



Best practices of panel retention and tracking – Lessons learned from international case studies

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Chicago

July 25-29, 2016

The 2nd International Conference on Survey Methods in Multinational,
Multiregional and Multicultural Contexts (3MC)



Outline

- Background
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- Recommended Steps
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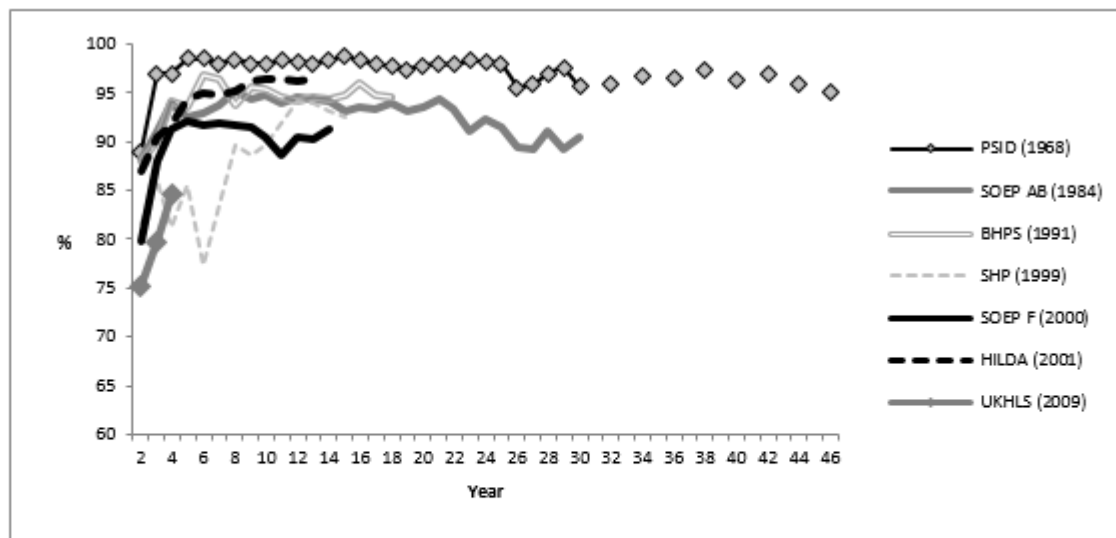


Background

- Respondents:
 - Desire to contribute to society; benefits from participation; an interest in the topic or respect for the survey organization (Singer and Ye 2013).
 - Perceptions of any costs and risks (Singer 2003; Couper *et al.* 2008).
- Interviewers:
 - Observe cues and customize their approach to the respondent (Groves and Couper 1998; Groves *et al.* 2000).
 - Can be given, and trained to use, a tool-kit of resources and strategies as they interact with the respondent.
 - Customize the survey experience for the respondent - being flexible.
- Fumagalli *et al.* (2013) found that mailing brochures about study findings that were targeted to BHPS sample subgroups with relatively low response rates (young people and busy people) can boost response and improve sample composition.

