



A Newsletter on the State of the Art in Marketing Research

A Note from our Company

We are excited to send you the latest edition of our newsletter on the state-of-the-art in marketing research. As always, our goal is to help researchers keep up-to-date on advances in research methodologies.

We have reviewed another set of 15 to 20 publications that presented articles on new methodologies, research strategies, and analytical techniques. The key findings of this literature review are presented in this newsletter.

Some of the topics covered in this issue address question design, sampling, and the value of using mean scores in tracking studies.

Keep Syndics Research in mind for your future research needs. We specialize in research design and analysis, and are committed to offering the highest level of service.

If you would like to discuss these articles or any project, contact us by telephone or e-mail David Cooper at david.cooper@syndics.com or Paul Varner at paul.varner@syndics.com.

If you have business associates who you think would like to receive the newsletter, please e-mail their address to mark.teich@syndics.com

In this issue

- ***Asking the Age Question in Mail and Online Surveys¹***
The most accurate way to ask a respondent their age.
- ***Optimising the Language of Email Survey Invitations²***
The specific language used in email invitations has a major impact on response rates.
- ***A Holistic Examination of Net Promoter³***
Claims that the Net Promoter Score (NPS) is the best indicator of company growth and is superior to customer satisfaction measures are called into question.
- ***The Hidden Limitations of Tracking Research⁴***
The power and reliability of tracking research can be improved by using means measurements instead of top-two box and other percentage measures.
- ***Does “Yes or No” on the Telephone Mean the Same as “Check-All-That-Apply” on the Web?⁵***
Forced choice answers perform better than check-all answers.
- ***A Comparison of Address-Based Sampling (ABS) Versus Random-Digit dialing (RDD) for General Population Surveys⁶***
Using ABS sampling can reduce non-response rates in previously identified low-response states.

Asking the Age Question in Mail and Online Surveys

The most accurate way to ask respondents their age.

The authors tested three different ways to ask the age question: date of birth or year born, current age in years, and age within a series of age ranges.



Key findings of the article include:

- Asking for age using a categorical question performed best in mail surveys, but did not perform well online with drop-down menus;
- Asking respondents their date of birth or the year in which they were born is the best method. This method works well in all survey formats and produces low non-response and higher levels of accuracy.

Optimising the Language of Email Survey Invitations

The specific language used in email invitations has a major impact on response rates.



The authors conducted two studies, an analysis and then a validation, concerning response rates to various styles of email invitations to participate in an online survey. Initially, the authors divided the typical email invite into six sections (intro/appeal, importance of participation, survey topic, ease of participation, survey length and flexibility, and incentive) and devised 6 model statements for each section. In the first study, 1,336 respondents were tested for 48 combinations of invitations, with each model statement appearing three times. They then validated the study with the second test, where they sent out eight versions of the email invitation to a further 2,400 respondents.

Key findings of the article include:

- Most respondents were prompted to participate based on the incentive first and the study topic second;
- Statements which had the greatest positive impact on promoting participation were those that promised cash or prizes as an incentive, emphasized the short length, or made clear that the respondent could complete the survey at their own convenience by starting and stopping at their leisure;
- The study also indicates the importance of emphasizing the value of the respondent's opinions and research participation, as one major segment of respondents are motivated primarily by the chance to be an "expert;"
- The factor most important in refusing to participate was the length of the survey.

A Holistic Examination of Net Promoter

Claims that the Net Promoter Score (NPS) is the best indicator of company growth and is superior to customer satisfaction measures are called into question.



The authors conduct a Meta study of two previously executed studies, and compared the findings to the initial

claims of NPS superiority offered by Fred Reichheld in his original Harvard Business review article about NPS.

Key findings of the article include:

- The NPS single metric function was found to be inferior to the use of multiple metrics;
- His original findings could not be generalized to other industries;
- While NPS can, in some cases, be a valid predictor of company growth, it is not inherently superior to other measures, such as customer satisfaction measurements.

The Hidden Limitations of Tracking Research

The power and reliability of tracking research can be improved by using mean rating measurements instead of the top-two box and other percentage measurements.



The authors use the concept of "survey-wide reliability" to evaluate tracking studies and identify best practices.

