

Marketing Research
Chapter 8
Survey Research: An Overview
Lecturer: Michaella DeLeon Castillo, DBA - Philippines

Marketing Research – Lecture 8

LESSON 8

Survey Research: An Overview

Learning Objective 8.1 – The Nature of Surveys

Respondents are the individuals who provide answers to written or verbal research questions. These questionnaires or interviews collect information via mail, telephone, online, or in-person. Consequently, a survey is defined as a technique for gathering primary data through communication with a representative sample of individuals. Surveys provide a moment-in-time snapshot. The term sample survey emphasizes that the objective of contacting respondents is to obtain a representative sample of the target population.

Survey Objectives: Type of Information Gathered

Depending on the objectives of a survey, the types of information gathered vary substantially. Typically, surveys aim to characterize current events or discover the motivations behind a particular marketing activity. Common survey objectives include identifying target market characteristics, measuring consumer attitudes, and characterizing consumer purchasing patterns. Rarely do marketing surveys collect only one type of factual information. Product development and advertising campaigns are aided by inquiries about product use and desirable features. The survey may also capture demographic and media exposure data to aid in the development of a market segmentation strategy.

Advantages of Surveys

Surveys are a rapid, cost-effective, efficient, and accurate method for assessing population information. The preceding examples demonstrate that surveys are highly adaptable and extremely valuable to managers when conducted correctly.

Learning Objective 8.2 – Errors in Survey Research

When evaluating the quality of a survey, a manager must estimate its precision.

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Random Sampling Error

The majority of surveys attempt to depict a representative cross-section of a specific target population. Even with technically correct random probability samples, statistical errors will occur as a result of random variation in the selected elements.

Systematic Error

The other main source of survey error, systematic error, results from a flaw in the research design or a blunder in the research's execution. These errors or biases are also known as nonsampling errors because systematic errors include all sources of error other than those introduced by the random sampling procedure. A sample has a bias if its results consistently deviate in one direction from the true value of the population parameter. The numerous sources of error that influence answers in some systematic manner can be grouped into two broad categories: respondent error and administrative error.

Learning Objective 8.3 – Respondent Error

Surveys request responses from respondents. If individuals cooperate and provide honest responses, a survey will likely achieve its purpose. Nonresponse error and response bias, the two main categories of respondent error, may lead to sample bias if these conditions are not met.

Nonresponse Error

Few surveys have response rates of one hundred percent. However, a researcher who receives only 1% of responses to a five-page e-mail questionnaire about spark plug manufacturers may have a serious problem. The researcher must believe that consumers who responded to the questionnaire are representative of consumers who did not respond in order to use the results. Nonresponse error refers to the statistical discrepancies between a survey that includes only respondents and one that also includes those who did not respond. Nonresponse is notably prevalent in mail and Internet surveys, but it also poses a threat to telephone and in-person interviews.

Response Bias

A response bias occurs when respondents tend to provide biased responses to queries. People may intentionally or unintentionally distort the truth. If a measurement error occurs because

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respondents' responses are intentionally or unintentionally falsified or misrepresented, the resulting sample bias will be a response bias. When identifying response bias, researchers must include a corrective measure.

Deliberate Falsification

Occasionally, individuals intentionally provide false responses. It is difficult to determine why individuals intentionally provide false information. People may misrepresent their answers in order to appear intelligent, conceal personal information, avoid humiliation, and so on. For instance, respondents may recall the total amount of money spent on grocery shopping, but they may forget the precise prices of the individual items. In order to avoid appearing ignorant or unconcerned about prices, they may provide their best estimate rather than admitting they cannot recall. Occasionally, respondents become tired with the interview and provide answers in an attempt to escape the interviewer. Other times, respondents attempt to appear knowledgeable by providing answers they believe are expected. On occasion, they provide answers merely to appease the interviewer.

Unconscious Misrepresentation

Response bias can arise from the question format, the question content, or another stimulus, even when a respondent is consciously attempting to be truthful and cooperative. Respondents who misunderstand queries may provide unwittingly biased responses. Or, they may be willing to respond but unable to do so due to forgetting the specifics. The answer to the question "When was the last time you attended a concert?" may be an educated conjecture because the respondent has forgotten the exact date. A respondent may also be biased if they have not considered an unexpected question. Many respondents will respond to queries without giving them much thought. For instance, in the majority of studies of consumers' purchasing intentions, the predictability of the intention scales is contingent on the subject's proximity to making a purchase. Inaccurate predictions of purchase behavior cannot be made based on the intentions of respondents with limited knowledge of the brand or store alternatives being surveyed or who have not yet made any purchase plans.

