Mode Changes in the NLSY

Holly J. Olson
National Longitudinal Surveys
Survey Methods Symposium
July 16, 2019
Presentation Overview

- Background on NLSY
- Mode Change Considerations in the NLSY97
- Outcomes of the NLSY97 Mode Change
- Conclusions
National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS)

- NLS surveys gather detailed information about labor market activity and other experiences in the lives of seven cohorts of men and women.
- Three active cohorts:
  - NLSY79
  - NLSY79 CYA (1986)
  - NSLY97
NLS Survey Structure

- Contractor Based System
  - CHRR – OSU, NORC – University of Chicago
- Each cohort is fielded biennially, alternating years
- Each fielding effort is referred to as a ‘Round’
- Round lasts approximately 4 years
  - Divided into 4 phases: design, survey preparations, data collection (fielding), data processing
NLSY79 & NLSY97 Response Rates

The graph shows the response rates for NLSY79 and NLSY97 over 27 rounds. The response rate for NLSY79 starts at around 90% and decreases to about 70% by Round 27. For NLSY97, the response rate starts at around 90% and decreases to about 80% by Round 17, after which it remains steady at around 70%.
Interview Modes in the NLS

Interview Method
- Paper and Pencil Interview (PAPI)
- Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI)
- Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI)

Interview Mode
- In-person
- Phone
- Web – not yet
NLSY79 & NLSY97 Use of Phone by Round
Differences between NLSY79 & NLSY97

- Age of Respondents/Life Stages
- Proximity of mode change to shift in interview frequency (biennial)
- Technology
- Sample Stability
- Questionnaire Structure
NLS Priorities

- Total Response Rates
- Cost
- Sample Retention
- Sample Representation
- Data Quality
Reasons for mode change in NLSY97

- COST!!!

- Other options considered:
  - Reducing sample size by dropping oversamples
  - Moving to a triennial collection schedule
  - Not going after the hardest to reach cases
  - Adaptive design/focus on subsample response rates
  - Reducing overall interviewer hours
Design Considerations for Phone

- Respondent setting is unknown
- Respondent visual aids are removed
- Harder for respondent to retain long strings of information
- Respondent are more subject to primacy/recency effects
- Phone respondents less likely to report sensitive information than self-administering respondents, but more likely than in-person interviewer-administration respondents
Survey Changes to Adapt to Phone

- FIs instructed not to state private information
- Category questions changed to yes/no questions
- Streamline questionnaire
  - Shorten question response lists
- Some sensitive questions moved out of the SAQ section
- Additional materials informing respondents of mode change
R18 Fielding Strategy

- Early Bird
  - Decentralized dialing system (D-CATI)
  - Use of replicates
- Outbound dialing
  - Expired replicates
- Case Managed
  - FI’s ‘own’ cases
NLSY97 R18 Outcomes

- Production
- Phone vs In-person
- Interview Breakoffs
- Timings
- Additional Factors
Cumulative Completes by Week, R10- R18
Round 17, Completed Cases x Average HPC
Round 18, Weekly Completed Cases x Average HPC
## Completes by Respondent Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round</th>
<th>Respondent Type</th>
<th>Fielded</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Round 15</td>
<td>Perfect Responder</td>
<td>5290</td>
<td>5164</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out 1 Round</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round 16*</td>
<td>Perfect Responder</td>
<td>5195</td>
<td>5076</td>
<td>98%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out 1 Round</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round 17</td>
<td>Perfect Responder</td>
<td>4975</td>
<td>4816</td>
<td>97%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out 1 Round</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round 18</td>
<td>Perfect Responder</td>
<td>4804</td>
<td>4542</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out 1 Round</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>38%</td>
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</table>
Comparison of Breakoffs b/w R17 and R18

Breakoff is defined as a time when the respondent needs to stop the interview at any point

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Round 17</th>
<th>Round 18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Breakoffs</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Breakoffs per Case</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1.27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of Cases with at least one Breakoff</td>
<td>3.27%</td>
<td>10.53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mid-Fielding Changes

- Questionnaire modified to shorten administration time
- Earlier transition to case managed phase
- Additional monies added to FI hours for in-person R outreach
- Earlier implementation of ‘Last Chance’ bonus
Compounding Factors in 97 Mode Change

- Proximity of interview schedule (biennial) and mode change
- Early expenditures and outlays that may not have been cost effective
- Higher than average burn rate
- Difficulty contacting respondents
Lessons Learned

- Don’t try to do too much at once
- Outreach is key
  - More in-person outreach is needed
  - Different types of outreach is needed
- Case management structure
- Mid-fielding flexibility
Holly Olson
Assistant Director
National Longitudinal Surveys
www.bls.gov/nls
Olson.holly@bls.gov