Crafting Precise Personas: An Application of Q Methodological Research

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Introduction

- Persona development is a common strategy used to distinguish key stakeholder entities for marketing purposes.
- Personas are detailed archetypal characters representing distinct groups of behaviors, goals, and motivations observed and identified through the research process (Guo & Ma, 2018).
- The completion of personas requires an insightful perspective into the psychographics of individuals.
- Q methodology is a research approach grounded in the study of human subjectivity, a concept embodying how an individual's personal opinions and feelings shape one's judgements. At its core, the technique seeks to unveil patterns and viewpoints held by specific audiences (Watts & Stenner, 2012).
- Q methodology's application to marketing and communications is a relatively novel endeavor, particularly in agricultural communications (Leggette & Redwine, 2016).



An individual conducting a Q sort, placing statements in a template according to level of agreement

How It Works

1.Data collection is comprised of a series of "Q sorts" in which participants physically rank statements printed on cards according to their level of agreement (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

2. The statements should be broadly representative of the opinion domain and resist from exercising bias toward a viewpoint (Watts & Stenner, 2012). particular

3. Researchers first apply a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to generate an unrotated factor matrix. All factors with an Eigenvalue greater than 1.0 are considered as defining sorts.

4. Next, a varimax rotation is applied to generate a rotated factor matrix and select defining sorts for a characterization of viewpoints.

Implications

Q methodology builds personas by detecting trends and patterns in participants interpretations of social constructs. Using this approach personas can be manifested from:



Discerning inherent values of individuals



Identifying common preferences between groups of people

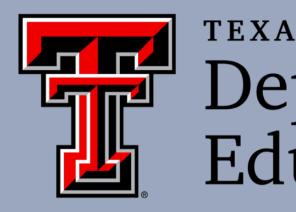


Uncovering underlying motivations influencing decision making



Understanding conceptualizations of identity

• The ability to develop personas truly reflective of key audience segments can inform strategic communication efforts and ensure messages are salient.



Advice to Others

- recommended per participant.

Resources Needed

- board specifically for the purpose.
- enough space for participants

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Watts, S., & Stenner, P. (2012). Doing Q methodological research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

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• The concourse should be reviewed by subject matter experts to "clarify wording of items, reduce duplication, generate new items, and ensure that the Q set provides adequate coverage of the relevant ground" (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 61).

Conducting a pilot test similar to the study's target population serves as an important way to refine the wording of statements

Q methodology researchers have cautioned against using too many statements, which can make the sorting process overly demanding and taxing for participants (Curt, 1994).

While the time necessary is largely dependent on the concourse and individual, scheduling 20-30 minutes is

Q sorts can be conducted a number of ways, from arranging statements into the distribution on the floor to creating a

To complete the instrument a 2' x 3' whiteboard with magnetized statements is a portable option that affords

Some budget may be necessary to incentivize participants to thoughtfully participate in the study.

• PQ Method, the data analysis software designed specifically for Q methodology, is free and available online.

References