

The Methodological Implications and Issues of Time Use Survey

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1. INTRODUCTION

For the last decades time use survey has grown into a research instrument for observing and evaluating a wide range of social phenomena in many countries. The principal objective of the time use survey is to estimate what people do, how they spend their time, what does everyday life look like, how much time is spent on gainful employment, unpaid work, leisure activities, personal activities, how do population groups and countries differ in these respects. To obtain this kind of information, a diary technique is used.

This paper describes the design and implementation of the survey and a major procedure related methodological issue. This provides the context within which the methodological findings of the pilot test and main Time Use Survey can be assessed. By testing various methods through the pilot surveys and the dress rehearsal survey, the "experimental two-day after-coded time diary" has been applied for the survey.

2. THE DESIGN AND CONDUCT OF THE SURVEY

2.1 Design of sample

The sample for the Time Use Survey can be defined at three levels: a sample of household, a sample of individuals and a sample of diary days: the three levels forming a hierarchy. Within each included household, all household members aged 10 years or older were included in the sample of individuals. The diary days for which each included individual should have completed a diary were pre-assigned to addresses by repeating the pattern systematically down the list of selected addresses. All members of selected a household were to complete diaries for the same two days which is continued day such as Friday-Saturday or Monday-Tuesday.

2.2 Design of questionnaires and diaries

In Time Use Survey in Korea, three separate questionnaire documents were designed: the household questionnaire: the individual questionnaire and the time-diary. The time-diary was conducted for the survey. An advantage of the time diary method is that respondents make fewer mistakes in recollection as they can register their activities any moment and do not have to think very far.

And the after-coded diary with 10 minutes interval was applied for the main Time Use Survey. According to self-writing diary in ten minutes interval in their own words, we coded activities into approximately 125 categories of activities. And the two-day diary was applied for the main survey.

3. METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN CLASSIFICATION OF ACTIVITIES

The major issue of the pilot survey related to classification of activities was founded in major group 8, travel. Travel should be classified by propose of the activities. According to our classification, spent time for travel is divided by only three types of travel, related to work, related to school, and unspecified travel. It would be better to adjust the UNSD's framework which suggest classification for concerning of purpose of travel. Time spent in the waiting for something is, also, needs more study to make meaningful category. In the main survey, we include a code for activities related 'waiting for a bus, train, and other transport'.

Another issue suggested that the employment activity group needs further clarification to make the groups operational. Especially, for small-scaled, self-employed work, there is a lot of ambiguous between working time and waiting for customer or taking relaxation in their own business place. It was suggested that further research and study would be needed to determine the contextual variables and the response categories expected.

The civic activities and voluntary services are relevant to non-market production in the household or community sector, even it is outside the SNA. On the other hand, personal socializing and religious activities are related to personal benefit. Therefore, the results of pilot survey suggested separation for those activities in main-survey. Now, we separated personal socializing and religious activities into social life category not in voluntary work and community participation category.

One of the important issues suggested for further research concerned what was generally referred to as supervising children, especially for infant and less than 2 years old children. Therefore, well-designed diary with having secondary activity's category is important, unless the amount of spent time for supervising children should be underestimated in time use survey. We coded both activities and will analyze for both activities.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the results and experiences of the 1999 Time Use survey in Korea, NSO will continue with its analysis and will report the methodological results of it. We believe we accumulate much information that could be of particular use to the plans for a main survey. Now, we need to consider that we will make this experience and information comparable with other countries' and international proposal for the time use survey. We hope the sharing of information and experience will improve the methodology of the time use survey. This is a meaningful step in the way to integrate paid and unpaid work in the SNA and evaluate the economic value of the unpaid work.