

The role of management practices for firms and their productivity has been highlighted in recent research by Nick Bloom and John van Reenen. Apprehending the dearth of a German dataset for this nascent literature, the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, the Institute for Employment Research and the Institute for Applied Social Sciences have initiated the project **“Management practices and firm performance in Germany“**. The goal of the project is to collect and analyze detailed information from German establishments on their use of management instruments and their economic success.

The contribution of the paper is twofold: First, the project has run through all phases of a data collection process, including the first stages of questionnaire design and country-specific questionnaire adaptations, as well as a sample design based on administrative data from the German Federal Employment Agency (BA) linked with firm data from Bureau van Dijk. A pretest delivered some valuable findings and led to adjustments in order to increase participation of establishments. Then, the post-field-phase procedures have been carried out and first analyses have been made. The paper thus presents problems and solutions throughout the stages of data collection with a focus on specific caveats of establishment surveys, as well as on the enhancement possibilities of survey data through administrative and commercial data.

Second, with top-level managers as the target respondent group, the study design was unusual for establishment surveys and insofar provides interesting insights. Since managers were asked not only to fill out the survey questions, but also items on their own characteristics; the influence of these items on the managers’ answer patterns regarding for example consent to linkage and panel participation, or item non-response. Results of these analyses will be presented.