

Performance study of a market research project The case of an Algerian census

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Abstract: Unlike the sample survey, census is a Complete Enumeration Survey Method wherein each and every item in the universe is selected for the data collection, When more and more data are collected the degree of correctness of the information increases. Also, the results based on this method are less biased.

But to arrive at a successful and realistic census project, it is necessary to use the method of the triangle which consists of three words: qualities, cost, delays. It is about Efficacy and Efficiency.

Therefore, this study will focus on how to pilot a performing census project starting with field work showing the different steps to follow, ending by back check methods and evaluation to ensure a reliable data.

To reach this objective we opted for case study which is a quantitative research using face-to-face survey of all electronic stores in Algiers (Algiers census).

Keywords- Census, performance, back check, quality control, fieldwork, data

I. INTRODUCTION

In a world where technology is evolving rapidly, identifying trends is essential, market research can be a key tool in the development of business marketing strategies. It is therefore important to pay special attention to it.

In Algeria, few local companies give importance to the realization of market studies, moreover we notice that many foreign companies develop market studies to penetrate the Algerian market,

For large companies namely NIELSEN, GFK and others, they carry out very successful market research in different

sectors, the latter solicit Algerian companies to perform field work, the question that arises is what is the approach to undertake by the Algerian company so that it can conduct its market research effectively?

Focus essentially on data processing instruments at the expense of relevance of the initial obtained information leads to an important risk, so professionals focus first on the collection of reliable information then data processing (Jean-Marc Gandy, Afnor, 2008, p06)

So, to arrive at a successful and realistic market research project, it is necessary to evaluate and study the performance of the latter using the triangle method consisting of three words: qualities, costs, deadlines. It's about efficiency and effectiveness.

Our problematic therefore will be formulated as follows:

How to optimize the performance of a market research project in Algeria?

Analysing its market is an unavoidable step in a marketing reflection (Lendrevie- Levy- Lindon, 2016); using census Algerian companies try to identify every POS in order to understand their attitudes by gathering data on available brands, best sellers and every useful information using a questionnaire in smart tablets, and this will be the case study of this research.

II. METHODOLOGY

To reach the search target, we opted for the descriptive methodology with a quantitative research using face-to-face survey and analytical techniques,

As personal interviewing is considered as the most flexible method of obtaining international research data (C.SamuelCraig- Susan P.Douglas, 2005) this study is based on face to face survey using tablets with online questionnaire, it is a census with total sweep (main street, secondary, neighbourhood, city.....etc.) targeting every technical store in Algiers, 3 questionnaires tested in each town.

III. Context

The quality certificate according to the standard ISO 9001 consist that: management must ensure that the requirements of the customers are determined and respected in order to increase the customers satisfaction (ISO 9001, système de management de la qualité, 2015).

Here stands the importance of the market research, it allows the foreign companies to know their customers, concurrence and distribution channels (P.Amrein, Armadcolin, 2005) by collecting data using one or more of the methods mentioned in the fig bellow

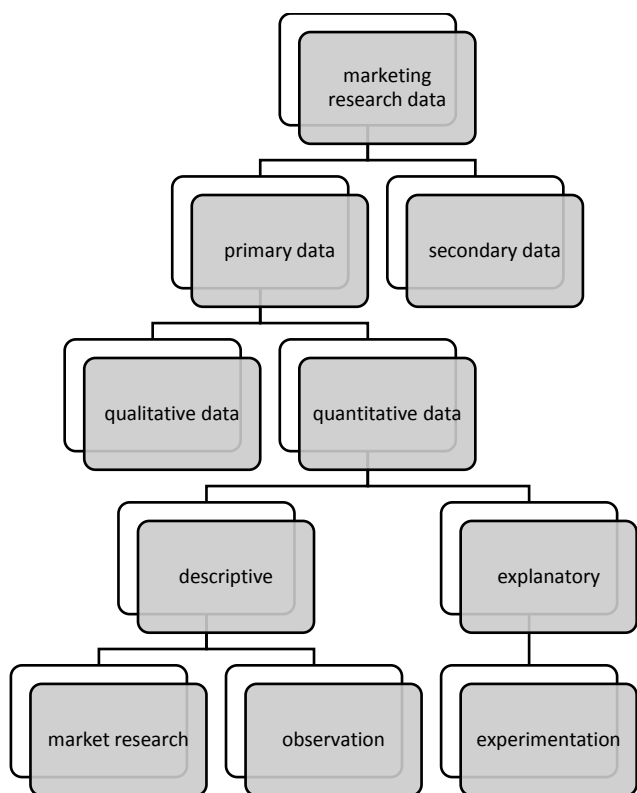


fig.1 Classification of market research data (Naresh Malhotra, 2011, p 93)

A. Evaluation and follow-up of the project:

Evaluation and follow-up of a project is essential for a performing project, three stages of evaluation existed:

- 1) Preparing a dashboard to have a clear vision of the project and creating problem/solutions trees are the two ways for the first step of evaluation (before project).
- 2) Evaluate the coherence of the means and methods implemented as well as the quality of the field approach for the evaluation during the project.
- 3) Compare the results obtained to the original objectives and analyze the gaps (qualitative and quantitative evaluation) and this will be the evaluation after project.

