



A Newsletter on the State of the Art in Marketing Research

A Note from our President

We hope you are having a productive and healthy New Year. In addition to the many research projects that were planned for the first of this year, we have been busy reviewing articles from marketing and marketing research magazines. We are pleased to present you with the key findings of those that relate to marketing research methodology.

This is the second edition of our state of the art newsletter, which will be published every six months. If you did not receive the first edition or you would like to refer to some of the information, it is available on our web site at www.syndics.com.

If you have any suggestions for the newsletter or if you have business associates who would like to be on our distribution list, please e-mail Judy Bader at jkbader@syndics.com. We are dedicated to keeping you abreast of methodological developments, and if there is something we can do toward that end, please let us know.

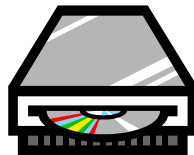
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A study of the advantages offered by interactive interviewing methods.
- ***Differential Incentives***²
A look at how survey participants react to differential incentives in survey research.
- ***Using Self-Concept to Assess Advertising Effectiveness***³
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- ***The Distribution of Survey Contact and Participation in the US***⁴
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- ***Response Variation in E-Mail Surveys***⁶
An exploration assessing response using prenotification on salient issues.

- ***Multimedia Marketing Research***¹

Multimedia research (studies consisting of self-administered interactive interviews embedded with visual stimuli and audio voice-overs that take place on computers in central sites or online in consumers' homes) offer several advantages over traditional research data collection techniques. A key benefit is improved data quality resulting from more accurately simulating consumer purchase and product experiences for a particular item. Digital product images can demonstrate product appearance, features, and performance in a realistic manner, as well as allow survey respondents to interact with the product.



Other advantages of multimedia research include the following:

- Lower cost,
- Faster turnaround time,
- Elimination of interviewer bias,
- Automated questioning to support complex analytical methodologies.

Multimedia is applicable to a variety of studies including testing retail strategy, packaging, pricing, channel preference, category management, and product development and refinement.

- ***Differential Incentives, Beliefs About Practices, Perceptions of Equity, and Effects on Survey Participation***²

The authors used the results of a study conducted by the University of Michigan to evaluate the public's reactions to equity issues caused by the use of incentives in survey research and to assess the effect of these reactions on willingness to participate in future surveys. Key findings of the article include the following:



- Most respondents are aware that survey organizations use incentives to encourage survey participation. However, awareness of the use of differential incentives is significantly lower.
- Three of four respondents believe the practice of paying differential incentives is unfair.
- The disclosure of differential payments had no significant effect on expressed willingness to participate in future surveys. Also, the disclosure of differential payments had no impact on survey participation rates in a study conducted a year later with the same population.

The authors conclude that survey respondents are sensitive to fairness issues in the distribution of surveys, but these issues are not prominent among factors that motivate survey participation.

- ***Using Self-Concept to Assess Advertising Effectiveness***³



The author presents an example where Concept Convergence Analysis (segmenting individuals based on self-concept attribute ratings) is used to enhance copy research.

Segmenting consumers based on self-concept factors proved highly valuable in assessing the appeal of the advertising. While the advertising received relatively average ratings among the entire sampled population, analyzing the advertising via the segmentation scheme helped identify groups of individuals with a strong affinity for the advertising. Moreover, the segmentation results were a better discriminator of advertising preference than traditional demographic factors such as age.

- ***The Distribution of Survey Contact and Participation in the United States: Constructing a Survey-Based Estimate***⁴

The authors used empirical survey results collected by The Council for Marketing and Opinion Research and Market Facts Inc. to develop a model to calculate the population distribution of survey contact and participation frequencies and to calculate several survey participation indices. Key findings of this article include the following:

- 20% to 23% of adults account for all survey responses during a typical year.
- 4% to 5% of adults complete 50% to 57% of all survey responses.
- The number of survey contacts per person in a typical year is 2-3.
- 10% of adults participate in at least three surveys a year.



The authors conclude that the research industry may be burning out a small fraction of heavy responders and efforts should be devoted to expand the scope of survey participation.

- ***Using Conjoint Analysis to Assess Consumer Response to a New Tollway Technology***⁵

The article revisits a conjoint study conducted seven years ago to aid the development of a new Tollway technology (EZPass). The methodology and findings obtained in the original study are reviewed, and a comparison is made between predicted market acceptance and actual market acceptance seven years later.



