



Sources of Information on Labour Statistics

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Outline

*Official sources
of labour
statistics*

*Integrated
labour statistic
system*

*Labour statistics
in the national
statistics system*

Official Sources

**Population and
housing census**

**Household
surveys**

**Economic
census**

**Establishment
surveys**

**Administrative
records**

Differences in coverage

Population and
Housing Census

Universal coverage of civilian population living in households

Household
Surveys

Sample of the population living in households; coverage depends on objective & sample design

Economic
Census

Census of establishments, coverage depends on objective and frame

Establishment
Surveys

Sample of establishments, coverage depends on objective, frame, sample design

Administrative
Sources

Defined by **legal or administrative** obligations: Registered/contributing population

Differences in periodicity

Population and Housing Census

Every 5 or 10 years. **Recommended every 10 years.**

Household Surveys

Usually **more frequent than censuses**. Depending on priorities and resources. For LFS could be continuous, monthly, quarterly, or annually.

Economic Census

Every 5 or 10 years. **Recommended every 5-10 years.**

Establishment Surveys

Monthly, quarterly, annually. Recommendation depends on purpose/resources: monthly or quarterly for time series; annually or 3-5 years for structural data.

Administrative Sources

Continuous updates depending upon administrative procedures.

Population & Housing Census

is the official procedure of systematically acquiring and recording information about the members of the population, (normally) at regular, long-term intervals (e.g. every 10 years).

Importance of collecting data on the **economic characteristics of the population** through a population census:

May be the only source in some countries.

Produces broad-based estimates on selected economic characteristics.

Provides benchmark data on economic characteristics to which statistics from other sources can be related.

Complements the other sources of data on economic characteristics.

Strengths of Population & Housing Census as source of information on economic characteristics

National and sub-national geographical coverage

Inclusion of all persons

- Permits extensive and detailed cross-tabulations.
- Produce summary statistics for all civil or administrative divisions.
- Generate finely detailed statistics for small geographical areas, small population groups, or finely classified groups of industries or occupations.

Permits cross-tabulation of economic characteristics with other demographic and socio-economic variables.

Limitations of Population & Housing Census as source of information on economic characteristics

Less frequent

- Conducted only once or twice every 10 years

High cost and sometimes heavy reporting burden

Compete with demands for coverage of other topics; placement of questions on the questionnaire.

Some of the concepts related to economic characteristics are very complex for censuses to handle

Proxy respondent may not know the most accurate information on certain characteristics.

Household Survey: Labour Force Survey

Surveys carried out using a sample of households

Constitute the main data collection instrument for statistics on employment and unemployment worldwide

Permit the collection of coherent information on the total working age population and its components, in particular the economically active population.

Concept of employment in household surveys **refers to persons employed** rather than to jobs, since a person may have several jobs and work in different establishments

Large range of topics can be included such as:

- Employment, unemployment, not in labour force
- Time-related underemployment
- Informal employment
- Occupational segregation by sex*
- Youth not in education and not in employment, 15-24 years
- Hours actually worked

Note: * also captured by establishment surveys

Strengths of Labour Force Survey

Flexible, can cover a large set of labour topics

Allows personal interviews

Detailed questioning permits precise measurement of concepts

If frequent, can provide data to monitor short-term labour force trends

Provides data on persons & their households

Covers all workers, including all self-employed

Allows disaggregation by demographic factors: by sex, age group, ethnic group

Limitations of Labour Force Survey

Sampling often prevents reliable estimates of granular information on small groups and areas.

Limited geographic coverage at times due to cost considerations.

Sampling and non-sampling errors.

Reliability of estimates regarding data by industry or occupation; and sensitive information (e.g., employment-related income).

Is still considered the best source for statistics on labour supply

Employment-related Establishment Surveys

- Surveys based on a sample of establishments that seek to obtain statistical information on employment, hours and earnings.
- They may have a short-term (current statistics, trends) or longer term purpose (structural statistics, distribution of earnings, etc)
- Employment **measures the number of jobs held by persons working in establishments**, not the number of employed persons
- Generally cover employees (i.e., not all workers are covered)
- Examples of indicators and topics:
 - Average hourly earnings in selected occupations
 - Manufacturing wage index
 - Employment by branch of economic activity*
 - Wage/earnings inequality*
 - Labour cost
 - Hours paid for

Note: * also captured by LFS

Strengths of Employment-related Establishment Surveys

Permit the collection of coherent data on employees who work in sampled establishments

Often best source of periodic data on wages & hours statistics

Good coverage of medium sized and larger establishments

Estimates disaggregated by economic activity are generally considered more reliable than those from household surveys.

Limitations of Employment-related Establishment Surveys

May exclude small establishments from sampling frame

Difficult to obtain reliable estimates for small industries

May not allow data disaggregation by demographic variables (age, sex, ethnic group, etc.)

Sampling and non-sampling errors

Excludes self-employed workers not covered in sampled establishments

- In developing countries can represent a high percentage of total employment

Generally exclude the agricultural sector

- A sector with a high concentration of employment in most developing countries

Administrative Records

Systematic registers related to administrative procedures maintained by institutions of the public sector

Used to carry out the administration or operationalization of Government programmes

Serve to control, verify and monitor compliance with legal and / or administrative obligations

Examples of topics and indicators:

- Minimum wage
- Occupational injury rate, fatal and non-fatal
- Union density rate *
- Number of collective bargaining conventions and worker coverage
- Share of population covered by (basic) health care provision*

Strengths of Administrative Records

A very low-cost source of data

Allow a broad disaggregation of information and coverage of different topics

Allow for more frequent production and dissemination of data (continuous collection)

Not subject to sampling errors

Good administrative information can be used to benchmark sample survey estimates

Good source of information on small groups

Population/business registers serve as sampling frames for sample surveys

Limitations of Administrative Records

Generally are structured for administrative purposes rather than statistical purposes

Accessibility to and availability of data source

Time and geographic coverage of the data

Coverage of target population defined by legal/administrative procedures

Quality may depend on enforcement for registration

Concepts & definitions classifications often based on legislation, not always consistent with statistical standards

Integrated labour statistics system

- No single data source can meet all needs
- All sources contribute to an overall system of national labour statistics
- Need to recognize relative strengths, limitations & complementarities

Census data

- for benchmarking & to develop sample frames for surveys

Population/business registers

- to develop sample frames for surveys data for inter-censal estimates & to monitor short term trends

Administrative data

- to complement or benchmark certain survey data

Survey data

- to gauge under-registration in administrative sources

Census

- for small areas/groups

Administrative data

Integrated labour statistics system (cont'd)

Requires coherence between sources in terms of

Concepts

Definitions

Classifications

Reference
periods

Methods

Labour statistics standard framework

References

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End of Session 2