Types of Response Bias

There are four distinct types of response bias: acquiescence bias, extremity bias, interviewer bias, and social desirability bias. These categories overlap and do not exclude one another. A single biased response may be distorted for numerous complex reasons, with some distortions being intentional and others being unintentional misrepresentations.

Acquiescence Bias

Certain respondents are extremely amenable. They appear to concur with virtually every questionable statement. The tendency to agree with all or the majority of queries is referred to as acquiescence bias. This bias is especially prevalent in the research of new products. Questions about a new product idea are typically accompanied by a degree of acquiescence bias, as respondents assign positive connotations to the majority of new ideas.

Extremity Bias

Some individuals tend to respond to queries with extreme positions, while others consistently avoid extreme positions and tend to respond in a more moderate manner. Response styles differ by individual, and extreme responses may introduce an extremity bias into the data.

Interviewer Bias

As a result of the interaction between interviewer and respondent, response bias may occur. The survey will be tainted by interviewer bias if the interviewer's presence influences respondents to provide false or altered responses. Many housewives and retirees view an interviewer's visit as a welcome escape from their daily routine. Others may provide answers they believe will satisfy the interviewer rather than the truth.

Social Desirability Bias

A social desirability bias may occur consciously or unconsciously due to the respondent's desire to make a good impression or save face in front of the interviewer. To gain prestige, incomes may be embellished, education may be exaggerated, and perceived respectable answers may be provided. In contrast, responses to queries seeking factual information or responses about matters of public

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knowledge (such as postal code, number of children, etc.) are typically quite accurate. The social desirability bias is especially significant in research involving sensitive or intimate topics, such as the sexual behavior of respondents.

Learning Objective 8.4 – Administrative Error

An administrative error is the result of improper administration or execution of a research endeavor. Administrative blunders are the result of negligence, confusion, neglect, omission, or another error. Data processing error, sample selection error, interviewer error, and interviewer cheating are the four forms of administrative error.

Data-Processing Error

As with any arithmetic or procedural process, computer data processing is susceptible to error because data must be edited, coded, and entered by humans. The veracity of computer-processed data is dependent upon correct data entry and programming. Errors in data processing can be reduced by establishing thorough procedures for verifying each data processing phase.

Sample Selection Error

Failure to select a representative sample is a common source of error. Sample selection error is a type of systematic error that results in a non-representative sample due to a flaw in either the sample design or the sampling procedure. It is challenging to execute a sampling plan without procedural errors. Because unlisted phone numbers are not included, a company that selects its sample from the phone book will make systematic errors. Stopping respondents during the daytime in retail centers excludes employed individuals who shop by mail, Internet, or telephone. In other instances, researchers interview the incorrect individual.

Interviewer Error

The abilities of interviewers vary substantially. When interviewers record responses but verify the incorrect response or are unable to write quickly enough to record responses verbatim, interviewer error

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is introduced. In addition, interviewers may erroneously record data that does not support their own attitudes and opinions due to selective perception.

Interviewer Cheating

Cheating by an interviewer occurs when an interviewer falsifies entire questionnaires or fills in responses to questions that have been purposefully omitted. Some interviewers commit fraud in order to complete an interview as swiftly as possible or to avoid questions on sensitive topics.

If interviewers are suspected of falsifying questionnaires, they should be informed that a small proportion of respondents will be contacted to corroborate whether or not the initial interview was conducted. This method should deter interviewers from deceiving. Sometimes, the term curb-stoning refers to interviewers filing in responses for respondents who do not actually exist.

Learning Objective 8.5 – Rule-of-Thumb Estimates for Systematic Error

The estimation techniques for systematic, or non-sampling, error is less precise than a number of sample statistics. To estimate systematic error, researchers have established conservative rules of thumb based on experience. In the context of consumer research, seasoned researchers may determine that only a certain proportion of individuals who claim they will undoubtedly purchase a new product actually do so.

Classifying Survey Research Methods

Surveys can be categorized based on the method of communication, the degree of structure and concealment in the questionnaire, and the time period during which data are collected (temporal classification).

Structured and Disguised Questions

A structured query restricts the number of possible answers. To designate his or her age, the respondent may be instructed to select one of the following options: "under 18," "18–35," or "over 35." An unstructured query does not restrict the respondent's answers. An unstructured, open-ended query

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such as "Why do you shop at Wal-Mart?" provides the respondent with a great deal of freedom in their response.

