

Marketing Research

Chapter 3

The Marketing Research

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Marketing Research – Lecture 3

CHAPTER 3 – The Role of Marketing Research

LESSON 3

The Marketing Research Process

Learning Objective 3.1 – Decision Making

Businesses face decisions that shape the future of the organization, its employees, and its customers. In each case, the decisions are brought about as the firm either seeks to capitalize on some opportunity or to lessen any potential negative impacts related to some market problem. A market opportunity is a situation that makes some potential competitive advantage possible. Thus, the discovery of some underserved market segment presents such an opportunity.

Decision making is the process of developing and deciding among alternative ways of resolving a problem or choosing from among alternative opportunities. A decision maker must recognize the nature of the problem or opportunity, identify how much information is currently available and how reliable it is, and determine what information is needed to better deal with the situation. Every decision-making situation can be classified based on whether it best represents a problem or an opportunity and on whether it represents a situation characterized by complete certainty or absolute ambiguity.

Certainty

Complete certainty means that the decision maker has all information needed to make an optimal decision. This includes the exact nature of the marketing problem or opportunity. For example, an advertising agency may need to know the demographic characteristics of subscribers to magazines in which it may place a client's advertisements. The agency knows exactly what information it needs and where to find the information. If a manager is completely certain about both the problem or opportunity and future outcomes, then research may not be needed at all. However, perfect certainty, especially about the future, is rare.

Uncertainty

Uncertainty means that the manager grasps the general nature of desired objectives, but the information about alternatives is incomplete. Predictions about forces that shape future events are

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educated guesses. Under conditions of uncertainty, effective managers recognize that spending additional time to gather data that clarify the nature of a decision is needed.

Ambiguity

Ambiguity means that the nature of the problem itself is unclear. Objectives are vague and decision alternatives are difficult to define. This is by far the most difficult decision situation, but perhaps the most common. Marketing managers face a variety of problems and decisions. Complete certainty and predictable future outcomes may make marketing research a waste of time. However, under conditions of uncertainty or ambiguity, marketing research becomes more attractive to the decision makers. Decisions also vary in terms of importance, meaning that some may have great impact on the welfare of the firm and others may have negligible impact.

Learning Objective 3.2 – Types of Marketing Research

Marketing research can reduce uncertainty. It also helps focus decision making. Sometimes marketing researchers know exactly what their marketing problems are and can design careful studies to test specific hypotheses. This type of research is problem-oriented and seems relatively unambiguous. The marketing research may culminate with researchers preparing a report suggesting the relative effect of each alternative curriculum on enrollment. The decision should follow relatively directly from the research. In more ambiguous circumstances, management may be totally unaware of a marketing problem.

Marketing research is almost certainly needed. Marketing research can be classified on the basis of either technique or purpose. Experiments, surveys, and observational studies are just a few common research techniques. Classifying research by its purpose shows how the nature of a decision situation influences the research methodology. The following section introduces the three types of marketing research:

1. Exploratory
2. Descriptive
3. Causal

Matching the particular decision situation with the right type of research is important in obtaining useful research results.

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Exploratory Research

Exploratory research is conducted to clarify ambiguous situations or discover ideas that may be potential business opportunities. Exploratory research is not intended to provide conclusive evidence from which to determine a particular course of action. In this sense, exploratory research is not an end unto itself. Usually it is conducted with the expectation that more research will be needed to provide more conclusive evidence. Using exploratory research can sometimes also make the difference in determining the usefulness of other related research. Rushing into detailed surveys before it is clear exactly what decisions need to be made can waste time, money, and effort by providing irrelevant information. Exploratory research is particularly useful in new product development.

Research can allow consumers to interact with robots as a form of exploratory research. The results suggest that consumers interact much more when the robot has human qualities, including the ability to walk on two legs. Researchers noticed that people will actually talk to the robot (which can understand basic oral commands) more when it has human qualities. In addition, consumers do seem entertained by a walking, talking, dancing robot. Thus, this has allowed each company to form more specific research questions focusing on the relative value of a robot as an entertainment device or as a security guard. In our university example, it could be that exploratory research is needed to help identify concerns about nontraditional course delivery for business classes. This exploratory research should include open-ended interviews with faculty, students, and alumni. By doing so, specific hypotheses can be developed that test the relative attractiveness of alternative curricula to students, the effect of online instruction on job satisfaction and on alumni quality perceptions. These hypotheses may be tested by either or both of the remaining two research types.

