

Report of Original Experiment Results^a

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We conducted the field experiment during June to August 2018. From the database of Research Infrastructure of Chinese Foundations, we identified 3,983 foundations founded before 2014 as our research target.

Round I

We randomly grouped the foundations in to a control group and three treatment groups. Table 1 shows the covariate balance across control and treatment groups in Round I. Four variables—size, age, nature, and region were taken into account. Specifically, “Size” measured the amount of a foundation’s original endowment fund (million Chinese Yuan, CNY); “Age” referred to the number of years since a foundation was founded until 2018; “Nature” concerned whether a foundation is a private one (0) or a public one (1); and “Region” referred to either a foundation is a regional foundation (0) or a national foundation (1). The results suggested that our randomization was successful and the groupings were balanced across all the four variables.

[Table 1 here]

We sent requests through email to the 3,983 sample foundations in China. The content of requests to the foundations was identical, drafted as a basic inquiry “requesting the foundation’s annual report in 2017 or 2016.” For foundations in the control group, we sent them the following request:

Respected Foundation:

I would like to know more about your foundation, could you please send me the foundation’s annual report of 2017 or 2016?

Many thanks.

Yours,

[Common unisex name]

For the foundations in the treatment groups, we added claims in capacities of past donors, potential donors, and beneficiaries, respectively. For the treatment group of past donors, we added the following information to the request:

Respected Foundation:

^a This report describes the original experiment results of the paper titled “Nonprofit Online Responsiveness: An Exploratory Field Experiment in China,” to be published in *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*. Any citation must be permitted by the authors.

I have made a donation to your foundation before. I would like to know more about...

For the treatment group of potential donors, we augmented the following information:

Respected Foundation:

I am planning to make a donation to your foundation. I would like to know more about...

Last but not least, for the treatment group of beneficiaries, we included the following information:

Respected Foundation:

I was benefited by your foundation's projects before. I would like to know more about...

Round II

To further examine potential drivers for foundation responsiveness, Round II experiment was conducted focusing on foundations which had not responded to our request in Round I in 30 days. The invalid email addresses detected in Round I were excluded. We randomly grouped these foundations into a control group and three treatment groups, as shown in Table 1.

A follow-up message was sent to each of these foundations through email in which we randomly put in different prompts, including citing legal obligation for foundations (T1), threatening to tattle to higher-level governments (T2), and threatening to expose the non-responsiveness to the media (T3).

For foundations assigned to the control group, we sent the request as follows:

Respected Foundation:

I have sent email to your foundation one month ago to request an annual report; no one has replied me yet. I am writing to request again the foundation's annual report of 2017 or 2016, many thanks.

Yours,

[Common unisex name]

For T1, we added the prompt of citing the legal obligation that foundations should disclose their annual reports to the public in the follow-up request:

Respected Foundation:

I have sent an email to your foundation one month ago to request an annual report; no one has replied me yet. According to the Charity Law of the People's Republic of China, charitable organizations are obliged to disclose relevant information, and have their reports available to members of the public. The government document—

“Measures for the Information Disclosure of Foundations—also

requires that a foundation shall disclose its annual report. I am writing to request again...

For T2, we included a prompt that threatened to bring the issue to a higher-level government agency:

Respected Foundation:

I have sent an email to your foundation one month ago to request an annual report; no one has replied me yet. I am writing to request again the foundation's annual report of 2017 or 2016, many thanks. If I still do not hear from you, I will report it to the civil affairs department.

...

For T3, we threatened to expose the non-responsiveness to the media:

Respected Foundation:

I have sent an email to your foundation one month ago to request an annual report, no one has replied me yet. I am writing to request again the foundation's annual report of 2017 or 2016, many thanks. If I still do not hear from you, I will expose this to the media.

...

