Measurement Of Income Inequality
Re-Examined: Constructing
Experimental Tests By Questionnaire

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Abstract:

Learning ordinary people’s perception of income inequality is a relatively new field of research, but its importance is rapidly growing. Despite the popularity of inequality measures, the underlying assumptions concerning the most popular of them do not fully hold, as shown in early research by Amiel and Cowell (1992, 1999). However, results of their study contain multiple puzzling and inconsistent answers. This paper analyses methods used by Amiel and Cowell to elicit respondents’ views about income inequality. It presents the results of a quantitative questionnaire repeated after Amiel and Cowell, combined with qualitative interviews with selected respondents. The research was conducted in Poland on 132 sociology and economy students. Qualitative interviews and the subsequent data analysis revealed multiple problems that caused respondents to answer inconsistently. Solutions to some of these problems are then proposed.

Keywords: Income Transformations, Inequality, Inequality Axioms, Questionnaire Experiments, Transfer Principle