Task force on "quality of BCS data"
Response rates across consumer survey institutes

Joint EU/OECD workshop on recent developments in business and consumer surveys, Brussels, 14-15 November 2013
Contents of the presentation

1. Survey nonresponse and response rates
2. Response rate trends
3. Ways to increase response rates
4. Response rates and tracking performance
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Statistics Finland is grateful to all BCS survey organisations for their contributions to the research of response rates. We thank you for all the material and support we have received.
Survey response rate and nonresponse

Survey response rate is affected by the *unit nonresponse*, i.e. by the situation where the selected sample person does not provide any information at all to the survey.

Three categories having distinctive causes:
- The selected sample element is *not contacted* due to failure to deliver the survey request
- The selected sample element *refuses to cooperate* i.e. refuses to participate in the survey
- The selected sample element is *not-able to participate* in the survey (because of language problems, illness, etc.)
Calculation of response rate

\[
\text{Response rate} = \frac{\text{Respondents}}{\text{Eligible sample elements}}
\]

If all noncontacted sample elements were eligible, the number of eligible sample elements would be

Eligible sample elements = Noncontacts + Refusers + Not-able Respondents + Respondents

The most popular way to calculate the response rate among BCS surveys was to use the total sample size as the number of eligible sample elements.
Response rates
Response rates: probability sampling countries

Mean: 64 %
Median: 65 %
Response rate trends
Response and nonresponse rates in Finland

Percentage from sample

Response
Other reasons
Noncontacts
Refusals

Joint EU/OECD Workshop November 14, 2013
Reducing nonresponse

The only way for survey organization to reduce the number of nonrespondents is through different survey design features.

Ways to reduce the number of noncontacts:
- Number and timing of contact attempts
- Length of the fieldwork period
- Lowering the workload of interviewers

Ways to reduce the number of refusals:
- Advance and persuasion letters
- Respondent incentives
- Selection of the survey mode
- The role of the interviewer
### Reducing nonresponse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Advance letter</th>
<th>Number of contact attempts</th>
<th>Wage dependency</th>
<th>Response rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>CAPI</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>At least 3 visits</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>89 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>Mixed-mode</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Limited to 3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>80 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Limited to 5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>70 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Mixed-mode</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No limitations</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>70 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>CATI</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Limited to 5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>70 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>CATI</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20 by default</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>65 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
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<td>Limited to 2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>65 %</td>
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<tr>
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<td>No</td>
<td>63 %</td>
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<td>the Netherlands</td>
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<td>At least 12 attempts</td>
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<td>CATI</td>
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<td>No limitations</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>50 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
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<td>No limitations</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>50 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>40 %</td>
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*November 14, 2013*
Reducing nonresponse

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<th>Advance letter</th>
<th>Reminder</th>
<th>Wage dependency</th>
<th>Response rate</th>
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<tr>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>61 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>CAPI</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>CATI</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>20 %</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denominator</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Austria</td>
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Tracking performance: *contemporaneous*

$CCI \leftrightarrow Private\ Consumption$

![Graph showing correlation coefficient vs response rate](image-url)
Tracking performance: **lead 1**

CCI ↔ Private Consumption

![Graph showing correlation coefficient vs. response rate](image)

- **Correlation coefficient** vs. **Response rate**
  - Y-axis: Correlation coefficient, lead 1
  - X-axis: Response rate

Correlation coefficient values range from 0% to 100%, and response rates range from 0% to 100%.
Tracking performance: **lead 2**

CCI ↔ Private Consumption

![Graph showing the correlation coefficient vs. response rate for lead 2. The x-axis represents the response rate ranging from 0% to 100%, and the y-axis represents the correlation coefficient also ranging from 0% to 100%. The data points are marked with blue and red dots, indicating different trends.](image)
Tracking performance: lead 3
CCI ↔ Private Consumption
Volatility: i/c ratio, 1 month

Months for Cyclical Dominance (MCD)

Number of observations

Volume ratio, 1 month time span

November 14, 2013
Volatility: i/c ratio, 2 month

Months for Cyclical Dominance (MCD)
Main findings

• Response rates vary a lot between countries (minimum 3 %, maximum 100 %).
• The computational formula for calculation of response rates is not uniform.
• Survey modes with a face-to-face data collection period produce in average higher response rates than telephone surveys.
• Most of the countries with the highest response rates (calculated as a ratio to the total sample size) use advance letters and have interviewer salary dependent on the number of completed interviews.
• There could be a linkage between tracking performance and response rates, but these findings need more support from a proper statistical analysis
Thank you!

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