

# Advantages and disadvantages of primary data

[Science](#), [Social Science](#)



**PRIMARY RESEARCH INTRODUCTION** Primary Research is considered the heart of the research. It is sometimes called field research as it entails researchers to go out of the field and gather first hand information and data. Field research is necessary because the information needed does not exist, in contrast to the secondary research in which the information and data are already published so that the researchers need only to find the existing data.

## MAIN BODY

### Research Approaches

" A plan for a primary data collection calls for a number of decisions on research approaches, contact methods, sampling plans and research instruments" (Philip Kotler). Research approaches include observation, survey and experiment. Contact methods can be mail, telephone or personal. Sampling plan decisions include sampling unit, sample size and sampling procedure. Lastly, the research instruments to be used can be questionnaires and mechanical instruments (Philip Kotler).

" Observational research includes the gathering of primary data by observing relevant people, actions and situation" (Philip Kotler). It is the appropriate approach for exploratory research.

" Surveys are a form of questioning that is more rigid than interviews and that involve larger groups of people. Surveys will provide a limited amount of information from a large group of people and are useful when you want to learn what a larger population thinks" (Driscoll). The survey approach is the best suited for gathering descriptive information such as finding out " peoples' knowledge, attitudes, preferences or buying behavior" (Philip

Kotler).

Experimental research is done by "selecting matched groups of subjects, giving them different treatments, controlling unrelated factors, and checking for differences in group responses"(Philip Kotler). This method is used in establishing causal relationships between variables, thus it "is commonly used in sciences such as sociology and psychology, physics, chemistry, biology, and medicine" (<http://www.experiment-resources.com>).

### Advantages and Disadvantages

Primary data collection has the following advantages:

Addresses Specific Research Issues - Carrying out their own research allows the marketing organization to address issues specific to their own situation.

Greater Control - Not only does primary research enable the marketer to focus on specific issues, it also enables the marketer to have a higher level of control over how the information is collected.

Efficient Spending for Information - primary data collections' focus on issues specific to the researcher improves the chances that research funds will be spent efficiently.

Proprietary Information - Information collected by the marketer using primary research is their own and is generally not shared with others.

Source: (KnowThis LLC)

It also has some disadvantages, given below:

Cost - primary data may be very expensive since there is a great deal of marketer involvement and the expense in preparing and carrying out research can be high.

Time Consuming - To be done correctly primary data collection requires the

development and execution of a research plan.

Not Always Feasible - Some research projects, while potentially offering information that could prove quite valuable, are not within the reach of a marketer.

Source: (KnowThis LLC)

## CONCLUSION

Primary Data Collection is done with a specific purpose in mind. Although many claim that it is the most beneficial research method, it is still very much important to consider the cost and benefits of this approach.

Specifically, the researcher should know whether the research is exploratory descriptive or causal. With knowledge on this, one can apply the most apt primary research approach. One important thing that marketers should also consider is how technology can be used to lessen the cost of research.

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Hall, 2000.

## OBSERVATION STUDY

### INTRODUCTION

Observation is one of the techniques in the primary data collection method of research. Observational research is defined as " the gathering of primary data by observing relevant people, actions and situation" (Philip Kotler). " Observational research can be used to obtain information that people are unwilling or unable to provide. In some cases, observation may be the only way to obtain the needed information" (Philip Kotler).

" What is agreed upon is that qualitative observational research is a systematic inquiry into the nature or qualities of observable group behaviors in order to learn what it means to be a member of that group. The researcher's job, rather than to describe a stable entity, is to give continually

updated accounts of observations on multiple levels of group interactions that occur on both a temporal and continuous basis simultaneously" (Colorado State University).

## MAIN BODY

### The Observation technique

There are two types of observational research: the direct observation (with an independent observer) and the participant observation (in which the observer takes part in the process). With direct observation, the observer observes and records behavior. With this type, the observer can remain unbiased. On the other hand, with the participant observation, observers get a detailed understanding of values and motives of the individuals.

Observation techniques and methods can be human or mechanical, natural or contrived, open or disguise and direct or historical. Mechanical means can be employed by researchers to do observation techniques. Examples of these are the people meters, which the Nielsen Media Research " attaches to television sets in selected homes to record who watches which program", and the checkout scanners " in retail stores used to " record consumer purchases in detail" (Philip Kotler).

