NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

COURSE CODE: MKT 403

COURSE TITLE: MARKETING RESEARCH

COURSE MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT

(MKT 403)

MARKETING RESEARCH

COURSE GUIDE

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COURSE GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

This course guide tells you the nature of the course the materials you are going to use and how you are expected to use them for meaningful benefits. It is expected that at least two hours should be devoted to the study of every unit. For each course units there are exercises. You are encouraged to do them. They serve as points of reflections, which are necessary for proper understanding of the facts.

At the end of each unit, there are tutor-marked assignments, which you are expected to answer. They serve as revision and continuous assessment. Tutorial lectures will be provided. This is the opportunity you have for a face-to-face contact with your facilitator. Any area you did not understand will be explained during the tutorial classes.

COURSE AIMS

The course aims at exposing you (students) to the necessary information that will add to the student's knowledge on Marketing Research. The aim of the course shall be achieved by:

Defining and explaining Marketing Research

Examining the nature and scope of Marketing Research.

Briefly tracing the historical development of Marketing Research.

Discussing the basic concepts and reasons for Marketing Research.

Examining Decision making criterions in marketing research

Approaches in addressing a research problem

Explaining the various forms of Marketing Research.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to: Discuss succinctly the principles and practice of Marketing Research.

Unit 5

Problem definition/identification of the marketing research problem.

Approaches in addressing a research problem

Relational approach

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Field research and unobtrusive research often confused.

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Unit 12

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Business market research panel-the orientation

Panel data analysis

Consumer panel

How do panels work

COURSE MATERIALS

1. Course Guide
2. Study Units
3. Textbooks
4. Assignment File
5. Tutorials

STUDY UNITS

There are eighteen study units as shown below:

UNIT ONE: INTRODUCTION

UNIT TWO: OBJECTIVES

UNIT THREE: BASIC RESEARCH CONCEPTS

UNIT FOUR: MARKETING RESEARCH DEFINED

UNIT FIVE: PROBLEM OF DEFINITION

UNIT SIX: DECISION ALTERNATIVE IN MARKETING RESEARCH PROCESS

UNIT SEVEN: RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

UNIT EIGHT: RESEARCH PLAN: SALES EFFORTS AND ADVERTISING WITH EMPHASIS ON PLANNING.

UNITE NINE: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PUBLISHED DATA

UNIT TEN: FIELD OR PRIMARY RESEARCH

UNIT ELEVEN: POSTAL SURVEY

UNIT TWELVE: PERSONAL AND TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

UNIT THIRTEEN: PANEL RESEARCH

UNIT FOURTEEN: QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

UNIT FIFTEEN: QUESTIONNAIRE CONSTRUCTION

UNIT SIXTEEN: STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRES

UNIT SEVETEEN: UNSTRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRES

UNIT EIGHTEEN: SAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRES

For each study unit, which you are expected to spend at least three hours, there are specific objectives. At the end of each unit, measure what you have learnt against the objectives. If there is any deviation go back to the contents of the unit. There are textbooks, which you may go for additional information.

The exercise in each unit has to be attempted to ensure that you are following the ideas being presented. In addition, there are tutor-marked assignments. You are entreated to attempt them, as some of them will form part of the continuous assessment.

ASSIGNMENT FILE

There will be nine (18) assignments, which will cover the following areas:

Problem Definition, Decision Alternative in Marketing Research Process, Research Objectives, Research Plan; Sales Efforts And Advertising With Emphasis on Planning, Internal and External Published Data, Field or Primary Research, Postal Survey, Personal and Telephone Interview and Panel Research, questionnaire (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8, 9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17 & 18).

PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

This concerns date for tutorials, submission of assignment to be sent to you in due course.

ASSESSMENT

This will be in two forms:

1. The continuous assessment which will be based on 30%.
2. The final semester examination after you has completed the material 70%.

TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

There is TMA at the end of each unit and you are to submit the nine. Each of them is 10%. As soon as you complete your assignment, sent it immediately to the tutor. The best three (3) will be selected for continuous assessment purpose.

FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING

The final examination of MKT 403 will be of two-hour duration and have a value of 70% of the total course grade. The examination will consist of questions which reflect the type of self-testing, practice exercises and tutor-marked problems you have come across. All areas of the course will be assessed.

You are advised to revise the entire course after studying the last unit before you sit for the examination. You will find it useful to review your tutor-marked assignments and the comments of your tutor on them before the final examination.

COURSE REVIEW

This table brings together the units, the number of weeks you should take to complete them, and the assignments that follow them.

