Conducting Survey Experiments using Qualtrics and Amazon Mechanical Turk

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Background: Lab Experiments

• Traditional Lab Experiments: Problems
  – External Validity
    • WEIRD college students not representative.
      – Ex) The Mueller-Lyer Illusion
    • Many canonical psychology experiments revealing “human nature” found to not apply to other cultures. (Henrich, Heine, Norenzayan, 2010)
  – Internal Validity
    • Artificial lab setting.
    • Subjects seek to please experimenter.
  – Cost
    • Experiments are often very expensive.
Background: Internet Experiments

• Internet experiments using Amazon Mechanical Turk (mTurk)
  – mTurk used to recruit subjects.
  – Survey software such as Qualtrics is used to create experiments & collect data.
  – Benefits:
    • Cheap!
    • Geographically & ethnically diverse subjects.
    • Short turnaround time.
How to Conduct an Internet Experiment

1. Think of something clever.
3. Design your survey using Qualtrics or other survey technology platforms.
4. Recruit respondents using Amazon Mechanical Turk.
Designing Your Survey Using Qualtrics

• **Qualtrics** makes designing surveys very easy.
• **Step 1**: Create a new survey.
• **Step 2**: Create questions/treatments that you want to ask.
• **Step 3**: Use the “Randomizer” to randomize treatments.
Designing Your Survey Using Qualtrics

• **New Surveys** - To create a new survey click on **Create Survey Tab > Quick Survey Builder**

• **Survey Questions** – Click on **Create a New Item**
  – You can create almost every imaginable type of question.

• **Treatment Randomization** - Qualtrics has several types of randomization. I will demonstrate the question randomizer.
Designing Your Survey Using Qualtrics

Example

• **Example:** How does question framing affect support for immigration amnesty?
Getting Respondents Using mTurk

- **Step 1:** Register as an mTurk “Requester.”
- **Step 2:** Create a Human Intelligence Task (HIT) in mTurk.
  - Write a brief description of the survey and include the Qualtrics provided link.
  - Determine how many respondents you want and how much you want to pay them.
  - $0.50 for a 3-5 minute survey is generally reasonable.
- **Step 3:** Launch the survey on mTurk.
- **Step 4:** Pay your workers!
Data Collection and Analysis

- When respondents complete surveys the data is collected and assembled by Qualtrics.
- Data can then be downloaded into Excel, SPSS, Stata etc. for analysis.
Questions?