Descriptive Research

The major purpose of descriptive research, as the name implies, describes characteristics of objects, people, groups, organizations, or environments. Put more simply, descriptive research tries to “paint a picture” of a given situation. Marketing managers frequently need to determine who purchases a product, portray the size of the market, identify competitors’ actions, and so on. Descriptive research addresses who, what, when, where, and how questions.

Descriptive research often helps describe market segments.

Causal Research

A decision maker can positively influence business decisions if they are aware of the factors that contribute to crucial outcomes like sales and employee happiness. Because they increase control, causal inferences are particularly potent. Causal inferences can be drawn thanks to causal research. In other words, causal research looks for links between causes and effects. When something produces an effect, it means that it causes it to occur. The result is the effect. Causative research typically comes after exploratory and/or descriptive research. Researchers often have a solid understanding of the phenomenon being researched in causal investigations. As a result, the research is able to forecast with some degree of certainty the cause and effect correlations that will be put to the test. Although having more information about the situation is beneficial, it has costs. Implementing causal research designs might be time-consuming. Additionally, they frequently include pricey, elaborate designs. Managers may frequently desire the security that causal inferences can provide, but they are not always prepared to invest the time and money necessary to obtain them.

Causality

Managers ideally want to understand how changing one event—like using a new product logo—will affect another important event, like sales. The goal of causal study is to prove that when we do one thing, another will inevitably happen. A conclusion like this is called a causal inference. Even while we frequently refer to something as a "cause" in common speech, doing so scientifically is more difficult. Only highly specific causal evidence can be used to support a causal inference. There are three essential components of causal evidence:

1. Temporal Sequence
2. Concomitant Variance
3. Nonspurious Association

Temporal Sequence

The time order of occurrences is referred to as temporal sequence. In other words, one need for causality is that the occurrences have a proper causal order, or temporal sequence. The result cannot come about before the cause. If a restaurant's sales decline before the arrival of a new chef, it would be

challenging for the manager to attribute the decline to the new chef. If advertising affects sales, it must do so prior to the change in sales.

Concomitant Variation

When two occurrences "covary," which means they vary systematically, concomitant variation happens. Concomitant variation, in terms of causality, refers to the observation of a change in the outcome along with a change in the cause. It's common to utilize correlation—which we cover in a later chapter—to symbolize concurrent variation. When there is no systematic fluctuation among the variables, causality is impossible. A retail store's vacation policy, for instance, cannot be held accountable for a change in customer satisfaction if the policy is never changed. The two incidents are unrelated to one another. On the other hand, if two occurrences change at the same time, one of them can be the cause of the other. If enrolment in a university's traditional in-class MBA programs declines as the number of online MBA course offerings increases, the decline may be due to the online course offerings. The systematic variation, however, does not ensure it.

Nonspurious Association

Any correlation between a cause and an effect that is nonspurious suggests that it is real and not just the result of another factor. A false association is one that was made. Even when the other two conditions are met, a causal inference is frequently impossible because the cause and effect have a similar cause, meaning that both may be influenced by a third variable. For instance, a city employee spots a concerning pattern.

