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Independent Study & Mentorship

22 May, 2018

Final Product Set-up/ Summary

After studying International Marketing over the course of the first semester through the help of numerous professionals and academic journals, I wanted to create something that could help me further expand my knowledge. For my original work, I had conducted a survey that looked into the consumer perception of eight different global brands in three different countries: the United States, India, and Mexico. However, after analyzing the data acquired from the survey, I realized that my results were slightly plagued with survey bias because most of the participants in each country were concentrated in a specific city. As a result, the data could not be seen as a representative of an entire country's general perception. This made me become quite interested in the topic of survey bias, and I decided to research more. Through more research, I found out that survey bias can also be caused by psychological barriers, and since I want to study psychology next year, I thought that looking into survey bias would create the perfect transition.

Objective:

The objective of this project was to research ways that conscious bias could be surpassed by activating the subconscious mind. By conducting this project, I wanted to see how different types of creative questions can surpass survey bias, and I specifically chose the Pizza Hut brand

to conduct my study on because my mentor works there. The questions that I asked in my survey were related to consumer perception, so after gathering my results and making conclusions, I presented my results to the Pizza Hut marketing team. Because survey bias is a pertinent problem in the marketing industry, I thought that the marketing team could benefit from learning about my results. More information on how designed and distributed my survey can be found below.

Description of Process:

In order to achieve my objective, I first figured out which types of questions I wanted to include on my survey. In order to do this, I researched more about psychology and the different ways in which the subconscious mind is activated. Drawings are a great way to activate the subconscious mind because psychologically, the human brain is wired to react to symbols and archetypes in a more direct manner, for pictures are what even the earliest humans used to communicate. Assigning animate qualities to different abstract concepts allows participants to correlate two different ideas better. Furthermore, humans are generally social creatures, so it is easier for participants to convey their thoughts. Open-ended questions also foster more creativity, and therefore the responses that participants give are much more accurate.

After learning about the different methods through which conscious bias could be surpassed, I created the questions. Overall, the survey had a total of four questions, which pertain to either Demographics or Pizza Hut Perception. The only question asked in relation to demographics related to age, since this study was targeted towards teenagers. Using the research conducted about penetrating into the subconscious mind, two types of questions were conducted that could be used to measure the participant's perception of Pizza Hut. The first question asked

“If Pizza Hut were a person, how would you describe him/her?”. This question was open-ended so that participants had the flexibility to channel their creativity and thus stimulate their subconscious brain to answer accurately. The second question asked the same question, except there were 4 drawings of males, and participants had the option to choose one picture. In order to create some control, all of the drawings had the same facial features, and they only varied in clothing choice. The images used for the survey are depicted below.

Option 1**Option 2****Option 3****Option 4**

The last question on the survey asked “If Pizza Hut were a person, how old would he/she be?” Largely serving the purpose of providing supplementary information about Pizza Hut, this question was arranged in a multiple choice format where participants chose one answer. This question, although worded in a way that allowed participants to think of the Pizza Hut brand as

animate, did not employ any unique approaches in surpassing survey bias, unlike the former two questions.

The population of interest for this study was mainly teenagers from the ages of 12 to 20 that reside in the United States and have at least a basic familiarity with Pizza Hut. The reason that the population of interest for this study are teenagers is because Pizza Hut is a brand that markets primarily to millennials, and over the next few years, these teenagers will be entering the age group of current millennials (20-35). As a result, this study sought to get insight on the future generation of customers, and see whether the perception of teenagers matched the perception of millennials. Given the time and financial restraints, the population accessible for the purpose of this study was limited to teenagers with access to internet, for the surveys were distributed using social media and texting applications such as WhatsApp. As a result, most of the participants are from a higher socioeconomic status.

To create the survey, I used Google Forms in order to ensure a uniform format and structure that would be familiar to most participants. To distribute the survey, I posted links to my survey on social media accounts such as Twitter and Instagram. I also texted my friends to spread the survey. In addition, I also made flyers to fill out my survey and put them in my teacher's classrooms.

After gaining about 100 participants, I started to analyze my data. For the open-ended question, results were analyzed by grouping them into different categories. There were a total of twelve categories, and if a response contained elements that related to more than one category, the response counted towards all applicable categories. The other questions had charts created automatically due to the spreadsheet tabulating the multiple choice questions immediately.

Finally, after all the conclusions were made, I created my presentation for Pizza Hut. I asked my mentor to provide me with a Pizza Hut template, and using that I started to add my information. Then, on May 21st at 10 am, I presented my results to the Pizza Hut marketing team and some other curious audience members in a meeting room. I made sure to record my speech as well. Finally, I opened up to take questions and this led to audience having a discussion with me over the work that I had done. After giving my presentation, I also wrote a reflection over how I thought my presentation went.

