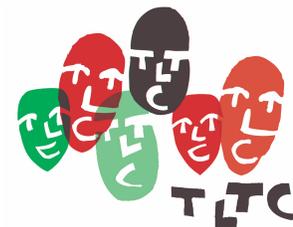


DOCUMENTATION GUIDE #8: REFRESHER SAMPLE



Purpose

Immediately following Wave 8, the study team added a refresher sample of 315 female respondents to TLT-1. Drawn from the original 2009 sampling frame to offset attrition, the refresher sample also provides a comparison sample against which analysts can identify potential panel conditioning effects within the study. The survey instrument administered to the refresher sample was based on the baseline questionnaire administered at Wave 1, in addition to select questions and modules from other waves and adjustments to account for the passage of time.

Instruments Used

Assembling the refresher survey instruments required team effort since it was a challenging task. It reminded everyone of the baseline survey, but it was also a little different from the baseline survey since there was a good chance that our new respondents might have already heard about the project and the questions we asked from our original respondents who were in the main survey. Principal investigators put together a questionnaire that summarized all questionnaires that were administered throughout the 8 waves of data collection for the core sample. We focused on questions that would be most comparable to those asked in the main study. For example, we focused on questions from the baseline that we thought were unlikely to change over time and thus could be comparable between the two groups over a 3-year time period. For other questions that were likely to vary over time, we drew heavily from the Wave 8 questionnaire as the refresher study would be conducted within months of the end of Wave 8. The data manager designed a coversheet – a document that would carry the respondent’s basic demographic information based on information collected at the time of the original household listing – and interviewer would update, correct, and record additional information about the respondent’s whereabouts. The project manager produced consent forms that would be used when recruiting respondents for the survey.

Training on the Instruments

As per Tsogolo la Thanzi tradition, interviewers underwent an intensive training period on each instruments that we used for any phase of data collection. A period of about 10 days was put aside for a complete training of survey instruments during waves 2 - 8. Since the refresher survey questionnaire comprised a set of old questions that the interviewers were already familiar with, a 6 day training period was sufficient: 1) the first three days to check the questionnaire and identify all typos and formatting problems and 2) three additional days to ensure that all questions made sense for the refresher group. For example, all questions were revised to ask about the past 4-months period to make it comparable to the survey administered to the core sample. Apart from

the questionnaire, consent forms and coversheets were carefully edited; we identified and corrected all errors at this stage. The data manager led a separate training on how the refresher sample coversheets should be handled because these were a little different from the ones we had used for the core sample.

Results of the Training

After 6 days of training, interviewers were familiar with the questionnaire, the coversheet, and consent forms. Initially, interviewers had worried that the questionnaire would confuse new respondents (core sample respondents had gotten to know their way around the questionnaire—i.e., what section came after a particular section, how respondents usually responded to particular questions, which sections tended to be difficult, etc.) After the 6-day training, supervisors were assured that the interviewers were comfortable with the refresher-sample instrument: the questions themselves, the ordering of the sections, and how to build rapport and put new respondents at ease.

Recruiting Respondents

Recruiting respondents was a major challenge to the interviewers, and the field supervisors felt the same way when they learned that respondents were supposed to be sampled and recruited from the baseline household listing population, which took place three years earlier. With baseline, the project had just started and the recruitment process started immediately after household listing; recruiting respondents was easy because maps of households were still fresh in interviewers' minds. In addition, since it didn't take much time between listing and recruiting, people were still found in the households they were listed in. After 3 years, the household IDs which were put on the doorposts of houses were erased and invisible, and when we learned that some of the members have migrated and died, recruitment was a challenge. The question was how we were going to find the 350 respondents.

After supervisors brainstormed separately and then together with interviewers, drawing pros and cons for each idea raised in the meeting, a number of facts were identified to act as a strategy for the recruitment process.

1. Since the refresher sample consisted of only women, female interviewers would be the ones recruiting.
 - After eight waves of data collection for the core sample, respondents were told that TLT had come to an end and no further appointments were made for future waves. Since everyone knew that TLT had ended, it would be absurd and might cause a lot of strife in the community if a male interviewer went to recruit a female respondent (i.e. a parent or husband would not easily understand).
 - Since it was one of TLT protocols for men to interview men and women to interview women, it was also expected to use the same protocol with the refresher sample. As such, recruitment period offers a great opportunity for an interviewer to start establishing rapport with respondents even before the interview.

