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NG's Answers to Esomar's  
"28 Questions to Help Research Buyers  
of Online Samples"

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[www.ngteknoloji.com](http://www.ngteknoloji.com)

## **Introduction**

NG answers Esomar's "28 questions to help research buyers of online samples".

The increasing growth of online research in Turkey has provided a range of opportunities to researchers. Online research enables fast and reliable data collection. However, this method of data collection also raises a number of ethical and technical issues.

This document serves as an official response to Esomar's "28 questions to help research buyers of online samples" and provides insight to the operational integrity and online panel management practices put in place by NG. Esomar's guidelines on conducting market research using the internet are used to set high standards for our operations and overcome these issues.

In order to ensure a reliable and robust online survey panel, NG has closely followed these guidelines. In addition, we put in place strong data management policies, high standards of business ethics, and overall integrity that ensures the development of our online research community.

This document was created on June 2013 and revisions were made on December 2014, August 2016, July 2019 and July 2020.

**Q1. What experience does your company have with providing online samples for market research?**

NG was established in September 2009. We were within the first few service providers in this field in Turkey. The NG research community has evolved since 2009.

In the first three years of the Company, NG provided market research services directly to companies. After that, we have changed our strategy and focused on providing online samples to market research companies. Now, we solely focus on our proprietary online survey panel. Our focus has helped us further improve our proficiency in this field.

We proved our strength in providing the right online samples by estimating election results in June 2011 in Turkey. We have estimated election results with 3% error.

To date, we provided online samples to leading market research companies in Turkey as well as academicians from different countries. The online surveys completed in our panel has been used in market researches for countless locally and internationally leading brands as well as academic articles by prestigious academicians. You can learn our up-to-date customer base and ask for referrals by getting in touch with us.

**Q2. Please describe and explain the type(s) of online sample sources from which you get respondents. Are these databases? Actively managed research panels? Direct marketing lists? Social networks? Web intercept (also known as river) samples?**

We only use our own online survey panel, where survey participants have to register. The panel has been developed within our company to address market research needs in Turkey. We actively manage our panel to keep panel members' response rate high and to get results fast and reliable.

We are also able to conduct surveys using client-supplied data lists for projects such as employee surveys or customer satisfaction surveys. This type of surveys are done request based.

**Q3. If you provide samples from more than one source: How are the different sample sources blended together to ensure validity? How can this be replicated over time to provide reliability? How do you deal with the possibility of duplication of respondents across sources?**

We do not provide samples from more than one source.

**Q4. Are your sample source(s) used solely for market research? If not, what other purposes are they used for?**

The members of online survey panel are communicated only for market research purposes. These members' data is only used for market research.

**Q5. How do you source groups that may be hard to reach on the internet?**

We create our media plans according to member profile distribution in our panel. The ads are targeted to groups that is hard to reach on the internet.

In addition, we employ offline recruitment techniques. These techniques include brochure delivery, articles on newspapers, magazines and reports on TV. These activities increases our reach to mass population as well as to the groups hard to reach on the internet.

We rarely use an invitation method in which panel members invite friends and acquaintances. In this method, we limit the participation to a selected

list of current members and also we limit how many new members can be invited by each current member so that we can keep the quality of new registrations high.

Overall, we aim to have wide variety of member profiles which are readily available and balanced to meet different marketing research needs.

**Q6. If, on a particular project, you need to supplement your sample(s) with sample(s) from other providers, how do you select those partners? Is it your policy to notify a client in advance when using a third party provider?**

We do not supplement our samples from other providers. This is one of our strengths to prevent multiple participation and any other complexity which may arise due to sampling from other providers. This certainly increases our data quality.

**Q7. What steps do you take to achieve a representative sample of the target population?**

We keep profile information about our panel members in many points including demographics. Initial sample selection in our panel is aligned with targeted respondents specified by client. Sample selection takes into account all demographic and other attributes of the target population. Once invitations to members are sent and answers are being collected, we continuously monitor the participation percentages towards meeting sampling targets. We may send additional invitations to specific groups within required sampling in case we need to increase participation. In addition, we can prevent participations from certain demographics once the related quota is met.

