



SURVEY FUTURES

**SURVEY DATA COLLECTION
METHODS COLLABORATION**

Targeted survey procedures in UK self-completion surveys

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Standard survey practice

- The predominant approach to survey research – standardisation
- Interviewers' initial introduction - the only common departure from standardisation
- Budget and time constraints are often a concern

Targeted survey designs

- An alternative to standardised approaches where:
 - a) one or more design features are varied between subgroups of sample members to improve the relationship between costs and errors
 - b) the variation(s) are identified and planned prior to data collection
- Information about sample units prior to data collection is required:
 - a) To identify subgroups
 - b) To identify the appropriate treatment

Targeted survey designs

- The objective – improving the relationship between survey costs and errors
 - Coverage and sampling errors cannot be tackled by targeted designs
 - Non-response is typically the focus
- Can involve modifying an existing feature or adding a new one

Subgroup criteria

1. A manageable number of subgroups
2. Each group having defining characteristics that lend themselves to targeted treatment
3. Varying treatment cost and/or contribution to survey error between groups

Categorising targeted design features

1) Agent of change

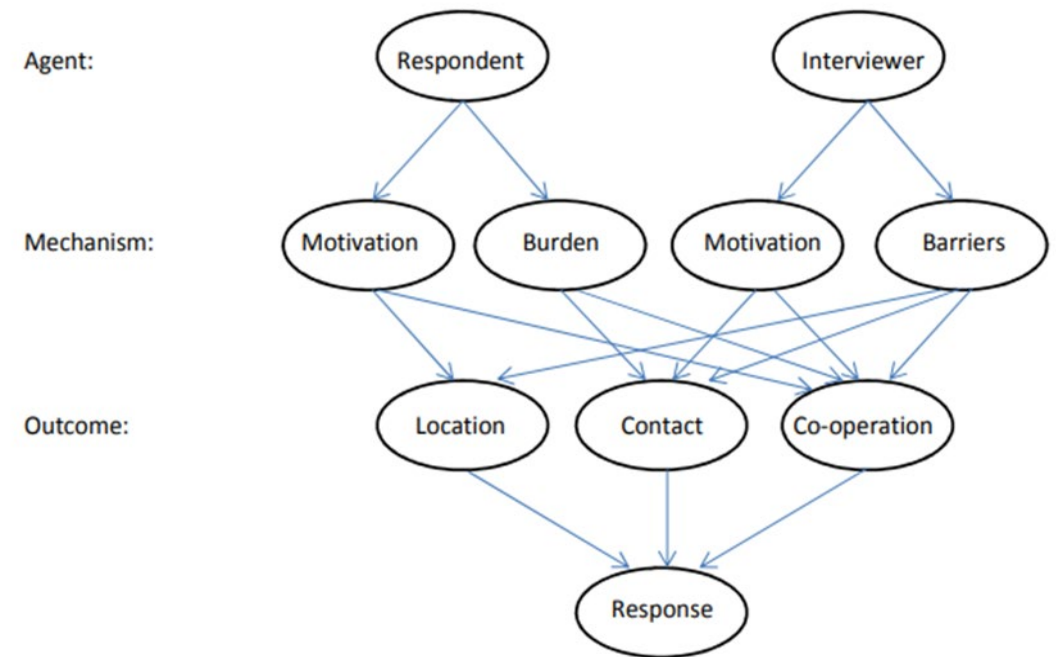
- Respondent or interviewer

2) Mechanism of change

- Reduction of burden, increase of motivation, reduction of barriers

3) Affected outcome

- Location, cooperation or contact propensity



Examples of targeted design features

- Reducing respondent burden
 - Providing a more convenient mode
- Improving respondent motivation
 - Targeted survey communications, targeted feedback on survey findings, type of interviewer allocated, differential incentive
- Improving interviewer motivation
 - Differential rewards/incentives
- Reducing barriers for the interviewer
 - Targeted call scheduling, persuasion statements, amount of field time, adjusting the amount of effort based on response propensities