Data Collection

An independent research assistant was hired to collect the outcome data. Before data collection started, we had pre-determined the method for coding the responses for the RA to stick to. If a foundation received our email request (i.e. successful delivery was shown at our end), but did not respond us within 30 days, it was defined as No Response and coded as 0. If a foundation responded us with information that was irrelevant to what we requested, it was coded as 1 (Irrelevant Information); if a foundation directly responded us with information on how to obtain the annual reports, it was coded as 2 (Direct Information); and if a foundation asked for further information upon on our request, it was coded as 3 (Further Information). The three types of responses were all defined as a Response in this study. Those bounded back emails were treated as missing values. The RA read each response and determined which type a response belonged to, based on our research team's pre-set criteria. Because we had only one RA as data collector, the content of each response was reserved for the author(s) to do a double check, in order to minimize the RA's subjectivity in coding the responses.

Analysis

In Round I, the 3,983 foundations identified as research sample were randomly assigned to

one control group and three treatment groups. Due to invalid email addresses, 510 emails we sent were bounced back, resulting in some missing cases in each group. In Round II, randomized assignment was conducted again on those foundations who had failed to respond to our email request in Round I ($N=3,182$), excluding invalid email addresses. In analysing the experimental outcome, we excluded the missing values (foundations that did not receive our email requests due to invalid email addresses), because request emails sent to them were bounced back and thus no treatment was applied to those foundations at all. Moreover, as we were more interested in capturing the sensitivity of the treatment effects, we had to abandon the ITT approach which was more conservative and might under-estimate an effect.

We developed two sets of dependent variables: The first one considered whether a foundation had responded to our request or not (0/1); the second one cared about if the response was a satisfying one, i.e., Direct Information or not (0/1). Logit model was utilized to estimate the treatment effects. Following the CONSORT guidelines, we display the flow diagram for both Round I and II experiments.

[Figure 1 here]

[Figure 2 here]

Results

Table 2 shows the foundations' response rates in both the control and treatment groups in the two rounds of experiments. In Round I, the response rates range from 4.34% to 11.58%; and in Round II, they range from 6.52% to 8.78%. Adding up the response rates of both rounds, a total of 15.5% of the foundations responded to our requests, excluding the missing cases; auto replies were coded as no response in this study. Furthermore, the response rates across nature—public/private—are also displayed in Table 2.

[Table 2 here]

To examine the impact of the different treatments on foundation responsiveness in Round I, we conducted Logit analysis on two models, using foundation responses (0/1) as the dependent variable. Model I included all the three treatments as independent variables; Model I' was the same as Model I, except that it also controlled for organizational attributes (size, age, nature, region) and the area fixed effect (province where a foundation is located). The level of significance applied for reporting the results is at $p<0.05$. The results of the Logit analysis are arrayed in Table 3. Our estimates show that foundations receiving information requests from potential donors are more likely to respond than those in the control group. The claim of being a beneficiary, instead of increasing the odds of getting a response, actually decreases it.

[Table 3 here]

In Round II, Logit analysis was conducted to examine the impact of different prompts

on the foundations' responsiveness on three models, using foundation responses (0/1) as the dependent variable. Model II included the three treatments as the independent variables; Model II' controlled for organizational attributes and the area fixed effect; Model II'' further incorporated interaction of Round I and II conditions. Again, the level of significance applied for reporting the results is at $p < 0.05$. The results of the Logit analysis are arrayed in Table 4. Results in Model II'' suggest that resorting to legislative pressure is the only statistically significant factor in getting the foundations' attention.

[Table 4 here]

Content of Responses

To further probe the foundations' responsiveness, we conducted a content analysis of the responses, and coded the responses into three categories: Irrelevant Information, Direct Information, and Further Information. The category of "Irrelevant Information" includes responses which addressed or focused on issues of little relevance to our requests, such as:

Hello XXX!

I am the secretary-general of xxx foundation. I have received your email, but I do not quite understand your purpose. Our foundation is a private foundation, and if you want to know more about our projects, you can follow our WeChat official account.

Thank you for your attention!

The category of "Direct Information" includes those responses which actually attached the foundation's annual report, in full or in part, in the email, or informed us where we could download the annual report (usually from the foundation's official website), for example:

Hello! Thank you for paying attention to our foundation, to download our annual reports, please refer to our official website:
xxx

The category of "Further Information" includes the responses which sought further information from us, or asked us to call the foundation for further discussion. Two examples are provided here:

Hello, your email has been received. Could you inform us about who you are and what institution you belong to?

