

Time Diary Data and Research

Exercise Worksheet.

Time diaries collect rich information surrounding daily life and participation in different activities. National time-use diary surveys typically provide information on activity duration, timing (time of day/day of the week), sequence of activities, simultaneous activities, location/travelling, co-presence (whether the diarist was alone/with others) and affect (level of enjoyment). The image below shows a completed extract from the 2014-2015 UK Time Use Survey diary instrument, which also collected information on mobile devices (i.e., smartphones).

Day 1 Time: 7am - 10am Morning		Day 1 Time: 7am - 10am		Were you alone or with somebody you know? Mark all relevant boxes								How much did you enjoy this time? 1 = not at all 7 = very much
Time: 7am-10am Morning (am)	What were you doing? Please write down one main activity.	If you did something else at the same time, what else did you do?	Did you use a smartphone, tablet, or computer?	Where were you? Location, or mode of transport	Alone	Spouse/partner	Mother	Father	Child aged 0-7	Other person	Others you know	
7am-7.10	Woke up the children		<input type="checkbox"/>	At home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
7.10-7.20	Had breakfast	checked emails	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	↓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6
7.20-7.30	" "	Talked with my family	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
7.30-7.40	Cleared the table	Listened to the radio	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
7.40-7.50	↓	↓	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	↓
7.50-8am	Helped the children dressing	Talked with my children	<input type="checkbox"/>	↓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	↓
8am-8.10	" "	" "	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	↓
8.10-8.20	Went to the day care centre	↓	<input type="checkbox"/>		on foot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Use an arrow or quote marks to record that an activity lasted longer than 10 minutes.

Figure 1. Completed Extract of the 2014- 2015 UK Time Use Survey

In order to further enhance your understanding of the time diary method, complete the tasks below:

1. Focusing on the process of diary completion, try to think of issues that may affect data quality. You may want to consider the impact of the format and/or complexity of the instrument, nature of different activities, and the time needed for completion. Consider how these may affect different population groups taking part. Once you

have compiled a list of potential data threats, research methodological literature on diary data quality for existing evidence.

2. Identify 2-3 areas of substantive interest. For example, this could be paid work, childcare, sleep or travelling. Write down the research questions that you could explore by using diary data. Make note of the unique information offered by the time-use diary instrument with regards to these substantive areas (i.e., information not possible to capture accurately with conventional social survey approaches).

3. Download a technical report of a national time-use survey, e.g., the 2014-2015 UK Time Use Survey. Locate the activity code scheme and consider potential issues with regards to categorization of daily activities.

Full resource: <https://www.ncrm.ac.uk/resources/online/all/?id=20824>

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