Consumer Behavior  
MAR 3503  
Group Project Instructions

Overview
This project should give you experience applying some of the concepts you’ve learned in class as you collect data on consumer behavior. Below I give you several topics to choose from, but you will still have a great deal of flexibility as to how you actually design your study and collect your data.

Written report (All reports due December 4)
Your report should be ten pages maximum, including graphs, tables, etc. You may have a separate cover page that does not count in the ten-page limit. The report should at least include:
(1) Introduction: Give some background on the problem or product being studied; describe the purpose of the study.
(2) Hypotheses: Say what you predict and why. This can be fairly short. If there are reasons to suspect several different possible patterns of results, you can propose and contrast multiple hypotheses.
(3) Procedure: Describe what you did. Provide sufficient detail that a reader could reasonably closely replicate your procedure.
(4) Results: Report relevant averages and other appropriate summary statistics (medians, standard deviations). You may use tables, graphs, and figures, if appropriate. Inferential statistics & formal hypothesis tests (like t-tests, etc.) are not required, but if you feel comfortable using them, feel free. (There is no need to report averages to the 8th decimal place: 4.21740893 is inappropriate; 4.22 or 4.2 are better.)
(5) Conclusions and marketing implications: Say what can be learned from your results and what implications they might have, both for consumers and/or marketers.
(6) Limitations & possible follow-ups: Say what might keep your results from being generalizable and what you would do differently in follow-up studies. What additional questions do the results raise?

Oral presentation
Your presentation (15-20 minutes) may contain the same sections that your written report contains. You are encouraged to use overheads, PowerPoint, ads, demonstrations, etc., to make the topic interesting to your audience. You may have one spokesperson for the group, or you may share the presentation duties among several (or all) group members.

If you are using PowerPoint, I strongly suggest that you bring a backup copy (or several backup copies) of your slides to class, either in the form of overheads or in the form of extra disk copies. As a further backup, you can email your presentation to me.

Grading (30 points possible)
- The written report will be graded out of 20 points.
- The oral presentation will be graded out of 10 points.
- Within a group, all members will initially earn the same grade. However, I will ask each group member to evaluate the contributions of his/her fellow members. If someone is consistently identified as having not contributed to the group, that person’s score will be adjusted accordingly.
**Topics: Select one of the following topics.** The topics will give you general guidelines, but the specific implementation of your topic is up to you.

**IMPORTANT FOR ALL TOPICS: TO GUARANTEE YOUR PARTICIPANTS’ PRIVACY, DO NOT VIDEOTAPE OR PHOTOGRAPH THEM IN ANY WAY!!**

1. **Price Attention & Memory**  
   **Assignment:** Identify the extent to which consumers focus on price while shopping. Accompany a friend on a trip to a store, and observe your friend’s behavior. (Do this individually for about 20 people total.) Make sure the store is one where people tend to buy many items (e.g., supermarket, Target, Wal-Mart). Make sure that your friends do not know in advance that their memories will be evaluated. After they pay, conduct a price recall task.

   **Analysis:** Use the actual receipt to evaluate performance. Make sure you define in advance what will qualify as a correct versus incorrect answer. Evaluate overall recall. Does recall differ as a function of individual variables, such as gender? Does recall differ as a function of other external factors, such as the type of product purchased, or whether there were certain in-store specials? You might also analyze “how incorrect” the answers were. When, and for whom, are the memories most/least accurate? What are the implications of these findings for the marketing strategies of the products or stores you examined?

2. **Predicting the Preferences and Attitudes of Others**  
   **Assignment:** How well can consumers predict the preferences of other people? Generate several preference or attitude questions to pose to about 30-35 people. Have them both answer these questions themselves, and also try to predict or estimate the answers of others.

   The nature of the “target” of the predictions offers you some flexibility. One option is to recruit pairs of friends and have them try to predict each other’s preferences: “Sally, does Jimmy prefer pretzels or peanuts?” Another option is to have people predict the overall preferences of the whole group: e.g., “What percentage of people prefer pretzels over peanuts?” Or predictions for subgroups (men vs. women) could be gathered and compared.

   **Analysis:** Measure the accuracy of the predictions of your participants by comparing their predictions to the actual preferences of the people they predict. Are there some types of questions where accuracy is particularly good or poor? Are some people’s predictions particularly accurate or inaccurate? Examine the relationship between the predictor’s own preferences and the predictions s/he makes. Do you see any “false consensus” effects? Where are they largest or smallest?

3. **Consumer Perception: Blind product test**  
   **Assignment:** Conduct a “blind” test for various brands of any one product, such that participants evaluate the product without seeing the brand name. This can be a taste test, but you can also be creative and evaluate a non-food product (paper towels, lotions, gloves, etc.). You may consider comparing several national “premium” brands to one or more private-label (generic) brands. Do not test any alcoholic beverages or medications!

   Ask about 25 friends (total for the group) to participate and to try each brand. Without telling them the identity of the brands, ask them for their impressions of each product they try. Get overall ratings of how much participants liked each sample, but also get ratings specific to the dimension you’re testing (that is, for a taste test, ask a few different questions about taste; if you were testing paper towels, you might instead ask a few questions about absorbency or softness). When participants are finished, you might also ask which product they liked best and/or worst.
**Analysis:** Which brand, if any, emerged as the favorite? How did you determine this? Is the favorite generally a popular brand, or were you surprised by the winner? If a consumer had a favorite before sampling, was that brand typically his/her favorite in the blind test? Did the results differ for different groups of consumers (e.g., men vs. women; frequent vs. infrequent consumers of the product)? What are the implications of this test for the marketing strategies of the brands you tested?

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