### Advantages and Disadvantages

" The great advantage of observational techniques is that we can observe directly the behavior of customers, rather than self reported behavior. This removes one of the major causes of error in market research - memory loss, poor recall, and perceptions affected by experiences after the original experience. It also reduces error due to translation, and provides a richer dataset that includes non-verbal and physical behavior" (Orient Pacific

Century).

However, it also has disadvantages. Observational research can be expensive especially with the use of mechanical means. There are also some things which are difficult to observe such as " feelings, attitudes, motives and private behavior", and " long-term or infrequent behavior" (Philip Kotler). These things make the observational research ineffective.

#### CONCLUSION

In employing the observation approach, researcher should have a " structured form to measure critical behavior such as the time it takes them to respond to a query, pick up the phone, the manner and words they use in addressing guests, the appearance of a room, the presentation of restaurant meals and quality of food, you actually observe real samples of the product, service or behavior" (Orient Pacific Century). This practice provides efficiency and accuracy in the collection of relevant data.

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## QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

### INTRODUCTION

Market research can be either quantitative or qualitative. While quantitative methods are designed to assess, predict and estimate buyer attitudes and behaviors (Power Decisions Group), qualitative marketing research provides the crucial information for the decision-makers and used in exploring new areas or deepen understanding of some market issues (Suite101. de).

There are at least five considered basic methods of market research. They include surveys, focus groups, personal interview, observation and field trials (AllBusiness. com). Among these, the qualitative ones are focus group and in-depth interviews.

### MAIN BODY

#### Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative research method examines the 'why', in the situations through the analysis of fresh information which are gathered through data collection methods such as interviews. Unlike the main instrument in the quantitative



research, it does not mainly rely on figures (QSR International Pty Ltd ). It is the one that allows the researchers to formulate a hypothesis and deep questions such as the motivation of people in buying and the decision in choosing. " Qualitative research methodologies are designed to provide the researcher with the perspective of target audience members through immersion in a culture or situation and direct interaction with the people under study. Qualitative methods used in social marketing include observations, in-depth interviews and focus groups" (Weinreich Communications ). Recently, there are innovations in the qualitative research such as the qualitative research software which " helps people to manage, shape and make sense of unstructured information" (QSR International Pty Ltd ).

" The advantage of using qualitative methods is that they generate rich, detailed data that leave the participants' perspectives intact and provide a context for health behavior. The focus upon processes and " reasons why" differs from that of quantitative research, which addresses correlations between variables. A disadvantage is that data collection and analysis may be labor intensive and time-consuming. In addition, these methods are not yet totally accepted by the mainstream public health community and qualitative researchers may find their results challenged as invalid by those outside the field of social marketing" (Weinreich Communications )

#### Quantitative Research

" Quantitative research is numerically oriented, requires significant attention to the measurement of market phenomena and often involves statistical analysis" (Research Portals Ltd)Quantitative research adopts the physical

science paradigm which is depended upon objectively generalizability and reliability; you can take your result and show them to the public because all participants involved in this kind of research are selected randomly

Quantitative market research can be online, phone, in-person, mail and intercept central location testing (CLT). " The online methods provides a fast implementation especially for complex measurement constructions, the phone provides the top-of-mind brand awareness and first reaction attitudes, the in-person has the hybrid quantitative and qualitative and provides depth in probing attitudes and beliefs by skilled interviewer, the mail allows time for respondent to think about complicated issues without pressure or interviewer influence and the CLT is for both the quantitative questions and for choice exercises in mock stores, and for physical product examination and concept testing "(Power Decisions Group).

Quantitative research's advantages are the following:

The results are statistically reliable. That is, quantitative research can reliably determine if one idea, concept, product, package, etc., is better than the alternatives.

The results are projectable to the population. That is, the proportion of respondents answering a certain way is similar to the proportion of the total population that would have answered that way if they all had been asked.

Source: (McCullough)

The disadvantage of the quantitative method is that it is sometimes hard to measure variables, especially the qualitative ones. Quantitative technique requires deep statistical know-how which may be more difficult to some researchers.

## CONCLUSION

Qualitative and Quantitative market research methods should not be seen as substitutes. Rather, they are complements thus they can both be integrated in the research process. Some studies now look at the strength that the integration of both quantitative and qualitative methods provides in the entire research process. " Integrating quantitative and qualitative research methods lends depth and clarity to social marketing programs. This combination of approaches is necessary because of the wide range of data needed to develop effective communications" (Weinreich Communications ). The only thing that matters is that experts in doing both methods should be employed in the entire research program so as to achieve thorough works on both.

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