- The nature of TLT's design meant that after recruitment, a respondent was given an appointment to come to the office for an interview. When the new respondent come to the center for her interview, the female interviewers would be the best person to identify that respondent as interviewers are the ones recruited this person in the field. In our experience with the core sample, *imposters* (people who came to the interview as though they were respondents) usually deceived the system because they were interviewed by a different interviewer than the one who recruited them. Therefore to minimize impostor cases in an already small sample, we decided to use the women in both recruiting and interviewing.
2. Each female interviewer would be paired with a male interviewer. In pairs, they would be given a set of respondents to manage. The female interviewer would be handling the field demands while the male interviewer would keep track of all field trips made and note progress on every respondent visited. This procedure was established so that in case the female interviewer failed to come to work and update on the recruitment status of her interviewees, her partner could resume working without putting the work on hold since we were working within time constraints.
 3. Each female interviewer would be given access to the most used and affordable transportation [bicycle, taxi] for a whole working day for up to 8 days to finish recruiting 10 respondents. After each working day, each interviewer was expected to give a detailed report to the supervisor on how many respondents were tracked, how many were found/not found, how many migrated, refused and recruited.
 4. The supervisor was to make documentation of all feedback from the field, and the team as a whole had two meetings in the early recruitment period to talk about what was working and what was not. We adjusted our strategies where necessary.

First Recruitment Effort: 350 Respondents

In 2009, all women meeting the age criteria from the household listing that had not been drawn into the core sample were given a randomly assigned number. These numbers were used to draw the comparison sample (including the refresher sample described below) in 2012.

The 350 respondents we sampled first were distributed among the 11 female interviewers we had available for field duty. After 8 days of intensive field work, only 166 respondents had been recruited. This number was way below the expected number (300-350) we were targeting. Below are some of the major reasons explaining the low figures:

1. High number of migrations due to marriages and family relocations.
2. High number of respondents who were not found in the area, contrary to our earlier household listing data. Migration was also a possible explanation for these respondents.

3. A number of respondents who were not known in the households and area in general were encountered. This was possibly because of the confusion around the definition of household members for the household head during household listing.

Looking at these outcomes, we felt there was nothing we could do but urge the interviewers to make multiple trips to a locality in search of a respondent who was reported not known until they exhausted all ways of looking for a person (i.e. contacted a number of people from different parts in the village as well as consulting the chief about that particular person).

Second Recruitment Effort: 200 Respondents

After seeing that the people who were given appointments were not enough, an additional 100 names were drawn, added to the refresher sample, and distributed amongst the same 11 interviewers. The strategy for recruitment remained the same and so did the response rate. After a few days of fieldwork, however, we noticed the same trend: migrations and not-found respondents were much higher than they were in 2009. We knew that we would not be able to reach 300, or even 250 which was the new target. Therefore, another 100 respondents were drawn and the interviewers were urged to put all their effort in finding these respondents. In the end we recruited 315 respondents out of 542 who were visited in the field (response rate: 58%).

Interviews

Interviews for this group started 3 days after the last recruitment field trip. Since our interviewers were already trained on the survey instruments, those three days were used for relaxing, printing, and making sure all instruments were available for the interviews. The first interviews started on Monday, March 19th, 2012. Our initial thought was that the first day would have a low turnout, but our respondents came in good time and in large numbers. This trend continued throughout the interviewing period. The last interview was on April 27th and we closed TLT for interviews on Monday, April 30th, 2012 marking the end of the refresher survey.

Interview Problems

We experienced minor problems, minor because they were similar to the problems we experienced during the baseline. Nonetheless, since we had already learned how to deal with such issues earlier in the study, when these problems reappeared in the refresher sample, we didn't worry about them much. Here are some of the most common problems:

1. A respondent saying contradicting information, especially in the Sexual and Romantic Partners Section. This was usually the case because the section asked about sensitive information that was regarded as private information by most people. Thus, for some respondents, sharing this information with the interviewer for the first time was usually not easily forthcoming. This was similar to our Core Sample, who would start being comfortable about this section in the subsequent waves and telling the interviewer that they lied about certain questions last time and wanted to correct the information, etc.
2. A respondent refusing to get tested for pregnancy because they were afraid their urine will be used for purposes other than research.

3. A respondent refusing HIV testing because they had already been tested elsewhere.

Interview Successes

Most of the respondents who were recruited for the refresher group were eager to be interviewed and were very cooperative during interviews—even more than respondents in the core sample. Their eagerness showed in the way they reported to the center for interviews and in keeping interview appointments. In later waves of TLT (especially Waves 5-8), the respondents in the core sample were not so good at keeping appointments.

