

MTurk vs. The Lab: Materials

MTurk Study

On May 27, 2012, we asked 697 participants on MTurk to complete a short online survey. We restricted our MTurk population to U.S. residents with at least a 90% approval rating, and we paid them 30 cents for completing the survey.¹

The survey consisted of two blocks of questions. One block measured the survey's independent variables (except we also measured height in this block) and one block measured the survey's dependent variables. The two blocks were presented in a random order and the items within each block were also randomized. Questions appeared one at a time on the screen.

The exact questions were as follows. The response options are shown in brackets.

Block of Independent Variables

Do you like eggs? [Yes; No]

Do you prefer apples or oranges? [Apples; Oranges]

Do you like to watch soccer? [Yes; No]

Are you a smoker? [Yes; No]

Do you prefer science or art [Science; Art]

What is your age? [*open-ended*]

If you were to vote today, would you plan on voting for Mitt Romney or Barack Obama? [Mitt Romney; Barack Obama]

Which word best describes your political orientation? [Liberal; Conservative]

Do you like spicy food? [Yes; No]

What is your height (in feet and inches)? (If you are 5 foot 6 inches tall, put 5 in for feet and 6 for inches) [*two open-ended response boxes, one labeled "Feet:" and one labeled "Inches"*]

Gender: [Male; Female]

Block of Dependent Variables

How often do you eat egg salad? [*7-point scale with 1 = Very Rarely and 7 = Very Often*]

How much would you be willing to pay for a pound of oranges? (in dollars and cents) [*open-ended*]

How many languages do you speak? [*open-ended*]

What is the likelihood of a smoker dying from a smoking-related illness? (From 0% to 100%) [*open-ended*]

How many planets can you name correctly? [*open-ended*]

How many years from now do you think that you will retire? [*open-ended*]

¹ Thanks to Berkeley graduate student Alice Moon for her help programming and running this study.

How important is social equality? [7-point scale with 1 = Not At All Important and 7 = Very Important]

How much do you like Michelle Obama? [7-point scale with 1 = Do Not Like At All and 7 = Like Very Much]

How much do you like Indian food? [7-point scale with 1 = Strongly Dislike and 7 = Strongly Like]

How many pairs of shoes do you own? [open-ended]

What is your weight (in pounds)? [open-ended]

In addition to the results presented in the post, we were also interested in the following effects:

Are people who prefer oranges to apples willing to pay more for a pound of oranges?

Are people who prefer science to art able to correctly name more planets?

Both of these effects were nonsignificant, not only in the MTurk sample but in the Lab sample as well. The data file ([.xls](#)) shows these results in full.

We also investigated whether people more inclined to vote for Obama over Romney would report greater liking for Michelle Obama. This effect was observed and very strong ($d = 1.47$). I don't report it in the post because I did not ask the Obama vs. Romney question in the Lab study, because the Lab study was run well after the 2012 election. So instead, for both samples, I report the effect of being a Liberal or Conservative on the liking of Michelle Obama.

The Lab Study

The Lab study was run in a professionally managed lab (the Wharton Behavioral Lab) on the five weekdays from from October 29, 2013 to November 4, 2013. I planned to get as many participants as I could in my one-week allotment of lab time, and I wound up with 192.

Participants completed the study by clicking on a link that sent them to the survey website. This study was the third of seven computer-based studies administered during a one-hour session. Participants were paid \$10 for the entire session.

Except for the exclusion of the Obama/Romney item, the survey was identical to the one administered on MTurk.