

Vanessa Muñiz
PA 705
Final Quiz
Professor Silverman
5/21/07

If I could select a different methodology to collect my data it would have to change from a cross-sectional design to a strict experimental design. I would choose experimental design, because I would like to test the outcomes of the asset development strategies that are to be implemented. With this change in design, I would be able to test the validity of the strategies and would then be able to make modifications to the strategies according to the results of the experiment.

Research Question:

What asset development strategies best serve the residents of Contra Costa County using free tax preparation services from Earn It! Keep It! Save It!?

Hypothesis:

Of the interested individuals in asset development, those in the experimental group will make positive strides toward asset building at the end of the one year study.

I. Research Design

This research will be conducted using an experimental design. All subjects interested in participating in this experiment will be asked when they go to one of the 12 free tax sites. I will randomly select a pair of comparable families or individuals and assign one to the experimental group and the other to the control group. Subjects will be matched using the following guiding criteria: average gross income, marital status, number of dependents, educational levels, age, asset goals and current assets.

II. Data

Independent Variable: Financial Education and Counseling

Dependent Variable: Asset development/ self-sufficiency

Study Population: Contra Costa County EKS tax clients

Unit of Analysis: Contra Costa County Taxpayers earning less than \$42,000

Taxpayers, receiving free tax prep at one of the twelve tax sites, will be asked if they would like to participate in an asset development study. The client will have the option of participating in this study, thus sampling will not be random as clients are self-selecting to participate in the study. Clients wanting to participate, will be notified that certain information will be asked of them and then if chosen to participate they will be notified. After the sample is collected personal financial information will be studied and clients will be matched and randomly assigned to the control or experimental group.

Experimental Group:

This group will be assigned to a financial advisor. These clients will have a full financial assessment done by a professional. Asset building strategies will be discussed fully

with these clients and they will develop a working relationship with their personal financial advisor for a year. During this time, the client will be given the tools and the guidance toward economic self-sufficiency.

Control Group:

This group will be given the same asset building resources; the only difference is that this group will not have a financial advisor. They will be given names of organizations that provide these services; the responsibility of attaining financial/economic stability is dependent on the client. They will not have a personal financial advisor to guide them through the process.

Measuring Data:

All participants are to report, on a monthly basis for a year, on their progress toward their asset goal(s) (reducing debt, credit score repair, purchasing a home, education, micro-business, auto, etc). This will be collected by a phone interview, which will be recorded; clients will be asked a set of questions. Responses will be weighted and coded for quantitative analysis.

Ethical Issues:

I don't believe there any blatant ethical issues. All participants are willing to participate, though it's a blind study. Those participating in the control group may think that the study is just what they are getting, without realizing that the experimental group actually has a personal financial advisor that is helping them through the process of achieving their asset goal(s).

Possible Biases:

- Clients that want to participate in the study have a desire to better their financial situation, thus are more likely to have upward mobility toward financial stability.
- Clients receiving advice from a professional are more likely to succeed because they may feel some sort of accountability toward that advisor because of the relationship that's developed.

Comparison to my research design:

I think that a design like this one would be the ideal type of research in this field of study. There is not much research done on this topic because it is very difficult and costly to do. My cross-sectional design will give me information about feasibility of asset development strategies; the experimental design would give actual data on strategy implementation. Further, the experimental design is really designed around the individual clients needs and the cross-sectional design is designed around clients and service providers.

The experimental design will show what works, as opposed to the cross-sectional design which will determine what types of strategies should be invested in (whether they may or may not work). The experimental design is actual implementation which would create real results and that is the main and most significant difference.