

Crowdsourcing Effective Educational Interventions

J. Hunter Priniski and Zachary Horne

Arizona State University



Can researchers use online arguments (e.g., from Reddit's Change My View) to develop effective educational interventions?

Introduction

- Developing effective educational interventions is difficult, and whenever a scientifically-tested intervention fails, it is still possible that other interventions would be effective.
- However, no single lab or group of labs can systematically explore and test the entire hypothesis space of possible interventions.
- We propose that researchers build on successful crowdsourced arguments (here, from Reddit's Change My View) to develop effective educational interventions.

Methods

- In two within-subjects experiments, we identified successful arguments on Change My View and performed a head-to-head comparison to interventions reported in the literature—adopting a methodological approach most analogous to a strategy relied on in clinical trials.

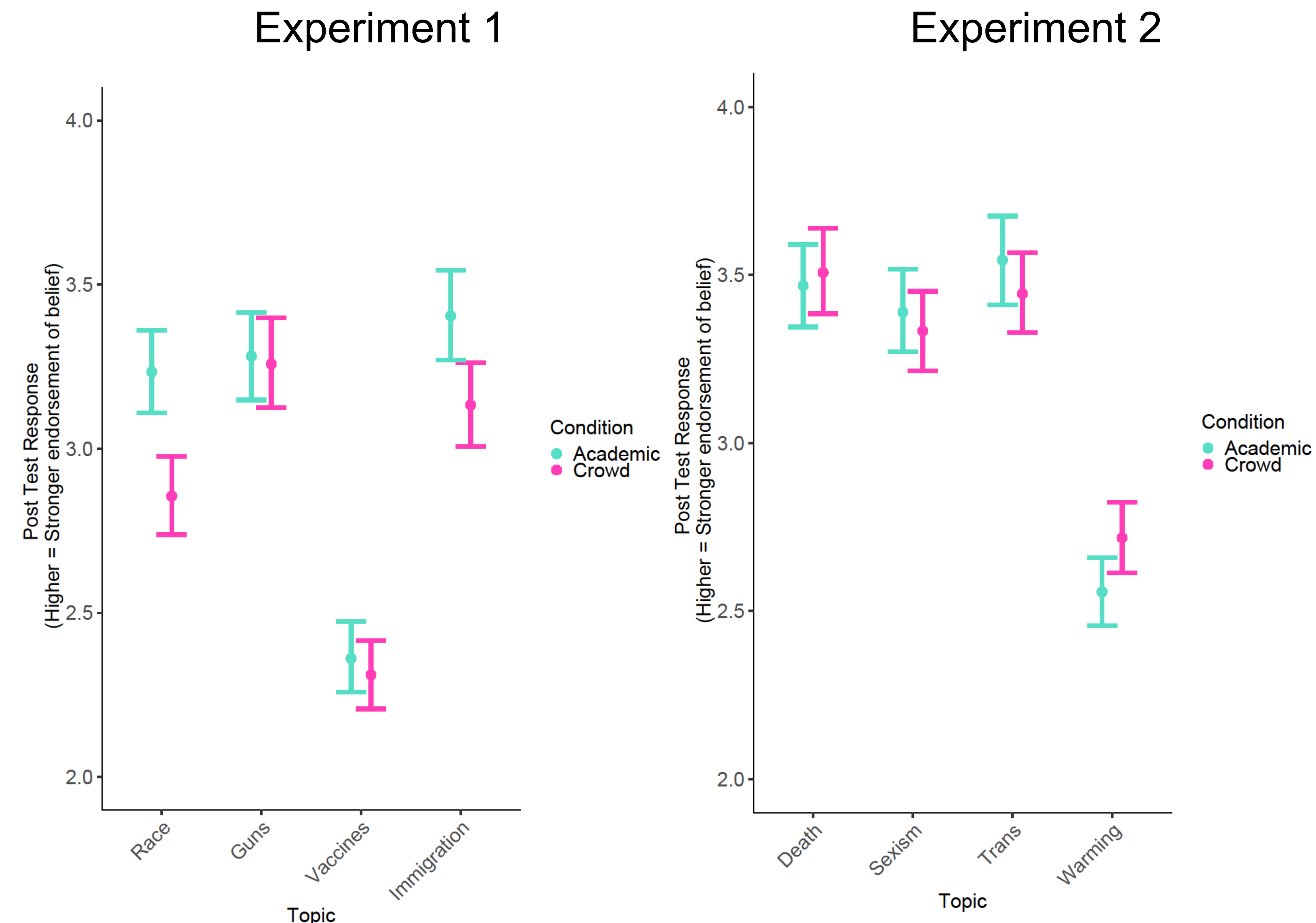
Experiment 1 ($N = 916$)

- Participants received two crowdsourced and two academic interventions aimed at changing beliefs on four different topics.

Experiment 2 ($N = 900$)

- An extension of Exp. 1, we compared crowdsourced and academic interventions for four new topics.

Results



For seven out of eight hotly-debated topics, we found that crowdsourced arguments were **as effective or more effective** at changing beliefs than interventions developed by academics and published in top-tier scientific journals.

Discussion

Two studies suggest that arguments mined from online communities can be used to develop educational interventions.