Introduction

For this assignment, we were asked to research how different reputable survey sources asked questions about the socio-demographics of households. Based on the types of questions mentioned in the assignment, we identified sources asking eight different types of questions about households: household size, housing type, housing age, household income, internet access, computer and other electronic device usage, number of vehicles available, and renting status and cost. The following sections address each question type in detail. In each section, we present the questions asked by at least two different sources, discuss their similarities and differences, and present a recommended question.

The Concept of “Household”

It is first important to have an understanding of what a household means. Various sources approach the definition of a household in different ways; however, what is similar between them all is that they refer to people living in the same home, whether related or unrelated, members of a household. This will be further discussed in the questions of household size and income. Here are two definitions for household:

Source 1. United States Census Bureau

“A family consists of two or more people (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption residing in the same housing unit. A household consists of all people who occupy a housing unit regardless of relationship. A household may consist of a person living alone or multiple unrelated individuals or families living together.”

Source 2. Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)

“Your household includes everyone who lives in your home, including roommates, relatives, friends, and household help.”
Household Size

Source 1. American Community Survey (2021)

![Image of 2021 ACS household size question]

Figure 1: Household size question in 2021 ACS questionnaire (source)

Source 2. PSRC Household Travel Survey (2019)

![Image of 2019 PSRC household size question]

Figure 2: Household size question in 2019 PSRC questionnaire (source)
Comparison

These two questions are relatively similar in design, but there are some differences observed. The main similarity is that both ask the respondent not to account for school or college students living away from the household. For differences, the PSRC survey separates the answering choices for the number of people from 1 to 12, and all households with more than 12 are placed in the same category. ACS, on the other hand, provides a vacancy where any number can be typed into it. Furthermore, the type of people included are more specific for ACS, whereas PSRC does not have that many constraints.

Recommendation

Our recommendation is to use ACS's question, without any modifications, due to the following reasons:

1) Instead of providing twelve categories like the PSRC survey, ACS's question can save more space and help the questionnaire appear shorter.

2) It is more specific and clear when specifying people living for more than 2 months, whereas PSRC simply asks for people who "normally" live in that household, making it less specific compared to a 2 month threshold.