In summary, causal research should do all of the following:

1. Establish the appropriate causal order or sequence of events
2. Measure the concomitant variation between the presumed cause and the presumed effect
3. Examine the possibility of spuriousness by considering the presence of alternative plausible causal factors

Degrees of Causality

According to conditional causality, a cause is required but insufficient to produce an effect. A weaker causal inference would be this. The cause can result in the effect, but it cannot do so solely, according to one theory of conditional causality. The cause may result in the effect if additional factors are in place. We are aware that there are more medical causes for cancer. For example, nutrition and lifestyle are both likely causes of cancer. So, smoking might be viewed as a conditioned cause of cancer if a person smokes and has a diet and lifestyle that encourage cancer. The causal inference would be refuted, though, if we could identify a cancer victim who never smoked. Even though contributing causality is the weakest type of causality, it is a valuable idea. It is neither required nor sufficient for a cause to exist in order for an effect to occur. However, the three categories of evidence listed on the previous page can be used to establish causal evidence. Any outcome could have a number of causes. So long as the addition of other potential causes does not invalidate the association between the event and the impact, the event can be a contributing cause of something. When we talk about how to test relationships later on in the text, this will become more apparent. So long as the presence of other potential causes does not cause both smoking and cancer, smoking can therefore be a contributing cause of cancer.

Experiments

Marketing experiments hold the greatest potential for establishing cause-and-effect relationships. An experiment is a carefully controlled study in which the researcher manipulates a proposed cause and observes any corresponding change in the proposed effect. An experimental variable represents the proposed cause and is controlled by the researcher by manipulating it. Manipulation means that the researcher alters the level of the variable in specific increments. So, managers often want to make decisions about the price and distribution of a new product. In other words, both price and the type of retail outlet in which a product is placed are considered potential causes of sales. A study can be designed which manipulates both the price and distribution.

Uncertainty Influences the Type of Research

The most appropriate type and the amount of research needed are determined in part by how much uncertainty surrounds the marketing situation motivating the research. Exhibit 3.4 contrasts the types of research and illustrates that exploratory research is conducted during the early stages of decision making. At this point, the decision situation is usually highly ambiguous and management is very uncertain about what actions should be taken. When management is aware of the problem but lacks some knowledge, descriptive research is usually conducted. Causal research requires sharply defined problems. Each type of research also produces a different type of result. In many ways, exploratory research is the most productive since it should yield large numbers of ideas. It is discovery-oriented and as such, unstructured approaches can be very successful. Too much structure in this type of research may lead to more narrowly focused types of responses that could stifle creativity. Thus, although it is productive, its results usually need further testing and evaluation before they can be made actionable. At times, managers do take managerial action based only on exploratory research results. Sometimes, management may not be able to or may not care to invest the time and resources needed to conduct further research. Decisions made based only on exploratory research can be riskier since exploratory research does not test ideas among a scientific sample.

Descriptive research is usually focused around one or more fairly specific research questions. It is usually much more structured, and for many common types of marketing research, it can yield managerially actionable results. For example, descriptive research is often used to profile a market segment both demographically and psychographically. Results like this can greatly assist firms in deciding when and where to offer their goods or services for sale. Causal research is usually very tightly focused around a small number of research hypotheses. Experimental methods require tight control of research procedures. Thus, causal research is highly structured to produce specific results. Causal research results are often managerially actionable since they suggest that if management changes the value of a “cause,” some desirable effect will come about.

Learning Objective 3.3 – Stages in the Research Process

Marketing research, like other forms of scientific inquiry, involves a sequence of highly interrelated activities. The stages of the research process overlap continuously, and it is somewhat of an

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oversimplification to state that every research project has exactly the same ordered sequence of activities. Nevertheless, marketing research often follows a general pattern. The stages are:

1. Defining the research objectives
2. Planning a research design
3. Planning a sample
4. Collecting the data
5. Analyzing the data
6. Formulating the conclusions and preparing the report

The research objectives cannot be properly defined without managerial input. After all, it is the manager who ultimately has to make the decision. It is also the manager who may ask for additional research once a report is given. In practice, the stages overlap somewhat from a timing perspective. Later stages sometimes can be completed before earlier ones. The terms forward linkage and backward linkage reflect the interrelationships between stages. Forward linkage implies that the earlier stages influence the later stages. Thus, the research objectives outlined in the first stage affect the sample selection and how the way data are collected. The sample selection question affects the wording of questionnaire items. For example, if the research concentrates on respondents with low educational levels, the questionnaire wording will be simpler than if the respondents were college graduates. Backward linkage implies that later steps influence earlier stages of the research process. If it is known that the data will be collected via e-mail, then the sampling should include those with e-mail access. A very important example of backward linkage is the knowledge that the executives who will read the research report are looking for specific results. The professional researcher anticipates executives' needs for information throughout the planning process, particularly during the analysis and reporting.