Refresher Survey Drawbacks

The only drawback for the survey was in the recruitment process; it was a very challenging task to find the required respondents for this survey.

Refresher Survey Success

In conclusion, refresher sample survey was the most enjoyable, rewarding and exciting survey because the questions were familiar and the respondents were enthusiastic and very cooperative. We had low number of no-shows. Out of 317 that were given appointments, only two did not honor their appointments. We suspect that these respondents did not want to participate but were reluctant to refuse (e.g., litany of excuses, refused home interview). These were put in the category of passive refusals. Below is a table summarizing the refresher sample survey.

Table 1. Numbers for Comparison Survey per Interviewer: March-April 2012										
Interviewer ID	Respondents Assigned	Interviews Conducted	Migration	Not Found	Over Age	Under Age	Refusal	Dead	No show	Other
109	50	25	11	12	0	1	0	0	0	1
124	50	32	9	8	0	0	1	0	0	0
129	50	29	7	9	0	0	4	0	0	1
115	50	34	9	5	0	0	1	0	0	1
127	49	33	8	5	0	1	1	1	0	0
103	50	26	15	5	1	0	0	1	0	2
118	50	28	12	5	2	0	0	0	0	3
105	50	29	9	8	0	1	1	1	0	1
135	50	27	14	6	0	1	0	0	0	2
112	50	28	10	8	0	0	2	0	0	2
102	51	24	12	10	1	0	2	0	0	2
Total	550	315	116	81	4	4	12	3	0	15

We have no No Shows because respondents were categorized as passive refusals. The refusal category is comprised of both active and passive refusals. We had 2 no shows/passive refusals. The Dead Category are those who were on the list to be recruited but were found to have died. The "other" category is a mixture of male respondents, old respondents and imposters (caught at the point of interview at TLT).

Refresher Sample ID

Each refresher sample woman was given a four-digit respondent ID (respid) starting with 9 – this distinguishes them from the core sample women, who are identified with unique, six-digit respids (for more detailed information, see Documentation Guide 3: Respondent IDs and Missing Codes). Since most of the questions in the refresher sample survey are comparable to Wave 8, the refresher sample can be easily appended to Wave 8 for certain types of cross-sectional analysis. Logistically, we can treat wave 8 and refresher sample survey as a single point in time, yet for clarification, we refer to the refresher sample survey round as “Wave 9” in the study, overall.

Refresher sample women were re-interviewed in 2015 as part of the TLT-2 follow-up round (Wave 10). For a longitudinal perspective, analysts can use respondent IDs to merge the 2012 data from the refresher sample (Wave 9) with TLT-2 (2015) dataset.

Comparability of the Refresher Sample

Given the challenges with recruiting the refresher sample, investigators carefully investigated the data for evidence of selection bias. Table 2 below provides a descriptive overview of the core sample and the refresher sample at the time of the household listing and includes the paired t-test results. Measures are either taken directly from the household listing or calibrated to reflect the respondents’ situation in 2009. These results confirm that despite small differences in the household infrastructure, two samples are statistically identical in terms of household size, marital status, childbearing history, and health.

Table 2. Core/Refresher-Sample Differences at the Time of the Household Listing			
	Core Sample (2009)	Core Sample (2011)	Refresher Sample (2012)
Native to Balaka †	0.62	0.65	0.67
Age at listing	19.52	19.63	19.63
Household size	4.96	4.95	4.94
Never married at listing	0.53	0.49	0.49
Any children prior to listing †	0.47	0.50	0.51
Poor health	0.02	0.02	0.03
Finished roof	0.43*	0.40	0.37
N	1505	1212	315
† indicates variables constructed from the complete questionnaire			
T-test used to estimate significance of differences between Core Sample and Refresher Sample. 1st column compares CS 2009 and RS; 2nd column, CS 2012 and RS			
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001			

Panel Conditioning

Comparing the responses of core-sample to those of refresher-sample women at two points in time (2011/12 and 2015), we find evidence of panel conditioning on many domains of life that are directly related to the scope of the study and some that extend beyond it. This topic is being explored in more detail in a separate paper about the impact of research on respondents and on communities.

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Initial draft: July 2012

Final version: October 2018

Further reading: Trinitapoli, Jenny, Jeong Hyun Oh, and Sara Yeatman. 2018. "Data Collection As Disruption: Insights from a Longitudinal Study of Young Adulthood." Presented at the University of Minnesota MPC Seminar Series. Retrieved January 27, 2019 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezb13umtздg>)