

Research Surveys launches new Quality of Life Model

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Research Surveys, South Africa's largest knowledge management and marketing research company, today announced the launch of its new Everyday Quality of Life model and its associated family of quality of life measures – the EQLitm family.

The new model, which goes well beyond the traditional use of wealth (LSMs) as the primary means of segmenting people, was developed in response to new thinking from around the world on how people respond to advertising and make daily brand buying decisions. However, the new model represents cutting edge thinking in that it weaves together several separate threads of thought from the US, the UK and Europe into one cohesive model for the first time.

Marketers in SA universally use LSMs as the starting point for target market definitions and as a key part of the analysis of most research studies. It turns out that this is a very "thin" way of understanding consumers. The modern trend is to throw out the term "consumer" and, instead, think about "people" in a richer way, in order to communicate at a level and in a way that will ring bells with real living and breathing people.

EQLi^{trade} from Research Surveys provides a world first in doing this quantitatively. In presenting a model that measures 14 aspects of people's "whole" lives, EQLi^{trade} explicitly brings together for the first time several newly recognised marketing forces in people's lives:

- There have been major advances in the understanding neuroscience brings to how our brains function, in particular, how they absorb, process and use information. We do indeed process much of the huge mass of information we receive daily at a cognitive level, with higher attention levels. But we absorb and process much more at much lower levels of attention. This has new and major implications for advertising and branding, as well as research, as these memories are at a more visceral, emotional level. In particular, it challenges traditional marketing models and shows that the effect of advertising is often greater than previously thought, particularly advertising that engages the emotions - the root of all great advertising.
- These emotional associations with brands, which can be very enduring, are used by the brain as a shortcut in making many decisions, especially daily decisions. "Does it feel right?" is a common way that the brain makes these quick decisions. Our brains are now known to store at least 10 000 brands, so the use of these shortcuts is an essential way to make brand buying decisions from the ever increasing and confusing array that confronts us. These "fast and frugal" heuristics, as they are termed, depend on brand memories that are built up over time and take into account every kind of encounter that a person has with a brand, its parent company, its people, as well as, crucially, the views of others, either explicit or implicit. Much of the information we receive about brands is associated with a positive or negative feeling that the body generates unconsciously and stores as part of the brand memory.
- If we do think about a brand cognitively, the emotive component is still at play. Ultimately, in any conflict between cognitive and emotive decision-making, emotions always win. These emotions are largely developed from the low attention component of our brand memories.
- A person's own degree of happiness affects the level of attention given to incoming information and the level of attention employed in making daily decisions. People fall on a continuum from lower attention/heuristic processing to high attention/more cognitive processing. Happier people make more use of heuristics; less happy people tend to agonise more over decisions and pay more cognitive attention to brand communications. This has a huge influence on the way we think about the style, tone and manner of our communications.
- Realising that people are parts of networks of other people and that this has a fundamental modifying influence on

their everyday buying decisions is now considered as a previously highly neglected force. The terms "the tipping point", "the Latin school of marketing", "viral marketing" and "tribal marketing" are indicators of this new view and again challenge much of traditional marketing thinking.

- There is a new focus around the world on health at all levels - understanding the body, mind and soul. This fundamentally affects people's sense of well-being and the judgements that they bring to their daily buying trade-offs.
- "Consumer" confidence is a key indicator of future buying pattern changes in most countries. At an individual level, a measure of optimism provides a way of understanding how people approach money management, leisure activities, lifestyle planning - and daily buying decisions.
- Finally, in many sectors of society, there is a growing disillusionment with big companies and with big brands. People are savvy to conventional marketing activities and are becoming more vocal about accountability, the need to be treated as real people, and the social corporate responsibility that they are beginning to expect as routine from big companies. So, marketers need to understand their customers properly and the unique, complex and unpredictable beings that they are.

All of this points to the need to think beyond LSMs and to examine people's broad well-being - their Everyday Quality of Life. The new RS EQLi^{trade} model provides a framework to understand all these influences, and to measure specific aspects so as to provide marketers with new ways of understanding why communications do or do not work, why brands respond as they do, and what types of communication and media will work best with different people.

FAQs about Research Surveys' new EQLi model

1. Will EQLi replace LSMs?

A. Not at all. LSMs are a great place to start understanding people. But they are just about wealth. They tell us little about what is going on in a person's head. And it is exactly that which determines what brand a person will buy. Happier people use shortcuts to make those decisions. They make them faster and more confidently. Less happy people use more cognitive process and take longer. That should influence the style of communication you use. LSMs won't tell you that.

2. What is EQLi?

A. EQLi stands for Everyday Quality of Life. This is influenced by many things - your wealth, your health, where or how you live, your friends, your job, your own approach to life. The EQLi suite of measures has 14 indices measuring all these things. Your quality of life acts as a permanent backdrop and filter to all the information that your senses receive about brands. It influences every decision you make.

3. Who should be using the EQLi approach?

A. At one level, one could say that all marketers, communicators and decision-makers need to know their target market's quality of life. It fundamentally affects how people make decisions in their daily lives. It is as fundamental as knowing their wealth and education level. Without this basic knowledge of where people's lives are at, it is almost impossible truly to understand their hopes, dreams, aspirations, frustrations and obstacles in anything other than the most superficial way. There are also some of the indices that will have special interest to certain people:

- For direct communication planning, the state of Mind (SMi) and Connectivity (Ci) measures are invaluable. They are also invaluable to anyone trying to understand brand and communication dynamics at all levels - in essence, everyone.
- The health and stress (OH_i and SP_i) measures are central to the food, beverage and related industries, to the pharmaceutical industry, and anyone marketing any well-being product or service - this also applies to any media in this arena, all the medical aids, gyms and health and fitness centres, many entertainment, leisure and technology offerings, major retailers, and any marketer using lifestyle-related platforms.
- The needs satisfaction index will have a similar broad appeal.
- Optimism is important to anyone in the financial arena, to marketers of durables and motor vehicles, especially bigger

ticket items, to those in the travel industry and to those looking to understand the broad trend of the "consumer" market. This is allied to the concept of "consumer" confidence, an indicator closely tracked in most major first world countries.

- Technology marketers will also be interested in urbanisation levels, connectivity and either SWB (subjective well-being) or state of mind. This is just a small sampling of the possibilities for the application of this set of measures.

4. How easy is it to add to a survey? Or do I have to commission a special EQLi study?

A. Very easy. The full EQLi question set uses two pages in a questionnaire. If certain indices only are of interest, less space is needed. A special EQLi study is not generally needed unless one wants to expand into certain areas. So, for example, we have done a full well-being study for a pharmaceutical client. That looks at certain aspects of health and nutrition in much more detail. We also sometimes look in more detail at key life events.

5. What if I want to add EQLi to a study done by one of your competitors?

A. We are looking at ways to license other suppliers and supply them with the algorithm. However, we have now had two years' experience developing the model, and that is key in making it work for you. It is much more than just an "advanced LSM"!

6. Can we compare ourselves against other countries?

A. Some of the measures have international components and can be compared.

7. What sort of sample size do I need?

A. The full EQLi battery is probably best used on bigger samples, but the shorter one can easily be employed on samples of size 400.

8. Where can I find out more?

A. We have publications that discuss EQLi in more detail. Also, look on our website www.researchsurveys.co.za, or speak to any RS executive. Our contact details are:

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