B. performance indicators:

Indicators are information that characterizes the performance of an action. These are, for the monitoring-evaluation of a project, scales of progression.

1) On form, the indicators can:

- Take the form of questions to answers serving as an alert
- Give a quantitative assessment (number or percentage, indicators answering the quality questions (what?), The quantity (how much?), The target (who?), The location (where?) And the period of the action)
- Give a qualitative assessment of an action (scales of objective value hence the obligation to qualify / analyze the answers)

2) In substance, the indicators provide information on:

- The means to arrive at the result = means indicators. That means how are project activities implemented?
- Achievement indicators, that is to say, the achievement of intermediate results
- The result indicators. That means, whether the project objectives are achieved or not.
- Effects indicators, that means what are the impacts of the project (positive / negative, environmental, population, etc.)?

IV. Case study

The main goal of this census project is to ensure a certain competitive intelligence by creating a reliable database of technical stores, with details of the products displayed and / or sold, available brands, annual turnover generated and other information that help companies to know their real market share.

Therefore, after the **preparation** where the company starts with calculation of coverage parameters, briefing the census team on the study objectives and preparing the questionnaire. It passes for the second step that is the

organization and **field work** where it starts with the delimitation of the country and segmentation by region/area. The third step is the **back-check** which takes place at the same time with field work and editing data.

These steps will be detailed in the following points:

A. Preparation:

This phase includes four stages:

1) *Identification of the Required Staff*: field team works by groups, for each group we have four interviewers, one supervisor, and one controller. Those field workers must have a good educational level “mostly university students” who work by project.

2) *Briefing on the Study's Objectives*: every member of the study team must understand the main objective of the study, its deadlines, areas to cover as well as the issues of interest previously agreed during the first step of this phase.

3) *Planning of the Project*: after identifying the census team and briefing them it is the time to determine the number of working days, so the execution time which starts with the field work until the end of the census project

4) *Preparing Geographical Maps*: for a better control of interviewers, and to ensure that all towns, cities and streets will be covered, each town will be divided into several areas.

Once the areas are well defined, they will be divided into blocks, and these last can be divided into small blocks in the case where the volume of these blocks is too big (contains many shops) and every single block should be numbered for an easier work.

B. Field Work

Interviewers should be trained by the project field-manager. In order to get good results they must understand perfectly the questionnaire, every interviewer must know exactly the limits of the areas to be covered and the timing for each one (it depends on the size of the area) and also the walking procedure for a total coverage, the fig 2 show how to put a walking procedure

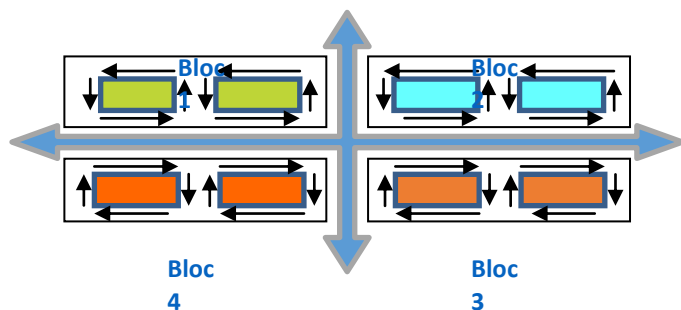


fig.2 Walking procedure for a total coverage in a census project

they learn how to use correctly the maps, making the location of every store on the map with GPS coordinates.

when the field work starts, every questionnaire will be delivered at the T time, and this is possible only when we use an online survey where every interviewer has a smart tablet to be able to fill the questionnaires and send it immediately and ensure the 100% editing.

This helps for a better checking, that is what we will be developed on the next phase.

C. Back-checking

This phase aims to ensure a very good quality of work to get a reliable data, it is necessary to proceed with the back checking phase 2 days maximum after the beginning of the field work in order to check if the work performed is up to our waits, there is two methods for back checking:

1) *Telephonic Back Check*: Telephone back checkers have to confirm the existence of the point of sale and its address as a first step, then the verification of the information mentioned in the questionnaire, and finally complete the missing information if any.

More than 30% of telephonic back-check should be performed for better results.

