Rapid category understanding: an alternative approach for competitive assessment using consumer-generated CATA

Lauren Dooley, Kernon Gibes, Julie Adams, Sara Whetstone

Kellogg Company, Battle Creek, MI 49017

INTRODUCTION

As companies are faced with compressed timelines and fierce competitive entries into new or existing categories, there is a heightened need for a consumer method to rapidly assess competitive features. Traditional drivers studies are limiting from a time, resource and cost perspective.

This research proposes a rapid assessment approach combining several standard methodologies in a qualitative environment as an alternative to a drivers study.

METHODOLOGY

12 samples were selected from a previous drivers study. This allowed the utility of the approaches to be compared between the two methodologies.
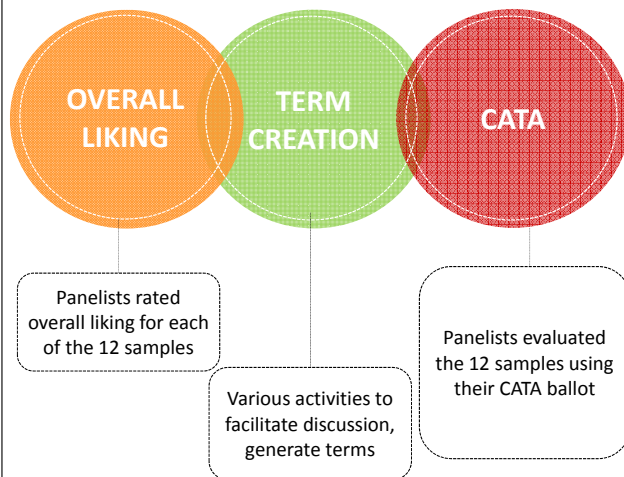

Fig. 1. Tasks performed by the panelists (n=24) to obtain overall liking scores and generate terms for the CATA ballot.

ANALYSIS

Generalized Procrustes Analysis (GPA) was applied to the CATA lists, which were developed separately by the three panels.

GPA is a multiple dimension technique which forms consensus among the panelists . This is effective for comparison of different panel languages or terms.

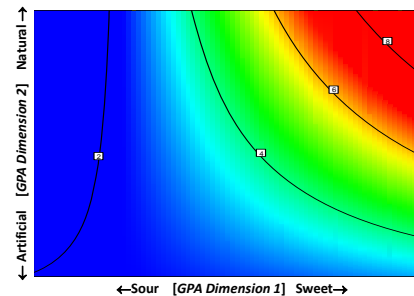The first 3 GPA dimensions accounted for a good fit with **R^2 = 85%**

Fig. 2. Liking response surface of GPA dimensions 1 and 2. Both dimensions tend to increase liking, indicating an area of highest liking in the upper right quadrant.
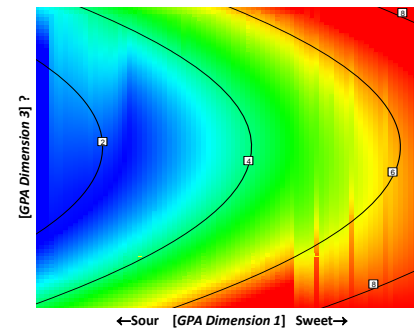

Fig. 3. Liking response surface of GPA dimensions 1 and 3. Dimension 1 tends to increase liking, and Dimension 3 illustrates an unexplained quadratic effect.

- Dimension 3 is useful to the model, but the data does not indicate a clear explanation for the quadratic effect; possibilities may include color or texture.
- The explanation may be that panelists are less articulate on less dominant attributes, so there is less agreement or understanding on how those attributes are interpreted.

RESULTS

Traditional	Rapid
Advantages	**Advantages**
• Analytical understanding • Attribute intensities (Descriptive) • Actionable results • Clustering	• Voice of the consumer • Quick to plan and execute • Fewer resources, lower cost • Adaptive, easy to modify
Disadvantages	**Disadvantages**
• Costly • Time-consuming • Resource-intensive • Positive drivers may not always be a measurement	• Less specific results • Inability to cluster consumers • Inherent noise • Panelist fatigue • Less routine statistical analysis

Fig. 4. Comparison of advantages and disadvantages of the traditional and rapid methods.
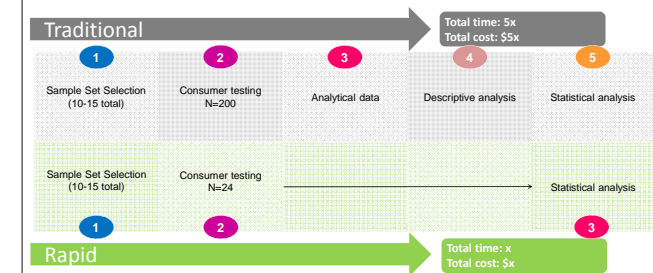

Fig. 5. Illustration of similarities and differences in the research phases for each method.

CONCLUSIONS

- Similar positive and negative drivers between the two methods.
- This first iteration identified areas of opportunity.
- Future use of this research will include modifications to address panelist fatigue and improve data robustness.

- Consider a traditional approach for a new platform or transformational category.
- Consider this proposed quicker approach for core category understanding.

- **Decision on which method to use may be based on the product category and overall test objective.**