

Marketing Research

Chapter 9

Survey Research: Basic Methods of Communications with Respondents

Lecturer: Michaella DeLeon Castillo, DBA - Philippines

Marketing Research – Lecture 9

Lesson – 9

Survey Research: Basic Methods of Communications with Respondents

Learning Objective 9.1 – Media Used to Communicate with Respondents

Throughout the majority of the 20th century, survey data was collected by asking respondents to respond to questions posed by human interviewers (interviews) or questions they read themselves (questionnaires). Face-to-face or telephone interviews were conducted with respondents, or self-administered paper questionnaires were mailed to respondents. These survey methods continue to be popular among marketing researchers.

Human Interactive Media and Electronic Interactive Media

When two individuals engage in conversation, there is human interaction. Human interactive media constitute a form of interpersonal communication. One individual communicates with and interacts with another individual (or small group). Most people envision two individuals engaged in a face-to-face or telephone conversation when they think of an interview. Electronic interactive media enable marketers to reach a large audience, customize individual messages, and interact through digital technology. Electronic interactive media are largely under the control of their consumers. Nobody else need be present. Today's survey respondents are not inert listeners.

Noninteractive Media

The traditional questionnaire received by mail and submitted by the respondent does not permit a dialogue or information exchange that provides immediate feedback. Therefore, self-administered questionnaires printed on paper are noninteractive from our perspective. This does not imply that they are devoid of merit; rather, it indicates that this form of survey is less adaptable than those that use interactive communication media. Each method for conducting surveys has advantages and disadvantages. The purpose of this chapter is to explain when various types of surveys should be used by researchers. The chapter commences with a discussion of live interview-based surveys. Then, we utilize

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self-administered, non-interactive questionnaires. We conclude by describing how the Internet and digital technology are radically altering survey research.

Learning Objective 9.2 – Personal Interviews

The researcher can conduct interviews in person by visiting door-to-door or intercepting individuals in shopping malls, or over the phone. Traditionally, interview results have been recorded on paper with a stylus, but computers increasingly support survey research. In this section, we investigate the general characteristics of face-to-face personal interviews and compare them to those of door-to-door personal interviews and mall-based personal interviews.

Advantages of Personal Interviews

According to marketing researchers, personal interviews offer a number of distinct benefits. The opportunity for feedback is among the most significant.

Opportunity for Feedback

Personal interviews provide the opportunity for clarification and feedback. For instance, if a consumer is hesitant to provide sensitive information, the interviewer may reassure him or her that their responses will be kept strictly confidential. The risk of respondents misinterpreting questions is minimal in personal interviews because an interviewer who detects ambiguity can clarify the instructions or questions. Circumstances may necessitate that the respondent be provided with additional information regarding the purpose of the study at the conclusion of the interview. Obtaining this clarification is simple through a personal interview. If the responses indicate that a particular question or set of questions is particularly unclear, the researcher can modify the questionnaire to make it simpler to comprehend.

Probing Complex Answers

Another essential aspect of personal interviews is the opportunity for further inquiry. If a respondent's response is too brief or ambiguous, the researcher may request a more detailed or explicit explanation. Although interviewers are required to pose questions exactly as they appear on the questionnaire, probing provides them with some leeway. Personal interviews differ in the degree to which questions are

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structured and the amount of probing required based on the research objective. Interviews are particularly beneficial for obtaining unstructured information. Skilled interviewers are able to ask difficult questions that are difficult to ask via telephone or mail surveys.

Length of Interview

If the research objective necessitates a very extensive questionnaire, in-person interviews may be the only viable option. The general rule for mail surveys is that they should not be longer than six pages, and telephone interviews typically last less than ten minutes. A personal interview, on the other hand, may last up to an hour and a half. However, the lengthier the interview, regardless of its format, the more compensation the respondent should receive for their time and participation. Researchers should also specify the duration of participation in the initial dialogue requesting participants. Online surveys should include a completion meter that indicates a respondent's progress towards assignment completion.

Completeness of Questionnaire

In a personal interview, the social interaction between a well-trained interviewer and a respondent increases the likelihood that the respondent will answer all questions on the questionnaire. The respondent may terminate a telephone interview at his or her discretion by simply hanging up the phone if he or she becomes fatigued. Self-administration of a mail questionnaire requires the respondent to exert even more effort. Rather than composing lengthy responses, the respondent may opt to skip certain queries. Item nonresponse, or failure to respond to a question, is least likely to occur when an experienced interviewer poses direct questions.

Props and Visual Aids

Face-to-face interviews enable the investigator to show respondents new product samples, proposed advertising sketches, and other visual aids. When Lego Group wanted to introduce new train model sets for its iconic building blocks, it targeted adults who construct intricate models with the product. Adults

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who were exchanging ideas on the Lego website were invited to the company's New York office, where they viewed ideas and provided feedback.