Alternatives in the Research Process

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Each step of the research process requires the researcher to make a decision from a variety of options. You might think of the research process as a map. It is crucial to keep in mind that there is no one proper or ideal path for every journey. The route taken relies on the destination desired as well as the available resources (money, time, labor, etc.) for the journey. The map metaphor is helpful for marketing researchers since different avenues can be taken at different stages. The fastest route could be the best choice when there are severe time limitations. The best course of action may differ greatly when there is an abundance of both financial and human resources.

Defining the Research Objectives

Deliverables is a term frequently used in consulting to outline the goals for a research client. The type of decision-making situation encountered is where the research objectives were born. The goals can include investigating a new product in a new market. Alternately, they can involve evaluating the impact of a policy change on the level of service. A variety of research designs are based on a variety of aims. The objectives of applied or market research cannot be stated before the decision circumstance is known. The actual decision-maker and the chief researcher must both agree on this. This comprehension is frequently referred to as a problem statement. The word "problem" generally implies that something has gone wrong. Prior to the start of the research, this isn't always the case. Actually, the goal of the study can be to simply define an opportunity, describe a condition, or keep track of and assess ongoing operations. Managers and researchers must first agree on the actual business "problem" that the research would attempt to solve before developing the research objectives. In order to "discover" this issue, they conducted a number of interviews and used a document known as a study proposal.

It should be emphasized that this method leans more toward confirmation than discovery. At the beginning of the study process, both managers and researchers might not have a precise awareness of the circumstances. Managers might simply be able to list potential problem symptoms. Although sales may be falling, management might not be fully aware of the issue. As a result, the problem description is frequently only made in broad strokes; the subject of the investigation is not yet known with certainty.

Defining the Managerial Decision Situation

It's important to keep in mind the proverb "a problem well defined is a problem half solved" when conducting marketing research. This aphorism underlines how giving the research problem a clear

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definition gives it a sense of direction. A thorough understanding of the problem definition enables the researcher to choose the appropriate study goals. The likelihood of gathering data that is necessary and relevant while avoiding collecting excess data will be significantly higher if the research's objective is clear. According to Albert Einstein, "the formulation of a problem is often more essential than its solution." Marketing managers would do well to heed this advise. Managers tend to focus more on getting the right response than formulating the best inquiry. Additionally, they don't want to spend time analyzing numerous options; they just want a solution immediately.

It can be more challenging to define a problem correctly than to find a solution. If data are gathered for marketing research before the nature of the marketing challenge has been adequately considered, they probably won't allow for useful results. Marketing research needs to have precise designs and defined objectives. Unfortunately, many research problems are formulated with little to no planning.

Often, the marketing researcher won't get involved until line management realizes that it's necessary to learn more about a specific element of the marketing mix. The precise nature of the incident may still not be clear at this stage. The marketing researcher and management can work together to start accurately define a problem area after it has been identified. Research is frequently undertaken without having its aims defined clearly. The optimal time to start a research endeavor is at the finish, yet far too many researchers overlook this. The research method is determined by knowing what has to be done. A mistake or omission in the problem objectives is likely to be expensive and impossible to fix later in the process.

Exploratory Research

Exploratory research can be used to help identify the decisions that need to be made. The preliminary activities undertaken can yield results that place the situation into a more easily researched context. Exploratory research can progressively narrow the scope of the research topic and help transform ambiguous problems into well-defined ones that yield specific research objectives. By investigating any existing studies on the subject, talking with knowledgeable individuals, and informally investigating the situation, the researcher can progressively sharpen the concepts. After such exploration, the researcher should know exactly which data to collect during the formal phases of the project and how to conduct the project.

