

Household Attrition Patterns in the Survey of Income and Living Conditions, Turkey 2006-15

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Abstract:

Increased availability of panel data has exposed the vulnerability of surveys to nonresponse. Attrition, nonresponse after an initial response, and reverse attrition, response after an earlier nonresponse, are examples of missing data problems that loom large. In this paper we examine household attrition patterns in the Survey of Income and Living Conditions, the first and only household level panel data available in Turkey (T-SILC). Using data from the 2006-15 period, we document that 11.4 percent of households in the sample frame of T-SILC attritted, and an additional 4.15 percent reverse attritted at some point. This alone need not be source of concern because Turkstat keeps track of non-response and uses weights that depend on age, gender and region to adjust the data. What should be of concern is the fact that the likelihood of attrition is influenced by the labor market status of the household head. We show that households with heads who were unemployed (employed) in the period before attrition are more (less) likely to attrit compared to non-participants. The 15.5 percent combined attrition rate plus our finding that non-response has a statistically significant link with the employment status of the household head exacerbates concerns that attrition in the T-SILC can result in biased inferences in case of outcomes such as income inequality, poverty or deprivation status, well-being and living conditions of households that are directly related to the employment status of the household head.

Keywords: attrition, reverse attrition, panel data non-response, labor market status, SILC

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