

The Impact of Nonresponse on Survey Quality

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A survey is an important data collection instrument for official statistics. If the basic scientific principles of probability sampling are applied, and no other problems are encountered during the fieldwork, accurate estimates of population characteristics can be computed. Unfortunately almost every survey suffers from nonresponse. Nonresponse rates are particularly high for voluntary surveys. The problem of nonresponse is that it affects the representativity of the survey results, and therefore causes estimates to be biased. Theoretically, it is possible to correct these estimates, but this requires sufficient auxiliary information. Unfortunately, such information is not always available. This paper discusses a number of issues and developments. By estimating response probabilities insight can be obtained in a possible loss of quality. The R-indicator is described as an indicator of the lack of representativity, The question is raised if problems can be solved by applying some weighting technique. Adaptive survey designs are discussed as a possible approach for reducing the nonresponse bias.

Key Words: Bias, Representativity, Response probability, R-indicator