And:

Hello xxx! To acquire the annual report, please kindly call us: xxx (telephone number), or come to our foundation: xxx (address).

Thanks.

In Table 5, we arrayed the response rates of all three categories of responses by control and treatment groups in both rounds. We further displayed response rates of the three types of

responses by foundation nature—public/private.

[Table 5 here]

Among the three categories of responses, “Direct Information” means that a foundation’s response is a satisfying answer which addresses our request in a direct way. Further to the outcome as response or not, a satisfying response could reflect the quality of response. We used satisfying response (0/1) as dependent variable and ran logistic regression to test the treatment effects. Regression results of Round I and II are displayed in Table 6 and Table 7, respectively.

[Table 6 here]

[Table 7 here]

Table 1 Covariate balance across control and treatment groups

Round I					
	Control	T1 Past donor	T2 Potential donor	T3 Beneficiary	p-value
Size	7.54 (22.89)	6.83 (21.24)	8.44 (30.41)	7.64 (31.22)	0.62
Age	9.76 (6.74)	9.59 (6.81)	10.07 (7.52)	9.93 (7.06)	0.46
Nature	0.34 ("0"=656; "1"=339)	0.34 ("0"=655; "1"=341)	0.36 ("0"=633; "1"=363)	0.35 ("0"=643; "1"=353)	0.65
Region	0.046 ("0"=949; "1"=46)	0.054 ("0"=942; "1"=54)	0.054 ("0"=942; "1"=54)	0.050 ("0"=946; "1"=50)	0.83
<i>N</i>	995	996	996	996	
<i>n</i> of missing	136	129	124	121	
Round II					
	Control	T1 Legal obligation	T2 Threat to tattle	T3 Threat to expose	p-value
Size	7.77 (29.61)	8.15 (33.72)	7,16 (21.83)	6.57 (22.44)	0.67
Age	10.07 (7.18)	9.39 (6.55)	9.74 (7.07)	9.85 (7.25)	0.27
Nature	0.37 ("0"=500; "1"=295)	0.33 ("0"=532; "1"=263)	0.37 ("0"=501; "1"=295)	0.35 ("0"=517; "1"=279)	0.23
Region	0.044 ("0"=760; "1"=35)	0.044 ("0"=760; "1"=35)	0.043 ("0"=762; "1"=34)	0.046 ("0"=759; "1"=37)	0.99
<i>N</i>	795	795	796	796	
<i>n</i> of missing	0	0	0	0	

Note: For size and age, means are reported with S.D. in parentheses; for nature and region, means are reported with N per category in parentheses; p-value corresponds to F test results.

Table 2 Foundation response rates in Round I and II

	<i>N</i>	No. of responses	Response rate %	Missing
Round I				
Control group	995	65	7.57	136
T1 Past donor	996	87	10.03	129
T2 Potential donor	996	101	11.58	124
T3 Beneficiary	996	38	4.34	121
Nature—Public	1396	104	8.43	162
Nature—Private	2587	187	8.35	348
Round II				
Control group	795	52	6.54	0
T1 Legal obligation	795	70	8.81	0
T2 Threat to tattle	796	67	8.42	0
T3 Threat to expose	796	57	7.16	0
Nature—Public	1130	95	8.41	0
Nature—Private	2052	151	7.36	0

Table 3 Causal effects of stakeholders on foundation responsiveness (Round I)

	Model I	Model I'
H1: Past donor	0.309 (0.172)	0.327 (0.175)
H2: Potential donor	0.470* (0.167)	0.483* (0.171)
H3: Beneficiary	-0.590* (0.210)	-0.604* (0.213)
Constant	-2.503* (0.129)	-2.454* (0.558)
Size (ln)		0.073 (0.085)
Age (ln)		-0.068 (0.116)
Nature		-0.030 (0.159)
Region		0.842* (0.281)
Area fixed		Yes
<i>N</i>	3,473	3,473
LR chi2	36.43	133.72
Prob > chi2	0.0000	0.0000
Pseudo R2	0.0182	0.0672