**Q8. Do you employ a survey router?**

No.

**Q9. If you use a router: Please describe the allocation process within your router. How do you decide which surveys might be considered for a respondent? On what priority basis are respondents allocated to surveys?**

N/A.

**Q10. If you use a router: What measures do you take to guard against, or mitigate, any bias arising from employing a router? How do you measure and report any bias?**

N/A.

**Q11. If you use a router: Who in your company sets the parameters of the router? Is it a dedicated team or individual project managers?**

N/A.

**Q12. What profiling data is held on respondents? How is it done? How does this differ across sample sources? How is it kept up-to-date? If no relevant profiling data is held, how are low incidence projects dealt with?**

All members are invited to complete certain surveys to gather profile information. The profile information helps us pre-select survey participants. This type of surveys is conducted once a year to make sure data is up-to-date. As we only use our proprietary online panel, there is no complexity or issues, which arise due to multiple sample sources.

**Q13. Please describe your survey invitation process. What is the proposition that people are offered to take part in individual surveys? What information about the project itself is given in the process? Apart from direct invitations to specific surveys (or to a router), what other means of invitation to surveys are respondents exposed to? You should note that not all invitations to participate take the form of emails.**

The panel members are invited to surveys based on selection criteria requirements of survey as well as the recent number of total survey participations. In addition, targeted project completion date and estimated response rates are taken into account so that the final number of initial survey invitation is decided.

We select members who meet sampling requirements and then send invitations. Survey invitations are sent as a combination of email, Facebook notification, mobile application (Android and iOS) push notification and SMS.

Participants are offered points for each survey participation. These points can be later used for money transfer into bank account, variety of gift certificates or cell phone credit top-up.

Invitation includes survey information on the followings; survey topic, reward and final date for participation. The length of the survey is generally provided on the first page of survey.

**Q14. Please describe the incentives that respondents are offered for taking part in your surveys. How does this differ by sample source, by interview length, by respondent characteristics?**

Respondents receive points when their participation and answers to a survey are approved. If they end up being screened out, they still get points, but less than a completed survey reward. In order to receive the full reward points, they have to successfully complete the survey and have their national ID number verified in their accounts.

The amount of points changes from survey to survey. We aim to reward members fairly. Hence, points get higher when estimated survey completion time gets longer. In addition, rewarded points are inversely proportional with penetration rate so that we can positively affect response rate when penetration rate gets lower.

Also, panel members can get points when they join bonus campaigns such as referral for a new member or taking a survey in a given limited time frame.

**Q15. What information about a project do you need in order to give an accurate estimate of feasibility using your own resources?**

The basic information needed is as follows:

- Sample size
- Survey quota details
- Target respondent criteria
- Incidence rate of target respondent
- Length of survey
- Subject and complexity of survey
- Timeframe to complete the project
- Any technical or non-technical details impacting sampling and data collection (i.e. mobile only, desktop only, iframe restriction, geo-fence, number of phases in the project, sensitive data collection etc.)



**Q16. Do you measure respondent satisfaction? Is this information made available to clients?**

We put a special emphasis to have strong communication with our panel members. Our main way of support channel is email. Our average response time is less than a business day. We actively monitor any feedback and complaints coming from members and use these in our decision making process.

In addition, we conduct satisfaction surveys. We identified actions to improve surveys and services we provide to our panel members. We aim to conduct these surveys once a year. Results of these satisfaction surveys will be shared with clients on inquiry basis.

**Q17. What information do you provide to debrief your client after the project has finished?**

We provide survey results if hosting is provided by us. Any other information is provided on inquiry basis. Such information need should be communicated by client before the start of project.