Wave-on-Wave Re-interview Rates

Figure 1: Wave-on-wave re-interview rates, household panel surveys



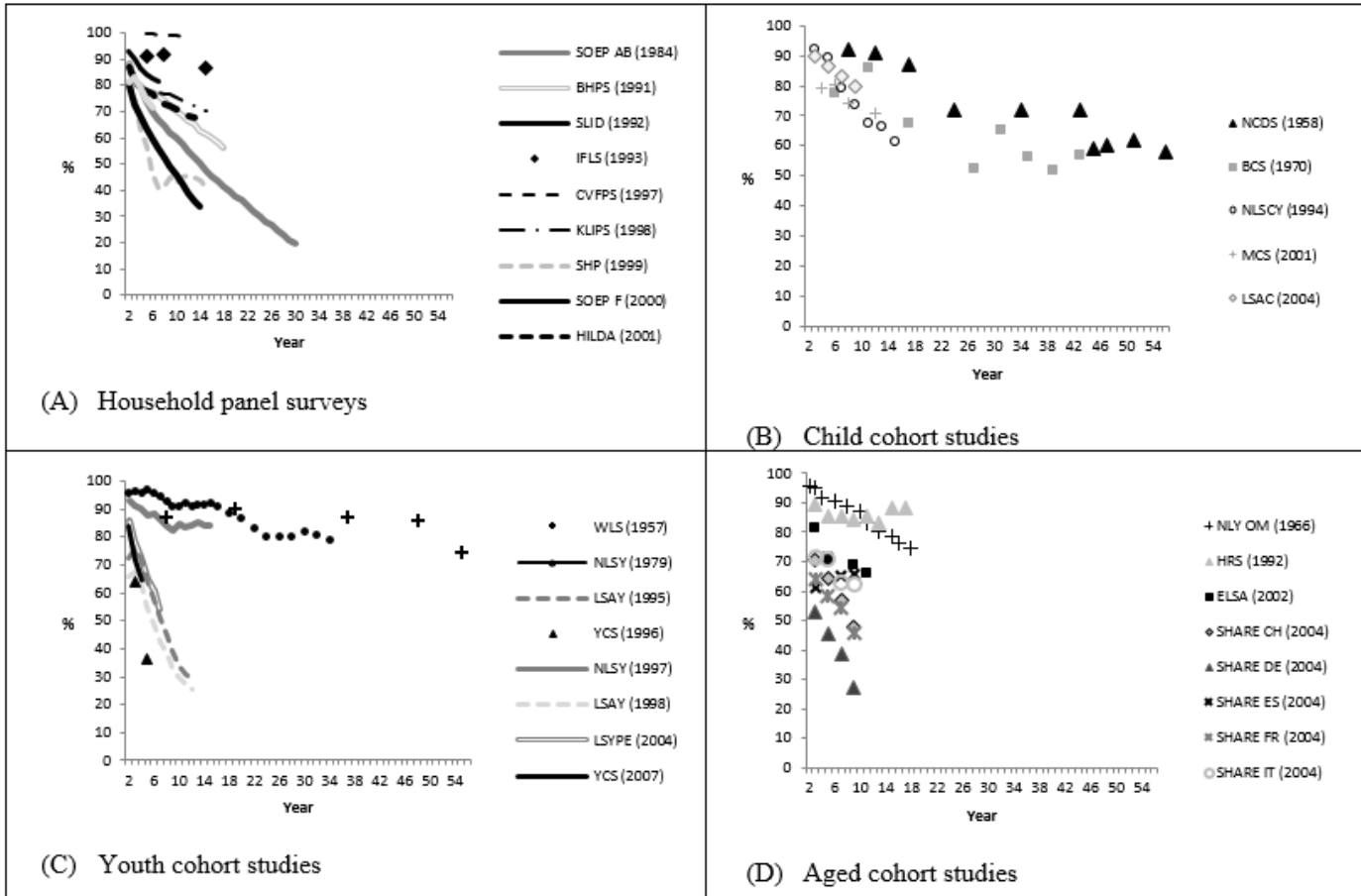
Notes: PSID = Panel Study of Income Dynamics (US); SOEP = Socio-economic Panel (Germany); BHPS = British Household Panel Survey; SHP = Swiss Household Panel; HILDA = Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey; UKHLS = UK Household Longitudinal Study. Figures in parentheses indicate the year in which interviewing commenced. The PSID response rates are calculated at the family level while the rates for all other studies are calculated at the individual level. The rates for the SOEP, BHPS, SHP and HILDA Survey exclude deaths and moves abroad from the denominator; the rates for the PSID only exclude deaths.

Sources: PSID: ISR (2013, Table 7). SOEP: authors' own calculations for samples A, B and F. BHPS: Taylor *et al.* (2010, Table 18a-q). SHP: Lipps (2007, Figure 2); personal communication with Oliver Lipps, 29 July 2015. HILDA: Summerfield *et al.* (2015, Table 8.27). UKHLS: Knies (2014, Table 6, 9 and 12).

Source: Watson, Leissou, Guyer, & Wooden, forthcoming.

Re-interview Rates, Wave 1 Rs

Figure 2: Re-interview rates, wave 1 respondents



Source: Waltson, Leissou, Guyer, & Wooden, forthcoming.