High Participation

Although some individuals are hesitant to participate in a survey, the presence of an interviewer typically increases the proportion of willing participants. Typically, respondents are not required to read or write anything; they are only required to speak. Many individuals appreciate sharing information and insights with interviewers who are friendly and empathetic. People are frequently more reluctant to say "no" face-to-face than over the phone or through an impersonal medium.

Disadvantages of Personal Interviews

Personal interviews have disadvantages as well. Due to the fact that respondents are not anonymous, they may be reluctant to provide confidential information. Assume a survey asked top executives, "Do you see any major internal instabilities or threats (people, money, etc.) to the achievement of your marketing goals?" In a personal interview where their identities are known, many managers may be reluctant to answer this sensitive question truthfully.

Interviewer Influence

There is evidence that the demographic characteristics of the interviewer influence the responses of the interviewees.

The typical public perception of a market researcher is that of a devoted scientist. Unfortunately, not all interviewers meet this standard. There is considerable interviewer variability. Cheating is possible; interviewers may take shortcuts to save time and energy, forging portions of their reports by creating a counterfeit version of the questionnaire or a portion thereof. It is essential to maintain authority over interviewers to ensure that difficult, embarrassing, or time-consuming inquiries are handled appropriately.

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Lack of Anonymity of Respondent

Due to the fact that a respondent in a personal interview is not anonymous and may be reluctant to provide confidential information to another person, researchers frequently invest a great deal of time and energy crafting sensitive questions to avoid social desirability bias. In lieu of requiring the respondent to verbalize sensitive answers, the interviewer may, for example, present the respondent with a card containing a list of potential responses and ask the respondent to read a category number.

Cost

Personal interviews are generally much more expensive than mail, Internet, and telephone surveys. The proximity of respondents geographically, the duration and complexity of the questionnaire, and the number of nonrespondents who could not be reached (not-at-homes) will all impact the cost of the personal interview.

Door-To-Door Interviews and Shopping Mall Intercepts

Personal interviews can take place at the respondents' residences, offices, or in a variety of other locations. Personal interviews are increasingly conducted in shopping centers. Mall intercept interviews make it possible to conduct numerous interviews rapidly. Respondents are frequently approached in public areas of shopping malls and requested to visit a permanent research facility to sample new food items or view advertisements. The location of the interview affects the participation rate and, consequently, the degree to which the sample is representative of the entire population.

Door-To-Door Interviews

The presence of an interviewer at the door increases the likelihood that an individual will agree to participate in an interview. Due to the increased participation rate, door-to-door interviews provide a more representative sample of the population than mail questionnaires. Door-to-door interviews may exclude individuals who reside in multiple-dwelling units with security systems, such as high-rise apartment dwellers, or executives who are too occupied during business hours to grant personal interviews. Others, for purposes of safety, will not open the door to a stranger who knocks. Appointment scheduling with a member of one of these subgroups may increase the overall sample's

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representativeness. However, it may be difficult to obtain a representative sample of this security-conscious subgroup from the telephone directory. Due to these factors, door-to-door interviews are becoming obsolete.

Callbacks

When a person selected for the sample cannot be reached on the initial attempt, a standardized procedure is typically initiated to attempt contact again at a later time. Callbacks, or attempts to recontact individuals chosen for the sample, are the primary method for reducing nonresponse error. Calling back a sampling unit is more expensive than interrogating the individual the first time around, because subjects who were initially not at home are typically more geographically dispersed than the original sampling units.

Mall Intercept Interviews

Mall intercept interviews or shopping center sampling refer to personal interviews conducted in retail malls. Typically, interviewers intercept consumers at the mall's entrance or a central location. The primary reason why mall intercept interviews are conducted is due to their reduced expense. There is no need to travel to the respondent's residence; rather, the respondent arrives to the interviewer, allowing for numerous interviews to be conducted rapidly.

A significant issue with mall intercept interviews is that individuals are typically in a rush to shop, resulting in a high rate of refusal—typically 50 percent. Despite this, the commercial marketing research industry conducts more personal interviews in retail malls than at the door.

Global Considerations

Globally, the willingness to partake in a personal interview varies dramatically. In many Middle Eastern nations, for instance, women would never agree to be interviewed by a male. And in many countries, it

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would be highly offensive to discuss hygiene practices and personal care products with a stranger. Few individuals would agree to be interviewed about such topics. The norms of appropriate business conduct also influence the propensity of businesspeople to share information with interviewers. For instance, conducting business-to-business interviews in Japan during business hours is difficult because managers believe they have an imperative obligation to monitor their employees while they are at work. In some cultures, if a businessperson is unwilling to be interviewed, a reputable third party may be requested to intervene so that the interview can occur.

