

Bush 631: Research Design Task I

Instructions

This document provides you with instructions to help you complete the first research design task - constructing an experiment.

On our week 2 (virtual) meeting we talked about the structure of experiments, and their main elements. In this task, you are asked to construct your own experiment using a template file.

You can use any topic that is interesting to you.

Remember what is the objective - to construct a research design that would help you assess causal relations between two or more factors.

You are asked to work **by yourself**.

The deadline for submitting the task is **September 28, 2021**.

The experiment template

The first section of your experiment consists of the following items:

- **Topic:** what is the area of research you are interested in?
- **Research question:** what is your main question? (what is the relationship between factors that you wish to test?)
- **The causal factor(s):** what are the main factor (or factors) that you expect to have a causal effect on the outcome of interest?
- **Outcome variable:** what is the outcome you are measuring?

In the second section, the design detail how your experiment would look like:

- **Treatment(s):** in this section, you detail the values and manipulation of the treatment(s). Your text in both values fields will be what your respondents would read. You are also asked to describe who reads every value of the treatment(s).
- If you defined (in section 1) more than one factor, you will need to describe an additional treatment.
- **Outcome variable:** in this section, you describe your main outcome measure. Write the text (what your respondents would need to answer), and then the levels of your outcome variable.
- Your outcome variable can be categorical (as in the example below) or numerical. If it is numerical, then in the scale field, detail what are the expected values of the outcome variable (e.g. 0-100, 1-10 etc.).

In the following page, I added an example template for how you should approach the experiment task. The example is based on the study we talked about in class (Mattes and Weeks 2019). You can use it as a guide.

Experiment design: Mattes and Weeks (2019)

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Topic	Public opinion and government foreign policy		
My research question	Does the president's party affect public views of foreign policy actions?		
The causal factors tested	1. Party: Republican OR Democrat 2. Policy: Conciliatory OR Status-quo		
Outcome measured	Approval of president's actions in a foreign policy dispute		
The Design			
	Value 1	Value 2	Who reads?
Treatment 1: Party	[President Richards] is a lifelong member of the Republican party	[President Richards] is a lifelong member of the Democratic party	One for each group
Treatment 2: Policy	[President Richards] announces that he is sharply reducing the U.S. military presence in the Arctic. He is withdrawing a third of the U.S. forces currently in the Arctic and is calling off planned military exercises in the region.	[President Richards] announces that he is maintaining the current U.S. military presence in the Arctic. He will continue to keep U.S. forces in the Arctic and will carry through with planned military exercises in the region.	One for each group
Text			
	Text	Scale (detail categories)	Who answers?
Outcome variable: Approval	How much do you approve of president Richards actions?	1 = Strongly disapprove 2 = Somewhat disapprove 3 = Neither approve nor disapprove 4 = Somewhat approve 5 = Strongly approve	All respondents