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 Section 1: Introduction and background research

Currently, the United States is facing a student loan debt crisis that affects a large portion of the population and continues to have an unprecedented impact on the economy. Making college tuition free is a possible solution, however in order to implement such solution we must understand who supports or opposes such solution. Once we have determined who opposes or supports tuition-free college we are able to determine if such solution is viable. Our hypothesis is that that people who are currently attending college support tuition-free college as opposed to out of college population. This observation is based on the idea that current college students have to think about college tuition, while out of college population do not have to deal with tuition. We, therefore, designed a survey that would attempt to prove or disprove our hypothesis.

[5 points]

 First, we took into account that our topic is concerning college students, and is exclusive to the United States. As explained by Jonathan Haidt research on "Beyond W.E.I.R.D morality" our area of interest consists of western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic. Understanding this is important because in creating our hypothesis we made the assumption that the United States has an individualistic culture. For example, our hypothesis that most out of college people would oppose tuition was formulated on the idea that society values independence and self-reliance, and therefore would not support helping others. In a pew research study it was found that "Among adults ages 18 to 29, 37% say they have outstanding student loans for their own education" therefore age is important in our analysis. It is also found that student debt is not very common amongst older age students. As to whether student debt impacts the economy a 2017 federal reserve study found that homeownership, which means those who have student debt have a time settling down, such as having children or seeking higher degrees. There is some debate on how the economy will be impacted, and defining who is affected by this problem is also under debate.

[5 points]

The survey determined the age and socioeconomic standing of a randomized sample group. The sample group was given the framed statement that would lead them to answering a certain way. In answering the question the sample group gave feedback about their emotions. Our sample group consisted of college students, college graduates, and higher than bachelor's. Our major group was college students and our minor group was two-year degrees. Those who did not graduate from high school where inexistent. Our results showed that moderately left was the major ideology.

[5 points]

Section 2: Describe your experiment

The hypothesis is as follows, that people out of college are less likely to support tuition-free colleges. Those who are currently attending college support tuition-free colleges because of their current socioeconomic standing, if they are first-generation students, have taken out loans, and fear. Our treatment consisted of creating a sense of fear by priming responses with questions such as "Currently, the student debt in the United States is 1.521 trillion dollars.". The words "student debt" creates many feelings such as fear, enthusiasm, and disgust. Since our sample space will consist of college and noncollege students we measured the responses by reaction since debt has a negative connotation, universally. The political outcome was to change attitudes on how one views tuition-free colleges. The major component that would affect political outcome would be biased, would be emotions, for example, we attempted to create fear by stating the there is a crisis in the United States and that student debt continues to grow, this will affect those who are in college the most.

[5 points]

 We had to determine whether a person was currently attending college or not by asking the question "Are you currently a college student". We took into consideration the economic standing, since this may a variable that leads to supporting or opposing tuition-free. From the data gathered we may also determine who is well of financially. Not being financially stable may contribute to anxiety and other feelings which may increase or decrease support for tuition-free colleges. We wanted to test whether priming the responders with the statement "Currently, the student debt in the United States is 1.521 trillion dollars." has any effect on the amount of fear, enthusiasm, and disgust from this we would understand what kinds of feelings are manifested so that pinpoint the type of feeling student debt has. Student debt may create mixed feelings, and may also depend on whether that person is a college student or non-college student.

We decided not to ask the question "Some people are advocating for free college tuition. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this issue?" because doing so would be invalid. We had asked this question before asking what type of emotions responders manifested. The reason this question was not asked after the statement "Currently, the student debt in the United States is 1.521 trillion dollars" was had also primed them with feelings, since we asked how they felt such as the amount anger, enthusiasm, or disgust, in doing so we had created multiple variables. From

lectures, we had learned how anger, enthusiasm, or disgust affect people, and we concluded that such data would be enough for our analysis.

[5 points]

To some responders, tuition is may not be a problem if they receive financial aid. We worded the question as "Do you qualify for financial aid?". Our hypothesis depends heavily on trying to measure the feelings of the responders, and this was difficult to accomplish that college students may be facing other externalities, however, this is not only exclusive to college students but people overall. The shortcomings of our survey are that student debt by definition has a negative connotation, because of the word "debt". It may be possible that responders are facing financial problems. However, the previous question regarding income would stabilize our results, and gives us data for troubleshooting, or determining the strength of our hypothesis.

