

Exploring the Panel Study of Family Dynamics: An Overview and Its Applications

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The Panel Study of Family Dynamics (PSFD), initiated in 1999, is a multi-disciplinary multi-purpose longitudinal survey project focusing on families. It is currently overseen by the Center for Survey Research at the Research Center for Humanities and Social Sciences, Academia Sinica. The main respondents of the PSFD, consisting of five groups of adults born between 1935 and 1991, had their initial wave of surveys conducted through face-to-face interviews. These first-wave surveys were based on randomly drawn samples from the registration records of Taiwanese citizens meeting the birth-year criteria. Since 2000, children of the main respondents have been added to the targeted sample upon reaching the ages of 16 to 24. Starting with the 2024 survey, grandchildren of the main respondents aged between 16 and 25 have also been included in the targeted sample. Before 2012, the PSFD survey was conducted annually. Since 2012, it has been implemented biennially.

The first talk delivered by Dr. Yu will provide a succinct overview of the PSFD data, covering aspects such as sample structure, questionnaires, data access, and attrition rates. Challenges faced by the survey project will be addressed as well. Additionally, there will be a brief introduction to the Survey Research Data Archive (SRDA), which plays a crucial role in preserving and disseminating the PSFD data and other key survey data in Taiwan.

In the second talk, Prof. Tao will share applications of the PSFD on the debate of the Set-Point Theory (SPT), which argues that human happiness does not permanently change even after confronting important life events. The debate can only be conducted by using longitudinal datasets. This makes the PSFD the perfect material to examine whether the SPT applies to Taiwanese. In this talk, Prof. Tao will introduce two examples of life events, marriage and unemployment, to investigate whether the

SPT prevails in Taiwan. Studies using Western countries' data show that marriage aligns with the SPT, while unemployment violates the SPT. That is, the unemployed cannot recover their happiness even after re-employment. In this talk, Prof. Tao will show that Taiwanese behaviors have unique patterns. They are neither consistent with the SPT nor consistent with Western people.

In the third talk, Prof. Huang will introduce several applications of the PSFD in labor economics. These applications will highlight two important aspects of PSFD: (1) its longitudinal nature, and (2) its comprehensive information on family structure and attitudes towards family. For instance, the longitudinal aspect of PSFD enables us to explore how marriage and children affect parental earnings and employment. The detailed information on family structure allows for further investigation into questions such as how family configurations, like co-residence with grandparents, interact with child (motherhood) penalties, whether there is a bias towards sons and how it has evolved over time. Additionally, the extensive data on family attitudes provides researchers with the opportunity to examine whether the child (motherhood) penalty is influenced by gender norms. Prof. Huang will conclude the talk with a brief introduction to some other applications of PSFD.