Previous Research

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As a general rule, researchers should first investigate previous research to see whether or not others may have addressed the same research problems previously to gain a better understanding of the area. Previous research reports should be searched within the company's archives. In addition, some firms specialize in providing various types of research reports, such as economic forecasts. The Census of Population and the Survey of Current Business are each examples of previous research conducted by an outside source.

Previous research may also exist in the public domain. A literature review is a directed search of published works, including periodicals and books, that discusses theory and presents empirical results that are relevant to the topic at hand. A literature survey is common in applied market research studies but it is a fundamental requirement of a basic (i.e., marketing) research report. Literature reviews are conducted using traditional library research tools. The Internet and modern electronic search engines available through most university libraries have made literature reviews simpler to do and allowed them to be done in less time. Suppose, for example, that a bank is interested in determining the best site for additional automated teller machines. A logical first step would be to investigate the factors that bankers in other parts of the country consider important. By reading articles in banking journals, management might quickly discover that the best locations are inside supermarkets located in residential areas where people are young, highly educated, and earning higher-than-average incomes. These data might lead the bank to investigate census information to determine where in the city such people live. Reviewing and building on the work already compiled by others is an economical starting point for most research.

Pilot Studies

Before purchasing a car, almost all buyers take it for a test drive. A pilot study accomplishes the same thing for the researcher. A pilot study is a small-scale research endeavor that gathers information from participants who are comparable to those who will be included in the main study. It can act as a roadmap for a bigger research project or look at particular areas of the study to determine whether the chosen methods will function as expected. Pilot studies are essential for fine-tuning procedures and lowering the likelihood that the main study may have catastrophic flaws. This is especially true for experimental research, which heavily depends on accurate manipulations of experimental variables. Pilot studies are frequently helpful in adjusting study goals. Pretests are another name for pilot investigations. Pretest is a fairly descriptive name for a small-scale study, the results of which are simply preliminary and are only meant to help with the design of a future study. Focus groups are occasionally utilized as a pilot

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research. Six to twelve participants participate in a focus group interview, which has a fluid structure. The method is predicated on the idea that people are more open to discussing issues when they can do so in a group discussion setting. Focus group participants occasionally build on one another's remarks to produce concepts that would be challenging to articulate in another interview format.

Stating Research Objectives

With or without the use of exploratory research, the researcher must first identify and define the issue before formally stating the research goals. This assertion specifies the kind of study that is required and the knowledge that might be obtained, allowing the decision-maker to make well-informed decisions. The process of turning the managerial choice into something practical comes to a close with the announcement of research objectives.

The business situation is described to the researcher in a written decision statement. In certain cases, the decision statement or statements are directly addressed by the research objectives. As a result, the study objectives serve as a kind of agreement that binds the researcher to conduct the required research. They are referred to as deliverables in applied market research because of this. The rest of the study process is guided by the research objectives. In fact, the researcher and managers must concur that the aims are reasonable and will result in useful information before moving forward.

What Is A Theory?

In the end, theory contributes to choose the right research goals. A formal, logical explanation of some events that also makes predictions about how various components will interact is known as a theory. A theory is developed by evaluating earlier research results from related studies, making straightforward logical deductions, and having understanding of relevant theoretical fields. For instance, the researcher may first study earlier studies looking at the effects of color on packaging design and retail store design if a web designer is trying to decide what color the background of the page should be. Additionally, he or she might come across notions that address the wavelength of various hues or those that clarify retail atmospherics. This may result in certain forecasts that suggest blue is a nice background color. While it would appear that theory solely applies to academic or fundamental marketing research, theory is also important for comprehending applied research. The researcher must be able to coherently articulate the business condition before establishing study objectives. The researcher wouldn't know where to begin without this kind of clarification.

What Is A Hypothesis?

A formal statement that explains an outcome is known as a hypothesis. Testable hypotheses (plural) are required. To put it another way, a hypothesis should be expressed as a proposition. In order to evaluate hypotheses empirically, we frequently employ statistics on data. By using data, anything has been empirically tested against reality. We refer to a theory as being supported when the results are compatible with it. We say a hypothesis is not supported when the evidence contradicts the hypothesis. When the results match the prediction, we are inclined to say that we have proved the hypothesis, but this isn't actually the case. Our finding is based on statistics, therefore there is always a chance that it could be incorrect. Even if we can occasionally be unbelievably certain of our conclusion, statistics cannot absolutely demonstrate the truth of a hypothesis.