Learning Objective 9.3. – Telephone Interviews

In the United States, telephone surveys can provide representative samples of the general population. In developed nations, telephone interviews may be less feasible, but the pervasive adoption of mobile phones is unquestionably altering the telephone interview landscape. In addition, the recent no-call laws mentioned previously restrict the ability to collect a representative sample.

Characteristics of Telephone Interviews

There are several characteristics that distinguish telephone interviews from other survey methods. These characteristics present the researcher with significant advantages and disadvantages.

Speed

The speed of data acquisition is an advantage of telephone interviews. While collecting data via mail or in-person interviews can take weeks, hundreds of telephone interviews can be conducted overnight. When the investigator enters respondents' responses directly into a computer system, data processing is accelerated even further.

Cost

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As the price of in-person interviews continues to rise, telephone interviews are becoming relatively more affordable. It is estimated that the expense of telephone interviews is less than 25 percent of the cost of door-to-door interviews. Travel expenses and time are eliminated. However, Internet surveys are typically less expensive than telephone surveys.

Absence of Face-To-Face Contact

Telephone interviews are less intimate than in-person interviews. In a telephone interview, respondents may answer embarrassing or confidential inquiries more willingly than in a personal interview. However, mail and Internet surveys, despite their imperfections, are superior methods for collecting extremely sensitive information because they appear more anonymous. Even during telephone interviews, there is evidence that individuals are reluctant to disclose their income and other financial information. Such questions may be personally threatening for a variety of reasons, and each category of survey research experiences high refusal rates for this question type.

Cooperation

One trend is unmistakable. In recent decades, the telephone response rate has declined. More households are using caller ID and answering devices to screen their calls, and many individuals do not pick up the phone when the display reads "out of area" or when the name and number of an unfamiliar survey organization appear on the display. In addition, there are more phone lines dedicated to fax machines and computers. However, the University of Michigan study found that the rate of refusal increased more rapidly than the rate of not responding researchers' calls in the most recent period. Researchers can attempt to increase response rates by leaving a message on the household's answering machine or voice mail. However, many individuals will not respond to a request for assistance with a survey. A message stating explicitly that the purpose of the contact is unrelated to sales may increase responses. Other researchers merely expect to connect with respondents when they call back, attempting callbacks at various times and days.

Sending households an invitation to participate in a survey is another way to increase response rates. The invitation can include a description of the survey's purpose, significance, and duration. In

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In addition to encouraging subjects to be available, the invitation can reassure them that the telemarketer will not attempt to sell them anything. In a recent study comparing response rates, households that received an advance letter had the highest response rates, while those that received a postcard or no notice had the lowest response rates.

Incentives to Respond

Respondents should be incentivized to participate. The research investigates various forms of incentives. Test marketing involving various types of survey introductions for telephone interviews suggests that not all introductions are equally effective. A financial incentive or a significant chance to win a desirable reward will produce a higher telephone response rate than a simple assurance that the research is not a sales pitch, a more detailed description of the survey, or a confidentiality guarantee.

Representative Samples

Obtaining representative samples from telephone directory listings is complicated by logistical obstacles. People without phones are more likely to be low-income, elderly, rural, or southern residents. The problem is exacerbated by unlisted phone numbers and numbers that are too recent to be included in the directory.

A recent move distinguishes individuals whose phone numbers are not publicized from those with published numbers. Unlisted individuals are typically younger, more urban, and less likely to own a single-family home. By choice, households with unlisted phone numbers tend to have greater incomes. Moreover, as previously indicated, a number of low-income households are not listed due to extenuating circumstances.

Callbacks

A callback is required for an unanswered call, a busy signal, or a respondent who is not at home. Telephone callbacks are much simpler to make than personal interview callbacks. However, as stated, telephone answering machine ownership is increasing, and their effects on callbacks must be studied.

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Limited Duration

Respondents who lose patience with the interview may simply shut up the phone. To encourage participation, interviews ought to be brief. The duration of the telephone interview is certainly constrained.

Lack of Visual Medium

This method is not suitable for package research, copy testing of television and print advertising, and concept tests that require visual materials because visual aids cannot be utilized in telephone interviews.

Central Location Interviewing

All of the telephone interviews that are conducted by research firms or interviewing services are normally managed from a centralized location. When interviews are conducted at a central place, businesses are able to more efficiently manage and regulate the quality of the interviews, as well as recruit staffs consisting of experienced interviewers. Additional cost savings are possible for an organization or corporation when telephone interviews are brought under central control and logged on a computer system.

Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing

In a technique known as computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI), responses to telephone interviews can be entered directly into the computer due to advances in computer technology. Interviewers for the telephone are situated at computer terminals. Monitors display the questionnaires, one question at a time, along with pre coded possible responses to each question. Each query is read by the interviewer as it appears on the screen. The interviewer inputs the respondent's response directly into the computer, and it is automatically stored in the memory of the computer. The next query is then displayed on the screen by the computer. Computer-assisted telephone interviewing necessitates highly structured responses to the questionnaire. If a respondent provides an unacceptable response (one that has not been pre-programmed and pre-coded), the computer will refuse it.

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Global Considerations

Norms regarding appropriate telephone behavior vary significantly across cultures. Business-to-business researchers have discovered, for instance, that Latin American businesspeople are reluctant to speak with strangers over the phone. Therefore, researchers in Latin America prefer personal interviews to telephone surveys. In Japan, respondents perceive telephone interviews that last longer than twenty minutes to be impolite.

Learning Objective 9.4 – Self-Administered Questionnaires

Numerous surveys do not require the presence of an interviewer. They include surveys in shipments and magazines. They may distribute questionnaires at points of sale or in high-traffic areas of stores and marketplaces. They may even fax individuals' questionnaires. Questionnaires can be produced on paper, but they can also be posted online and emailed. Self-administered questionnaires differ from interviews because respondents are responsible for perusing and responding to the questions. Self-administered questionnaires pose a challenge for marketing researchers because they rely on the precision of the written word as opposed to the interviewer's abilities. Explaining mail questionnaires best illustrates the character of self-administered questionnaires.

Mail Questionnaires

A mail survey is a self-administered questionnaire that is mailed to respondents. This paper-and-pencil method has numerous benefits and drawbacks.

Geographic Flexibility

Mail questionnaires can simultaneously reach a geographically dispersed sample because interviewers are not necessary. Respondents (such as farmers) situated in remote areas or those (such as executives) who are otherwise difficult to reach can be contacted with relative ease via mail.

Cost

Compared to in-person interviews, questionnaires sent through the mail are relatively inexpensive, albeit not inexpensive. The majority involve follow-up mailings, which incur additional postage and printing expenses. And it is typically not cost-effective to attempt to save money on printing; questionnaires

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photocopied on low-grade paper are more likely to be discarded than those printed on more costly, high-quality paper. Contributing to the high cost are the poor response rates.

Respondent Convenience

Since mail surveys and other self-administered questionnaires can be completed when respondents have time, respondents are more likely to carefully consider their responses. Numerous difficult-to-reach respondents who place a high value on convenience are best reached by mail. In certain circumstances, especially in business-to-business marketing research, mail questionnaires enable respondents to collect information, such as sales statistics, that they may not be able to recall without verifying. The ability to check information by verifying records or, in household surveys, by consulting with other family members should provide more accurate, factual data than personal or telephone interviews. A catalog retailer may use mail surveys to estimate catalog item sales volume by including a dummy catalog with the questionnaire. Respondents would be asked to suggest the likelihood that they would order particular products. Using the mail permits respondents to consult with other family members and make decisions in a timely manner.

Anonymity of Respondent

In the cover letter that accompanies a self-administered or mailed questionnaire, marketing researchers almost always state that respondents' responses will be kept confidential. When respondents can remain anonymous, they are more likely to provide sensitive or humiliating information. Additionally, anonymity can reduce social desirability bias. When completing self-administered questionnaires, people are more likely to concur with controversial issues, such as extreme political candidates, than when speaking to interviewers over the phone or at their doorsteps.

Absence of Interviewer

Although the absence of an interviewer can prompt respondents to disclose sensitive or socially objectionable information, this lack of personal contact can also be disadvantageous. Once the respondent receives the questionnaire, the researcher loses control over the inquiring process. Although

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the printed stimulus is identical, each respondent will interpret each query differently. Selective perception is utilized in both research and advertising. The respondent has no opportunity to ask the interviewer questions. In a mail survey, issues that could be clarified in a personal or telephone interview may remain unclear. There is no interviewer to probe for additional information or clarification, so it must be presumed that the recorded responses are exhaustive. Prior to answering individual questions, respondents have the option to peruse the entire questionnaire. Frequently, the text of a later question contains information that influences the responses to earlier inquiries.

Standardized Questions

The inquiries on mail-in questionnaires are typically highly standardized and structured. Questions and instructions must be precise and unambiguous. Ambiguous questions only contribute to the error rate. Interviewing permits the interviewer to provide feedback on the respondent's comprehension of the questionnaire. If an interviewer observes that the first fifty respondents are having trouble comprehending a question, he or she can inform the research analyst so that the question can be revised. Once the questionnaires have been mailed for a mail survey, it is difficult to modify the format or the queries.