Date/s:

For the purpose of this project, I spent ample time researching. Given that I did not have a mentor for the first month of March, I was a little lost on which direction to go with my interest in survey bias. As a result, some of the time prior to March had been spent trying to set up a seminar at which I could present my research and teach the public about survey bias. However, after talking to my old mentor again, I realized exactly what I wanted to do. From March 5th to March 20th, I looked into the different types of survey bias and ways to overcome it. In addition, I also looked into how the conscious bias that people often have can be suppressed by activating the subconscious mind.

Starting at the beginning of April, I began to create my questionnaire. I had a student, Aishah Uddin, help me with drawing some of the people that I needed for my survey because she is a good artist and I am not. After that, in the middle of April, I began to advertise my survey to people using social media, texting, and word of mouth. Upon attaining 100 results, which I got by the beginning of May, I began writing my paper. Writing my paper took about two weeks,

and after that I created my presentation in one day: May 20th. I practiced it multiple times, and then I presented it to the Pizza Hut Marketing Team on May 21st.

Time/s:

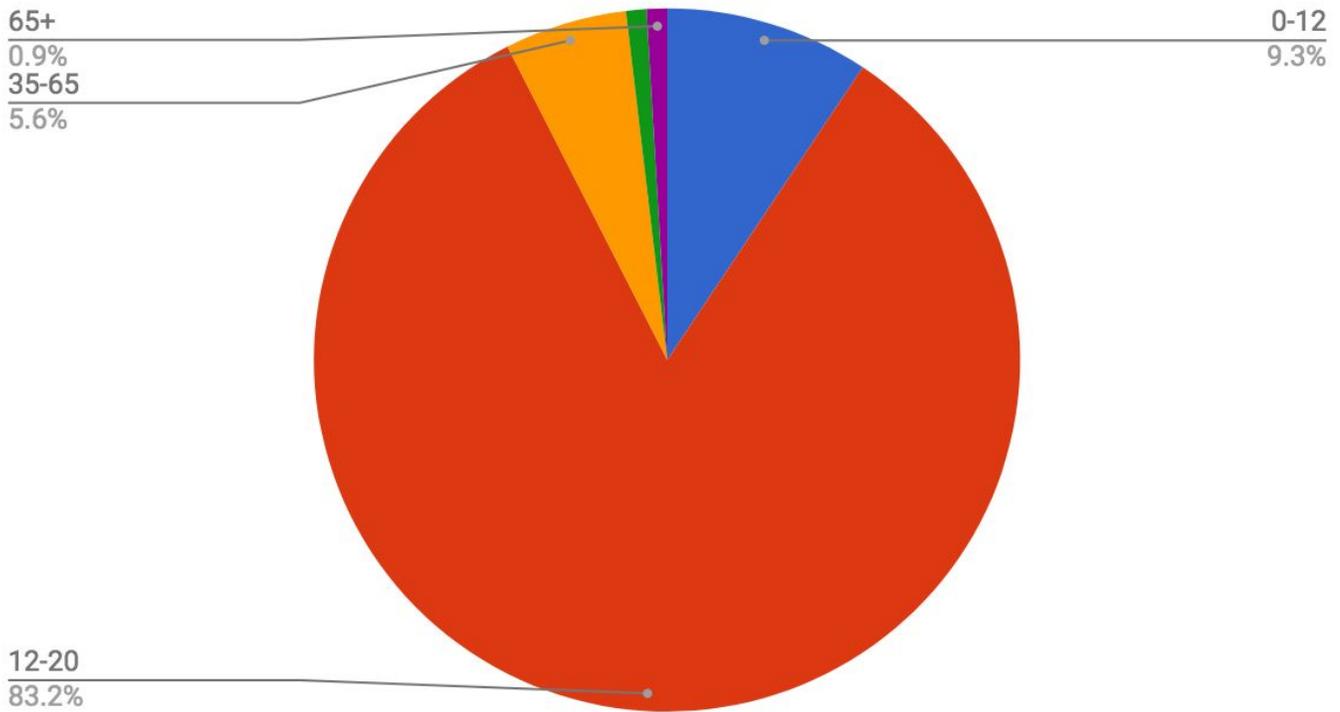
I worked on the majority of this project during the weekends, and I also was able to dedicated more time to it after AP testing was over. As a result, the last two weeks have been the most crucial in terms of getting my project done. I also used many of my mentor visits to talk about my final product and plan out the necessary steps to see this project into fruition.

