

Business research methods



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Defining the problem will assist in determining an appropriate research design that will include characteristics, such as independent and dependent variables, and operational definitions. Additionally, the research will provide a sample design to use for collecting data.

Organizational Dilemma The dilemma that Barnes and Noble face is how sales of online reading materials will affect the sales of traditional books. With new technology available for electronic devices and the high use of these devices to read traditional book online can affect the book sales at the brick and mortar stores of Barnes and Noble.

A research plan has to be put in place to see how the sale of electronic reading materials will affect Barnes and Noble's brick and mortar book sales to the public. By trending the data from the research, Barnes and Noble can make a decision on how to meet the product demands of customers and provide what they want as far as electronic reading material is concern as well as traditional books.

Research Design A qualitative research design method will determine how electronic books will impede the sales of hardbound and paperback books.

This type of method evaluates human behavior is ideal in reviewing the specific impact it has on Barnes and Noble. The independent variables are the Internet and the flexibility that people want with his or her Nook or other electronic devices. The dependent variable is the monthly sales for electronic downloads versus sales in the stores or online purchases. Another point to consider is the number of times a person can download a book free from the public libraries because more libraries are offering this service.

This will also affect the sales for both electronic and hard copy books. According to Cooper and Schindler (2011), “ An operational definition is a definition stated in terms of specific criteria for testing or measurement” (p. 57). These terms must refer to empirical standards, such as the ability to count, measure, or in another way gather the information through the human senses. Therefore, further research with the sample design will assist in this operational definition research design. Sample Design Barnes and Noble have a long history of selling hard bound and paperback books.

People purchase books from Barnes and Noble for academic and personal purposes whereas bookstores were the primary source of such reading materials. With the advent of computers and Internet, most of the books are easily available for reading online. Consequently, the younger generations are becoming more interested in reading books from the Internet rather than purchasing from a store. Barnes and Noble wants to explore if this increase in the Internet reading is adversely affecting the sales of hard bound and paperback books.

To make this determination, the learning team has research questions regarding hard bound and paperback book sales from Barnes and Noble in the following table (Table 1). Table 1 Research Questions from Barnes and Noble | Questions to Ask | Answer Choices | | Is there a decrease in the hard bound and paperback book sales at Barnes and Noble during the | (Yes (No (Some | | last 5 years? | | Is there an increase in the download of Internet books? | (Yes (No (Some | | If there is a decrease in the hard bound and paperback book sales at Barnes and Noble, is it | (Yes (No (Some | | because of the increase in Internet reading? | | Additionally, a customer

satisfaction survey from the public can measure the demand of electronic devices over the traditional reading materials of paper books.

In the following table (Table 2) is a list of questions to ask customers. Table 2

Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire	Questions to Ask	Answer Choices
How often do you read?	(Daily (Weekly (Monthly (More	Reading for pleasure, educational, or informative? (Pleasure (Education (Informative
What method of material do you prefer?	(Hard bound (Paperback (Electronic	If your preference was electronic, what device would you prefer? (Nook (Kindle (iPad (Other (None

Conclusion In conclusion, Barnes and Noble recognize the need to conduct a research survey to determine the impact of electronic reading devices have on sales.

As society advances into the electronic era, the traditional reading materials through hard bound and paperback books are becoming obsolete. Through conducting a survey research study, Barnes and Noble can determine the volume of loss sales because of the electronic reading devices. In addition, a customer satisfaction survey can present insight into the customer's preferences of reading materials. References Cooper, D. R. , & Schindler, P. S. (2011). Business research methods (11th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.