

**"PITY THE POOR STUDENT": OR HOW CAN WE EXPECT STUDENTS TO GET THINGS RIGHT
WHEN THE EXPERTS ARE SO BAD AT EXPLAINING THEMSELVES?**

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ABSTRACT

The authors recently had cause to research and apply aspects of the Fishbein model. In doing so they were surprised by the number of papers in which the early stages of research were reported in a way which prevented replication or where apparently inappropriate elicitation methods had been used. While not claiming to be experts in the field the authors have considerably more experience than undergraduate students in attitude research so they became increasingly perturbed at the problems which could be presented to students who are attempting to come to grips with research methodology.

In order to investigate the issue further a survey of literature describing research using the Fishbein model was undertaken. Each paper was categorised according to a) whether an elicitation technique endorsed by Fishbein had been applied and b) the completeness of the description of the elicitation method used by the researchers. This enabled papers to be classified into one of five groups:

- 1) full description of an approved elicitation method
- 2) inadequate (for replication purposes) description of an approved elicitation method
- 3) full description of an unapproved elicitation method
- 4) inadequate (for replication purposes) description of an unapproved elicitation method
- 5) none of the above: normally because a different method has been used (for example semantic differential scales).

The authors were disappointed at the number of published articles in which apparently "unapproved" methods had been applied and also at the number of descriptions of the research which were poor enough to prevent replication of the research.

The authors feel that a further, more detailed analysis of research literature is warranted a) to validate the current findings b) to investigate to editorial policy of journals responsible and c) to explore articles in other areas of marketing research.

Furthermore, as educators we are coincidentally both researchers and students. It is incumbent upon all of us to specify clearly the methods and techniques we use in our role as researchers to enable other students to understand and replicate our work. If research is not able to be replicated the entire basis for its publication is called into question. Is it not time for us to put pressure upon researchers, reviewers and editors to ensure that good practice is established and maintained in publishing and the dissemination of research findings?

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