**Q18. Who is responsible for data quality checks? If it is you, do you have in place procedures to reduce or eliminate undesired within survey behaviours, such as (a) random responding, (b) illogical or inconsistent responding, (c) overuse of item non-response (e.g. "Don't Know") or (d) speeding (too rapid survey completion)? Please describe these procedures.**

When NG is responsible for scripting and hosting a survey, we include mechanisms to automatically identify any case which risks data quality. These mechanisms are asking the same question twice, red herrings, speeding, reasonable answers to open ended questions, consistent

answers to related questions. When we ask the same question twice, we make sure the answer cannot be different in a short period of time (e.g. gender, age). When we check for consistency, we also make sure we do not include any personal effect and judgment so that we do not interfere with participants' perceptions and thoughts.

When we identify a suspicious situation, we deep dive into respondent's answers and manually examine them. If the answers do not meet quality standards, respondent's participation is cancelled for that specific survey and answers are removed from final data report. Respondent is notified about the situation and cannot receive any reward for that specific survey.

We also have a trust score for each panel member. When a participation is approved, the trust score is increased. When a participation is cancelled, it is decreased. In addition, if we catch participant gives conflicting answers for demographic questions, then the trust score is decreased. We prevent the member taking further surveys when the trust score goes below certain level.

NG also informs participants at the beginning of each survey about the importance of carefully reading questions and providing appropriate answers.

In addition, 5% of participants must confirm their identity via SMS code that we send at the end of successful survey participation. SMS code is sent to the phone number, which has been already verified and stored in member profile. Phone numbers must be unique in the panel and can be used only in a single member profile.

**Q19. How often can the same individual be contacted to take part in a survey within a specified period whether they respond to the contact or not? How does this vary across your sample sources?**

A panel member is contacted once at the beginning of a survey. We send reminder notifications after 3 days passed and only if needed for hard to reach groups on the internet. It is quite rare to send reminder to the same individual more than once. Reminders are only sent to participants who meet the remaining quota criteria.

We prioritize respondents in survey invitations, who did not join the recent surveys. In addition, we prioritize respondents who took less than a specified number of surveys in a recent time frame. This helps us keep panel members more active as well as keeping the number of invitations and survey participations for each member at a reasonable level. On top of this, we prioritize invitations to panel members who have identified as active in recent months. Hence, inactive members do not get emails after a while. It is very important for us not to create a disturbing level of communication. Panel members can also change settings of their preferred communication channel (email, Facebook notification and SMS) and the level of communication (everything, updates, or none).

**Q20. How often can the same individual take part in a survey within a specified period? How does this vary across your sample sources? How do you manage this within categories and/or time periods?**

Members can take each survey only once. Also, we can include/exclude specific survey respondents into/from subsequent surveys, as necessary. Hence, the same individual cannot take another related survey in the following months. If there is a follow-up survey, then we can open the follow-up survey to only those, who took the main survey.

In addition, we give priority to individuals, who have not received a survey on a similar topic. This helps us reach different participants for a certain survey.

Also, we can filter out members based on their number of completed surveys in recent time frame. Therefore, number of survey participations is limited for members. This functionality helps us prevent the undesired behaviour of too many survey participations.

**Q21. Do you maintain individual level data such as recent participation history, date of entry, source, etc., on your survey**

**respondents? Are you able to supply your client with a project analysis of such individual level data?**

We log all member activity in the panel. Logs include information on survey participation history with relevant dates and login times. The logs are used for monitoring and data quality assurance. If a project requires such information to be reported, we are capable to do so on demand.

**Q22. Do you have a confirmation of respondent identity procedure? Do you have procedures to detect fraudulent respondents? Please describe these procedures as they are implemented at sample source registration and/or at the point of entry to a survey or router. If you offer B2B samples what are the procedures there, if any?**

There are two different ways of registration. One is to fill the registration form and the other is Facebook login.

For registration form, there are automated controls to verify email and phone number provided during registration. An individual cannot register without providing a correct email and phone number in use. It is not possible to register twice by using the same email or phone.

For Facebook login, we automatically receive personal information including email and demographics. Phone number can later be entered by following verification steps.

Survey data that does not meet our data quality standards are removed from the survey results.

