

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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4.1 BACKGROUND

In designing the research project, careful attention was given to four important issues, namely,

1. What information was required?
2. Where was this information to be found?
3. How would it be collected?
4. How would the information be dealt with so as to provide unambiguous and relevant conclusions?

In order to meet both the primary and secondary objectives of the research, it was decided to use structured personal interviews as the main way of collecting primary data. In the construction of the interview schedule special attention was given to the removal of distrust on the part of respondents, because during the preparation hawkers demonstrated a high degree of scepticism towards information gathering.

The lack of previously published literature on the marketing tactics used by the hawker sector demanded considerable attention to the formulation of questions. Important considerations in constructing questions and conducting the interviews were:

1. All interviewers had to be qualified or well schooled, totally "au fait" with the questions, and had to understand the importance of uniformity in their interview technique/presentation. They also had to be conscious of the need to alleviate any fears, suspicion and scepticism of the interviewee during the interview
2. The questions had to be formulated using easy-to-understand language, making the interview as friendly as possible and making it easy for the respondent to complete the interview.
3. The interviewee had to be able to understand and respond to questions in the language of his choice, requiring an accurate translation of the questions from English into Xhosa in many cases. Those interviewees from Northern Africa were restricted to the use of English.

4.2 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In order to be clear on the specific hawker market which this study covers geographically, refer to Annexure B and Annexure C.

Annexure B shows a map of the Eastern Cape indicating clearly where East London is positioned in the Eastern Cape. The annexure also show clearly the position of the Eastern Cape in relation to the whole of South Africa.

Annexure C is an enlarged street map of East London showing the Central Business District (CBD) as the coloured shaded area. The specific geographic scope of this study is the area demarcated as being in Oxford Street and Buffalo Street from the traffic circle at the bottom of town in Fleet Street, to as far up as Stephenson Street. The area includes hawkers in the side streets flowing from Oxford Street but excludes any hawkers positioned in Cambridge Street.

As a result of the experience gained in preliminary contact with the hawker market it became evident that accurate scientific data was going to be very difficult to generate. Besides the fact that the hawkers were hesitant to respond to any questions posed to them, it was not clear as to whether they were in fact giving their own honest opinion or whether they were guessing what the "correct" answer should be! For this reason, it was decided that the research be regarded as exploratory. It would be used to provide insight into the hawker market for the purpose of formulating a more focussed or more precise investigation. This research would thus be used to increase the researchers familiarity with the hawker market in order to establish priorities for future research. Amongst others, these are noted as the purposes for the use of exploratory research by Cant et al (2003:28). Chisnall (1992:23) explains that "exploratory designs are concerned with identifying the real nature of research problems and, perhaps, of formulating relevant hypothesis for later tests." He goes on to argue that, " the purpose of exploratory research gives valuable insight, results in a firm grasp of the essential character and purpose of specific research surveys, and encourages the development of creative, alternative research strategies." Bless & Higson-Smith (1995: 42) argue that, "the purpose of exploratory research is to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or person."

The decision to describe this research as exploratory is thus motivated from 3 bases:

1. Very little previous scientific research has been conducted in the hawker market and little is known about how they operate from a marketing point of view.
2. Very little confidence has been generated by the contact experienced with the hawkers as to the accuracy/validity of the information gathered from them.
3. The information gathered and the insight gained through this study would present possible hypothesis and assist in ones ability to develop a specific, more focussed research study.

See 4.6 Data Analysis Design for the detailed description of the analysis used.

4.3 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The development of the questionnaire took considerable effort with many of the questions needing to be reworded on numerous occasions. The questions were developed with the assistance of black Border Technikon BTech Marketing students who were familiar with the nature of the hawker population. This was carried out in many workshops with the students in which the nature of the hawkers was discussed and negotiated in relation to each question, how it should be worded and the type of response one could expect. The wording of each question favoured the researchers understanding rather than the respondent as it was agreed that the respondent would have the benefit of the presence of the interviewer who would explain the questions when necessary.

The main aim of the study was to determine the degree of use of marketing concepts and concern was expressed at the possibility of the respondents selecting to "sit on the fence" when they were not sure of their response should an uneven scale be used in section B of the questionnaire. It was anticipated that many of the respondents taking into account their education levels, (English literacy levels in particular), would more likely not be totally au fait with the exercise. Thus it was agreed to use a four-point scale in order to force the respondent to make a choice. As Cant (2003:111) points

out, "including a neutral option is sometimes advisable" but not if the respondents are required to have an opinion.

The interview questionnaire was divided into three main sections;

Section A – “General information questions” that were easy to answer to introduce the respondent to the interview. Most of these questions related to demographic factors.

Section B - This section was highly structured and required respondents to indicate the extent to which they made use of researcher-identified generally accepted marketing principles in their marketing efforts. The questions were very specific and required the respondent to indicate their preference on a scale of 1 to 4, (least applicable, moderately applicable, usually applicable and highly applicable, respectively).