Time Is Money

If time is a factor in management's interest in the research results, or if attitudes are changing swiftly (for example, in response to a political event), mail surveys may not be the most effective method of communication. At least two or three weeks are required to receive the preponderance of responses. Follow-up shipments, which are typically sent when a trickle of returns is received, require an additional two to four weeks. Six to eight weeks typically pass between the initial issuance and the deadline (when questionnaires are no longer accepted). Personal interviews can be conducted more efficiently in a regional or local study. However, conducting a national research via mail may be significantly quicker than conducting in-person interviews across the country.

Length of Mail Questionnaire

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The length of mail questionnaires varies substantially, ranging from postcard-length questionnaires to multipage booklets requiring thousands of responses. The general rule is that the length of a mail questionnaire should not exceed six pages. When a questionnaire requires a great deal of effort on the part of the respondent, an incentive is typically necessary to encourage the respondent to return the questionnaire.

Response Rates

All questionnaires sent via bulk mail are likely to be discarded. Questionnaires that are tedious, imprecise, or overly complicated are more likely to be discarded. An inadequately designed mail questionnaire may receive a response rate of less than 5% (i.e., a response rate of 5%). To determine the response rate, it is necessary to tally the number of questionnaires returned or completed, and then divide that number by the number of eligible individuals who were contacted or asked to participate in the survey. Typically, the denominator is adjusted to account for incorrect addresses and other factors that reduce the number of eligible participants.

The main limitations of mail questionnaires relate to response problems. The questionnaire respondents may not be representative of the entire sample. Those with a strong interest in the subject are more likely to respond to a mail survey than those with a lack of interest.

Increasing Response Rates for Mail Surveys

There is always the possibility of nonresponse error with mail surveys. Those who are interested in the overall topic of the survey are more likely to respond than those who are less interested or have less experience with the topic. Thus, individuals who hold extreme positions on an issue are more likely to respond than those who are largely apathetic regarding the issue. Researchers have devised a number of methods to increase the response rate to mail surveys in order to reduce this bias. For example, almost all surveys include postage-paid return enclosures. Using a postage-paid return envelope as opposed to a business reply envelope boosts response rates even further. Designing and formatting questionnaires that

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are visually appealing and wording queries so that they are simple to comprehend also contribute to a high response rate.

Cover Letter

A cover letter that accompanies a questionnaire or is printed on the first page of the questionnaire booklet is an essential means of encouraging the recipient to return the questionnaire. Most cover letters include a promise of confidentiality, an invitation to use the enclosed postage-paid reply envelope, a description of any incentive or reward for participation, an explanation that completing the questionnaire will not be difficult or time-consuming, and an explanation of how the individual was scientifically selected to participate. A letter designated to a specific individual demonstrates to the recipient that he or she is significant. The inclusion of a typed cover letter on letterhead rather than a printed form is crucial for increasing the response rate of mail surveys.

Money Helps

The motivation of a respondent to return a questionnaire can be increased by offering monetary incentives or bonuses. Although markers, lottery tickets, and other premiums have been used as incentives, it appears that monetary incentives are the most effective and least biased. Money arouses interest and engenders a sense of obligation. Perhaps for this reason, monetary incentives are effective across all income brackets. Frequently, cover letters include phrases such as "We understand that the enclosed dollar cannot compensate you for your time, but please accept it as a token of our gratitude." When the monetary incentive is to be sent to a charity of the respondent's choosing rather than directly to the respondent, response rates increase dramatically.

Interesting Questions

The research topic, and thus the purpose of the queries, cannot be altered without altering the marketing problem's definition. However, interesting questions can be added to the questionnaire, perhaps at the outset, in order to pique the interest of respondents and encourage their cooperation. By including questions that are of little interest to the researchers but are of interest to the respondents, the

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researchers may provide respondents who are indifferent to the primary questions with a reason to respond.

Follow-Ups

The response rates are comparatively high during the first two weeks (as indicated by the steepness of each curve), after which they decline gradually.

After responses from the initial mailing begin to filter in, most studies use a reminder letter or postcard to request that the questionnaire be returned, as a return rate of 100 percent is crucial. A follow-up may consist of a duplicate questionnaire or a reminder to return the original. Almost always, multiple contacts increase response rates. The greater the number of attempts made to reach individuals, the greater their likelihood of responding.

Advance Notification

In some instances, a letter or phone call informing respondents that a questionnaire is on its way has been effective in increasing response rates. ACNielsen has utilized this method to guarantee a high rate of participation in the completion of television viewing diaries. Sending advance notices closer to the questionnaire shipping time yields better results than sending notices too far in advance. The optimal lead time for advance notification is three days prior to the arrival of the mail survey.

