

TNS and sister companies dominate SAMRA Convention with seven papers - some highly controversial

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This week's annual Southern African Marketing Research Association (SAMRA) Conference will feature a total of seven papers from researchers at TNS Research Surveys, TNS Customer Equity Company and Research International.

Peter Wilson from TNS Research Surveys looks at the differences between actual measures of shopper behaviour versus post-rationalised recollections of behaviour, with a view to understanding the role of the sub-conscious in the purchase decision-making process. The study involved filming, eye tracking, a post eye track exit interview, qualitative in-depth interviews with shoppers, and a CATI study of past seven day shoppers to the store. This is in line with the rapidly growing interest in shopper research worldwide as marketers focus anew on what happens at the moment of purchase.

Amien Ahmed takes on a technical issue in a paper entitled *"Beyond brand attribute associations"*. This paper contends that we ignore to our peril the constraining impact of usage, double jeopardy, the consideration set and ambiguous attributes on brand attribute association measures.

Kathryn Robinson looks at the extent to which people are prepared to admit to doing a range of "dodgy" things such as offering bribes to making up excuses for being late for work as she examines South Africans' shifting attitudes to crime, ethics and morality. She develops a "dodgy barometer" that enables more and loess dodgy people to be identified and profiled - a very topical subject given the recent furore around gifts to politicians and the outcry against crime and corruption. She also explores the implications for research.

Kyle Findlay from TNS Customer Equity Company in a ground-breaking paper entitled *"The fundamentals of market share: power laws and preferential attachment"* looks at how people fall into groups, based on the brand(s) they chose to buy and how these purchase decisions are affected by their environment. In order to answer these questions, he makes use of a diverse range of inter-disciplinary thinking such as non-linear system dynamics from physics, maths, statistics, network theory and psychology to pull together a view of the general dynamics at play in any market - thinking that can be universally applied to most areas of nature, from a molecular- right up to a cosmic-scale.

Enrico Tronchin asks what advances, insights and innovations the market research industry needs for the next 10 years? What ultimately transpires will depend largely on which ideas are promoted within the industry. The ideas that spread the furthest are often not those with the most merit: the industry's continued wrong approach to TV advertising effectiveness measurement and the widespread use of the Net Promoter Score when it does not stand up to scientific scrutiny are examples.

The paper attempts to answer these questions by synthesizing insights from the fields of memetics, evolutionary psychology, and network theory.

Joanne Campbell, Nicky Liddle and Taryn Smart contemplate a world without surveys in a paper that investigates through empirical and secondary research, a subject which has become one of the priority topics on the agenda of the Advertising Research Foundation (ARF). The new era of the internet and new digital media, improved research methods using online forums, blog sites and social networks need to be assessed against more traditional research approaches, showing that new and traditional methodologies can yield varying results and insights, requiring the use of both.

Joe Boniaszczuk of Research International also looks at traditional vs new methods in his paper entitled *"Death of the analyst - the case for data calibration and advanced weighting"*. He examines the science of getting research results to show a desired outcome gleaned from some external source. He reassures users that weighting and calibration are not the

death knell of good analysis. In contrast, used properly, weighting and calibration brings the data nearer to the objective truth. And the weightings and calibration factors themselves are a new source of information, with added insights about the nature of research data itself and of the markets it reads.

Commenting on this diverse set of topics from the TNS stable, Margarita Putter, the new Southern and Central CEO of the combined TNS Research Surveys and Research International company that is currently being merged into one operation, to be known as TNS, said, "The diversity of topics and advanced thinking evident in this range of topics epitomises the expertise and passion of people at TNS - it will make for a memorable conference." Angy Watson, CEO of the South African company added, "This shows the depth of knowledge that the combined company will have."

The 2009 SAMRA Conference is being held at the Spier wine estate from 27 to 29 May.

For more details, please contact Neil Higgs on 011-778-7500 or 082-376-6312. www.tnsresearchsurveys.co.za

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