Section C - This section contained open-ended questions and was much less structured than the other two parts. The main theme of this section was identifying the marketing tactics and influencing factors that individual hawkers tried to implement in order to achieve sales, and how they rated these in order of their relative importance.

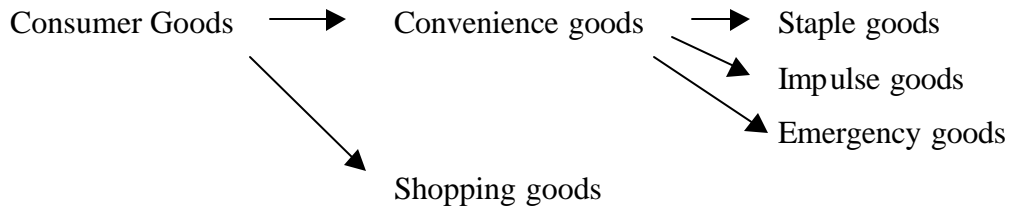
A detailed description of the questionnaire is thus as follows: (See exhibit 1 for a copy of the questionnaire. Exhibit 2 shows clearly the coding of the questionnaire.)

SECTION A

The research questions in Section A related to specific demographic descriptive information which was regarded as important for use in correlation analysis with responses in Section B and C.

All respondents were located in the East London Central Business District (CBD) and thus it was decided to ignore the information on the questionnaire relating to the **SITE**.

Question 1 required an indication of the hawker's product classification. The respondent simply noted down their actual products traded and from this they were classified according to the following classifications derived from Marx and van der Walt (1993:188-189)



Other

Staple goods are goods bought on a regular basis by consumers such as sugar, bread, vegetables, fruit, soft drinks and toothpaste.

Impulse goods are goods bought without much preplanning and effort such as chips, nikkaks, sweets, chocolates, processed food such as hot dogs, boerewors rolls, hamburgers, salad rolls and sandwiches, peanuts, audio cassettes, toys and accessories.

Emergency goods are normally bought immediately when a need arises such as matches, batteries, razor blades, umbrellas and plastic raincoats.

Shopping goods are those goods which the consumer wants to compare such as clothing, footwear, jewellery, furniture and bags, watches and audio equipment. Products which were unable to be classified into the above 4 categories were recorded as other.

The analysis of questions 2 to 13 gave an indication of the profiles of the respondent and his/her business. All data was coded and summed to give an overall indication of the make-up of the hawker market in the East London CBD area. For example it would indicate the percentage of females as to males hawking in the CBD area. Significant characteristics of this market were noted and correlations derived between related demographic variables and variables in Section B and C.

Question 2 and 3 required an indication of the size of the concern in terms of the number of people employed (if any) and the space accommodated in square metres.

Question 4 required an indication of the longevity, continuity or age of the business, which was manually calculated from the date established.

Question 5, 6 and 8 required an indication of the degree of business acumen of the respondent. An indication as to whether or not he/she started the business, its form of ownership and whether he was the owner or manager.

Question 7 required an indication of the size of the business in term of its daily turnover.

Question 9, 10, 11 and 12 required an indication of demographic information in terms of the respondents' sex, age, market status and language respectively.

Question 13 required an indication of the hawker's source of supply.

SECTION B

Questions from this section required respondents to give an evaluation of the extent to which their business made use of specific identified activities in their daily operations. They were to evaluate the extent of their use of implementation of the activity on a scale of 1 to 4, from least applicable (1) moderately applicable (2), usually applicable (3) to most applicable (4).

The responses to these questions were used to determine the degree of use of the marketing mix, the marketing concept and societal marketing concept. Assessment was made using a scale ranging from 1 to 4 as explained earlier in the previous paragraph.

Questions 14, 19, 25, 27, 29, 35, 37, 38, 44, 45, 46 and 51 were used to evaluate the degree to which the respondents applied the Marketing Concept. Attention in particular was given to the concern of the respondent to his/her customer. ("The Customer is King.") The reason for focussing on this key component of the marketing concept is explained in chapter 3.

Questions 24, 32, 42, 47 and 50 were used to evaluate the degree to which the respondents regarded their concern for the environment and society / the community as a matter of importance or not, - the Societal Marketing Concept.

Questions 16, 21, 33, and 36 were used to evaluate the respondent's application of the first P in the marketing mix, product.

Questions 17, 22, 28, 34, 39 41, 48 and 49 were used to evaluate the respondent's application of the second P in the marketing mix, price. Price was regarded as being relatively important and thus questions 22 and 39 were set in order to **test** the application of the practice of offering discounts or not. Similarly questions 28 and 34 tested the attention paid to the competitors pricing.