Survey Sponsorship

The sponsorship of a survey could result in auspices bias. One business-to-business marketer desired to conduct a survey of its wholesalers in order to determine their inventory policies and attitudes toward competing manufacturers. A mail questionnaire sent on corporate letterhead would have likely received a much lower response rate than the actual questionnaire, which was sent on the letterhead of a commercial marketing research firm. Sponsorship by well-known and prestigious institutions, such as universities and government agencies, may also have a significant impact on response rates. The response rate to a mail survey sent to members of a consumer panel will be exceptionally high because panel members have already agreed to participate in surveys.

Other Techniques

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There have been numerous other methods for increasing response rates. Numerous factors, such as the type of postage (commemorative versus conventional stamp), envelope size, and paper color, have been altered in an effort to increase response rates. Each has had at least limited success in certain situations, but in others, each has failed to substantially increase response rates. The researcher must consider his or her unique circumstances. For example, a researcher investigating consumers encounters one situation, while a researcher surveying corporate executives faces an entirely different situation.

Keying Mail Questionnaires with Codes

When planning a follow-up letter or postcard, a market researcher should not disturb respondents who have already returned the questionnaire. Generally, the expense of distributing questionnaires to individuals who have already responded can be avoided. Marking the questionnaires so that they can be keyed to identify members of the sampling frame who are nonrespondents is one method for eliminating those who have already responded from the follow-up mailing list. Blind keying of questionnaires on a return envelope (for example, systematically varying the position number or room number of the marketing research department) or a visible code number on the questionnaire have been used for this purpose. Visible keying is denoted by statements such as "The sole purpose of the number on the last page is to prevent sending a second questionnaire to individuals who have already completed and returned the first." Ethical researchers only code questionnaires to increase response rates, preserving the anonymity of respondents.

Global Considerations

Researchers conducting surveys in multiple nations must recognize that postal services and cultural conditions vary internationally. Considerations include the dependability of mail delivery, literacy rates, and confidence that researchers can and will maintain confidentiality. In certain instances, hand-delivered surveys or door-to-door interviews may be required.

Learning Objective 9.5 – Self-Administered Questionnaires Using Other Forms of Distribution

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Numerous types of self-administered, printed questionnaires resemble mail questionnaires in many ways. Airlines frequently send out questionnaires to passengers during flights. Restaurants, hotels, and other service businesses print brief questionnaires on cards for consumers to evaluate the quality of service. Numerous manufacturers use their warranty or owner registration cards to collect demographic information and purchase-related data. Utilizing proprietor registration cards is a very cost-effective method for tracing consumer behavior trends. Again, issues may arise due to the fact that those who complete these self-administered questionnaires differ from those who do not.

An interviewer may leave extremely lengthy questionnaires for subsequent collection. Because it necessitates traveling to each respondent's location, the drop-off method sacrifices some cost savings.

Fax Surveys

With fax surveys, prospective survey respondents receive and/or return questionnaires via fax machines. A questionnaire inserted into a magazine may instruct respondents to cut out the questionnaire and transmit it to a specified number. A pre-paid envelope in a mail survey places minimal burden on the respondent. However, when faxing a questionnaire to a long-distance number, the respondent must pay for the transmission. Consequently, a disadvantage of the facsimile survey is that only respondents with fax machines and a willingness to exert additional effort will return questionnaires.

E-Mail Surveys

Researchers can disseminate questionnaires via email, but they must keep in mind that some individuals cannot be reached this way. Certain initiatives lend themselves to e-mail surveys, such as internal surveys of employees or satisfaction surveys of retail buyers who frequently communicate with an organization via e-mail. The advantages of including a questionnaire in an email include the speed of distribution, reduced distribution and processing costs, a quicker turnover time, greater flexibility, and less handling of paper questionnaires. For surveys dealing with time-sensitive issues, the speed of e-mail distribution and

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the fast response time can be significant benefits. As invitations to participate in an Internet survey, email letters can be used as cover letters. Typically, these emails contain a password and a link to a website that requires a password to access.

Internet Surveys

A self-administered questionnaire posted on a website is an Internet survey. Respondents provide answers to on-screen inquiries by highlighting a phrase, clicking an icon, or typing in a response. Internet surveys, like every other form of survey, have advantages and disadvantages.

Speed and Cost-Effectiveness

Internet surveys enable marketers to reach a large audience (possibly a global audience), personalize individual messages, and rapidly and cost-effectively secure confidential responses. These computer-to-computer self-administered surveys eradicate paper, postage, data entry, and other administrative expenses. Once an Internet questionnaire has been created, reaching additional respondents incurs minimal incremental costs. Consequently, samples can be greater than with interviews or other self-administered questionnaire types. Even with large samples, surveys that previously required many weeks can now be completed in a week or less.

