

The problems of working out of tools household sample surveys

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Abstract

The paper considers the problem of developing tools for sample surveys conducted in the Republic of Belarus. The author has carried out a comparative analysis of the main tools with selection of their deficiencies and dignities.

Keywords: Tools, questionnaire, respondents, non-response.

1 Introduction

The active social policy is impossible without studying various aspects of living standards. Now there are three random surveys carried out in the Republic of Belarus: a survey of incomes and expenditures of the population (from 1995), a survey of private subsidiary plots in rural areas (from 2011), a labor force survey (from 2012).

These sample surveys conducted in accordance with international standards, are representative by the volume and structure and have a specific tool. The method of the survey is «face-to-face» interviewing.

2 The main part

For conducted surveys the following tools with the help of international experts have been developed:

- questionnaires for sample surveys;
- card on the dwelling for surveyed household;
- toolkit for interviewers (enumerators), which helps to fill in questionnaires, and includes such topics as the rules of communication with the public (first contact), the rules of filling in the card on the dwelling and procedure for completing the construction of questionnaires, the rules of the survey, the interviewer's personal safety and etc.
- identity of the interviewer.

The main methodological tool is questionnaire (s), preparation of which is based on the following principles:

- content of the questionnaire should be directed to obtain the information necessary for the development of social policy;

- maximum simplicity of the questionnaire, taking into account only those questions that can be obtained from non-response;
- simplicity of the questions' text.

The most worked out are the scheme and the questionnaire of the survey of incomes and expenditures of the households. In the course of the survey such information is collected: demographic characteristics, housing conditions, property security, costs and income of households, etc. Two questionnaires are used: a questionnaire for the main interview and a quarterly questionnaire of the income and expenditure. The main questionnaire consists of two sets of questions: housing and general characteristics of household members (education, social status, employment, etc.). The quarterly questionnaire reflects the value of the total family income and HH's expenditure for durable goods, the cost of market services, housing, health, education, etc. Particular emphasis is placed on the structure of goods and services consumption. The cost of food and nonfood products, indicating their place of purchase, are recorded in most detail.

The information obtained is mainly shown as mean values of the feature: per one household, per member of the household. Total values of indicators are not calculated. Questions on employment and production for private subsidiary plots do not always ensure the representativeness of the data, for example for the region. To obtain such information special surveys of private subsidiary plots in rural areas and labor force surveys are carried out.

For the examination of private subsidiary plots in rural areas, the following questionnaires are used:

- Basic questionnaire including general characteristics of household and private subsidiary plot;
- A questionnaire on the sown areas of crops;
- A questionnaire about the presence and movement of livestock and poultry;
- A diary account of livestock production and feed consumption.

These questionnaires allow you to study in detail the level of rural population development in the republic: the availability of land, acreage, cattle, and amounts of crops and livestock.

At the present time a new source of getting current information on the labor market is being implemented in the statistical practice of the Republic of Belarus – a sample survey of households in order to study the problems of unemployment. The main objectives of the survey are:

- Studying of the labor market status and dynamics;
- Getting the most complete and objective summary statistical data (information) on the number of economically active population, employed, unemployed and economically inactive persons in accordance with the criteria of the International Labour Organization;
- Formation of summary statistical data (information) about the causes of unemployment, methods and duration of job search intention and readiness for employment, as well as the composition of the employed, unemployed and economically inactive population by gender, age, educational level, professional qualification structure.

In line with the objectives the survey program includes questions on the following sections:

- A. Information about the respondents: gender, age, marital status, citizenship, education, profession or specialty, number of household members, their relationship to HH;
- B. Current economic activity (work): the presence of paid work or gainful employment, the classification of employment status, presence of permanent or temporary work;
- C. The first (main) job: type of economic activity, occupation (profession, position), the classification of employment status, presence or absence of employees, and the actual normal work week, reasons for working less than normal working hours or temporary absence;
- D. Information about additional (second) work: the presence of additional work in the surveyed week or previous month, type of economic activity, occupation (profession), position, classification by employment status, self-employed, the number of hours actually worked on the additional work.
- E. Past activities of persons who are not employed in the surveyed week: the presence of a vacancy, the type of activity and occupation of last job, duration of unemployment, reasons for leaving the last place of employment, the availability of a specialty for unemployed which do not have work experience;
- F. Information about the economically inactive persons: social status, reasons for rejection of the job search, the reasons for unwillingness to get started;
- G. Employment of production of goods or services in the household: employment in the surveyed week, the production of goods in personal subsidiary plots (PSP), the main type of production and time spent in the surveyed week for manufacturing of industrial goods or services for sale, the main type of manufactured industrial goods (services) in HH and the time spent on their production;

All the questions of the survey program are focused on a form of response: digital, alternative ("yes" or "no"), multivariate, when the answer is chosen from several options being proposed. So, the question of age is given in digital form, the presence of job – in the alternative, the methods of job search response is selected from the proposed options (prompts).

In the development, testing and implementation of sample surveys instruments the presence of a number of problems has been revealed (they are common to all surveys):

- A high level of non-response (25-30%);
- Partial non-response, that is, failures on some issues;
- Underestimation (overestimation) of some indicators of the questionnaire (eg, income, level of accumulated savings) by respondents;
- Obtaining error information for the previous period, or relating to misunderstanding of proposed categorical apparatus (type of activity, status).

Concluding remarks

In households sample surveys conducted in the Republic of Belarus the main tool is the questionnaires. In their design, testing and use a number of common problems appears, such as the need to simplify the structure and scope of the questionnaire, the need for latent problems; the problem is the presence of non-response, including partial non-response.

Possible solutions to these problems – the use of international experience, adjustment of the questionnaires content basing on the results of previous surveys. Another way to solve the issues may be associated with the union of several specialized studies into a single multi-purpose, which, however, will require fundamental changes in statistical practices in the Republic of Belarus.

References

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