Panel Maintenance Strategies

- Watson, Leissou, Guyer, & Wooden (forthcoming)
 - Study branding
 - Interviewer maintenance
 - Interviewer continuity

Study Branding

- Create a sense of identification or belonging to a study (Robinson et al. 2007).
- Reduce concerns about the credibility of the study, and facilitate immediate recognition of study communication by respondents (Ribisl *et al.* 1996).
- Use it in a consistent fashion in all respondent communication (such as letters, brochures, and respondent gifts), on interviewer identification, and on the study website.

Interviewer Maintenance

- Reduce training costs between one half and one third as much according to some studies (Laurie et al. 1999, Summerfield et al. 2015).
- Reduce attempt to complete interviews and respondent burden (Watson and Wilkins 2015).
- Offer interviewer bonuses for:
 - Signing up to the next wave (e.g., HILDA Survey).
 - Converting non-respondents within a wave (e.g., BHPS, HILDA Survey) and / or from an earlier wave (e.g., BHPS, MCS);.
 - Tracking movers (e.g., IFLS).
- In countries where the fieldwork is more team-based, these incentives may be more appropriately pitched at the team level.
 - For example, how well the team worked together, the quality of the completed questionnaires, and completion rates (Thomas et al. 2012).

Interviewer Continuity

- Develop rapport and trust with respondents:
 - Laurie *et al.* (1999) reported that 97% of respondents to the first four waves of BHPS had the same interviewer for at least two of those waves. In the HILDA Survey, the comparable rate was 86%.
 - The negative effect of a different interviewer on response is least marked within the mover population (Laurie *et al.* 1999; Watson and Wooden 2014).
 - Lynn *et al.* (2011) controlled for interviewer experience in the second wave of a panel and found no effect on cooperation propensities following a change of interviewer as long as the new interviewer was as experienced as the previous interviewer.
 - A different interviewer generally has a higher likelihood of converting the non-respondent (Watson and Wooden 2014).



Discussion Guide

- What data has the study has collected?
- What is available to the public or accessible and can be used?
- What methods have been used?
- Budget/resources/timing:
 - mailing > phone > FtF (in order of cost magnitude)
- Start building databases for historical profiles
 - Address changes, phone numbers, contact people, jobs



List of Studies

- Australia: Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey
- China: China Family Panel Study (CFPS)
- Nepal: Chitwan Valley Family Panel Study (CVFPS)
- South Africa: National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS)
- Taiwan: Panel Study Family Dynamics (PSFD)
- US: Health and Retirement Study (HRS), Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID)



Overall Efforts

- Employ between wave contact efforts (newsletter mailings, calling)
- Collect contact (people) information from Rs during the IW
- Provide case profile to Iwers during the field period
- Employ tracking efforts during the field period



Lessons Learned

- Having frequent interactions with HHs or Rs is the key.
 - (CVFPS) Monthly demographic registry provides frequent updates.
- Rs prefer a returning Iwers.
 - Attempt to assign same Iwer to the HH from wave to wave.
- (CFPS) Modeling *response rate* on the village level before the data collection .
 - Using variables like previous contact record/refusal using previous FTF/TEL mode, HH response rate, age, occupation, etc.
- Cluster of families which serve as contact people for each other.
- (NIDS) Gate keepers (tribal chiefs, politicians, local government members, gangsters, farmer's union, ANC youth league) are key for helping Iwers locate households.



Lessons Learned (Cont'd)

- (PSFD) Married daughters are not a subject to question after leave the HH.
- (CFPS/CVFPS) Personal movements mainly due to either going to school (particularly from high school > collage) or seasonal work
- (CFPS) Phone number change: in China each location will charge certain fees when people are using phone number form other area.
 - People switch cell phone number frequently to waive the fee and this causes the frequent change of cell phone numbers.
- (CVFPS) Text has been used for short surveys for Rs currently living outside Nepal and expenses are paid by CVFPS.