Visual Appeal and Interactivity

Surveys conducted on the Internet can be interactive. The researcher can use more sophisticated lines of questioning based on the respondents' prior answers. Many of these interactive surveys utilize color, sound, and animation, which may help to increase respondents' cooperation and willingness to spend time answering the questionnaires. The Internet is an excellent medium for the presentation of visual materials, such as photographs or drawings of product prototypes, advertisements, and movie trailers. Innovative measuring instruments that take advantage of the ability to adjust backgrounds, fonts, color, and other features have been designed and applied with considerable success.

Respondent Participation and Cooperation

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Users intentionally navigate to a website containing survey questions to participate in some Internet surveys. A survey of more than 10,000 visitors to the Ticketmaster website, for instance, assisted the company in gaining a deeper understanding of its customers' purchasing patterns and gauging site satisfaction. In some instances, individuals anticipate encountering a survey on a website, while in others, it comes as a complete surprise. In certain instances, the visitor cannot proceed beyond the survey page without completing the organization's "registration" form. Response rates are low when users are unprepared for a survey on a website and participation is voluntary. In addition, as with other questionnaires that rely on self-selection, participants tend to be more interested in or involved with the research topic than the average individual.

Representative Samples

Variable Internet sample quality is determined by the population to be analyzed, the objective of the research, and the sampling methods. Self-selection error makes it unlikely that the sample is representative of the entire U.S. population if it comprises only of individuals who voluntarily visit a website and complete a questionnaire. If, however, the purpose of the study is to determine how visitors feel about a website, selecting every 100th visitor at random may be sufficient. Samples drawn scientifically from a consumer panel or other randomly generated samples can also be representative. A disadvantage, albeit one that is diminishing, of Internet surveys is that many members of the general population lack Internet access. Even among those with Internet access, not everyone has the same level of technological sophistication.

Accurate Real-Time Data Capture

The computer-to-computer nature of Internet surveys ensures that each respondent's responses are immediately incorporated into the researcher's computer upon questionnaire submission. In addition, the software for the questionnaire may be programmed to deny incorrect data entry. On a paper questionnaire, for instance, a respondent may mistakenly select two responses despite the instructions requiring only one. In an Internet survey, this error can be corrected interactively as the survey is being conducted. Therefore, data collection is more precise than when humans are engaged.

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Real-time data acquisition enables real-time data analysis. Real-time sample size counts and tabulation data from an Internet survey can be reviewed by a researcher.

Callbacks

When the sample for an Internet survey is derived from a consumer panel, it is simple to recontact respondents who have not completed the survey questionnaire. The software can easily send email reminders to panel members who have not visited the welcome page. In addition to identifying the passwords of respondents who completed only a portion of the questionnaire, computer software can also send those individuals personalized messages. Occasionally, such e-mails provide additional incentives to respondents who left the questionnaire with a few questions remaining, so that they are motivated to comply with the request to complete the questionnaire.

Personalized and Flexible Questioning

Internet-based computer-interactive surveys are programmed similarly to computer-assisted telephone interviews. In other words, depending on a respondent's response to a filtered query, the used software permits questioning to branch off into two or more distinct paths. The difference lies in the absence of an interviewer. On a website, the respondent interacts directly with software. In other words, the computer program poses questions based on the respondent's previous responses. The questions are displayed on the computer screen, and responses are recorded by pressing a key or clicking an icon, thereby entering the data instantaneously into the computer's memory. Obviously, these techniques eliminate the labor expenses associated with the accumulation and processing of paper-and-pencil questionnaires.

Respondent Anonymity

When respondents can remain anonymous, they are more likely to provide sensitive or humiliating information. Internet anonymity encourages respondents to provide truthful responses to sensitive inquiries.

Response Rates

Similar techniques are used to increase response rates for Internet surveys and other types of survey research. A personalized invitation could be crucial. In many instances, invitations are sent via email. As

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the recipients may not recognize the sender's address, the subject line of the message is crucial.²⁰The subject line should refer to a topic that is likely to pique the reader's interest, and legal and ethical standards prohibit it from being deceptive.

Security Concerns

Many businesses are concerned that hackers or rivals may access their websites to discover new product ideas, advertising campaigns, and other confidential information. Respondents may be concerned about the confidentiality of their personal information. Likewise, organizations may fund the research.

Kiosk Interactive Surveys

To administer an interactive survey, a computer with a touch screen may be deployed in a kiosk at a trade show, a professional conference, an airport, or any other high-traffic location. Self-selection is typically a problem with this form of survey because the respondent chooses to interact with an on-site computer. Individuals with computer literacy are most likely to complete these interactive questionnaires. Frequently, at transitory locations such as conventions, a fieldworker must be present to demonstrate how to use the computer system. This personal assistance is a clear detriment.