Published studies of targeted design features

| Agent of change | Change mechanism | Affected outcome | Targeted design feature | Studies |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Interviewer | Motivation | Contact & co-operation | Interviewer incentives | Peytchev et al. (2010); Calderwood et al. (2013) |
| | Barriers | Contact | Field priority | Calderwood et al. (2012) |
| | | | Call scheduling algorithm | Luiten & Schouten (2013); Kreuter & Müller (2015); Jessop et al. (2019) |
| | | Co-operation | Interviewer allocation | Luiten & Schouten (2013); Gummer & Blumenstiel (2018) |
| | | | Persuasion scripts | Lipps (2012) |
| Respondent | Motivation | Co-operation | Respondent communications content | Fumagalli et al. (2013); Cleary & Balmer (2015); Lynn (2016); Einarsson et al. (2023); Zhang et al. (2023) |
| | | | Respondent incentives | Kay (2001); BLS (undated); Zuckerberg (2007); Jessop & Oksala (2014); Jessop et al. (2019); Jackson et al. (2019); McGonagle et al. (2022); Zhang et al. (2023); Beste et al. (2023) |
| | | Location | Extra contacts | Lynn (2012) |
| | Burden | Co-operation | Data collection modes | Luiten & Schouten (2013); Rosen et al. (2014); Al Baghal & Lynn (in progress); Zhang et al. (2023) |

Published studies: Interviewer

- Interviewer incentives
 - Peychev et al. (2010), Calderwood et al. (2013)
- Field priority
 - Calderwood et al. (2012)
- Call scheduling algorithm
 - Luiten & Schouten (2013); Kreuter & Müller (2015); Jessop et al. (2019)
- Interviewer allocation
 - Luiten & Schouten (2013); Gummer & Blumenstiel (2018)
- Persuasion scripts
 - Lipps (2012)

Published studies: Respondent

- Respondent communications content
 - Fumagalli et al. (2013); Cleary & Balmer (2015); Lynn (2016); Einarsson et al. (2023); Zhang et al. (2023)
- Respondent incentives
 - Kay (2001); BLS (undated); Zuckerberg et al. (2007); Jessop & Oksala (2014); Jessop et al. (2019); Jackson et al. (2019); McGonagle et al. (2022); Zhang et al. (2023); Beste et al. (2023)
- Extra contacts
 - Lynn (2012)
- Data collection modes
 - Luiten & Schouten (2013); Lynn (2017); Zhang et al. (2023)

Use of targeted design features by survey agencies

| Agent of change | Change mechanism | Affected outcome | Targeted design feature | Studies |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Interviewer | Barriers | Contact | Field priority | Millenium Cohort Study Ages 11 and 14 Survey |
| | | Co-operation | Interviewer allocation | 1970 British Cohort Study |
| Respondent | Motivation | Co-operation | Respondent communications content | English Housing Survey; REACT; |
| | | | Respondent communication protocol | Community Life Survey; DCMS Participation Survey; HMRC Customer Survey (Individuals); Attitudes to Mental Illness Survey |
| | | | Respondent incentives | Next steps Age 32 |
| | Burden | Co-operation | Data collection modes | Community Life Survey; DCMS Participation Survey; HMRC Customer Survey (Individuals); DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker; Attitudes to Mental Illness Survey |

Survey agencies: Interviewer

- Field priority
 - Millenium Cohort Study Ages 11 and 14 Survey
- Interviewer allocation
 - 1970 British Cohort Study

Survey agencies: Respondent

- Respondent communications content
 - English Housing Survey; REACT
- Respondent communication protocol
 - Community Life Survey; DCMS Participation Survey; HMRC Customer Survey (Individuals); Attitudes to Mental Illness Survey
- Respondent incentives
 - Next steps Age 32
- Data collection modes
 - Community Life Survey; DCMS Participation Survey; HMRC Customer Survey (Individuals); DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker; Attitudes to Mental Illness Survey

Targeted design features and self-completion

- Many targeted design features rely on the interviewer as an agent of change
 - Mostly not relevant to self-completion
 - Lately – more focus on respondent as the agent of change
- All features addressing the respondent have relevancy to self-completion
 - Communications: invitation letter, reminders, loading page, questionnaire
 - Incentives: nature, value
 - Extra contacts: number, nature and timing of reminder mailings
 - Data collection modes: paper questionnaire option

Challenges

- Outside of longitudinal surveys – identifying groups to target
 - Linkage of census data, deprivation indices data or other additional information to the postcode address file

Sources

- Lynn, P. (2014). Targeted response inducement strategies on longitudinal surveys. In U. Engel, B. Jann, P. Lynn, A. Scherpenzeel, & P. Sturgis (Eds.), *Improving Survey Methods: Lessons from Recent Research*. 322– 338. Abingdon UK: Psychology Press.
- Lynn, P. (2017). From standardised to targeted survey procedures for tackling non-response and attrition. *Survey Research Methods* 11(1), 93-103.