

## Survey Experiments

Survey creators will sometimes incorporate multiple questions asking the same thing, but with slightly different wording, to see how it affects people’s responses. In this module you will be introduced to some of these survey experiments and gain experience in evaluating survey question with wording and bias in mind.

Open your web browser and go to the homepage for the Association of Religion Data Archives ([www.theARDA.com](http://www.theARDA.com)).

Begin by locating the *General Social Survey, 2016 – Instructional Dataset* on the ARDA website. For assistance locating a data file on the ARDA, click [here](#).

The General Social Survey for 2016 has a variety of items testing word choices to determine how different words or phrases bias respondent answers. These experimental questions from the data set are listed below. Look at each pair of questions and use the Analyze Results function to see how changing words or phrases for each item changes the response.

Find the variables labeled NATCITY and NATCITYY in the Codebook for the *General Social Survey, 2016 – Instructional Dataset*. (*Hint: Click Ctrl+F and type “nacity” into the search bar.*)

1. What are the two variable descriptions? (*Hint: The variable description is the phrase right before the variable label in each question.*)

NATCITY: \_\_\_\_\_

NATCITYY: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What are the differences implied by the different wording of each phrase?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



3. Which version of the question do you expect to be most biased?

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4. Fill out the below frequency table with the percentage of respondents who selected each response category for each question. (*Hint*: Find this information by clicking “Analyze Results” under each question.)

	NATCITY	NATCITYY
Too little		
About right		
Too much		

5. What do you notice when comparing the frequencies?

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Let’s look at a different pair of survey experiment questions. Find the variables labeled NATSPAC and NATSPACY.

6. What are the two variable descriptions?

NATSPAC: \_\_\_\_\_

NATSPACY: \_\_\_\_\_

7. What are the differences implied by the different wording of each phrase?

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8. Which version of the question do you expect to be most biased?

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9. Fill out the below frequency table with the percentage of respondents who selected each response category for each question.

	NATSPAC	NATSPACY
Too little		
About right		
Too much		

10. What do you notice when comparing the frequencies?

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Now let's look at a different pair of survey experiment questions. Find the variables labeled NATRACE and NATRACEY.

11. What are the two variable descriptions?

NATRACE: \_\_\_\_\_

NATRACEY: \_\_\_\_\_

12. What are the differences implied by the different wording of each phrase?

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13. Which version of the question do you expect to be most biased?

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14. Fill out the below frequency table with the percentage of respondents who selected each response category for each question.

	NATRACE	NATRACEY
Too little		
About right		
Too much		

15. What do you notice when comparing the frequencies?

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Choose another pair of experimental variables (e.g. NATCRIME and NATCRIMEY, NATAID and NATAIDY, etc.).

16. Which variables did you choose?

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17. What are the two variable descriptions?

\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
(variable name)

\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
(variable name)

18. What are the differences implied by the different wording of each phrase?

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19. Which version of the question do you expect to be most biased?

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20. Fill out the below frequency table with the percentage of respondents who selected each response category for each question.

Too little		
About right		
Too much		

21. What do you notice when comparing the frequencies?

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