



Connect

Knowing When *Yes Doesn't* Mean Yes

Successful marketing strategies depend on solid market research. And global market research is highly affected by language and culture. As such, considering equivalencies at the outset will ensure that data outputs will be comparable and valuable.

Most researchers are familiar with the idea of construct equivalence, which means that the instrument is relevant and comparable across different countries and that it produces equivalent responses regardless of cultures and languages. Construct equivalence can be broken down into Functional equivalence (is the instrument serving the same purpose in each country), Conceptual equivalence (is the instrument being "expressed" similarly in each country), and Category equivalence (does the instrument rely on the same class of activities across countries).

Normally given less consideration, Measure equivalence is also important. You need to know the research instrument you have constructed is actually measuring identical content. There are four areas of Measure equivalence to which you should pay particular attention:

Translation Equivalence

A translator needs to be fluent in the source and target languages. The importance of source fluency is often underestimated in market research. If a translator does not understand subtle nuances of emphasis, for example, these areas will be missed in the translation of the instrument.

As an example, consider the following source sentence: "Consult your doctor before stopping your medication."

The Spanish back translation might produce: "You should consult your doctor before stopping your medication."

The Spanish translation makes this more of a recommendation than a command.

Ethnocentric Bias

Even when an instrument is well-translated, the issue of ethnocentric bias must be considered. The same question may not carry the same thing in a different country. For example: "Are you eating healthier since your stroke?"

This is a loaded question. For someone in the US, eating healthier may mean cutting saturated fat from their typical diet. For someone in Japan, where the typical diet contains little to no saturated fat, eating healthier will have a different meaning. The question elicits a "yes" response in both countries, but exactly what that yes means will differ.

Cultural Response Patterns

Culture impacts the way people answer questions - even when the questions are exactly the same and independent of other

obvious bias. In a study group, for example, the typical response of an Italian can be one of extreme emotion; whereas, in the more restrained culture of the U.K., a more sedate response is to be expected. Directly comparing the sample means of these two sets of data without taking equivalency into account would produce incorrect conclusions: that Italians surveyed feel more strongly about their medication than Brits, which may not be the case.

Moderator/Delivery Equivalence

Related to response equivalence, moderator equivalency is dictated by the impact of differences in delivery. The role of the moderator is critical. You may have one moderator per cultural group or a multi-cultural group of moderators that works with each segment, but ideally your moderators should have similar roles to their subjects across cultures. Moderators should have similar levels of education and experience and their guidelines for coding data should be consistent. ←





MARKET RESEARCH

Real Time Evaluation Breeds Real Research Success

OK. So you have thoroughly researched your market and taken great care to gather equivalent data throughout the process. You planned your communication program with your internal team and developed a killer strategy with your translation partner. Now that your program is in full effect, was all your planning and strategizing successful, or for naught?

Evaluating your program before, during and after implementation will provide an answer. Instead of tacking an evaluation onto the end of your program, an integrated evaluation process allows you to understand what is and is not working in real time. This knowledge allows you to tailor your program to effective activities and ensure future efforts are productive.

As always, advance planning and remaining flexible throughout the process will go a long way. As you develop your strategy, establish appropriate, achievable and date specific objectives to measure your progress against. This integrates an evaluation process into your program.

As your communication program kicks off, ensure your market research is on target. Include a feedback page among your written communications in the native language of the target audience. This is where the flexibility comes in: if you receive negative feedback, investigate it immediately. Maybe your research is

wrong. Kill what is not working, re-tool your message and turn it around.

Evaluating the program during implementation is not only important for keeping the project on track. If you are beholden to the public, partners, or funding agencies, demonstrating the value of your program can only work in your favor. Positive feedback is also an important motivator for staff working on the project. Knowing you are making a difference in someone's life is a powerful tool.

Of course, at the end, it is always good to look back and see how your program fared overall. When you evaluate your communication program in hindsight, you make assumptions about what you set up and thus, what should have happened to whom and with what results. If you have been evaluating your program in real time, as it occurred, there should be no surprises here – only success. ←



"Kill your darlings."

William Faulkner



From Afterthought to *STRATEGIC* Component

When it comes to global market research, translating marketing materials is considered a necessary, but tedious, final step in the process. It doesn't have to be. Instead of an afterthought, make your translation team part of the initial strategy. The following suggestions can help reduce costs and create efficiencies:

Involve Your Translation Team Early in the Process:

Knowing the ultimate purpose of the document (research? education? ad?) allows for quicker translation and extraction of comparable data across markets. It also allows for content applicability in target countries. Data and regulations can be localized so they are relevant to the intended market segment.

