

SSGG Workshop – Eurosense 2024

Challenges & Practical Solutions for Consumer Research Implementation across Global Cultures: Perspectives from regional Sensory Science Societies

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Workshop Summary

Following presentations from the Sensory Societies making up the Global Sensory Group, attendees discussed the presentations and issues they face in their own cross cultural research. So what are the current issues we face?

Highlights included:

- In larger companies cultural differences between team members can bring about difficulties even before the data collection starts.
- Now that teams are more diverse there is an opportunity to learn from colleagues about different cultures.
- Products have different formulations in different countries which can confound studies. Planning is key to check this and potentially budget to ship products from one location.
- Ensuring sample preparation is consistent across centres this can include utensils as well as sensory standards. The main solution is careful planning and discussions with partners -in advance.
- Dealing with different levels of panel sensitivity from country to country. Advice was to share standards and then train for trained panel them.

Difference in use of terminology to describe different cultures was noted. In some Countries asking ethnicity is a sensitive subject, eg Across Europe (and may be questioned by Ethics committee) in others it was not an issue. In Africa they ask what languages people speak as a proxy for culture. In others the question might be where have you lived most of your life, where did you live as a child etc as a better representation of lived culture.

- LATAM researchers have similar issues with asking about income and use different proxies.
- Translation is a key issue. Planning is needed translate - need to plan ahead and think about the questionnaire design and may need to be adapted to different environment.
- Language itself may not have the same diversity of terms, or more terms than the research language and translation - eg texture - insufficient words for crispy and crunchy in some languages. perhaps focusing on translating method of evaluation as opposed to the term to get the attribute measured is a way. to avoid confusion of terms.
- It was indicated that sometimes consultancy's translations do not fair well and that having a native speaker, with lived experience of the culture is key. Piloting is very important even if in the same language. Some words vary across countries.

When the speakers were asked if they were given \$10M what to they would spend the money on researching first to improve our studies they suggested:

These included:

- How to identify the right people to participate in these studies
- Scale usage - liking and JAR across cultures
- Interventions to change our food environment
- A more interdisciplinary approach working with anthropologists, social scientists, psychologists etc...