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; * $p < 0.05$

Table 4 Causal effects of prompts on foundation responsiveness (Round II)

	Model II	Model II'	Model II''
H4: Legal obligation	0.318 (0.190)	0.345 (0.195)	0.631* (0.321)
H5: Threat to tattle	0.271 (0.192)	0.294 (0.197)	0.473 (0.340)
H6: Threat to expose	0.090 (0.199)	0.092 (0.203)	0.152 (0.348)
Constant	-2.658* (0.143)	-3.413* (0.574)	-3.072* (0.612)
Size (ln)		0.228* (0.085)	0.236* (0.087)
Age (ln)		0.109 (0.123)	0.109 (0.125)
Nature		0.120 (0.171)	0.127 (0.173)
Region		-0.129 (0.313)	-0.154 (0.318)
Area fixed		Yes	Yes
Interaction between Round I and II conditions			Yes
<i>N</i>	3,182	3,182	3,182
LR chi2	3.75	102.87	140.15
Prob > chi2	0.2892	0.0000	0.0000
Pseudo R2	0.0022	0.0594	0.0809

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; * $p < 0.05$

Table 5 Content of responses in Round I and II

	Irrelevant Info (%)	Direct Info (%)	Further Info (%)	No Response (%)	Total Valid
Control	3 (0.3)	53 (6.2)	9 (1.0)	794 (92.4)	859
T1 Past donor	6 (0.7)	43 (5.0)	38 (4.4)	780 (90)	867
T2 Potential donor	11 (1.3)	53 (6.1)	37 (4.2)	771 (88.4)	872
T3 Beneficiary	0 (0)	23 (2.6)	15 (1.7)	837 (95.7)	875
Nature— Public	7 (0.6)	60 (4.9)	37 (3.0)	1130 (91.6)	1234
Nature— Private	13 (0.6)	112 (5.0)	62 (2.8)	2052 (91.6)	2239
Control	1 (0.1)	30 (3.8)	21 (2.6)	743 (93.5)	795
T1 Legal obligation	5 (0.6)	50 (6.3)	15 (1.9)	725 (91.2)	795
T2 Threat to tattle	2 (0.3)	43 (5.4)	22 (2.8)	729 (91.6)	796
T3 Threat to expose	3 (0.4)	37 (4.6)	17 (2.1)	739 (92.8)	796
Nature— Public	4 (0.4)	61 (5.4)	30 (2.7)	1035 (91.6)	1130
Nature— Private	7 (0.3)	99 (4.8)	45 (2.2)	1901 (92.6)	2052

Table 6 Causal effects of stakeholders on satisfying responsiveness (Round I)

	Model III	Model III'
H1: Past donor	-0.231 (0.211)	-0.244 (0.216)
H2: Potential donor	-0.016 (0.200)	-0.019 (0.206)
H3: Beneficiary	-0.890* (0.254)	-0.928* (0.258)
Constant	-2.722* (0.142)	-2.675* (0.691)
Size (ln)		0.059 (0.104)
Age (ln)		-0.069 (0.148)
Nature		-0.023 (0.203)
Region		1.030* (0.342)
Area fixed		Yes
<i>N</i>	3,473	3,473
LR chi2	16.74	91.16
Prob > chi2	0.0008	0.0000
Pseudo R2	0.0122	0.0677

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; * $p < 0.05$

Table 7 Causal effects of prompts on satisfying responsiveness (Round II)

	Model IV	Model IV'	Model IV''
H4: Legal obligation	0.533* (0.237)	0.565* (0.244)	0.349 (0.366)
H5: Threat to tattle	0.375 (0.243)	0.427 (0.250)	0.245 (0.390)
H6: Threat to expose	0.211 (0.251)	0.220 (0.257)	-0.111 (0.401)
Constant	-3.237* (0.186)	-4.594* (0.574)	-3.989* (0.710)
Size (ln)		0.313* (0.098)	0.343* (0.100)
Age (ln)		0.234 (0.151)	0.241 (0.154)
Nature		0.028 (0.210)	0.031 (0.213)
Region		-0.252 (0.352)	-0.279 (0.357)
Area fixed		Yes	Yes
Interaction between Round I and II conditions			Yes
<i>N</i>	3,182	3,182	3,182
LR chi2	5.75	110.09	143.90
Prob > chi2	0.1247	0.0000	0.0000
Pseudo R2	0.0045	0.0877	0.1147