Write For Translation From the Start:

Eliminate idiomatic expressions, colloquialisms, and acronyms. A precursory view of the English document by the translation team will red-flag problem areas before changing them becomes costly and time consuming.

Take Advantage of Translation Memory:

If your content is repetitive in nature, make sure your translation agency uses a translation memory system (TM). Remembering previously translated material keeps costs down (you don't pay to translate twice) and ensures consistency in language.

Plan Ahead For Page Design:

Translation produces differing lengths of text. Spanish expands but German contracts. Hebrew and Arabic will change the direction of the page. White space proportions will change and forcing translated text into small graphics can be problematic.

Debrief With Your Translation Team:

When all is said and done, include the translation project manager in debriefing sessions to leverage any feedback to improve further translation sessions. ←

Culture-Based Triggers

There are many psychological predictive models that attempt to explain human health behavior. From the old school Health Belief model, through the theories of Reasoned Action and Planned Behavior to the more recently revised PRECEDE-PROCEED and Transtheoretical (TTM) models, there are many theories behind what makes us get off the couch and do something about our health.

Among these models, there are many catch phrases for what causes us to act: Cues to Action, the Action Stage, Behavioral Intentions, and Self-efficacy. Whatever label or model you prefer, the purpose is the same: to trigger an action. What makes a person go from *wanting* to make a health change to physically *making* that change?

This trigger can come in many forms: a billboard on the highway, walking past a blood donor van, or watching a relative die of cancer. External influences in the form of education, reminders, persuasive communication, or the relay of personal experience can promote a desired behavior.

Some forms can be more influential than others. Our September 17th blog post, "*Use Education, Not Emotion: Get People to Buy What You Are Selling*", discusses a recent study that indicates educational cues in surveys have a more desired action/outcome than commercial advertisements or government mandates.

An educational cue is a useful tool, but if it works in the US, will it also work in Saudi Arabia? As we have noted, in the field of global market research, culture plays an important role. Are action triggers immune to the effect of culture on human behavior?

The answer is no. For some, the effect of a mother dying of breast cancer will motivate getting a mammogram. For others, where the cultural view is more fatalistic, maybe not. If you believe fate was the root of your mother's death, a typical educational cue will not trigger you to act. *Que sera, n'est pas?*

Are action triggers immune to the effect of culture on human behavior?

Market researchers need to take a step back and look at what motivates self care and preservation in their target audience. A white male in the US who is constantly exposed to ads featuring people that look like him dying of AIDS will be affected and will wear a condom. A Latino male's viewpoint may differ: a "real man" would not wear a condom and AIDS is considered a gay man's disease. A cue to action can be created for the Latino man, but it needs to be done in a different way.

Are educational cues a more compelling trigger to action? Maybe. If they are culturally sensitive. Do you want your target audience to make a health change? Use theory to explain behavior and cultivate triggers that cause them to act, but do it in a way that speaks to who they are and where they come from. ←





aiaTranslations

54 Old Highway 22, Suite 302
Clinton, NJ 08809 USA

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

EDITORIAL

Do Market Researchers Need More Culture?



Several decades ago, a Dutch researcher, Geert Hofstede, observed that cultural traits and behaviors can be measured along four scales:

1. Individualism versus Collectivism (*Degree of belief in individual versus group accountability*);
2. Uncertainty Avoidance (*Preference of structured versus ambiguous situations*);
3. Power Distance (*Importance of separation of individuals based on rank or authority*); and
4. Masculinity versus Femininity (*Predominance of typically masculine or feminine traits or values*).

When market researchers are evaluating study results obtained from their own country, the similarities that exist in these four dimensions of culture are often taken for granted.

When researchers move outside of their own point of reference, however, interpreting data collected from other countries or cultures requires a

different context. Individuals have a natural tendency to use their own cultural standards when judging others. This is called the *self-reference criterion* and it is often done unconsciously.

Market researchers who work on international or cross-cultural studies should possess an understanding of where their target country falls on Hofstede's continuum of cultural values. Disregarding these differences may lead to inaccurate data analysis and misleading statistical results.

The easiest and most efficient way to educate your global market research group is with cross-cultural training by Atkins International Associates. Our trainers can provide an overview of the country or region where market research will be conducted, answer questions from team members, and remain available for follow up guidance throughout the life of the study. ←

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