

Defining and Measuring Respondent Burden in Establishment Surveys

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Response Burden: Review of the Literature

- Focus on definitions and measurement
 - ▶ not burden reduction
- Establishment surveys – unique features related to burden
- Multidimensional nature of burden
 - ▶ Actual and perceived burden
- Suggestions and challenges

Establishment Surveys: Unique Characteristics

- Large companies/establishments more likely to be selected into a survey
 - ▶ Likely to get many survey requests from many agencies
- Use of existing records
- In complex surveys, can require multiple respondents
- Mandatory/voluntary
 - ▶ Large companies most aware of distinction

Why does Response Burden Matter?

- Effect on data quality
 - ▶ Nonresponse
 - ▶ Measurement error
- Increased cost
- Long-term sustainability of surveys

Survey Design and Burden

- Sampling
- Frequency of collection
- Instrument design
- Mode
- Procedures
 - ▶ Contact/recontact
 - ▶ Communications

“Actual” Burden

- OMB Paperwork Reduction Act
- Burden hours
 - ▶ Time it takes respondents to
 - Review instructions
 - Search data sources
 - Complete and review responses
 - Transmit or disclose information
 - ▶ The “search” is usually more complex in establishment surveys
 - Access existing records and aggregate data

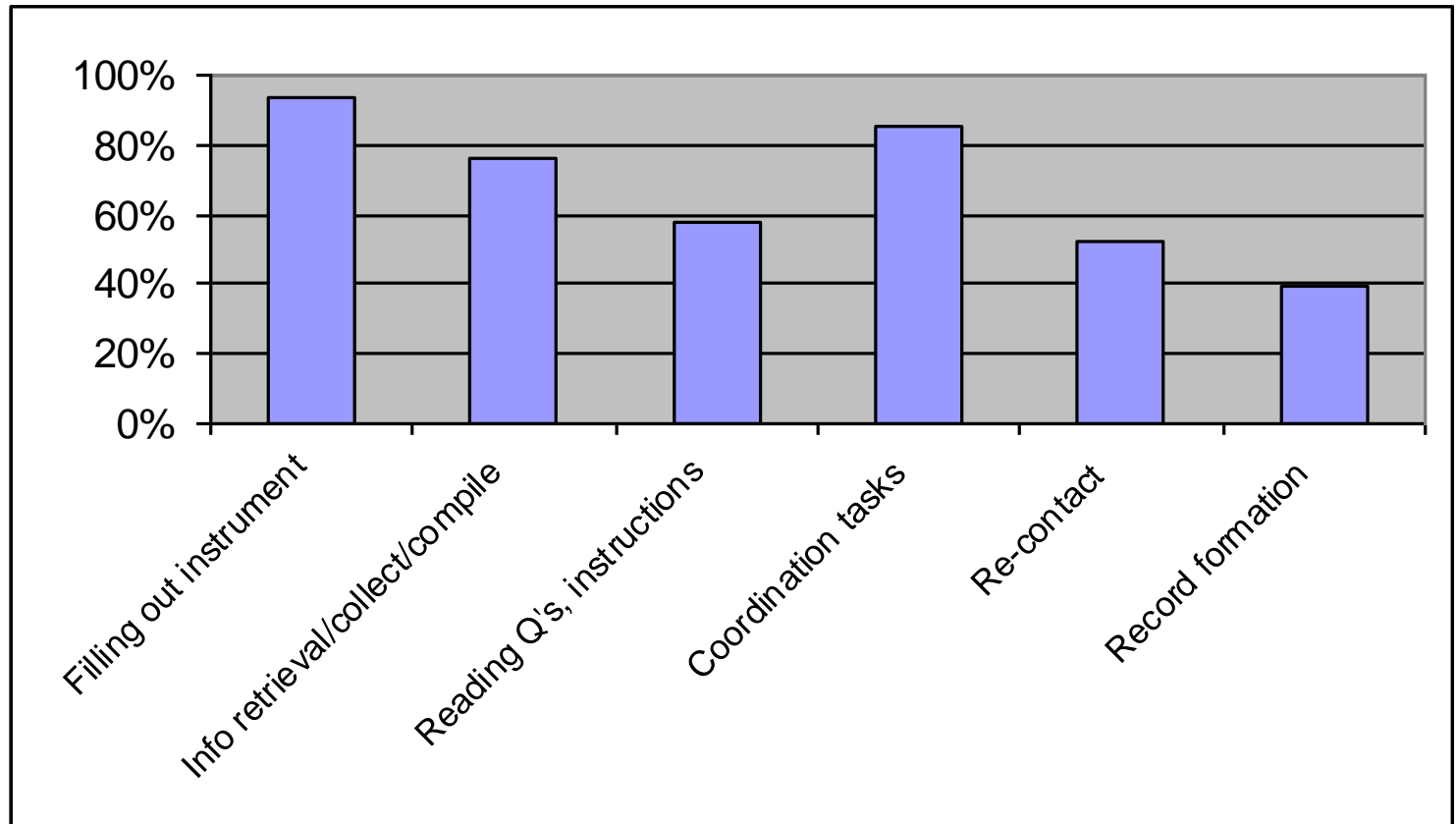
“Actual” Burden Collection

- When and where?
 - ▶ Pretests, actual surveys
 - ▶ Quality assurance/follow up surveys
 - ▶ Qualitative/observational studies
- Who is asked?
 - ▶ Respondents
 - ▶ Data collectors
 - ▶ Experts or staff

Common Questions Asked of Respondents

- One question:
 - ▶ Can you tell me how long it took to gather the information requested and to complete the survey?
- Two questions:
 - ▶ How much time did it take to collect all information necessary for completing the questionnaire?
 - ▶ How much time did it take you to actually fill in the questionnaire?

What is Included in “Actual” Burden Calculations?



Survey of National Statistical Institutes (N=33), Giesen (Ed.) 2011

“Perceived” Burden

- Respondent assessment of burden
 - ▶ Four aspects to monitor (Dale and Haraldsen, Eds., 2007)
 - Perception of time
 - Perception of burden
 - Perceived causes of burden
 - Perceived usefulness to establishment and society (motivation)

“Perceived” Burden Questions: Time

■ Time

