

Introduction

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1. In the first part of the present publication, an attempt was made to present the “state of the art” for the most important aspects of household survey design and analysis in developing and transition countries. The focus was on the general principles and methodologies in survey design, implementation and analysis, applicable to household surveys in developing and transition countries, with emphasis on the operating characteristics: design effects, survey costs and non-sampling errors. There have been a wide range of methods and techniques developed and applied to household surveys in developing and transition countries. The coverage in the preceding chapters was therefore as broad as possible to ensure the treatment of as many of them as possible. Many examples of applications were included in the chapters themselves and some specific applications to a variety of surveys in developing and transition countries were dealt with in separate chapters. Thus, chapter VII described the sample designs and presented data on design effects for 11 surveys in 7 countries. Similarly, chapter XI presented a case study with details of current practices for reporting, controlling, evaluating, and compensating for non-sampling errors in Brazil.

2. However, for practitioners, it is of the utmost importance to see how the various techniques and methods advocated combine in practice in a real-life application and to view concrete examples of the integration of the methods into a well-designed and analysed complete household survey. The specific conditions in each country and its infrastructure have an important influence on how the general principles are applied in practice and, in particular, on the way they are combined for a complete survey. Case studies are, in general, a fundamental learning tool for the study of any applied science, and the study of the application of theoretical statistical concepts and results to the design and analysis of statistical surveys by means of detailed case studies is especially fruitful. It is for this reason that we have devoted the second part of this publication to case studies. With the case studies, we hope to set the methods discussed in the first part in applied real-life contexts. This should exemplify not just the application of specific aspects of the techniques studied, but, above all, their integration into complete programmes of design and analysis for household surveys in developing and transition countries.

3. The four chapters in this part of the publication cover a very wide array of several hundred household surveys from all over the world in a variety of subject areas, under differing conditions and different designs, in varying degrees of detail. In most cases, the case studies describe the aims and scopes of the surveys, the population definition and sample design, the survey instruments, fieldwork design and implementation, non-response errors and evaluation, analysis, weighting and design effects. In some cases, the surveys described were standardized in respect of design parameters over a large number of surveys by international organizations. In other cases, there were similarities in the survey designs owing to similar conditions in neighbouring countries (for example, in the transition countries).

4. Chapter XXII describes the general characteristics and design of the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) programme for over 100 surveys of households and of individuals in over 50 countries. Chapter XXIII describes the operating characteristics of the series of over 60 Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) surveys carried out under the aegis of the World Bank in over 40 countries. Chapter XXIV discusses a number of sample designs and measurement-related issues specific to household budget surveys (HBS), based on experiences with such surveys in a number of developing and transition countries. A case study of the Lao Expenditure and Consumption Survey 1997-1998 includes detailed descriptions of the general conditions for survey work, the survey instruments, measurement methods, sample design and fieldwork. An evaluation of the experiences in these areas has provided interesting conclusions. Finally, chapter XXV reviews the main aspects of the design and implementation of household surveys in 14 transition countries of Eastern Europe with detailed case-study descriptions of the household surveys in a selection of 6 of them.

5. Some of the features described have much in common. For instance, all the surveys were household surveys or had a household element in them. However, in many cases, the unit of analysis was primarily the individual - a single individual per household (for example, women in the Demographic and Health surveys) or all individuals in the household (for example, in the labour-force surveys), often with response obtained by a proxy. Basic sample designs were quite similar in almost all the surveys described - multistage cluster sampling with large geographical units usually serving as primary sampling units (PSUs). Some stratification of PSUs was often attempted. Mostly, the designs were self-weighting at the household level. However, when a single individual was selected per household, the sample of individuals was no longer self-weighting. Practically all the designs were full probability designs, though the household budget surveys in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia still used quota sampling.

6. The aims and purposes of the surveys vary quite considerably. For instance, the Demographic and Health Surveys aim “to provide countries with the data needed to monitor and evaluate population, health and nutrition programmes.” The focus of the LSMS programme is on understanding, measuring and monitoring living conditions. The household budget surveys programme aims at measuring the important aspects of the everyday household budget - income and expenditures. The wide range of household surveys in transition countries have concentrated on the analysis of living conditions, the construction of consumer price indices and the labour-force statistics required for the transition from a State economy to a market economy.

7. The survey instruments used in these surveys were still based, in general, on field interviews with pencil and paper questionnaires. However a first attempt to use computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) was reported for the Estonian labour-force survey (chap. XXV). Training and control of interviewers were given a high priority in many of the surveys reported and various attempts were made to reduce non-response and response errors. High response rates were reported for the DHS: 88-99 per cent for households and 87-99 per cent for women. LSMS surveys also reported high rates of overall response (74-99.7 per cent). However, high rates of missing income data were also reported, especially for the self-employed. The Lao Household Budget Survey had only a 3.1 per cent non-response rate. On the other hand, household budget surveys in the transition countries reported non-response rates ranging from 8 to 49 per cent. Response was somewhat better in the labour-force surveys for these

countries, with non-response rates in the range of 4 to 29 per cent, and some countries having consistently attained less than a 10 per cent non-response.

8. There is much emphasis in many of the case studies on the efforts made at data cleaning, editing and imputation. Most of the processing and analysis was carried out by standard software packages - often without weighting. The transition countries did use weighting and calibration methods extensively. Many of the studies attempted to estimate design effects using standard methods. These estimates were used both in the analysis and for future design improvements. Thus, a review of LSMS design effects has indicated the necessity of using them in analysis but the large variations in design effects for different important variables have not made it possible to reach useful conclusions on the sample design, owing to the multi-topic nature of the surveys.

9. Beyond offering the possibilities for learning from the wide range of experiences presented here for a variety of different surveys in different countries, the reports reach important conclusions of their own for the types of surveys covered. These include the need to constantly update sample frames, the continuing emphasis on field training and interviewer control, the importance of quality data preparation, formulation and updating of data requirements and analysis, the use of design effects, and much more. In conjunction with the methods described in part one of this publication, these case studies form an important and integral component of what can be learned from this publication.