Behavioral Economics Tutorial 2

Using Repertory Grid and Laddering Techniques to Map How We See Alternatives

Kelly's 'Repertory Grid Technique'

- A research method designed to uncover the repertoire of construct axes we use to form constructs in a particular context – i.e., the features that we see as making a product worth having or avoiding
- Your repertoire might actually be rather bigger than what is reveals today, because some constructs don't come to mind today and some constructs may be more 'available' today because of what has been happening lately
- Some of the constructs elicited today may be ones that you've never consciously articulate previously

Task 1: Construct Elicitation (1)

- Divide a sheet of paper into 10 zones and number them 1-10
- Choose an area of consumption where you can think of 10 things ('elements') to compare and contrast (e.g. 10 different guitars, TV programs, types of coffee, jobs, food, sport, cars, etc....)
- These 'elements' don't all need to be actual examples: they could include 'my ideal ...' or 'the sort of .... that my mother/partner/sibling/etc. would like (or would prefer me to have)'
- Write the name of each 'element' in one of the numbered zones on the sheet of paper

Task 1: Construct Elicitation (2)

- Next, get into pairs: you'll take turns to be 'researcher' and 'subject'

- 'Researcher' then points to elements 1, 2 & 3 and asks 'subject' to say in what ways they are similar and in what ways they differ

- On a different sheet of paper, the researcher writes down the construct axes thereby revealed and keeps track of which 3-way combinations have been tried

- Researcher repeats this for all other possible 3-way combinations of elements, noting down any further construct axes that get mentioned

- How many construct axes were elicited in total?

Example: Constructs for Pub Trivia Quiz Venues

- 'Restaurant quality food' versus 'really basic/unhealthy food'
- 'Gluten-free and vegetarian food' versus 'doesn't offer gluten-free and/or vegetarian food'
- 'Close to home' versus 'long drive across town'
- 'Likeable, knowledgeable quiz presenter' versus 'obnoxious or ignorant quizmaster'
- 'Tests general knowledge' versus 'too much pop culture or sport'
- 'Good pace of questions' versus 'lots of "dead air" time'
- 'Comfortable seating' versus 'backache-inducing or overly cramped seating'
- 'Too easy to win' versus 'good opposition'
- 'Enough time to work out likely answers' versus 'too hurried'
- … and so on

Task 2: Construct Laddering

- Researcher gets subject to look at the list of constructs so far elicited and asks, for each of them, in turn, 'Which end of the construct axis is your preferred one?

- Each time, after the subject has answered, the researcher then says 'Why do you prefer that end of the construct axis?'

- In explaining 'why', the subject will normally use constructs not on the original list, and the researcher writes these on a new list after asking the subject what the other end of the new construct axis is

- Do this for all of the constructs on the original list

- Now repeat the process for the constructs on the 2nd list, which will generate a 3rd list, then repeat the process for the constructs on the 3rd list, etc….

- Note for 'researchers': Do not pressurize your 'subject' if they get to a point where they can't go furrther.

Example: Laddering Pub Trivia-Related Constructs

- Do you prefer winning to be easy or to face strong competition?

- Strong competition

- Why?

- It's embarrassing to win every week and we play for the challenge, not the prize money

- Why is it embarrassing to win every week?

- It doesn't seem fair on the other teams to go there knowing they have little chance of beating us

- Why do you want the contest to be fair and to be a challenge?

- Because I'm that sort of person; I don't like being a show-off but I do want to test my knowledge and capacity to make good guesses relative to others

Task 3 (time permitting): put all the constructs together in a single diagram

- Draw this like the 'means end chain' diagrams early in Lecture 2, with the constructs that were elicited first shown as a row at the bottom of the page, and the ones elicited next shown as the row above this, and so on

- Put in lines to show how the constructs are linked (sometimes several constructs at one level may link to a single construct at a higher level)

Means-End Chain Example

- Before setting the class on to Task 3, instructors should reprise an example from Lecture 2 of a means-end chain diagram, such as one from any of the sources referred to at the start of section 2.1 of *Principles of Behavioral Economics*, subject of course to copyright conditions.