2) *Field Back Check*: the objective of personal back checkers is the verification of these points:

- Ensure that there are no missing stores and the block was fully enumerated by the interviewers.
- The shops position on the maps (correct GPS address)
- Information collected by the interviewers (they should re-interview the stores to verify the reliability of the collected information and every questionnaire with more than 5% of error will be rejected)

In the case of cheating detected by either telephonic or field back checkers, every rejected questionnaire must be re-done.

V. Analysis and Results

To be able to realize a good census project we opted for a face to face survey using smart tablets in which we have connexion to allow us to observe the interviewers work and get the questionnaires at T time.

A. Results:

The results of a good market research project is to be able to give representative statistics regarding:

- Market size in Volume and Value
- Market structure by characteristics
- The situation of the different distribution circuits
- Price evolution by category
- Brand market shares
- Hit lists of the best sales
- Distribution of products, brands, features, etc.

The findings from this empirical study have demonstrated that there is some factors affect directly the results of the market research (census in our case), the fig: 3 resume these factors

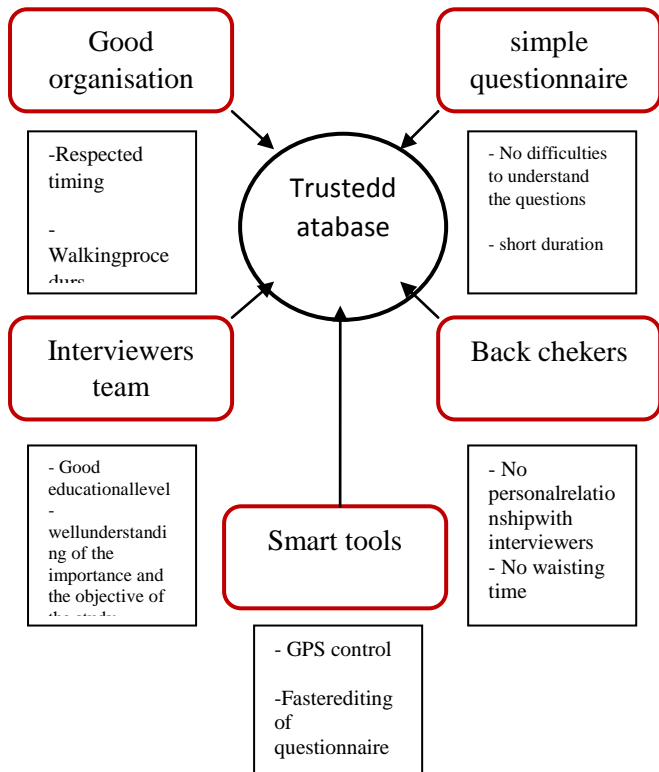


Fig.3 Important factors for a good quality of census

A. Analyses:

To evaluate and study the performance of a market research project using the triangle method, we have to evaluate both of the quality of the results, the global costs of the project and deadlines.

The table below summarizes the anomalies detected in the case of Algiers census and proposes solutions for each one :

TABLE 1
RESULTS ANALYSES

| Anomalies | Solutions |
|---|---|
| <p>Quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The error percentage after a 30% phone back-check is almost 6% - Insufficient investigator training (incomprehensible questionnaire) - Very long questionnaire which takes a long time | <p>Quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simple questionnaire (short and comprehensive) - Use smart tools to improve control quality (GPS control and others) - Complete training of the field team (questionnaire, objective of the study and the importance of data reliability) - Choice of interviewers and controllers (level of education, no personal relationship between back-checkers and interviewers...) |
| <p>Deadlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 months for the Algiers census. the deadlines have been respected but no problem has been reported during the project, if it is not the case the company will exceed the agreed deadline | <p>Deadlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Calculating the census duration can not be precise, it is recommended to base on an old data taking into account the possible changes in the market - An additional period is required to handle special cases |
| <p>Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expenditure accounted for 30% of total profit | <p>Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Add a margin of reserve on the overall cost of the project for better crisis management |

VI. Conclusion:

The use of information has been identified as a source of a firm's market orientation (Kohli and Jaworski 1990) and sustainable competitive advantage (Day 1991; Glazer 1991; Porter 1985). This shows the importance of trust results of market research to take good decisions.

The results of market research "census in our case" offer an in-depth look at the market; this look should be clear, in the best time and with lowest costs

A good census team with organized work, an easy questionnaire, smart tools and smart back check could be enough to get good information to help companies having best decisions that is to mean a good quality of results, in the other hand we have the overall costs which must be affordable comparing to the size of the project. Deadlines have to be respected as the third element for a performing project.

The results based on the census study are less biased than other sampling methods because the degree of correctness of the information increases with the size of collected data.

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