**Modeling Food Insecurity and Housing Insecurity among UTEP students – Variables Characterization**

**RULES FOR DEFINING RESPONSE VARIABLES**

**A measure of Food Insecurity**

**Q26:** "The food that I bought just didn't last, and I didn't have money to get more." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?

**Q27**: "I couldn't afford to eat balanced meals." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?

**Q28**: In the last 12 months, since (today's date), did you ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there was not enough money for food?

**Q30**: In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there was not enough money for food?

**Q31**: In the past 12 months, were you ever hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?

We construct a measure of food insecurity as a dichotomous response variable that combines what we consider to be four main dimensions of food insecurity embodied in five of the survey questions, namely, a stable source of food (Q26-did food run out?), lack of healthy/balanced meals (Q27), inadequate size of food – eating less (Q28 & Q30) and going hungry (Q31). Therefore, an individual who participated in the survey is classified as being at risk of food insecurity if they answered yes to all of questions Q26, Q27, Q31, and answered yes to either Q28 or Q30 since we see these two questions to be similar in terms of measuring a single dimension of food insecurity. That is, an individual that reports four conditions that indicate food insecurity are classified as “food insecure”. Though questions Q26 and Q27 originally have 3 levels, we decided to collapse them into two levels, where those who answered, “Often true”, and “Sometimes true” are put in a “Yes” group as a sign of food insecurity while those who answered “Never true” will be in a “No” category. Thus, our response variable is defined as follows:

**A measure of Housing Insecurity**

Taking a similar approach, we make use of the following two survey questions to create an indicator of housing insecurity.

**Q20**: In the past 12 months, have you had a permanent address?

**Q22**: Due to lack of permanent address or housing options, how frequently did you spend the night elsewhere in the past six months due to lack of permanent housing?

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**Potential Predictor Variables**

Q1: Enrollment at UTEP

Q2: Employment

Q6: Ethnicity [Levels: Hispanic/Latin, Black/African American, White/Caucasian, Asian, Other]

Q7: Gender [Levels: female, male, and other]

Q9: Income level [Levels: maintain first five and collapse the rest into 1 level]: Total income of all members of household.

Q10: Academic level [Undergrads, graduates (masters & doctoral), professional]

Q12: Most common mode of transportation (Maintain levels as they are)

Q13: Reliability of most common mode of travel [Not reliable at all, somewhat reliable, fairly reliable, very reliable]

Q14: Living alone [Yes/No]

Q15: Has Dependents [Yes/No]. Thinking of combining this with Q16 to create a single variable, number of dependents.

Q17: Head of Household [Yes/No]

Q19: Location/Residence [On-campus, off-campus with family, off-campus not with family, other]

Q23:

Q25: Federal student aid [Grants, work study, loans (loans & emergency loan), Scholarship (likely to combine this with other forms of aid)]

**Multi Racial / Ethnicity issues:**

**636** individuals identified themselves as belonging to more than one ethnic groups/races, out of which 592 were found to belong to 2 races (mostly Hispanic-White/Caucasian), 35 belonging to 3 races, with other breakdowns as presented in the table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of Races | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 |
| Respondents | 592 | 35 | 6 | 1 | 2 |