When the study was conducted seven years ago, the market demand estimates from the conjoint simulator were perceived as being “extraordinarily high” given industry experience. However, a comparison of actual adoption figures indicate that the usage estimates made seven years ago are very similar to the adoption rates of today.



The demand estimates were enhanced by calibrating the simulator model with actual marketplace data that were available seven years ago. While the marketplace data used was viewed as

“imperfect” it helped improve demand estimates made from the simulator.

The authors identify four rules for conducting new product evaluations.

- Test participants’ ability to fully understand the product concept and how it solves current problems.
- In terms of the range of design alternatives offered to test participants: Is the range sufficiently diverse (in operational impact), and yet meaningfully diverse (in respondents’ minds) to provide the product designers with useful response functions?
- Ensure a balance among the number of attribute levels. Also, ensure the range of levels across each attribute is relatively similar.

- Properly qualify respondents (including those who truly represent the target market in the survey process), and consequently provide them with adequate motivation to supply reasonably accurate responses.
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- ***Response Variation in E-Mail Surveys: An Exploration***⁶

A study was conducted to assess the impact of issue salience and prenotification on e-mail surveys. The findings revealed a positive relationship between issue salience and the response rate for e-mail surveys. Thus, one would expect the response rate of an e-mail survey to increase, as the relevance of the study increased among respondents.



The authors found some evidence that the speed of responding to e-mail surveys is faster for respondents who received a prenotification versus those who did not receive a prenotification.

For more information, contact us at Syndics Research Corporation, 13612 Midway Road, Suite 605, Dallas, Texas, 75244. 972.385.0066. Visit our website for future archives of this newsletter. www.syndics.com.

OUR RESEARCH TEAM

Joe Welch Ph.D. - President: Over twenty years experience in the research industry. Joe has moderated over 1500 focus groups and has extensive experience in survey research, experimentation, and publishing. Graduate faculty at the University of North Texas.

Lydia Welch - CEO: Over fifteen years of marketing research experience in focus group moderating, data processing, analysis, and strategic planning. MBA Marketing Methods from the University of North Texas.

Gwen Fontenot Ph.D.- Senior Account Executive: Over fifteen years of experience in marketing research and consulting experience with expertise in customer satisfaction measurement, service quality, and Quality Function Deployment. Ph.D. in Marketing from the University of North Texas.

David Cooper - Senior Account Executive: Over ten years of marketing research experience in focus group moderating and survey research in healthcare, new product development, customer satisfaction, and high-tech industries. BBA Marketing & Statistics, AAS Design Technology, Graduate studies at UT Arlington.

Paul Varner - Senior Account Executive: Eight years of experience with marketing research suppliers with expertise in advanced research methods, price sensitivity & demand analysis, customer satisfaction, and on-line research. MS Marketing Research from UT Arlington and BBA Marketing & Finance from UT Austin.

Judy Bader - Project Director: Five years of experience with marketing research suppliers with experience in project coordination, quality control, and reporting technologies. BA in Mathematics from the University of Texas at Austin.

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- 1) Stewart, Betsy J., "Multimedia Market Research," Marketing Research: A Magazine of Management & Applications (Fall 1999), 15-18.
- 2) Singer, Eleanor, Groves, Robert M., and Corning, Amy D., "Differential Incentives, Beliefs About Practices, Perceptions of Equity, and Effects on Survey Participation," Public Opinion Quarterly, Volume 63 (1999), 251-260.
- 3) Mehta, Abhilasha, "Using Self-Concept to Assess Advertising Effectiveness," Journal of Advertising Research, (January-February 1999), 81-88.
- 4) Bickhart, Barbara and Schmittlein, David, "The Distribution of Survey Contact and Participation in the United States: Constructing a Survey Based Estimate," Journal of Marketing Research, (May 1999), 286-294.
- 5) Vavra, Terry G., Green, Paul E., and Krieger, Abba M., "Evaluating EZ Pass: Using conjoint analysis to assess consumer response to a new tollway technology," Marketing Research: A Magazine of Management & Applications (Summer 1999), 5-16.
- 6) Bartel Sheenan, Kim, and McMillan, Sally J., "Response Variation in E-Mail Surveys: An Exploration," Journal of Advertising Research (July/August 1999), 45-53.

Syndics Synopsis

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