Questions 20, 23, 26, 31, 41, and 43 were used to evaluate the respondent's application of the third P in the marketing mix, promotion.

Questions 18, 30 and 40 indicated the respondent's application of the fourth P, place (distribution) in his/her offering of his/her product to customers.

Each question follows the same logic. Consider question 14 as an example.

Question 14 required an evaluation of the extent to which the respondent was concerned about customer complaint. "Most applicable" would indicate a high degree of consumer orientation while "least applicable" would indicate little or no degree of consumer orientation. The question is supported by question 35, which requires the respondent to evaluate the extent to which they have a policy to deal with customer complaints. Here too, "most applicable" would indicate a high degree of consumer orientation and "least applicable" a low degree of consumer orientation.

By combining all the responses of each question in each group, the extent to which a respondent applies the marketing concept, the societal marketing concept or the marketing mix is evaluated.

SECTION C

Question 52 required the respondent to list the marketing strategies or tactics they used in order to achieve good marketing performance. Although the wording in this question may appear academic and not necessarily in line with potential respondents, all interviewers were schooled to assist respondents with this question in order for them to indicate any tactic / activity they performed which they regarded as important in enhancing their operations business activity.

Each respondent's list was manually categorised in the post coding procedure in order to identify a group of activities actually implemented by the East London CBD hawkers which aimed at increasing their consumer support.

Once categorised, the rankings were summed in order to determine which of the activities listed were regarded as most important to those regarded as being the least important activity.

Question 53, an extension of question 52, required respondents to indicate which of the tactics they listed was in their opinion the most important, to that one they regarded as being the least important tactic. Question 53 thus indicated a ranking in order of importance of specific tactics used.

Once categorised, the rankings were summed in order to determine which of the activities listed were regarded as most important to the least important activity.

4.3.1 QUESTIONNAIRE PRE-TESTING

As a result of the time and effort spent on developing the questionnaire and on the mixed and generally vague response received from ad hoc testing of the questionnaire on a few hawkers, it was decided to get a third year marketing group of 12 students to approach as many of the hawkers as they could and request them to complete the questionnaire. From the pre-test attempts, it was clear that the researcher personally, should not accompany the students as the hawkers were very sceptical of him based on racial grounds. To say the least, the response was depressing. Besides the fact that

very few of the hawkers would co-operate with the students, those that did indicated a total lack of enthusiasm and said they were "having a look" at the questionnaire simply to please the student. The students returned with very little one could do anything with. It was at this point that the group were made aware of the hawker associations and the need for us to work through them in order to achieve the hawkers co-operation. With the help of some students, the three association heads, after much negotiation, gave us, and their hawkers, permission to go ahead with the questionnaire.

From the results received at this first attempt it was questioned as to whether the hawkers had a clear understanding of the questions. Did their literacy level in English limit their understanding? Welman and Kruger (2001:167) note as an important consideration, to "take the respondents literacy level into consideration". Because the obvious goal was to obtain accurate information from the respondents, it stood to reason that they should know exactly what is being asked of them." Was there a problem with the questionnaires? From the ensuing debate it was agreed not to change any of the questions, but, to rather focus on ensuring that the fieldworkers accepted responsibility for making sure that the hawkers knew what each question required. Thus the emphasis of the three important considerations discussed in section 4.1 on the conducting of the interviews. See also the section 4.4 below under fieldwork.

4.4 FIELDWORK

During 1998 three B-Tech students, Kwonele Mafanya, Siyabulela Mlozana and Coceka Tsewa, assisted with the fieldwork and implementation of the questionnaire. It was important for the interviewers to implement the questionnaire in a uniform manner and thus it was important for them to be aware of the following:

- that the respondents may perceive the experience as unnerving and would most likely be very sceptical of the interviewer.
- that they would need to be cautious of their initial introductions and try to establish a rapport with the respondent.

- that they should take time to explain carefully the aim of the questionnaire so as to assure them of its lack of any threat to them.
- that they should reassure the respondent that all answers would be treated in the strictest confidence and to highlight the fact that no names were being recorded on the questionnaire.

It was only once the “go ahead” was given by the chairmen of the three hawker associations that progress was made in gaining access to the hawkers. This relationship building exercise took almost a year to cement.

The flow of the questions in the questionnaire were set from general “easy to answer” questions to more specific questions in order to assist the interviewers with establishing a rapport.

The interviewers were assisted and coached through all questions in order to ensure they were totally au fait with what was required and meant by each and every question.