Questionnaires can be categorized based on their structure and level of concealment. For instance, interviews in exploratory research may employ disguised, unstructured questionnaires. In this category are the projective techniques discussed in Chapter 6. There are also structured-undisguised, unstructured-undisguised, and structured-disguised classifications. These classifications are restricted in two ways: First, the degree of structure and degree of concealment are not distinct categories; they vary. Second, the majority of surveys consist of both structured and unstructured questions. Recognizing the levels of structure and concealment required to achieve survey objectives will aid in selecting the most suitable communication medium for conducting the survey.

Temporal Classification

Although the majority of surveys are conducted once for individual research projects over a brief period of time, other projects require multiple surveys over an extended period. Thus, surveys can be categorized in terms of time.

Cross-Sectional Studies

The survey asked respondents if they had made resolutions the previous year, which resolutions they had kept, and what resolutions they had made for the upcoming year. The results indicated that 43% of men and 52% of women made resolutions for 2006, despite the fact that less than half had kept their resolutions from the previous year. This study was cross-sectional because data were collected at a singular point in time. Using cross-tabulation, this type of study samples diverse segments of the population to investigate relationships between variables. This category encompasses the vast majority of marketing research surveys, especially those dealing with market segmentation. Analysis of a cross-sectional survey typically involves subdividing the sample into relevant subgroups. For instance, if a winery believes that income levels influence wine attitudes, the data are divided into subgroups based on income and analyzed to disclose any similarities or differences.

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Longitudinal Studies

In a longitudinal study, respondents are interrogated at multiple time points. The objective of longitudinal studies is to examine the consistency of a response and to observe the occurrence of changes over time. In applied marketing research, a longitudinal study using successive samples is referred to as a tracking study because successive cycles are designed to compare trends and identify changes in variables such as consumer satisfaction, brand image, or advertising awareness. These studies are valuable for assessing aggregate trends, but they cannot be used to track individual changes over time. Surveys conducted in cycles with two or more sample groups eliminate the problem of response bias caused by a prior interview. A respondent who was questioned about a particular brand in a previous survey may become more aware of the brand or give closer attention to its advertising after being interviewed. Using multiple samples eliminates this issue. However, researchers can never be certain whether changes in a measured variable are the result of a distinct sample or a true change in the variable over time.

Consumer Panel

A consumer panel is a longitudinal research that collects data from the same sample of individuals or households over time. Consider the marketer of packaged goods who desires to understand brand-switching behavior. A consumer panel consisting of a group of individuals who document their purchasing habits in a diary over time will provide the manager with a steady stream of information regarding the brand and product category. Regularly recorded diary data over an extended period of time allow the researcher to monitor repeat-purchase behavior and changes in purchasing habits in response to price changes, special promotions, or other marketing strategy components.

Members of the panel may be reached via telephone, in-person interview, mail questionnaire, or email. Typically, respondent's complete media exposure or purchase diaries and return them via postal mail. Face-to-face or telephone interviews may be necessary if panel members have agreed to test new products in the field. The communication mechanism used is determined by the nature of the problem.

Learning Objective 8.6 – Total Quality Management and Customer Satisfaction Survey

Total quality management is a business strategy that places a premium on market-driven quality. Total quality management entails implementing and modifying a business's operations to ensure customer satisfaction with the quality of its products and services. In the 1980s, when an increase in high-quality foreign competition posed a threat to their former dominance, many U.S. organizations adopted comprehensive quality management. Today, businesses continue to acknowledge the importance of comprehensive quality management programs. Sometimes, executives and production employees are too removed from the customer. Companies need a method to bridge this divide with product and service quality feedback. This refers to market research. Obviously, these programs are not restricted to marketing researchers alone. Nonetheless, in a company driven by the concept of quality, marketing research plays a crucial role in the administration of total product quality.

What Is Quality?

Historically, organizations defined quality by engineering standards. Most businesses no longer view quality in this manner. According to some managers, having a quality product entails that the commodity or service meets consumers' expectations and is acceptable. However, effective executives who subscribe to a total quality management philosophy believe that the product's quality must exceed what is acceptable for a given price. Instead of simply being relieved that nothing went awry, consumers should be treated to pleasant surprises or unexpected benefits. In other terms, quality assurance encompasses more than meeting minimum requirements.

Internal and External Customers

Organizations that have adopted the philosophy of comprehensive quality management believe that a focus on customers must extend beyond external customers. They believe, like Arbor, Inc., that everyone in the organization has customers: Every individual, at every level and in every department, has a customer. A consumer is anyone who receives a service, product, or information from an individual. The customer may be an employee or department within the company (internal) or an outside party

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(external). Total quality management programs are most effective when every employee has a thorough understanding of his or her internal and external customers. Additionally, it is essential to understand how customers perceive their demands being met. Too frequently, the differences between perceptions and actuality are not comprehended.