Planning the Research Design

As part of the research design stage, the researcher must create the research design after formulating the research problem. A research design is a comprehensive strategy that outlines the techniques and steps to be taken in order to gather and analyze the required data. A research design offers a framework or game plan for the investigation. To guarantee that the data gathered is useful for solving the problem, study objectives established in the early stages of research are incorporated into the design. The researcher must also choose the information sources, the design approach (such as an experiment or survey), the sampling strategy, the time frame, and the budget for the study.

Selection of the Basic Research Method

Once more, the researcher is forced to choose. Four fundamental design strategies for descriptive and causal research are illustrated in Exhibit 3.6: surveys, experiments, secondary data, and observation. Which approach should be used will depend on the study's goals, the data sources that are accessible, the need for the decision to be made quickly, and the cost of collecting the data. We'll think about the managerial issues of choosing the research design later. The survey is the most used technique for producing primary data. A survey is a research method in which a sample is in some way interviewed or in which the conduct of the respondents is noticed and reported. Most frequently, civil engineers who use a transit to characterize a piece of property are referred to as surveyors. Similar to this, marketing researchers use a questionnaire to describe a certain market niche. An integral part of creating a survey

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study design is the work of creating a list of questions and developing the layout of the printed or written questionnaire.

The primary benefit of the observation technique is that it documents behavior independently of reports from respondents. Observational data are frequently gathered quietly and passively without a respondent's active involvement. The ACNielsen Company, for instance, utilizes a "people meter" affixed to televisions to record the shows each person of the household watches. By doing this, the respondents' potential bias of reporting that they watched the State of the Union speech rather than a situation comedy on another network is removed. The process of observation is more complicated than simply "nose counting," and it is more challenging than a novice researcher might anticipate. It is impossible to witness many interesting things, including attitudes, opinions, motivations, and other intangible mental states.

The "Best" Research Design

There are others who contend that there is no one best research design. As a result, the researcher frequently has a variety of options for achieving the stated research objectives. Think about the researcher who has to predict sales for the future season. Surveying management opinion, compiling sales force opinions, surveying customer expectations, projecting trends, and assessing market dynamics are some of the frequently utilized forecasting techniques. Any of these could result in an accurate projection. With practice, one becomes more adept at choosing the best study design. Because they are most familiar with this methodology, inexperienced researchers frequently assume that a survey methodology is always the optimum design. The Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago has the option of conducting a survey to ascertain the relative level of popularity of its exhibitions. Unobtrusive observation techniques were recommended as a significantly less expensive alternative by a creative researcher experienced in different research styles. The researcher advised the museum to simply record how frequently the floor tiles in front of the various displays needed to be replaced in order to determine where the busiest traffic occurred. When this was finished, the museum discovered that the exhibit on chick hatching was the most well-liked. At a significantly lesser cost, this strategy produced results comparable to those of a survey.

Sampling

The sampling stage is a separate stage of the research process, even if the sampling plan is described in the research design. However, we shall discuss the sample planning and sample generating procedures combined in this part for the sake of convenience. You have just performed a sample if you take a taste of a steak and decide that it requires salt. Sampling refers to any process that derives conclusions from data collected from a subset of the population. A sample is, in other words, a portion of a broader population. A researcher need not choose every item in a population if specific statistical approaches are used because a decent sample should produce results that are representative of the population as a whole. Of course, samples do not provide accurate estimations of the population when errors are made.