There is a trust score calculated for each member based on their activity in the panel. The score is used in our own algorithm to increase data quality level.

If a member is identified to abuse surveys and panel, the account is frozen in the panel. Any payment of rewards to such members is rejected and they cannot redeem any rewards in their account.

We verify their identity via national ID number before we transfer any payment into their bank account, provide gift certificate or top-up on cell phone. The national ID number is unique for each citizen in the country and can be verified against personal information. Hence, it provides high level of reliability for panel members.

In addition, there is an SMS verification step at the end of a survey for 5% of respondents. In order to complete the survey, they have to send an SMS code to their phone number in the account and then enter the code.

We do not offer B2B samples.

**Q23. Please describe the 'opt-in for market research' processes for all your online sample sources.**

An individual has to fill out a form to register. When the form is successfully submitted by accepting our terms and conditions of use, an automated email is sent. The unique link in the email has to be clicked in order to verify the email account. By clicking the link, the user is directed to the website where s/he has to send an SMS code to his/her phone number to verify the phone number in the account. Following the verification of email and phone number, the user becomes eligible to participate in surveys.

As an alternative way, Facebook login or application can be used. When a person registers via Facebook, s/he accepts our terms and conditions of use by giving approval to our Facebook login/application. Email is collected from Facebook account. Hence, email is verified by Facebook registration process.

**Q24. Please provide a link to your Privacy Policy. How is your Privacy Policy provided to your respondents?**

The NG's privacy policy can be found on our online panel at [https://benderimki.com/bireysel\\_sozlesme.html](https://benderimki.com/bireysel_sozlesme.html)

The link is provided on the registration screen and the user has to give consent on the acceptance of the privacy policy and our Terms and Conditions before starting the registration process.

Link to the privacy policy and our Terms and Conditions is also provided during Facebook application registration.

In addition, our KVKK (Turkey's laws similar to GDPR) compliance is explained on the following link, which can be found on footer of the website: <https://benderimki.com/kvkk-aydinlatma-metni.htm>

Also, our cookie policy can be found on the following page: <https://benderimki.com/cerez-politikasi.aspx>

**Q25. Please describe the measures you take to ensure data protection and data security.**

All data provided by our members is stored on secure servers on cloud. Only authorized personnel have access to these servers, and only for the purpose of administering member accounts and surveys. The list of authorized personnel is monitored constantly and kept at minimum with respect to the operational needs.

Sensitive panel member data, which can be used for personal identification, is stored in database after advanced encryption methods are applied.

Our servers are secured from public and unauthorized access both physically and electronically by using advanced technologies and security systems. Our cloud server provider is a leading company in its field and applies best practices and highest security standards on the world. The security measures include followings but not limited to:

- Data encryption
- CCTV
- Swipe entry access control
- Fingerprint controls
- SSL

**Q26. What practices do you follow to decide whether online research should be used to present commercially sensitive client data or materials to survey respondents?**

It is not possible to guarantee to prevent disclosure of survey content. However, we inform survey participants about the confidentiality of the content in survey. We pay special attention to create trust and goodwill in our relationship with panel members, which plays an important role in market research.

**Q27. Are you certified to any specific quality system? If so, which one(s)?**

As being a start-up company, we decided to invest our limited resources (timewise and moneywise) into growing our online panel. However, we have always closely followed standards set by TÜAD, ESOMAR, local laws and thrive to follow more strict rules with the aim of creating the best online panel in Turkey.

We have started the certification process for GAB2014 and ISO:20252 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2020. Based on our plan for successful certification in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2020, we will apply for membership to TÜAD, Turkish Researchers' Association, and ESOMAR, European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research.

**Q28. Do you conduct online surveys with children and young people? If so, do you adhere to the standards that ESOMAR provides? What other rules or standards, for example COPPA in the United States, do you comply with?**

If we need to reach a person younger than 15, then we take consent from a child's guardian for registration. After registration, survey notifications are sent to the guardian so that s/he will always be in control and informed about surveys being taken by the child.

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