
Three experimental insights for strengthening response rates

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Abstract

A continuous objective of Statistics Sweden is to enhance the data collection process. The purpose of this paper was therefore to examine the results of three experiments focusing on response rates and data quality. The objectives of our experiments were to: a) observe the extent to which a shortened survey could enhance response rates, b) observe the extent to which more web-oriented contact approaches could enhance the share of digitally collected responses, and c) assess the extent to which a fifth (compared to our standard of four) send-out generates a higher response rate and a more varied composition of answers. Results show that a shortened questionnaire can increase response rates. A more web-oriented approach may decrease the overall response rate but can still reach the same levels of response rates in ages 18-64. Finally, a fifth send-out reported marginally higher response rates. Also, estimates based on five send-outs were similar to those with four and with no significant changes in the R-indicator. Based on these findings, our recommendations are to: 1) use shorter questionnaires, 2) aim for more web-oriented strategies (especially if targeting a younger population), and 3) not send more than four send-outs without a strong cause.