- ▶ Did you think it was quick or time consuming to collect the information to complete the questionnaire? (5 point scale)
- ▶ What were the main reasons that you found it time consuming?
 - Collection of information from different sources
 - Needed help from others
 - Had to wait for information
 - Other

“Perceived” Burden Questions: Burden

Burden

- Did you find it easy or burdensome to fill in the questionnaire? (5 point scale)
- What conditions contributed to making the questionnaire burdensome to fill in?
 - ▶ # questions
 - ▶ Messy question presentation
 - ▶ Unclear terms/term explanation
 - ▶ Complicated or lengthy calculations
 - ▶ Information requested did not match available information
 - ▶ Difficult to understand response categories
 - ▶ Other

“Perceived” Burden Questions: Usefulness/Motivation

- Do you think that the statistics from this questionnaire are useful or useless to
 - ▶ your business?
 - ▶ society?
- 7-point scale

What Else — Actual or Perceived Burden?

- At the respondent level:
 - ▶ Instrument design seems well covered
 - ▶ Frequency of collection, mode, and contact/communication procedures might be added
- At the company/establishment levels
 - ▶ Use of sampling procedures
 - ▶ Multiple requests

Suggestions

- Question development and testing on burden measurement
 - ▶ Actual burden might be place to start?
- Perceived burden
 - ▶ Agency paradata might be applicable/further developed
- Assess how burden is measured within and across statistical agencies

Challenges

- Definitions and measurement of establishment survey burden
 - ▶ qualitative research, designs have weaknesses, and few studies have undergone peer review
- Need burden measures to assess the relationship between actual and perceived burden and data quality, i.e., nonresponse and measurement error

References

- BLUE Enterprise and Trade Statistics
 - ▶ <http://www.blue-ets.istat.it/index.php?id=7>
 - Deliverable 2.1, Inventory of published research.
 - Deliverable 2.2, Report on existing practices of NSIs concerning business burden reduction and motivation enhancement
- Dale and Haraldsen, Eds., (2007) Handbook for Monitoring and Evaluating Business Response Burdens, Eurostat.
 - ▶ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/64157/4374310/12-HANDBOOK-FOR-MONITORING-AND-EVALUATING-BUSINESS-SURVEY-RESPONSE-BURDEN.pdf>

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