Consequently, obtaining a sample that accurately represents the population is crucial for the validity of research-based forecasts. The first question to ask while sampling is, "Who is to be sampled?" Finding a target demographic is necessary for the solution to this main query. It might not be simple to define this population and choose the sampling units. The chosen sampling units won't represent potential consumers if, for instance, a savings and loan organization ask those who currently have accounts about their opinions on images. One of the most important parts of the sample plan is identifying the target demographic. The size of the sample is the following sampling issue. How much of a sample should there be? Even while management would want to screen every prospective customer for a good or service, doing so might be pointless and impossible. Larger samples are typically more accurate than smaller ones, but with adequate probability sampling, a small percentage of the entire population can provide a trustworthy assessment of the whole. How big of a sample must be taken in order for it to accurately represent the universe or population will be discussed later. How to choose the sampling units is the key sampling decision. The most popular sort of sampling may be simple random sampling, which gives every unit in the population an equal and known probability of being chosen. This is simply one kind of sampling, though. The researcher will need to decide which sampling technique is best for achieving the stated study objectives in order to determine the best sample plan.

Gathering Data

Once the sampling plan is set in stone, the data collection stage can begin. Information is gathered through the process of data gathering. Data can be collected by humans, like observers or reporters, or by

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machines, like with scanner data. There are many ways to get information when doing study, which is obvious. Research participants have to take part in surveys in person. This could mean filling out a survey or talking to an employee. In this way, they are a bother. Methods of getting information that don't bother the people being studied are called "unobtrusive." They might not even know that study is being done. For example, one way to get information is to count how many people drive by a suggested franchise location. No matter how the data are gathered, it is important to make as few mistakes as possible. For example, the way data is collected should be the same everywhere. If an interviewer asks questions in the wrong way or writes down what a subject says in the wrong way (not word for word), it will lead to big mistakes in collecting data.

Processing and Analyzing Data

Editing and Coding

This happens throughout the stage of data processing and analysis. In this case, the raw data will be mined for the information content. Editing and coding the data is typically the first step in data processing. Editing include looking over the data gathering forms for errors, legibility, and classification consistency. Before the data are input into the computer, the editing procedure fixes issues like interviewer mistakes (a response entered on the incorrect section of a questionnaire, for example). Meaningful categories and character symbols must be created for groupings of responses before data can be tallied. Codes are the guidelines used to interpret, classify, record, and transfer data to data storage media. This coding procedure makes manual or computer tabulation easier. The data are entered into the computer and checked if computer analysis will be employed. Computer-assisted (online) interviewing is one example of how technology advancement has affected the way that research is conducted. Telephone interviewers read survey questions that were presented on a monitor while sat at computer terminals. The interviewer poses the queries, after which the respondents' responses are entered by typing. Thus, intermediate processes that could bring errors are removed as answers are gathered and processed into the computer at the same moment.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of using logic to comprehend the collected data. Analysis can be as easy as identifying recurring patterns and summarizing the pertinent information gleaned from the research. The parameters of the research design, the type of data collected, and the information needs of management will all influence the best analytical technique for data analysis. Simple frequency

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distributions can be depicted using statistical analysis, as well as more sophisticated multivariate approaches like multiple regression.

Drawing Conclusions and Preparing a Report

The dissemination of research findings is one of a researcher's most crucial tasks. Although it is the study project's last stage, this one is by no means the least significant. The stage of preparing the report's conclusions and report involves analyzing the research findings, outlining their ramifications, and coming to the correct managerial judgments. The deliverables outlined in the research proposal should be satisfied by these conclusions. In addition, it's critical that the researcher take into account the fact that persons have a range of cognitive abilities. A group of PhDs should not get the report in the same manner as a group of line managers. There are far too many publications on applied market research that are overly technical explanations of advanced research techniques. In many cases, management is simply interested in a summary of the results rather than a thorough analysis on the research design and statistical findings. The research will have been for naught if the marketing manager leaves the findings on his or her desk unread. It is impossible to overstate the value of excellent communication. The usefulness of research depends on its applications.

