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PROPOSAL GROUP 6

RESEARCH QUESTION: How does the display of wealth influence a Dartmouth undergrad's perception of a peer's friendliness?

MOTIVATION: At Dartmouth College, 69% of students come from the highest-earning 20% of American households. Dartmouth provides a unique opportunity to analyze the perception of wealth within a community, as socioeconomic status among the student body is much higher than the national average. It's interesting to investigate how perception of socioeconomic status correlates with perceived character traits, such as friendliness.

DESIGN: Group 6 will send out a survey via Qualtrics to Dartmouth undergraduates in the Fall term of 2019. Respondents will be randomly directed to either Survey A or Survey B by the Randomization feature on Qualtrics. Survey respondents are not aware of the fact that there are two versions of the survey. Students who take Survey A (the control group) will first be prompted with a video in which a college student (note: not a Dartmouth student to mitigate bias) is wearing a non-branded sweater, coat, and earphones. Students who take Survey B (the experimental group) will be prompted with a video in which the same actor is wearing the same items of clothing as video A, but from luxury brands (ie. Canada Goose, Apple, etc). The actor, in both videos, will recite an introductory statement that does not concern their socioeconomic status. After watching the videos, the survey respondents will be prompted to answer the following question in randomized order:

"On a scale of 1-7 (1 being unwilling and 7 being very willing), how willing are you to collaborate with her [the girl from the video] on a group project"; [1-7 SCALE]

"On a scale of 1-7 (1 being not at all friendly and 7 being very friendly, how friendly do you think she is?"; [1-7 SCALE]

"Which of the following do you think describes her family's income last year?" [$1-$9,999, $10,000-$24,999, $25,000-$49,999, $50,000-$74,999, $75,000-$99,999, $100,000-$149,999, $150,000+]

POTENTIAL CONFOUNDS:
1. Voluntary response bias
    a. Students who are more willing to respond may respond differently than the whole student body.
2. Inaccurate responses
    a. Students may lie, misread the question, or respond inaccurately.
3. Bias against the actor's characteristics
    a. A survey respondent's connotations of the actor's other demographics (height, race, gender, etc.) may affect their perceptions of that person's wealth
4. Treating vs. intent to treat
    a. While we suspect that respondents will connote branded items with wealth, it may be that some survey takers do not pay attention to the branded items, in which case the treatment would not be applied evenly across survey respondents.