

An Analysis of Classification Error for the Revised Current Population Survey Employment Questions

Biemer, P. (2004). An analysis of classification error for the revised current population survey employment questions. *Survey Methodology*, 30 (2):127-140.

The reduced accuracy of the revised classification of unemployed persons in the Current Population Survey (CPS), conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, was documented in Biemer and Bushery (2000). This paper provides additional evidence of this anomaly and traces the source of the error through extended analysis of the CPS data before and after the redesign. This paper presents a novel approach decomposing the error in a complex classification process, such as the CPS labor force status classification, using a technique called Markov latent class analysis (MLCA). Using this method, Dr. Biemer provides convincing evidence the CPS estimate of unemployment is biased as a result of the misclassification of unemployed persons, particularly those who are laid off. This work provides guidance for further investigation, possibly through cognitive laboratory and/or field experiments, into the root causes of the errors in the collection of labor force data in the CPS.



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Link: <http://www.statcan.ca/bsolc/english/bsolc?catno=12-001-X20040027747>