Survey Research That Mixes Modes

Numerous survey objectives necessitate a combination of telephone, mail, e-mail, Internet, and in-person interviews. For instance, the researcher may conduct a brief telephone assessment interview to determine if respondents are eligible for a more in-depth personal interview. This type of mixed-mode survey incorporates the benefits of telephone surveys (such as rapid screening) and in-person interviews. A mixed-mode survey may incorporate any combination of two or more survey techniques. However, when a research study is conducted in two or more phases, it is possible that some respondents will no longer cooperate or will be unavailable for the second survey.

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Learning Objective 9.6 – Selecting the Appropriate Survey Research Design

Earlier discussions of research design and problem definition emphasized that similar decision-making information may result from numerous research assignments. There is no optimal mode of survey; each has benefits and drawbacks. To avoid interviewer bias, a researcher who must pose highly confidential questions may conduct a mail survey at the expense of data collection speed. Telephone interviews conducted from a central location may be appropriate if a researcher must have substantial control over question formulation.

Learning Objective 9.7 – Pretesting

A researcher conducting a survey of 3,000 consumers does not want to discover, after the questionnaires have been filled out and returned, that the majority of respondents misunderstood a specific question, missed a series of questions, or misinterpreted the instructions for filling out the questionnaire. Typically, screening procedures, or pretests, are employed to avoid such issues. Pretesting entails a trial run with a group of respondents to iron out fundamental issues in the questionnaire's instructions or layout. The researcher looks for impediments such as the point at which respondent fatigue sets in and if there are specific locations in the questionnaire where respondents tend to abandon it. Unfortunately, this stage of investigation is sometimes skipped due to financial or time constraints.

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Progress Check:

Requirements:

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



4. Rubrics (40 points)

Questions

1. Compare the advantages and disadvantages of conducting door-to-door, mall intercept, and telephone interviews
2. Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of distributing questionnaires through the mail, the Internet, and other means.
3. Discuss the importance of pretesting questionnaires

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Answer

1. Personal interviews conducted door-to-door can yield high response rates, but they are more expensive to administer than other forms of surveys. When a sample does not have to be representative of the entire nation, mall intercept interviews can help reduce costs. The advantage of telephone interviews is that they provide data quickly and at a reduced cost per interview. However, not all homes have telephones and not all telephone numbers are listed in telephone directories. This makes it difficult to obtain a representative sample, so researchers frequently employ random-digit dialing. The inability to utilize visual materials and the lack of face-to-face contact also limit telephone interviews. Certain types of telephone surveys can be conducted more efficiently with computer-assisted telephone interviewing from central locations.
2. Self-administered questionnaires have traditionally been mailed to respondents, but they can also be dropped off at respondents' homes, distributed from central locations, or administered via computer. In general, mail questionnaires are less expensive than telephone or in-person interviews, but they also carry a greater risk of nonresponse error. Several techniques can be employed to increase response rates. Mail questionnaires must be more structured than other survey varieties and cannot be modified if problems are discovered during data collection. Internet and other interactive media facilitate survey administration for organizations. Internet surveys are fast and inexpensive, but not everyone has access to the Internet. Because the surveys are interactive and computerized, questionnaires can be customized and data can be collected in real time. There are some privacy and security concerns, but the future of Internet surveys appears bright.
3. Pretesting a questionnaire on a small sample of respondents is an effective method to identify issues while they are still correctable. Pretests may involve evaluating the questionnaire with other researchers or conducting a pilot study with a subset of respondents.

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Quiz 9

Identification

1. Face-to-face communication in which an interviewer asks a respondent to answer questions.
2. Failure of a respondent to provide an answer to a survey question.
3. Attempts to recontact individuals selected for a sample who were not available initially.
4. Personal interviews conducted in a shopping mall.
5. The number of questionnaires returned or completed divided by the number of eligible people who were asked to participate in the survey.
6. Screening procedure that involves a trial run with a group of respondents to iron out fundamental problems in the survey design.
7. The first web page in an Internet survey, which introduces the survey and requests that the respondent enter a password or pin.
8. Personal interviews conducted by telephone, the mainstay of commercial survey research.
9. Windows that open on a computer screen to prompt the user to enter information.
10. Study that employs any combination of survey methods.

Answer

1. **Personal interview**
2. **Item nonresponse**
3. **Call backs**
4. **Mall intercept interview**
5. **Response rate**
6. **Pretesting**

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- 7. Welcome screen**
- 8. Telephone interview**
- 9. Dialog box**
- 10. Mixed mode survey**