Strategies for minimizing attrition and engaging respondents in the PSID and its supplemental studies

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Ongoing panel study of U.S. families
- Began in 1968; 41 waves as of 2019 with ~11,000 families
- Genealogic panel – Adult children of original sample followed at economic independence

CATI / FTF interviewing
- Lengthy and complex interview: ~75 minutes
- Post-paid monetary incentive – 2019, $75 baseline incentive

Long field period:
- 9 months, March 1 – December 31, biennially

Major ongoing supplements:
- Child Development Supplement (PSID-CDS) – 5 waves, 1997-2019
- Transition into Adulthood Supplement (PSID-TAS) – 8 waves, 2005-2019
Recent challenges: PSID response rates trending down (but now stable?)

Note: Excludes 2017-19 immigrant refresher sample
Increasing effort needed to schedule & complete PSID interviews

- Interviewer attempts (median)
- Interviewer attempts (mean)
Respondent engagement strategies

• Maintain contact with respondents through between-wave mailings
  – contact update postcard, small incentive
  – R newsletter describing results and upcoming data collection via postal mail
• R website
• Use MM approaches to engage different subgroups:
  – email, text, telephone, postal mail
• Tailored messages, e.g., highlighting motivation to participate
Tailoring respondent messages -
New question: Main reason you participate in PSID

- Family loyalty: 46
- Own study loyalty: 21
- Scientific importance: 18
- Likes incentive: 9
- Enjoys interview: 4
- Other: 1
Respondent mailing to highlight motivation of family-loyalty

“I remember watching my grandma complete this survey!”

“After every interview, my husband and I use the money we receive to go out to a nice dinner.”

“The U of M study is a family tradition!”

“I want my family’s experiences on the table when policy is being made.”

“I enjoy talking with the interviewer about how things have changed over the last two years.”
Incentives strategies to minimize attrition & field effort

• Variety of incentive modes:
  – Check (slow), E-pay to accelerate incentive
  – Cash & non-monetary incentives for FTF interviews

• One-time extra $ for families at high risk of NR:
  – Prior-wave NR:
    “Welcome Back!”
  – New sample members: “Welcome to the Study!”
Incentive strategies to minimize attrition & field effort

• Incentive Boosts to achieve RR, doubling incentive for “Difficult cases”:
  – Final 6 weeks of production
  – 2019: time-limited offer during 1st month of production
    • “Early-Bird” experiment

Special Early Bird Offer!

Complete your interview by March 31st to receive an extra [$75], for a total of [$100]!
New approach: Online appointment scheduler experiment

- 2017 PSID Transition into Adulthood Supplement
- Offered some Rs use of scheduler that allows them to select day/time of interview without relying on an interviewer
  - Used frequently in daily life
  - Should save fieldwork effort, provide more positive R experience
  - Randomly assigned Rs to either “Scheduler-Group” & offered use of online scheduler or “Control-Group,” no offer

Online appointment scheduler experiment

• **Scheduler-Group:**
  – Completed the interview significantly faster
  – Needed significantly fewer interviewer attempts to complete interview; cost per case was lower
  – About 1/3 of those in Scheduler-Group used it to set appointment

• **Future waves:**
  – Increase use of scheduler
  – Applicable in any study with interviewer-administered component
Next steps

- Major transition Core PSID 2021 - adding “web” as mode

- Design & evaluate strategies to engage Rs and minimize attrition using MM approaches
Primary Sponsors

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- National Institute on Aging
Thank you. Questions?