Materials:

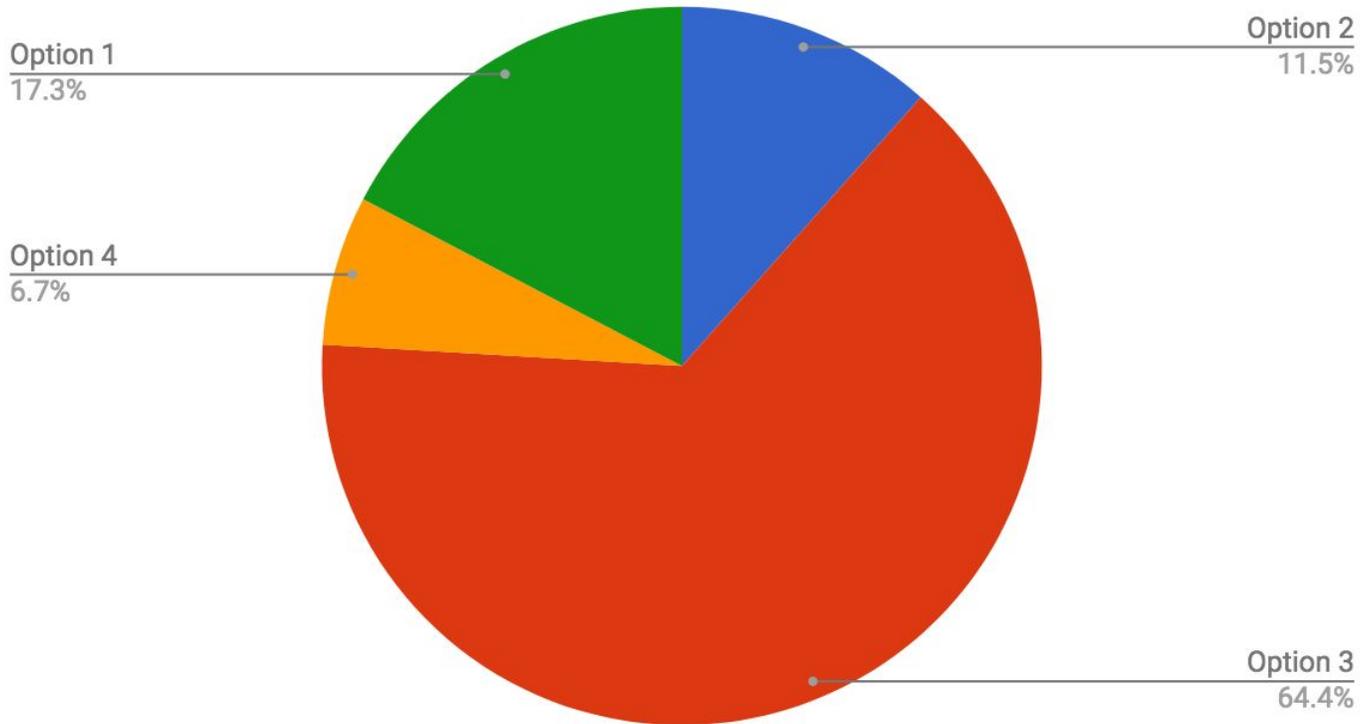
For the purpose of this project, the biggest tool that I needed was access to the internet because this is how I made and distributed my survey. In addition, having social media accounts and having connections with people in each of the different countries that I distributed my survey in was also beneficial. In addition, since I presented my results to the Pizza Hut marketing team, I also needed access to a screen and a laptop. I also used my phone to record my presentation as proof that I had presented.

Results:

Pizza Hut: Age of Survey Participants



Which Image Best Represents Pizza Hut?