Between Wave Efforts

- Including:
 - Address correction postcards (with or without incentive).
 - Newsletters.
 - Pre-notification letters.
 - (CFPS) Mobility predictive models (household, individuals, village level).
- (PSFD) Studies choose to communicate via mail/letter with respondents in countries where postal service is reliable and there is also address forwarding mechanism in place.
- Mail is lower in cost than telephone or in-person visits, therefore more likely to be implemented.
 - PSID completes three mailings during the 12-month period between data collections (newsletter, postcard, and letter)



Efforts During Field Period

- Including:
 - FtF contact attempts.
 - Phone attempts.
 - Contact with neighbors, local leaders, social and family networks.
 - Asking respondent for the likelihood of moving (individuals or family).
- Internet or database searching (government or commercial vendor).
 - Birth or death registries.
 - Postal service.
 - Driver's License and/or Voter registration.
 - Employment, tax, home ownership, or criminal records.

Recommended Steps -1

- Thank You Card:
 - A couple months after the end of data collection, send a thank you card using the address the respondent provided at the end of the interview.
 - Update the study databases with the new or confirmed address that get returned from the postal service.

Recommended Steps -2

(Cont'd)

- Locating Calls:
 - Three months after the end of field period organize a locating effort.
 - Call the last known phone number to touch base with the HH or R.
 - If the phone number is no longer accurate for the HH or R employ the following tracking steps:
 - Call Directory Assistance for a new phone number.
 - Do an online search for new phone numbers.
 - Call Contact persons.
 - Call all past phone numbers on study records.
 - Once a good phone number becomes available the Iwer/tracker should call the R:
 - Ask the whereabouts of everyone that was on the family roster.
 - Ask for the address and phone number for everyone who now lives separately from the respondent.
 - Update the study databases with the new or confirmed address that get returned from the postal service.

Recommended Steps -3

(Cont'd)

- Locating FtF:
 - If the effort to contact the HH or R via phone is unsuccessful send Iwers FtF to the last known address.
 - Before the Iwer heads out, do online searches to confirm the address or find a new one for the HH or R.
 - When the Iwer gets to the address, if the HH or R is not available:
 - Talk to neighbors, mailman, store owners; ask where the HH or R is or if they moved.
 - Visit local agencies (i.e. tax records, voter registration) to ask information about the HH or R.
 - Update the study databases with the new or confirmed address that the Iwer finds.

Recommended Steps -4

(Cont'd)

- Newsletter:
 - Prepare a newsletter including results from study, stories from the field, and a calendar for the year. Mail it out to all HHs or Rs.
 - Include a card where the HH or R can update or confirm the address by sending the card back to the study office.
 - Use prepaid postage, or pay for the postage when it's returned to the study offices (depending on what arrangement is available from the postal services).
 - If funds are available offer a small token (monetary incentive) when the R returns the post card.
 - If paying monetary incentive is not possible, offer small token like a magnet for the refrigerator, or other small item.

Recommended Steps -5

(Cont'd)

- Locating Calls (the second time):
 - Six months before data collection starts, repeat the phone contact attempts steps; update the study databases with new phone numbers.
- Pre-notification Letter:
 - Prepare a letter and mail it to all HHs or Rs letting them know that interviewing will start again within a few weeks.
- Case Profile:
 - A summary document prepared before the survey is fielded:
 - Audience: interviewer or/and the tracking team.
 - Family composition during the last IW completed.
 - Last IW refusal/tracking indicator.
 - Contact information of both Rs and contact people.
 - Call records for the past wave(s).
 - If letters were sent during the last wave, a copy of the letter.



Case Profile Example -1

2015 Example Study --

- Sample ID: 5001-003
- Type: Re-interview Interview
- Contact #: 734-999-8888

2013 Information --

- Interviewer: Mary Smith
- Final Result: 1001
- Result Date: 05/01/2013
- Whether RC in 2013: No
- Whether Tracked in 2013: No
- Whether Iw Completed Cell Phone in 2013: Yes
- Whether any FTF calls in 2013: No
- Total # calls in 2013: 3
- Language Used for 2013 IW: English
- Iw Length 2013: 72.8 min

2011 Information --

- 2011 IWer: Mary Smith
- 2011 Final Result: 1001
- 2011 IW Result Date: 05/3/2011
- Whether RC in 2011: No
- Whether Tracked in 2011: Yes
- Whether Completed on Cell Phone in 2011: Yes
- Whether any FTF call in 2011: Yes
- Total # calls in 2011: 5
- Language Used for 2011 IW: English
- Iw Length 2011: 69.4 min

