

The Validity of Online Marketing Research

In this task, students review the results of a recent online market research survey undertaken by a firm. Given the survey was conducted online and was optional, your task in this exercise is to determine how valid the results are likely to be.

The Bank's Customer Satisfaction Online Survey

For this exercise, let's assume that a bank wanted to conduct a customer satisfaction survey with its customers. They decided to implement an online survey. To highlight the survey to their customer base, they had messages placed on their website and on their internet banking system. As an incentive to complete the survey, respondents were offered the chance to win one of 10 iPads.

The bank knows, from an analysis of its customer database, that their customers have the following levels of relationships with the bank:

Use the bank daily (heavy user)	25%
Use the bank weekly/monthly (medium user)	25%
Use the bank every few months (light user)	10%
Use the bank one a year (very light user)	20%
Have not used the bank for more than a year (inactive)	20%

As you can see, the bank was around 50% of its customers quite engaged with the bank, but the remaining 50% are light or inactive users of the bank. These latter customers are likely to provide a growth opportunity for the bank if they could be more successfully connected with.

The results of the banks online customer satisfaction survey were:

Very satisfied	75%
Quite satisfied	15%
Somewhat satisfied	5%
Dissatisfied	5%

Please note that 20% of the bank's customers participated in the survey

This result highlights that 90% of the respondents are quite or very satisfied. That is fantastic but doesn't necessarily make sense when compared to the bank usage data above.

Student Discussion Questions

1. Given the methods used to communicate the survey and to encourage customers to participate, in terms of customer relationships (that is, light/medium/heavy user), which customers were more likely to participate in the research?
2. Given your answer in Q1, how accurate is the 90% customer satisfaction score as a reflection of ALL the bank's customers?
3. As one of their goals is to grow through increased engagement of inactive/light users, how helpful would the findings of this research be (keep in mind that the questionnaire was broader than just customer satisfaction questions)?
4. What research method would you suggest using to get the view of inactive/light users? Would this be worthwhile anyway? (That is, should the bank pursue them for growth or look to attract new customers instead?)