December 23rd to January 23rd
  • Offered more broadly starting on January 24th
  • Limitation: no experimental design embedded in the test

• **Considered** a non-response bias study
  • Will not go ahead
  • Details in the appendix
Compensation: preliminary conclusions

• **N.B.** Final results/evaluations can only be provided when collection is over
• No significant impact on responses observed (nationally and by province)
• No significant difference on education levels and household incomes
• But... Cases where collection started after January 24th have:
  • Smaller average (and median) number of attempts to get a response
  • Slightly smaller final refusal rate
• When comparing September-January to February-April:
  • Average number of responses per month increased
  • Average number of hours to complete a case decreased substantially
  • Average cost decreased, despite the compensation
• Improvements observed throughout collection
  • Can be attributed to a combination of all collection initiatives described in this presentation
  • Difficult to isolate the impact of one factor
Summary / Lessons learned

• Very challenging due to timing, hiring & length
• Different initiatives developed
• All of them contributed to increase response rate

If compensation offered for next cycle (or for any potential survey):
  • Test it with an experimental design in a pilot survey
  • Have a clear protocol for the offer
  • Ensure good communication and clear instructions for the interviewers
  • Be careful with perception of the public
Questions?

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Appendix: Non-response Bias Study

• Will not reach original target
• Goal: study non-respondents’ characteristics and evaluate potential bias
• Main Principles
  • Small number of non-respondents across Canada (400)
  • Simple questionnaire with a maximum of 25 questions
  • Allow EQ/CATI/CAPI for a large response rate (85%)
• Issue: find one or two questions that would really allow evaluating bias
• Decided not to go ahead
  • Households selected from Census long-form: already have some information on non-respondents
  • Research project: study paradata to better understand non-response
• Allowed developing a framework for future non-response bias studies with other surveys