



Statistics Sweden

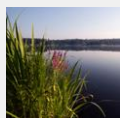
Statistiska centralbyrån

Quest
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Cognitive aspects of surveys on children

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For starters...

- Focus on 5:th graders (10-11 years old)
- Subject to a substantial amount of surveys (in Sweden)
- Cognitively ready?



Surveying children

Problems

- Interprets literally...
- Answers even when they don't understand the question...
- Problem with...
 - Complex questions
 - "retrospective questions"
 - draw an average
 - negations
- Tendency for :
"acquiescence"/"satisficing"/"positive thinking"...?

Living Conditions Survey of Children

Distribution on A/D-questions asking for positive vs. negative items (not each others antonyms!)
(10-11year olds)

	Completely true	Somewhat (fairly) true	Not very true	Not at all true
Asks for positive items				
Pos (%)	98			2
Pos (%)	97			2
Pos (%)	98			2
Pos (%)	98			2
Asks for negative items				
Neg (%)	42			57
Neg (%)	26			72
Neg (%)	10			90
Neg (%)	26			73



The younger the child...

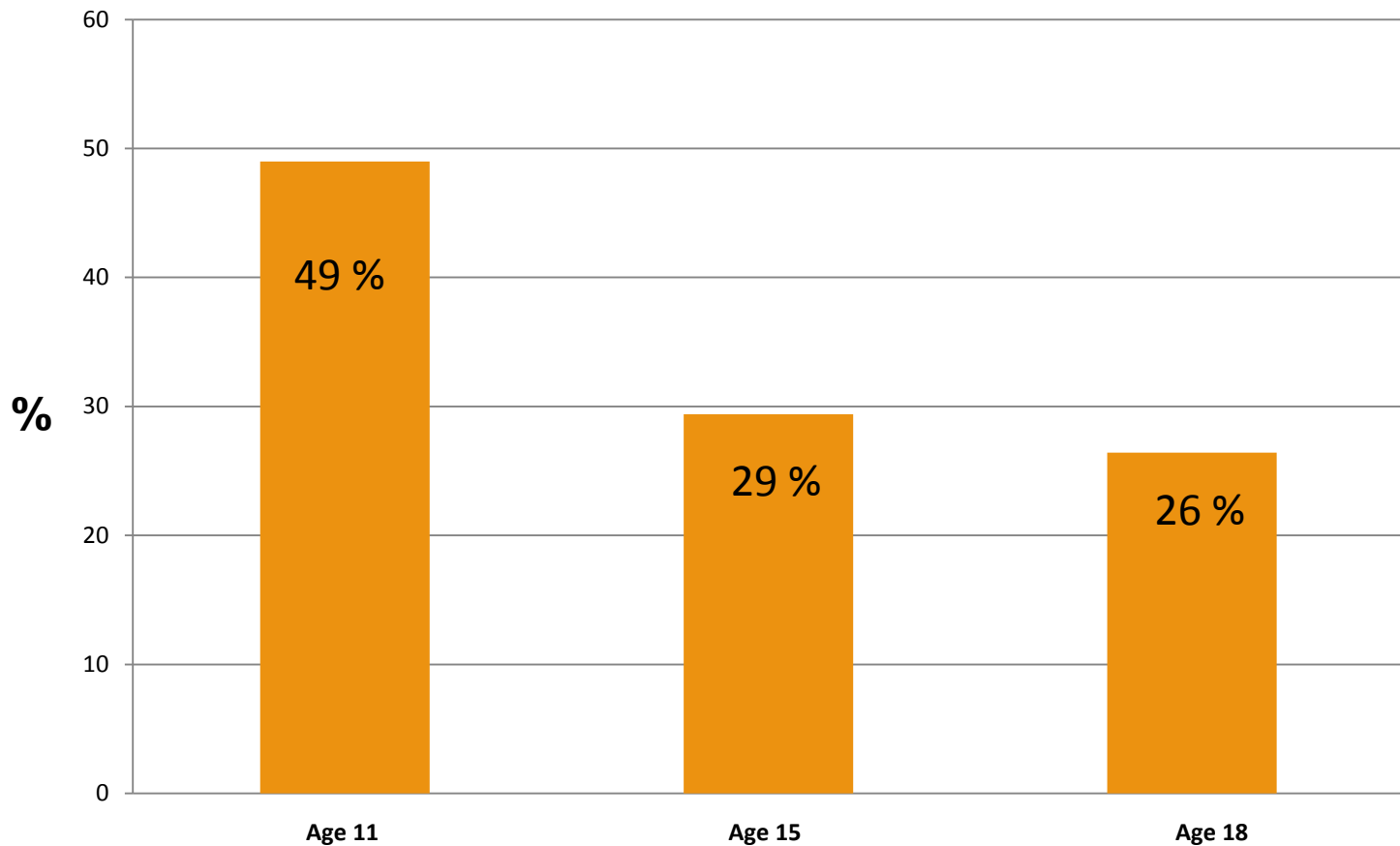
Comparing distribution over age categories for answering "Completely true".

Percent (%)

	Q 1 (Pos)	Q 2 (Pos)	Q 3 (Pos)	Q 4 (Pos)
	Completely true	Completely true	Completely true	Completely true
Age 10-11	45	66	78	80
Age 12-15	42	53	64	55
Age 16-18	48	49	56	47

Living Conditions
Survey on Children 2009-2010
(2261 int)

Average share of highest answer category (completely agree) by age group (Pupils survey, School Inspectorate 2011)



Topic for discussion...

- Is recommending straight, simple and unambiguous questions (and answer alternatives) enough?
- How to handle this “positive thinking”?
(in cognitive testing as well as in surveys)
- What other doable ways are there to test these issues?
- Is there additional research to embrace?
- Other thoughts?

