

Field work, Quality checks

The aim of my presentation is to introduce the quality control method used in Hungary in Labor Force Surveys. During my presentation I will go over the quality checks steps used during fieldwork.

Firstly I would like to talk about the first step: the preparation of new interviewers and the monitoring of their work.

After their admission, each interviewer receives an education package, on the basis of which he /she must prepare for the classroom training from the materials of the data collections concerned. During classroom training, with the help of a trainer, he/she covers the rules of different forms of data collection and is trained in the data collection program and the use of the tablet. The training concludes with a 15-question test, which assesses the knowledge acquired. The candidate passes the test if he/she gives correct answers to at least 80% of the questions. Moreover, before fieldwork, he/she must upload two completed and two failed practice questionnaires from the tablet.

It is only after this that they can start data collecting, in the expected amount and quality. In the case of Labor Force Survey interviewers are expected to collect data in the following implementation rate: in rural cities, towns, villages and other rural communities: 80% implementation; in Budapest: 75% implementation; within each settlement at least 50% implementation. We perform weekly monitoring of the implementation indexes and the progress of data collection in order to check during the process whether our expectations are fulfilled. Moreover, the Household Surveys Data Collection Department (HSDCD) makes an overall monthly assessment of the results of that month's data collection for the Employment Statistics Section.

As part of quality control, HSDCD employees, data editors make telephone and on-site check-ups. We perform telephone checks on every interviewer every three months, checking at 3-5 addresses; we also perform monthly on-site check-ups, whereby we visit households in person to get information about the questionnaires work. Also as a form of quality checks we operate a call center to manage issues of the data providers considering the data collection. After working hours we operate a parallel professional hotline to manage the concerns of interviewers as a test. In order to discuss questions related to data collection, we have team meetings for interviewers once or twice a year.

Quality control of the collected data

After the arrival of data, earlier we checked up on each address to ensure quality control. In order to make the process more efficient we have now switched to a new control mechanism, whereby we have combined the built-in control mechanisms of the Blumen system with new check-up methods of data tables.

The process is the following: we check the questionnaires that the data collection program's built-in mechanisms signal as faulty or doubtful, and we correct them, entering the questionnaire in the Blumen system. Moreover, we create data tables from the whole data set and perform an overall check-up on those.

The structure of data tables is based on the typical mistakes experienced earlier, as well as connections between data collected on the questionnaire. The tables are created in a .csv format therefore we can open them in Excel.

The following lists can be created with the help of the Blumen/Tables function regarding the whole data set:

1. Household table
2. Welfare provisions, job search, education table

3. Main employment, working hours, field of employment
4. Complementary collection table (optional)

In the tables data are not indicated in the order of questioning but according to connections between questions:

-In the Household table, besides the members of the household and their main data, we can also see the data needed for International Standard Classification of Education ISCED, National Statistical Classification of Economic Activities NEACE and International Standard Classification of Occupation ISCO coding, so we can check whether the data entered are in harmony with the ISCED and NEACE codes and whether they are satisfactory to perform the classification of occupations coding.

-In the Welfare provisions, job search, education table we can see data about the welfare provisions received and the data necessary to evaluate the entitlement to these, as well as fields related to education level, employment, the conditions of termination of employment.

-The Main employment, working hours, field of employment table includes all the fields related to the person's job.

The data tables do not contain all the questions of the questionnaire, only the ones corresponding to the control aspects not checked by the program's built-in control mechanisms. At the same time, some questions appear in several tables, so that the correspondence of data could be checked with regard to as many fields as possible.

Below you can see the format of the data table. In the first two lines you can see the individual questions of the questionnaire, below the IT names of the variables. The table includes data from successful questionnaires. Under each address the number of lines indicates the number of people in the household, that is, the number of data sheets completed there.

At the beginning of the table the identifier of the data collector is indicated, so each of our colleagues can filter for the data collected by the data collector she/he must check up on. The penultimate column of the tables always indicates the date of uploading. This way we can check up on questionnaires in chronological order, always filtering for a given day.

On this slide you can see that with this check-up system we have the possibility to check the whole data set regarding a given variable. This function was very helpful when NEAC codes were modified from three to four digits, as before the closing down of data we could check up one last time on the 'qualifications' categories that had often been coded wrong even on the national level.

The directorate prescribes the control aspects in the Implementation Order, based on which we go through the data and if we find any faulty or suspicious results, we consult the interviewer and correct the questionnaire accordingly in the Blumen system.

With the help of the built-in control mechanisms we indicate with different colors if a questionnaire must be checked for a given reason. The color yellow indicates the data of the persons with the 'start-up' code. Orange data must be checked, because they may be correct, but based on previous experiences the often contain mistakes (e.g. mistakes regarding the welfare provisions received, mixing up different types of parental leave). Red data are sure to need correction, e.g. when the data collector made mistakes in compiling the membership of the household: e.g. a person dedicated as 'single' lives under the same address code as some others, so either he/she is not single or he/she should appear under a different address code.

With the introduction of the new control system it is easier to discover and correct typical mistakes and inform interviewers about the correct procedure, therefore it has increased the efficiency of

quality control and the preparation of data. Filters make it easier to find the data affected by specific mistakes than the former process of reading each questionnaire individually. For the quarterly complementary data collection we always prepare a new data table depending on correlations between the fields of main questionnaires and the questions of the complementary questionnaire.

The biggest challenge of quality control for us, however, is to find the balance between the acknowledgement and encouragement of interviewers and positive feedback on their work on the one hand, and the feedback on mistakes necessary for upholding the quality of work and continually improving the quality of data collection on the other.

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