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INTEGRATING SURVEY DESIGN AND DATA QUALITY MANAGEMENT

A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE

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Abstract

Survey research aims at producing comparable data without survey errors. However, in reality numerous problems occur at any stage of the data production process from questionnaire design to data processing: Comparability of data may be limited because different projects may survey the same characteristics with different operationalisation approaches. Variables may be surveyed over time repeatedly, but measurement error or comparability over time may change. Compensating such issues after the data is collected requires plenty of data work and becomes increasingly difficult with the number of studies and variables.

Although survey errors are unavoidable, there is a considerable potential for data quality improvement and monitoring by integrating work steps of data production. The presentation suggests a practical solution to streamline and connect questionnaire development, data collection and data quality monitoring. For this purpose, the questionnaire design will be based on a software solution (LimeSurvey) and connected with a relational data base application storing survey data and further variable information. This integration of information allows rationalising work steps, improving coherence of surveys and facilitates data quality monitoring. The approach is completely implemented with open source software and thus can be applied cost-effectively in any organisation.