[5 points]

Section 3: Share your results

The study consisted of high school graduates, college students, and professionals. There were one-hundred sixteen responses recorded. People who did not take our survey where nonhigh school graduates. People who are not in a way associated with the University of California, Merced. This refers to the way it was distributed. The survey was distributed by political psychology students, which means those who received the survey where near Merced area or are associated with University of California, Merced students. Approximately seventy percent of responders are currently enrolled in college. The sample was largely composed of moderately left ideologies.

[5 points]

Average values across treatment group were generally very low. The average amount of respondents who are first generation is very high, the standard deviation was low which means there was plenty of respondents closer to the average. The average response for the question "Are you currently a college student" is a, yes, and the standard deviation is low which shows that respondents are largely college students. The standard error for both whether responders are first generation and or currently a college student is relatively low. With regards to emotions, responders showed low levels of emotion. Enthusiasm on average was higher, and fear and anger were at modal.

[5 points]

The results for the respondent's political scale and whether they are currently college students is virtually zero. Our treatment was a priming question. For fear, the t-test was virtually zero. For anger, the t-test was .8 which shows a ninety-five percent confident. For enthusiasm, the t-test result was zero. The only significant outcome was the anger aspect of our analysis.

[10 points]

Section 4: Discuss the political implications of your results

 If your results *are not* significant, do you think that this is due to a small sample size (the means are pretty different for the two groups, but the difference isn't statistically significant), or do you think there really was no treatment effect? If there was no treatment effect, do you think that is because of how you designed the experiment, or because the underlying relationship you hypothesized is wrong?

The sample space was far too small to determine whether the priming statement took any effect. From the t-test with regards to priming statement and fear we found it to be virtually nonexistent. The priming question with regards to was to some extent significant. This may be due to the fact a portion did not receive the treatment, this contributed to a low sample pool. The experiment is flawed in that we failed to ask the question on whether they supported or opposed tuition-free colleges after the priming question had been posed. The underlying relationship of the hypothesis is difficult to measure specifically because the word "debt" has such a power connotation that regardless of the priming question the responses will be relatively negative. As it is shown by the averages, the responses to anger, fear, and enthusiasm were very high. It is difficult to determine whether such responses are accurate, as we are measuring mixed feelings.

[5 points]

If our treatment is of significance this will show that by using priming questions people may be swayed in changing their politics. If this is the case then loyalty to party identification would be of very little significance in a person life. Asking questions with regards to emotion may trigger such emotions, and if this is the case the implications are that many surveys that rely heavily on the feelings of respondents may be deemed invalid.

[5 points]

It is the case that people do not generally think about politics, the priming question will have no impact when there is an immediate situation requiring a political response. The priming question would work in a situation where people need to give a response to a political question, as a person will reflect back on the previous situation and possible believe they truly believe the way the question was primed. The treatment would consist of posting in social media, giving out flyers at polling stations, this may have an impact on how people vote.

[5 points]

Finally, think back to your literature review. Does your finding complement or contradict existing research? Cite a few specific studies to support your points.

The existing research contradicted

[5 points]

Section 5: Propose follow-up research

This was a first effort at political psychology research. Now, imagine you had a budget of $50,000 and connections that would let you work with any community or population in the U.S. that you want (or globally, for that matter). What is the political treatment you would want to test? What is the outcome you would hope to see? How would you measure this outcome? Cite research justifying why you would expect to see this outcome (you can use some of the citations from earlier in the paper if you want).

The priming effect would be a political treatment of interest, the expected outcome would be that the priming effect does change political views or beliefs. If it is the case that priming has the power to change perspectives, then knowing this would provide an insight into much of the political actions of the general population. In a county whose population is conservative I would go around polling stations giving people surveys, and flyers with the priming question, then I would measure how people voted, I would do the same for a liberal county.

[10 points]

In conclusion, discuss why this outcome is relevant for politics in 2018: are you hoping to persuade people, energize voters, foster dialogue, etc.? Where is this kind of intervention most likely to work, and how will it change the political landscape?

[5 points]

Extra evaluation criteria *[5 points each]*

- Demonstrates thoughtful analysis and critical thinking
- Communicates ideas clearly in writing
- Meets assignment guideline

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