

The way Mexican society perceives INEGI

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Abstract

INEGI is an autonomous institution that is well known and well positioned among Mexican society, scoring a 7.3 out of 10 points, due to the reliability and accuracy of the data it provides. According to the study “Social perceptions” 82.4% of Mexican households are aware of its brand and up to 14% of the interviewed people have used its official data.

This study, which was conducted with the help of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM in its Spanish acronym), took into consideration households and academic experts. This was the first time households were considered for a perception study. It managed to get quantitative and qualitative information that has helped INEGI to understand the way Mexicans perceive it. This is a key fact since our credibility also relies on our public opinion.

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Abstract

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This study took into consideration households, commerces and academic experts. This was the first time households were considered for a perception study. It managed to get quantitative and qualitative information that has helped INEGI to understand the way Mexicans perceive it and it also helped to find our main areas of opportunity for improving our daily work.

This is a key fact since our credibility also relies on our public opinion. Furthermore, it has provided relevant information for improvement or dissemination and for communication processes.

1. The importance of offering quality information

Since its creation in 1983, the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) has been seeking its continuous improvement to offer Mexican society quality, relevant, accurate and timely information that supports decision-making in public and private areas in order to contribute to the national development, under the principles of accessibility, transparency, objectivity and independence.

Also, the INEGI is the coordinating body of a larger entity that integrates all the dependencies of the state (federal public administration) called the National System of Statistical and Geographical Information. Since 2008 INEGI has had this role, when the Institute was recognized as an organ of the state but with technical and patrimonial autonomy.

2. The continuous improvement of the Institute

As part of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) best practices, the Institute carried out in 2014 the “Survey for the Measurement of Trust in INEGI and its Information”, which was the first exercise to accomplish the OECD's recommendation to measure the social perception of the Institute.

Then, in 2017, the fulfillment of this international recommendation was extended, commissioning the realization of a study, with the same purpose, to a qualified and independent third party: the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM)¹, which was called: Study of Social Perceptions of INEGI².

The study included a survey in households and establishments to assess the perception of INEGI's role. The surveys were conducted between May and July of 2017 and a sample of 7,900 households was estimated to get the opinion of the inhabitants aged 15 years and over in the whole country.

For the economic units, the sample was 10,040 in order to capture the perception of those people responsible or managers of financial and insurance institutions, education services, small and large businesses.

¹ One of the most important universities in Mexico and in Latin America.

² In Spanish: “*Estudio Percepciones Sociales del INEGI*”, UNAM-III. Departamento de Investigación Aplicada y Opinión. 2017.

In the design of the instruments (questionnaires) and the operations (when they were executed), INEGI was very careful with the data obtained, so that it could help the Institute for decision-making around social perception. We sought to detect points of tension and encounter as well as capture a reliable reference of public opinion for future evaluations.

3. How they see us (main findings)

According to the study in households, 82.4% recognizes the institution (*brand awareness*), 14.2% declares to have used its information and it is granted a grade of 7.3 out of 10, placing it in the second place³ of the most reliable institutions in Mexico, below public universities.

Meanwhile, for establishments the report shows that 89.2% recognizes the institution (*brand awareness*), 10.3% declares to have used its information and it is granted a grade of 7.6 out of 10, placing it in the second place of the most reliable institutions for the informants of economic units.

The study also had a qualitative module, where it was investigated the way specialists use the information on a daily basis. This module was carried out under a focus-group modality and specialists evaluated the information provided by INEGI. The results were very positive in terms of their usefulness, relevance, confidence, credibility and breadth (it is considered that there is very vast information).

4. What can we improve?

The specialists participating in the focus groups also mentioned specific areas for improvement:

- *Accuracy*: greater accuracy and clarity in the publication of methodologies.
- *Opportunity*: they believe that some information is too sporadic and it ceases to be timely for their research (There are censuses every 5 or 10 years, for example).
- *Comparability*: in some cases, the impossibility of comparing INEGI data versus data from other international institutions or among time series of INEGI itself due to methodological adjustments.

³ Non-institutional entities such as family and teachers were not considered, although they were ranked in the first places, even before formal institutions.

- *Coverage*: more information is required by entity (Mexican states) of information that at the moment only exists disaggregated at national level.
- The website of the INEGI should be more friendly and intuitive for all types of audiences.
- The development of applications for mobile devices should be strengthened.

5. Changes in communication

This information is of great importance for the Institute, since it allows us to know where and how we are positioned before Mexican society and how it is related to other organizations. Based on these data, both the survey in households and establishments and the *focus-groups*, INEGI has made changes in the way official statistics communicate.

For example, this year it will launch a new version of the website, which will be more user-friendly and that will facilitate navigation to search by topics and not by the name of the specific program or product.

Another of the actions implemented in the field of communication has been an improvement in social networks. The dissemination of information through these channels has gone from sporadic shipments with generic messages and without strategy, to an expanded and planned dissemination, with information on the situation and presented using a greater diversity of graphic and language resources.

In terms of social networks, the presence of the Institute has been strengthened by using these channels as officers to reinforce the dissemination of the topics of interest. It went through using Twitter and Facebook to share only the press releases, to publish in these social networks information from all INEGI areas; currently, Twitter shares information about events in real time, communications and attention to users of our information. On Facebook we carry out live broadcasts of the conferences and presentation of results. Recently, on February 15th, 2018, INEGI ventured into Instagram, a social network where we mainly share images.

Conclusion

The study of Social Perceptions has been a very useful tool to know the way in which Mexican society perceives us. Its design, based on quantitative and qualitative

elements, has made it possible to detect the areas of opportunity to continue our constant improvement in adherence to the best international practices.

The findings are relevant. INEGI enjoys prestige among households and Mexican establishments, which are clearly present (*brand awareness*), higher than 80% in both cases, while placing it among the most reliable institutions in the country.

Our areas of opportunity are clear. For example, be more timely with published information and offer more data locally. They also highlight digital aspects, such as having a more user-friendly website and having apps on mobile devices.

The activities of the Communication Department are focused in that sense. The opinion of households, establishments and academic experts help to reorient our efforts to improve the dissemination of data.