Key findings of the article include:

- Reducing a 10 point scale to a top-two box effectively turns the attribute into a much less useful binary measurement with less sensitivity, thus requiring a larger sample size to produce meaningful results;
- Using means, instead of top-two boxes, provides more powerful statistical tests and increases the survey-wide reliability;
- The top-two box offers limited ability to recognize gains because, on average, most respondent answers fall into the top-two box;
- Using the top-two box requires the sample sizes to be increased by 25% to 50% to achieve the same statistical power as a study that uses means.

Does “Yes or No” on the Telephone Mean the Same as “Check-All-That-Apply” on the Web?



Forced choice answers perform better than check-all answers.

The authors conducted 1,054 web surveys and 945 telephone surveys which tested two methods of asking multiple option questions. Respondents were randomly assigned to be asked multiple option questions by either asking for a “yes/no” answer for each item or having them check all the “yes” answers for the entire answer list.

Key findings of the article include:

- Online respondents will give a “yes” to more options when they are forced to give a “yes/no” answer for each option on the list when compared to being told to just check all that apply on a list;
- This finding was replicated among the telephone respondents;
- The authors suggest using the forced answer choice in web, telephone, and paper surveys.

A Comparison of Address-Based Sampling (ABS) Versus Random-Digit Dialing (RDD) for General Population Surveys



Using ABS sampling can reduce non-response rates in previously identified low-response-rate states.

The authors mailed 10,080 mailed surveys using the ABS system and compared response rates and respondent demographics with the results of 18,780 survey attempts over the telephone using RDD generation of sampling.

Key findings of the article include:



- ABS produced higher response rates than RDD in five of the six states evaluated;
- The use of a second mailing significantly improves response rates, but the use of a reminder postcard has limited benefits to the response rate;
- ABS provided answers from cell-phone only households, a segment that is not available in RDD sampling;
- The costs per 1,000 completed interviews is 12% lower for ABS mail surveys compared to RDD telephone surveys;
- ABS resulted in more inclusion of non-Hispanic whites and people with at least some college.



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 and Principal Managing Consultant: Over twenty-five years experience in the research industry. Joe has moderated over 2000 focus groups and has extensive experience in survey research, experimentation, and publishing. Graduate faculty at the University of North Texas.

David Cooper - Senior Account Executive and Principal: Over seventeen years of marketing research experience in focus group moderating and survey research in healthcare, leadership measurement, 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 and Principal: Over seventeen 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.

Mark Teich – Director of Quality Assurance: Seventeen years of experience in data collection and quality assurance. MBA in marketing from the University of North Texas.

Peggy Tinsley – Director of Research Support Services: Over twenty-five years of experience in business accounting and market research data collection. Specialized data collection experience with computer-based data entry platforms. Attended UT Arlington.

References in this volume:

1. Gendall, Phillip and Benjamin Healy, “Asking the Age Question in Mail and Online Surveys,” International Journal of Market Research, Volume 50, Issue 3 (2008), pp. 309-317.
2. Moskowitz, Howard, R. and Birgi Martin, “Optimising the Language of Email Survey Invitations,” International Journal of Market Research, Volume 50, Issue 4 (2008), pp. 491-510.
3. Keiningham, Timothy L, Aksoy, Lerzan, Cooil, Bruce, Andreassen, Tor Wallin, and Luke Williams, “A Holistic Examination of Net Promoter,” Database Marketing & Customer Strategy Management, Volume 15, Issue 2 (2008), pp. 79-90.
4. Seal, John, and Mark Moody, “The Hidden Limitations of Tracking Research,” Marketing Research, Volume 20, Issue 1 (2008), pp. 16-22.
5. Smyth, Jolene D., Christian, Leah Melani, and Don A. Dillman, “Does “Yes or No” on the Telephone Mean the Same as “Check-All-That-Apply” on the Web?” Public Opinion Quarterly, Volume 72, Issue 1 (2008), pp. 103-113.
6. Link, Michael W., Battaglia, Michael P., Frankel, Martin R., Osborn, Larry, and Ali H. Mokdad, “A Comparison of Address-Based Sampling (ABS) Versus Random-Digit Dialing (RDD) for General Population Surveys?” Public Opinion Quarterly, Volume 72, Issue 1 (2008), pp. 6-27.

Syndics Synopsis

A Newsletter on the State of the Art in Marketing Research



13612 Midway Road, Suite 605
Dallas, Texas 75244
Ph: 972.385.0066
www.syndics.com