

On “Comparing Selected Expenditures of Dual and Single Income Households with Children:”

Julie Sullivan, Economist

Division of Consumer Expenditure Surveys

Branch of Production & Control

Comments *by Geoffrey Paulin, Ph.D.*

Senior Economist

Division of Consumer Expenditure Surveys:

Branch of Information and Analysis

Consumer Expenditure Surveys Microdata Users’ Workshop

July 18, 2019

Washington, DC

COMMENTS FOR BOTH INTERVIEW AND DIARY DATA

Demographics:

DEMOGRAPHICS	INTERNAL	PUMD
WORKING STATUS:	Occupation of reference person is on FMLI/FMLD file. Occupation of spouse is on MEMB file. User must obtain information from both files and merge.	Occupation of reference person (OCCUCOD1/OCCULIS1) and spouse (OCCUCOD2/OCCULIS2) are on FMLI/FMLD file. No merging is necessary.
AGE, EDUCATION, RACE, ETHNICITY, ETC.	Same as work status.	Same as work status. (AGE_REF/AGE2; EDUC_REF/EDUCA2; etc.)

Advantage (Demographics): PUMD

Topcoding, Suppression, etc.

TOPCODING	INTERNAL	PUMD
Income	Reported data are available for analysis.	<p>Data are subjected to topcoding as described on Day 1 of the workshop, and are flagged accordingly.</p> <p>Means and especially variances may be affected, particularly for analysis of very high income groups.</p>

NOTE: Julie did not analyze any expenditures (e.g., purchase of airplane) or geographic variables (e.g., States) that are actually or likely to be subjected to topcoding or suppression, but the same comments applicable to income apply to these.

Advantage (Topcoding, Suppression, etc.): Internal data when full information is crucial.

SUMMARY VARIABLES

INTERVIEW ONLY

Summary Variables (I)	INTERNAL	PUMD
Expenditures/outlays, general	<p>Quarterly summary variables are available for expenditures and outlays.</p> <p>However, they are for collection quarter only.</p> <p>They are not suitable for computing calendar year estimates.</p>	<p>Summary variables with “CQ” and “PQ” extensions are available for expenditures and outlays.</p> <p>These extensions allow for easier computation of calendar-year estimates.</p> <p>For quarterly collection period estimates, add “PQ” and “CQ” variables, and the result is comparable to the internal summary variable. (Example: If variable X exists internally, then $X = \text{SUM}(\text{XPQ}, \text{XCQ})$.)</p>
Travel expenditures	Not available internally.	<p>Same as above.</p> <p>Available for all aspects of travel (food, lodging, airfares, etc.) and owned/rented vacation homes (mortgage payments, utilities, etc.)</p>

NOTE: Julie did not analyze travel expenditures, but they are included here for those who are interested.

DIARY ONLY

Summary Variables (D)	INTERNAL	PUMD
Food at Home Expenditures	Not available internally.	Available for total food at home (FOODHOME), as well as detailed items (CEREAL, BEEF, PORK, EGGS, FRSHFRUT, etc.)
Food Away from Home Expenditures	Not available internally.	FOODAWAY is sum of all food-away-from home UCCs (meal by type—breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack—and venue of purchase—e.g., fast food; full service restaurant; etc.
Total Food	Not available internally.	FOODTOT is the sum of FOODHOME and FOODAWAY.

Advantage (Summary Variables): PUMD for both Interview and Diary.

FINAL NOTE:

We are always striving to improve the PUMD files in this regard. If you have any thoughts or ideas—long-standing or new—please do not hesitate to contact a CE staff member during the course of this workshop, including during breaks. And, of course, if you think of something afterward, please send e-mail to CEXINFO@bls.gov. The information specialist who receives your comment may be able to respond directly, and if not, will be sure to forward it to the microdata team.