Option 1



Option 2



Option 3

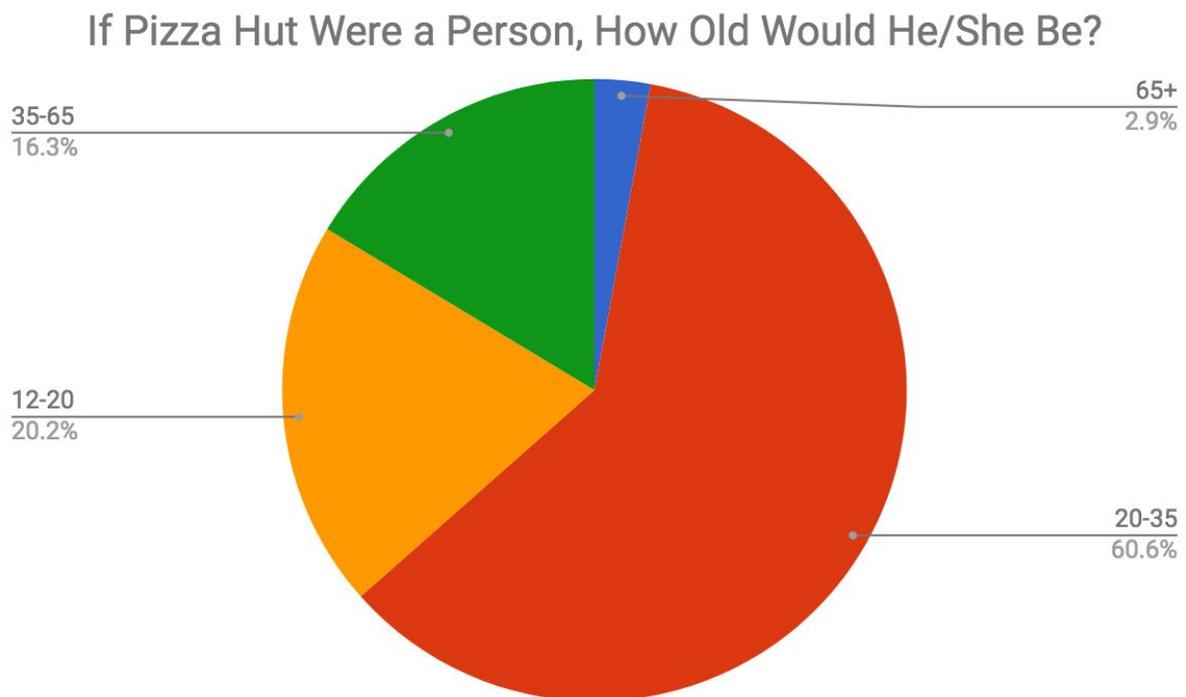


Option 4

Characteristic	Number of Participants	Characteristic	Number of Participants
Trendy	18	Casual	34
Young	6	Old	8
Healthy	0	Unhealthy	30

Happy	20	Sad	0
Extroverted	32	Introverted	6
Lazy	33	Motivated	3

Through this summary of results, it becomes apparent that a majority of the participants viewed Pizza Hut as a causal, extroverted brand that is unhealthy and “lazy”.



Conclusions/Interpretations:

After gathering data about the brand perception of Pizza Hut using the creative questionnaire, it became apparent that by employing distinct surveying methods, a more holistic

perspective can be established. After conducting research about events and instances that activate the subconscious mind, three main methods were concluded upon as being the best suited for survey research. Drawings are a great way to activate the subconscious mind because psychologically, the human brain is wired to react to symbols and archetypes in a more direct manner, for pictures are what even the earliest humans used to communicate. Assigning animate qualities to different abstract concepts allows participants to correlate two different ideas better. Furthermore, humans are generally social creatures, so it is easier for participants to convey their thoughts. Open-ended questions also foster more creativity, and therefore the responses that participants give are much more accurate.

However, each type of question has its benefits and weaknesses. Multiple choice questions with drawings are answer choices are good for gaining a general perception efficiently. Open-ended questions are much more specific, but they take more time to analyze and it can be difficult to tabulate the data into a readable format. Questions with animate qualities can be used in conjunction with the other forms of questions mentioned above to surpass conscious bias. As a result, it becomes apparent that each type of question is appropriate to use in different instances based on the sample size and the type of data required.

Another interesting but rather unexpected find made from this study is that many participants viewed employees as direct representatives of the brand. As a result, lazy employees caused the entire brand to be painted as lazy. Thus, it is important that companies emphasize customer service so that the consumer brand perception remains consistent with the target brand image.

Application/Meaning:

Through this project, it became apparent that survey bias is a prevalent issue in marketing. Although many different types of bias exist, intrinsic bias, or conscious bias, is the hardest to combat because it is caused by psychological reasons. In order to fit in, many people may lie or express the exact opposite of what they believe in. A phenomenon known as reaction formation in psychology, this behavior can be responsible for why many participants stray away from choosing strongly-worded answer choices. Another sector of desirability bias, which is far harder to pinpoint, is the way in which participants may answer questions based on who they desire to be rather than who they really are. For example, society is trending towards eating healthy and exercising. As a result, many participants who desire to be healthier may answer on a restaurant survey that they wish more healthier options were available. However, the participant will continue to not buy healthy options at the said restaurant even after such products are added to the menu. This comes back to the idea of how participants want to express themselves in the best light possible.

However, through creative questions, bias can be overcome and this goes to show the power of creativity in the human brain. In the future, I would like to look into how the perception of different pizza brands differed from one another. It would be interesting to use the survey created for the purpose of this study to also measure consumer perception of other pizza brands. Using this data, comparisons could be made about how the creative questions speak for other pizza brands. This data could be used to guide changes in marketing plans and operations for the respective brands tested.

Utilization of Higher-Level Thinking Skills:

Throughout the course of this survey, the high level thinking skills that I utilized most throughout the survey was analysis. After passing out the survey and receiving the results, I compared the results to the research that I had done to come up with conclusions about which creative question was the most effective in combating conscious bias. When I was using the results to create conclusions, I also used the higher level thinking skills of application because I took my results to the next level by creating solutions that could be implemented into an actual company, Pizza Hut. In addition, I also evaluated the effectiveness of each creative question by looking at how detailed the results obtained were and how fast it took to tabulate the results.

Research Material:

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