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; * $p < 0.05$

Figure 1 Flow diagram of Round I experiment

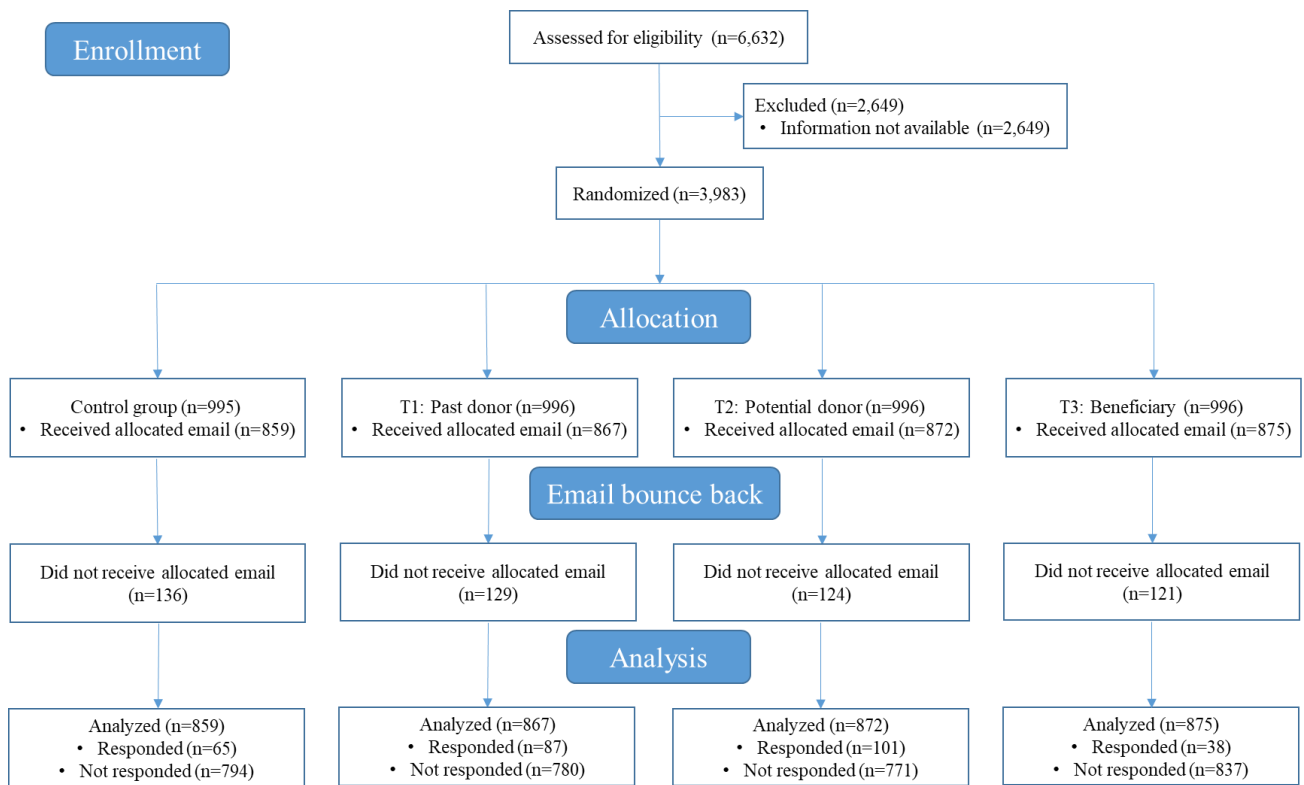


Figure 2 Flow diagram of Round II experiment