Implementing Total Quality Management

Implementing a program for total quality management requires extensive survey research. A company must routinely solicit consumer feedback comparing it to its competitors. Periodically, the organization must assess employee knowledge, attitudes, and expectations. It must compare the company's performance to industry benchmarks. It must determine if consumers encountered any pleasant surprises or significant disappointments. In other words, a total quality management strategy expresses the conviction that an organization must routinely conduct surveys to evaluate quality improvement in order to improve quality. The subsequent phase, continuous quality improvement, consists of a series of cycles with the same objective: to improve upon the preceding period. Continuous quality improvement necessitates that management permit workers to initiate problem-solving without excessive bureaucracy. Employees should be able to instigate proactive customer communication. In tracking wave 2, administration compares results to prior phases. Quality improvement management persists. Improvements at Empire have been reflected in rising patient satisfaction ratings and expanding retail sales.

Measuring the efficacy of a service involves comparing expectations to actual performance. Consumers who perceive excellent service quality believe that their expectations were met by service providers. Studies have repeatedly revealed disparities between what consumers expect and what service frontline and contact personnel deliver. Because service quality depends on what transpires during the service encounter, marketers who emphasize service quality strategies focus on the service encounter.

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Managers in organizations that desire to improve service quality must identify and analyze customer service needs before establishing service level specifications. They must then train frontline staff and assign them responsibility for providing quality service. The frontline staff must be motivated and encouraged to provide service in accordance with these specifications. Regular surveys with both external consumers and internal employees are used to assess compliance with standards.

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Progress Check:

Requirements:

1. Due Date : _____ before 5pm
2. Essay format, minimum of 20 words and maximum of 100 words.

Questions

1. Define surveys, and explain their advantages
2. Identify sources of error in survey research.
3. Distinguish among the various categories of survey

Answer

1. The survey is a common method for posing queries to respondents. Surveys can provide fast, affordable, and accurate data for a variety of purposes. Because a survey is anticipated to obtain a representative sample of the target population, the term sample survey is frequently used.
2. In survey research, two main types of error are commonly encountered. The first sampling error, random sampling error, is the result of arbitrary variation and yields a sample that is not perfectly representative of the target population. Such errors are unavoidable, but they can be anticipated using the statistical techniques covered in subsequent chapters on sampling. Systematic error, the second main category of error, can take several forms. Nonresponse error is the result of subjects not responding to a survey. This type of error can be reduced by comparing the demographics of the sample population to those of the target population and making an extra effort to reach out to underrepresented groups. In addition, response bias occurs when a questionnaire response is intentionally or unintentionally falsified or misrepresented. Four distinct types of response bias exist: acquiescence bias,

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extremity bias, interviewer bias, and social desirability bias. Administrative issues such as inconsistencies in interviewers' abilities, deception, coding errors, and so on also contribute to survey error.

3. Surveys may be classified according to methods of communication, by the degrees of structure and disguise in the questionnaires, and on a temporal basis. Questionnaires may be structured, with limited choices of responses, or unstructured, to allow open-ended responses. Disguised questions may be used to probe sensitive subjects. Surveys may consider the population at a given moment or follow trends over a period of time. The first approach, the cross-sectional study, usually is intended to separate the population into meaningful subgroups. The second type of study, the longitudinal study, can reveal important population changes over time. Longitudinal studies may involve contacting different sets of respondents or the same ones repeatedly. One form of longitudinal study is the consumer panel. Consumer panels are expensive to conduct, so firms often hire contractors who provide services to many companies, thus spreading costs over many clients.

Quiz 8

True or false

1. A survey is defined as a method of collecting secondary data based on communication with a representative sample of individuals.
2. Demographic information and information on media exposure might not be collected in the survey to help plan a market segmentation strategy
3. Most survey research is descriptive research, the term survey is most often associated with quantitative findings
4. Stylistic, aesthetic, or functional changes may be made on the basis of respondents' suggestions.

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5. Most marketing surveys are descriptive, they can also be designed to provide insights about causal explanations or to explore ideas
6. The growth of survey research is related to the complex idea that to find out what consumers think; you need to ask them.
7. Errors are common to all forms of surveys, so it is appropriate to describe them generally
8. The survey is a common tool for asking respondents questions
9. Surveys can provide quick, inexpensive, and accurate information for a variety of objectives.
10. The term sample survey is often used because a survey is expected to obtain a representative sample of the target population

Answer

1. F
2. F
3. T
4. T
5. T
6. F
7. T
8. T
9. T
10. T