

Use of Administrative Sources for Statistical Purposes: The Case of Jordan

Mohammad KHALAF

Head of Quality Division, Department of Statistics, Amman, Jordan

Department of Statistics, Amman, Jordan

mkhalaf@dos.gov.jo or khalaf30@gmail.com

The administrative sources of data save time, money and provide valuable statistical data for different uses. This paper overviews the use of administrative sources for statistical purposes in Jordan. The use of administrative sources is utilized currently in different statistical fields. The use of administrative sources started in Environmental statistics and economical accounts with the cooperation with governmental bodies regarding these two targets. The administrative sources increased with time to improve the statistical performance in other fields such as foreign trading in cooperation with Jordanian Customs Directorate. These administrative sources are considered partners in these fields. Moreover, the civil registration records were used for statistical purposes. The future work will concentrate on restricting administrative sources national wise that can be used for statistical purposes to build national strategy for the use of these sources.

Keywords: Administrative sources, Statistical purposes, National Strategy

1. Introduction

The statistical work nowadays searches for procedures to provide all the required data for public use with minimum cost and high quality. The use of administrative sources as a reference for statistical data is very old (Statistics Canada 2009). The use of administrative sources for statistical purposes was practiced on close objective (Nordbotten 2010a). The use of administrative sources developed with the development of life aspects. The need for the use of administrative sources became more crucial to save enough data that meeting the requirements of end users.

The use of administrative sources for statistical purposes became varied to cover all types of statistics. The experience of countries in AS use is based mainly on the availability of sources for statistical purposes and the infrastructure availability to use these sources for statistical purposes (European Communities 1999). In some developed countries the use of administrative sources use is utilized widely, while in others the use of administrative sources is still limited due to local limitations.

2. Use of administrative sources in Jordan

2.1 The current application of AS

Use of administrative sources for statistical purposes started since years. The administrative sources are used for different purposes. The environmental statistics in DoS are highly dependent on administrative sources to collect data and disseminate it. Different administrative sources were used to collect data including the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Directorate of Environment- Ministry of Health, Governmental hospitals and many other administrative sources (DoS, Environmental Reports).

Use of Administrative Sources for Statistical Purposes: The Case of Jordan

The administrative sources were used for other purposes in DoS including National Accounts. The national accounts used collect information through internal sources and external sources to integrate the information required for national accounts calculations. The national accounts relied on Central Bank of Jordan records and Ministry of Finance as major external administrative sources for their data. They use other different resources for the purpose of integration.

The administrative sources has been used for social statistics purposes but with restricted rely on these sources. The use some administrative sources are still in its initial states.

Most of administrative sources are used in some specific statistics in DoS. The Jordanian experience showed that the use of AS in environmental statistics was successful to produce integrated environmental data. The participation of different parties in providing DoS with different environmental statistics makes the published reports in statistics integrated and matured in this field. The information published in this regard through the different administrative sources is compatible with that of DoS.

Concerning national accounts, the DoS relies on administrative source seeking the integration of data required to fulfill the national accounts calculations. These sources do not contradict the data required by the department of statistics. In Agricultural statistics, the administrative source of statistics considered supportive for DoS ones. The National Agricultural Strategy considered department of statistics as provider and other parties as supportive to reach solid national statistical number.

The continuous and considered corporation in using AS in statistical purposes is represented in Foreign Trade Statistics. Department of Statistics receives continuous forms for registration of any new goods imported or exported through Jordan using direct link with Custom Department. The DoS agreed with Customs Department on the use of specific forms for information entry. These forms received electronically to DoS which convert them to databases for Foreign Trade Statistics purposes. This experience is considered very successful for DoS with Customs Department concerning the use of AS in statistical purposes.

2.2 The current work to improve use of AS

The previous discussion indicates that small percent of national administrative sources are utilized through DoS. The utilized sources are matching the needs of DoS in the mentioned specific fields, so these sources do not forms obstacles to use their numbers in statistical official issues. The use of other sources was difficult because of different obstacles that face the use of these sources and utilize them for statistical purposes.

The major obstacle that faces the use of AS in statistical purposes is the lack of national reference that organizes the data collection. For example, the information collected about persons in the Department of Civil Registration (DCR) depends on national number for individuals but the individuals of one household lack the connection through the national number. This makes the use of DCR difficult in statistical purposes.

The other difficulty is represented in lack of planning and coordination among data producers. This difficulty is related to the first difficulty mentioned. The lack of planning and coordination creates different references for data collection among different formal parties. The weak awareness and perceive of statistical data through

the different parties is considered the source of lack of coordination and planning among different parties.

The difficulty of using AS for statistical purposes is represented in the existence of diverse definitions, classifications, references, software and databases. Different parties use different combination of definitions that makes its use through DoS difficult.

The other obstacles is representing in the following aspects:

- Absence of clear methodologies for checking, review and dissemination.
- Differing levels of data accuracy.
- Deficiency in coverage and comprehension.
- Absence of documentation and indexing processes and procedures.
- Significant shortage in completing some of the fields (variables).
- Non - activation of all fields as being non - important to the data producing party.
- Absence of automatic checking, thus leading to more human errors.

2.3 Future work to mature use of AS

The current work in DoS is concerned with determining the existed AS in Jordan. The second step of the limitation will determine the concepts, definition, software databases used in order to determine the best method to utilize the different sources of AS for DoS. When finishing the determination of existed AS in Jordan, national higher policy should be arranged to facilitate data exchange among different formal sources in Jordan. The agreements should be arranged at the Prime Minister level and the concerned Ministers and Directors. The agreement should make it possible for DoS to utilize different databases for statistical purposes.

The national agreement will deal with the following issues:

- Existence of a single national reference party for statistical data and information.
- Standardization of definitions.
- Standardization of classifications.
- Harmonization of classifications and definitions.
- Boosting the efficiency of the data staff through training.
- Existence of a clear work methodology identifying the checking, review and dissemination periods.
- Appointment of a specialized technical committee in each field.
- Appointment of a coordinator for communication and follow-up.
- Legislations .
- Non - existence of institutionalism.
- Lack of comprehensive and permanent planning.
- Insufficiency in training and experience.
- Non - existence of a competent single reference party.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

Department of Statistics is considered one the pioneer statistical bodies in using AS for statistical purposes. The use of AS is old to some extent compared to other countries in the Middle East. The work of using AS in statistical purposes in Jordan

still requires more effort to generalize its use in different statistical sectors. The current uses are represented in environment, foreign trade, agriculture, national accounts, and some other statistical activities. The obstacles of using AS are represented of lack of national definitions and electronic compatibility to use different AS. The future work will concentrate on building database of AS and reaching national agreement for AS use in statistical purposes.

Acknowledgement

This paper was prepared with the encouragement of Egyptian Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics for participation in International Statistical Institute (ISI). This paper was prepared with the corporation with team of Administrative Sources Division in DoS- Jordan, namely Head of Division Ali Musleh.

References

Department of Statistics. Environmental Reports. Amman, Jordan, 1995-2010.

Department of Statistics, Foreign Trade Reports, Amman, Jordan, 1995-2010.

Department of Statistics, Personal Contact, National Accounts.

Nordbotten, S.: The Use of Administrative Data in Official Statistics – Past, Present, and Future – With Special Reference to the Nordic Countries, *Official Statistics – Methodology and Applications in Honour of Daniel Thorburn*, pp. 205-225. Available at Officialstatistics.wordpress.com. (2010a).

Statistics Canada. History of the Census. Ottawa. Available online at <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/edu/power-pouvoir/ch2/history-histoire/5214912-eng.htm>, (2009).