4.5 SAMPLE SIZE

The research area, i.e. the CBD of East London, was delineated carefully. (See point 4.2) A count of the hawkers active in this geographically defined area showed the total population to consist of approximately 100 hawkers. This number was small enough to enable the study of the entire population. The slight variation in number was not regarded as significant as these represented mainly new or temporary hawkers entering and leaving the market. It was regarded as being satisfactory to use the count of “approximately” 100 as a realistic count as the regular fluctuations of this number would not influence the results. It was felt that should the goal of 80 unspoilt questionnaires be achieved that this would contribute a sample representation of the population

4.6 DATA ANALYSIS DESIGN

With reference to the analysis of the data, it was decided that no hypothesis or propositions would be formulated. The main body of the analysis is in the form of

descriptive statistics, to be compiled from frequency tables. Relationships between factors is tested by means of SPSS and Statgraphics functions / tests. "Microsoft's Excel spreadsheet also offers an array of built-in statistical functions that are sufficient for the purpose of basic exploratory and inferential statistical analysis" says Cant et al (2003:166). These were used extensively, especially in the drawing of the column graphs and pie charts. The services of a statistical consultant were available to ensure the best applications and analyses were put to use.

Smit (1983:202) and Smit (1995:18) defines statistics as: "The science of the development and application of the most effective methods of collecting, classifying, analysing and interpreting quantitative data, so that the reliability of the findings can be determined by means of inductive reasoning based on mathematical methods of determining probability." Statistical methods must therefore be regarded as tools which will enable the researcher to interpret the research data accurately and reliably. The goal is to be able to sort the information collected, to draw conclusions from it and to show relationships between the variables in order to make meaningful predictions. Thus, the decision to use, primarily, descriptive statistics on variables that are essentially uni-variate, as classified by Chisnall (1992:329), to gauge application of marketing tactics and principles through the measurement of specific actions, while at the same time, through correlation analysis, determining any relationship between some of the demographic variables collected in section A of the questionnaire and those selected from variables in section B.

As explained by Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:46), "The purpose of correlational research is often only to detect the existence of a relationship between variable, (co-variance), which suggests a possible base for causality." It is argued that correlation does not necessarily imply causation. Thus it would be of interest to determine whether, for example, the majority of the female respondents implemented a marketing tactic which the majority of male respondents did not implement. Or, whether there was any correlation between gender and the implementation of the marketing concept?

Essentially the major part of the results of this study are analysed in the form of descriptive statistics. Welman and Kruger (2001) explain descriptive statistics to be

concerned with the description and/or summarisation of the data obtained for a group of individual units of analysis. These results were depicted in detail in Chapter 5, section 5.2

All questionnaires were edited and coding was carried out twice in consultation with the statistical consultant in order to achieve an accurate set of results. The coding was manually recorded onto each questionnaire and the data capturing was done through direct punching from each questionnaire. (See Exhibit C for the coding.)

4.7 TYPE OF STUDY

It is clear that this research into the marketing activity of the hawkers in the East London CBD is exploratory. The level of marketing understanding from a theoretical point of view is - to say the least - limited. Brink (1997) cites six reports on the business knowledge of black retailers in which it is revealed that there were several factors which curtailed the success of their businesses. The authors identified common factors which highlighted the fact that the real problem governing their success lay in the “lack of general business knowledge and skills and in particular an or inadequate perception of marketing” (Brink 1997:34). The common factors identified were:

- Lack of capital
- Lack of planning
- Lack of managerial and business skill/abilities
- Inadequate buildings and premises
- No consideration of environmental factors
- No knowledge of the correct purchasing skills
- No inventory control
- Inadequate financial management
- **No marketing knowledge**

The above factors relate to retail businessmen and thus it can safely be assumed that the position would not be any better in the hawker market. On the contrary, it is assumed that the marketing knowledge of hawkers could be a lot less developed as the retailer is seen to be far more advanced than the hawker. Research into the hawker

market thus required careful planning. As mentioned, cultural, education and language barriers needed to be addressed which played an extensive role in the development of the questionnaire discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

As discussed by Brink (1997:245) the primary objective of exploratory research is to provide insight into, and an understanding of, the problem confronting the researcher.” In this research the primary source of information was collected through the questions completed in an interview, and much insight was gained of related issues through basic observation and repetitive contact and interaction with individual hawkers and their association committees. In Brink (1997), Kinnear and Taylor (1996:139) point out that the most common source of marketing data is communicating with respondents. This was carried out in a structured manner in order to give clear direction to the type of information required. The more structured the questions were, the easier it was to collate the responses into specific categories. Section C of the questionnaire provided for unstructured responses and proved to test the ability of the researcher to categorise the respondents comments into homogenous categories.

4.8 SUMMARY

Although one could expand this chapter by discussing the theory of research methods and approaches, as done by Brink (1997), it was decided to restrict this chapter to explaining clearly what the research methodology of **this** research project was and to motivate why, with the necessary support from authoritative sources. Thus a concise explanation of the background to the study was presented. Thereafter an explanation of the questionnaire was detailed as well as an explanation of the fieldwork carried out. Elements of the sample and sample size and the design of the analysis of the data were explained. Finally the type of study was explained in order to depict the nature of the research project.