How to Run Surveys A Guide to Creating Your Own Identifying Variation and Revealing the Invisible

Author:Stefanie Stantcheva

Surveys are an essential approach for eliciting otherwise invisible factors such as perceptions, knowledge and beliefs, attitudes, and reasoning. These factors are critical determinants of social, economic, and political outcomes. Surveys are not merely a research tool. They are also not only a way of collecting data. Instead, they involve creating the process that will generate the data. This allows the researcher to create their own identifying and controlled variation. Thanks to the rise of mobile technologies and platforms, surveys offer valuable opportunities to study either broadly representative samples or focus on specific groups. This paper offers guidance on the complete survey process, from the design of the questions and experiments to the recruitment of respondents and the collection of data to the analysis of survey responses. It covers issues related to the sampling process, selection and attrition, attention and carelessness, survey question design and measurement, response biases, and survey experiments.

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