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| **Client:** | Hanna Sistek | **File:** 23-056 |
| **Dept:** | Political Science | **Faculty:**  **Student:** |
| **Date:** | 01/23/2024 | **Initial Meeting:**  **Follow-up:** |
| **Consultant and Attendees:** Hanna Sistek, Prof. Chong Gu, Youha Shin | | |
| **Statement of Problem:** To test a reputational cost theory of disinformation dissemination by political elites. | | |
| **Goal of this Project:** Ph.D. Dissertation and Journal Article. | | |
| **Background:** The original study’s background is as follows:   Disinformation dissemination impacts party reputation and that can influence reelection chances. Recent societal developments and the advent of social media and networked communication has altered its reputational cost and lowered the bar of its spread. The client developed a reputational cost theory of disinformation dissemination and wants to use regression to test it. Specifically, the client wants to test hypotheses such as “do countries with high political polarization and media fractionalization incentivize politicians to use disinformation?”.  It was noted early in this follow-up meeting that the client’s questions pertained to a separate project involving a survey experiment. The client has faced challenges conducting the power analysis, as moderating variables were included, and the client wished to gain greater clarity on whether a moderation or mediation analysis would be required. After using a tool called G\* Power (from Humboldt University) to calculate the sample size, the client expressed confusion by the results, which seemed far too low than what would be required in reality (results showed ~400 participants total). | | |
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| **Relevant information presented at meeting:** It was first noted that this follow-up meeting pertained to a separate project from the original study regarding disinformation dissemination. When inquiring upon the progress of the original study, the client informed that it was buried in the pile for now, given that there are two other studies that the client needed to develop as part of her research.  Dr. Gu began the meeting by providing background information on the two most important elements needed for a power analysis. The infeasibility of performing a power analysis in this particular context was then explained. This was primarily due to the challenges in ascertaining the magnitude of natural variability intra-group from using a survey tool (Likert-scale questions) based on metrics of opinions/feelings. More specifically, Dr. Gu elucidated that with physical measurements, one may obtain variance (sigma) values from pilot or past studies, but for surveys, similar exercises may not work as the intra-group variability may vary from cohort to cohort. That is, it was noted that past studies or literature might not provide reliable information, given the subjective nature of the survey questions and their corresponding interpretations, which are highly likely to differ across cohorts.  Examples of more amenable approaches for power analysis in this type of context, particularly binary polling, were presented to the client.  The client thereafter noted their intention to simplify the design of the original study and then determine what specifically needs to be changed in the data analysis. | | |
| **Recommendations for Design and/or Analysis:** This meeting was primarily a conceptual discussion and did not include explicit recommendations for design or analysis.  It was noted that if the client had any useful references related to power analysis in survey designs, particularly those involving moderating variables, they were encouraged to share these materials. This would enable further research to be conducted on behalf of the SCS.  Furthermore, it was recommended that the client submit a separate SCS application as this project becomes more developed. This step would help to clearly differentiate it from the original study. | | |
| **Who will carry out these actions?** The client with do further research/planning and will reach out to the SCS should questions arise. | | |
| **Status:** Continuing | | |

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