Learning Objective 3.4 – The Research Program Strategy

A study is referred to be a research project when there is only one or a small number of research objectives that can be addressed in it. We've underlined the requirement for the researcher to choose certain methods for resolving one-dimensional issues, such determining market niches, picking the optimum packaging style, or test-marketing a new product. But if you consider a company's marketing mix activity over a certain amount of time (like a year), you'll see that marketing research is a continual process rather than a one-off activity. A survey may come after an exploratory research study, or a researcher may carry out a unique research project for each component of the marketing mix. The various types of research that may be conducted when a new product is being developed include market potential studies to determine the market's size and characteristics, product usage testing to document consumers' reactions to prototype products, brand name and packaging research to identify the product's symbolic connotations, and test marketing the new product. Therefore, we refer to this as a study program when multiple linked studies join together to address concerns regarding a single organization. Management should see marketing research from the perspective of strategic planning because research is an ongoing process. The overall plan for a company to use marketing research is referred to as the program strategy.

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It is a planning exercise that situates a number of marketing research studies inside the marketing strategy of the organization. A term insurance policy can be compared to the marketing research program plan. Marketing research is conducted to reduce risk and boost certainty. The marketing manager's job is a little bit safer thanks to the many term insurance plans that each study project serves as.

REFERENCES FOR FURTHER READING

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Progress Check:

Requirements:

1. Due Date : _____
2. Essay format, minimum of 20 words and maximum of 100 words.
3. Format



Questions

1. Define decision-making and comprehend the function that research performs in decision-making.
2. Group market research into one of three categories.
3. Differentiate between the term's "theory" and "hypothesis"

Answer

1. Managers make decisions while deciding between alternative approaches to fixing issues or seizing opportunities. Decision-makers must understand the nature of the issue or opportunity, as well as the information that is currently accessible and that which is still needed. Every marketing choice can be categorized along a spectrum that runs from total assurance to complete ambiguity. Managers can learn more about the various options through research and then make an educated judgment as to which one, if any, is the best to pursue.
2. Three main categories of marketing research initiatives are exploratory, descriptive, and causal. Which type of research is most appropriate—exploratory, descriptive, or causal—depends on how precisely the decision circumstance is specified. Exploratory research is best suited when the choice

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is highly uncertain or uncovering new ideas is the goal. By describing traits of things, people, or organizations, descriptive research aims to draw a picture of the situation at hand. Cause-and-effect connections are found through causal research. Or, to put it another way, what change in "Y" will happen when something changes in "X"? For proof of causality to be established, three requirements must be met: Temporal sequence states that the cause must come first, concurrent variation states that a change in the cause is accompanied by a change in the effect, and nonspurious association states that the cause is real and is not countered by the existence of another possible cause.

3. A hypothesis is a formal assertion that justifies an assertion. It is stated in a testable manner. A formal, logical explanation of some events that also makes predictions about how various components will interact is known as a theory. A theory is developed by evaluating earlier research results from related studies, making straightforward logical deductions, and having understanding of relevant theoretical fields. In a theory, the explanations are frequently presented as hypotheses. They are quite helpful in research since they provide a notion of what to anticipate before testing. As a result, they also assist in identifying the variables that must be included in the research.

Quiz 3- True or False

1. Marketing research is conducted to reduce risk and boost certainty.
2. Using example theory Prior study examining the influence of color on package design and retail shop design may be consulted by the researcher before advising a web designer on the color of the page's backdrop.
3. Pilot studies are frequently helpful in adjusting study goals. Posttests are another name for pilot investigations.
4. One popular method of marketing experimentation is test marketing.
5. An event may be a contributing cause of anything if the existence of other potential causes does not render it irrelevant to the relationship between it and the consequence.

Answer

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1. T
2. T
3. F
4. T
5. T

Identification

1. _____ denotes that the researcher changes the variable's level in predetermined steps.
2. _____ denotes that the researcher modifies the variable's level in predetermined increments.
3. A _____ is constructed through a process of analyzing earlier results of comparable investigations, straightforward logical reasoning, and familiarity with relevant theoretical fields.
4. _____ is a means for managers to learn more about the many options and make a well-informed bet as to which option, if any, is best to pursue.
5. We refer to a hypothesis as being _____ when the evidence supports it.

Answer

1. **Manipulations**
2. **Objectives**
3. **Theory**
4. **Research**
5. **Supported**