Case Profile Example -2



2013 Respondent Information:

Portia Hines

1407 Trinity Ave. Apt. #A
 Durham, NC 27702

919/889-4733	Extension:	Phone Type: Home	Name listed: Kevin Freeman
919/889-4216	Extension: 143	Phone Type: Work	Name listed: Unlisted
919/889-5132	Extension:	Phone Type: Cell	Name listed: Unlisted

Respondent Email: phines@comcast.net



IW Problem:

Year: [Appears if applicable] IW Problem Code: [Appears if applicable]
 Description: [Appears if applicable]



Payment Problem:

Year: [2011] Payment Problem Code: [101]

Description: Respondent prefers payment via check made to her partner Kevin

2013 IW Payment: Check mailed May 24, 2013, Check cashed June 5, 2013

Follow-up Letter Type Sent: (Yes) Letter Type: Condolence for death of parent

Language Used for Last IW: English Time Zone: EST



Initial Family Listing:

Name (F M L)	RTH	Age at last IW	Sample	Why	PN
KEVIN JAMES FREEMAN SR	Male Head	39	No	00	171
PORTIA MARIE HINES	"Wife"	37	Yes	10	003
KEVIN SEAN FREEMAN JR	Son	8	Yes	20	033



Case Profile Example -3

2013 OBSERVATIONS:

The respondent has the same job she had back in 2011. She has now settled into the routine and is able to work from home once a week on Fridays. That may be a good day to contact her and make an interview appointment. The couple are planning to get married in the summer time but do not plan to move immediately. They want to save money and buy a house in the next three to four years.

2013 TRACKING OBSERVATIONS:

No need for tracking this wave. I was able to make contact with the respondent on the phone numbers provided.

2013 Contact, Proxy, Payee, and Locator Information

Contact #1: JOE MOODY

Relationship: Brother

495/869-3948 Extension: Phone Type: Home Name listed: Moody
495/869-1249 Extension: Phone Type: Cell Name listed: Unlisted
Address: 687 SPRING ST, WEST HILLSBURG, MI 46978

Contact #2: MARY MOODY

Relationship: Sister

495/555-1114 Extension: Phone Type: Cell Name listed: Mary Moody
495/555-1894 Extension: Phone Type: Pager Name listed: Unlisted
Address: 521 Summer Pl. Apt. #C, West Hillsburg, MI 46978



Case Profile Example -4

Proxy: Not Applicable

Payee: Not Applicable


Finder #1: Not Applicable

Finder #2: Not Applicable



2013 Call Records:

Call #:001 Date: March 22, 2013 Day: Tue Time: 9:17am Result:1401 Mode: TEL
Number Called: 919-889-4733 Phone Type: Home Iwer Name: Mary Smith
Notes: ANSWERING MACHINE



Call #:002 Date: March 31, 2013 Day: Thu Time:5:06pm Result:4202 Mode: TEL
Number Called: 919-889-4733 Phone Type: Home Iwer Name: Mary Smith

Notes: SPOKE WITH R (PORTIA). SHE'S GLAD TO DO IW, MADE APPOINTMENT FOR TOMORROW EVENING AT 7 PM.



Call #:003 Date: April 1, 2013 Day: Fri Time:7:00pm Result:1001 Mode: TEL
Number Called: 919-889-4733 Phone Type: Home Iwer Name: Mary Smith

Notes: R COMPLETED IW. VERY COOPERATIVE. SHE AND KEVIN (HEAD) ARE PLANNING ON MARRYING, BUT THEY DON'T HAVE PLANS TO MOVE.



Limitations/Opportunities

- Not all strategies can (or should) be implemented in all surveys.
- This review is dominated by the experiences of surveys that rely largely on collection of data via traditional interview methods.
- Other factors: interview mode, frequency of interview, use of proxy interviews, and interview length.
- UKHLS Innovation Panel - methodological research experiments (Jäckle *et al.* 2014).



Thank You so Much

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