	TITLE OF THE WORK	**WEEKS ACTIVITY**	**ASSESSMENT**
UNIT			**END OF UNIT**
ONE	INTRODUCTION	1	1ST Assignment
TWO	OBJECTIVES	1	2ND Assignment
THREE	BASIC RESEARCH CONCEPTS	1	3rd Assignment
FOUR	MARKETING RESEARCH DEFINED	1	4th Assignment
FIVE	PROBLEM OF DEFINITION	1	Assignment 5th

			Assignment
SIX	DECISION ALTERNATIVE IN MARKETING RESEARCH PROCESS	1	6^{th} Assignment
SEVEN	RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	1	7^{th} Assignment
EIGHT	RESEARCH PLAN: SALES EFFORTS AND ADVERTISING WITH EMPHASIS ON PLANNING.	1	8^{th} Assignment
NINE	INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PUBLISHED DATA	1	9^{th} Assignment
TEN	FIELD OR PRIMARY RESEARCH	1	10^{th} ASSIGNMENT
ELEVEN	POSTAL SURVEY	1	11^{th} ASSIGNMENT
TWELVE	PERSONAL AND TELEPHONE INTERVIEW	1	12^{th} ASSIGNMENT
THIRTEEN	PANEL RESEARCH	1	13^{th} ASSIGNMENT
FOURTEEN	QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN	1	14^{th} ASSIGNMENT
FIFTEEN	QUESTIONNAIRE CONSTRUCTION	1	15^{th}

			ASSIGNMENT
SIXTEEN	STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRES	1	16th ASSIGNMENT
SEVENTEEN	UNSTRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRES	1	17th ASSIGNMENT
EIGHTEEN	SAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRES	1	18th ASSIGNMENT
		20	

How to get the most from this course

In distance learning the study units replace the university lecturer. This is one of the greatest advantages of distance learning; you can read and work through specially designed study materials at your pace, and at a time and place that suit you best.

Think of it as reading the lecture instead of listening to a lecturer. In the same way that a lecturer might set you some reading to do, the study units tell you when to read your set books or other material.

Just as a lecturer might give you an in-class exercise, your study units provides exercises for you to do at appropriate points.

Each of the study units follows a common format. The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. You should use these objectives to guide your study. When you have finished the units you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. You should use these objectives to guide your study. When you have finished the units you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. If you make a habit of doing this you will insignificantly improve your changes of passing the course. The main body of the unit guides you through the required reading from other sources.

READING SECTION

Remember that your tutor's job is to help you. When you need help, don't hesitate to call and ask your tutor to provide it.

1. Read this course guide thoroughly.
2. Organize a study schedule. Refer to the "Course overview" for more details. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units. Whatever method you choose to use, you should decide on and write in your own dates for working on each unit.

3. Once you have created your own study schedule, do every thing you can to stick to it. The major reason that students fail is that they get behind with their course work. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please let your tutor know before it is too late for help.

4. Turn to unit 1 and read the introduction and the objectives for the unit.

5. Assemble the study materials. Information about what you need for a unit is given the "Overview" at the beginning of each unit. You will always need both the study unit you are working on and one of your set books on your desk at the same time.

6. Work through the unit. The content of the unit itself has been arranged to provide a sequence for you to follow. As you work through the unit you will be instructed to read sections from your set books or other articles. Use the unit to guide your reading.

7. Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study material or consult your tutor.

8. When you are confident that you have achieved a units objectives, you can start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to space your study so that you keep yourself on schedule.

9. When you have submitted an assignment to your tutor for marking, do not wait for its return before starting on the next unit. Keep to your schedule. When the

assignment is returned, pay particular attention to your tutor's comments. Consult your tutor as soon as possible if you have any questions or problems.

10. After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit) and the course objective (listed in the course guide).

TUTOR AND TUTORIALS

There are 8 hours of tutorials provided in support of this course. You will be notified of the dates, times and location of these tutorials, together with the name and phone number of your tutor, as soon as you are allocated a tutorial group.

Your tutor will mark and comment on your assignment, keep a close on your progress and on any difficulties you might encounter and provide assistance to you during the course.

You must mail your tutor- marked assignments to your tutor well before the due date (at least two working days are required). They will be marked by your tutor and returned to you as soon as possible. Do not hesitate to contact your tutor by telephone, e-mail, or discussion board if you need help. The following might be circumstances in which you would find help necessary.

Contact your tutor if:

1) You do not understand any part of the study units or the assigned readings.
2) You have difficulty with the self-tests or exercises.
3) You have a question or problem with an assignment, with your tutor's comments on an assignment or with the grading of an assignment.

You should try your best to attend the tutorials. This is the only chance to have face-to-face contact with your tutor and to ask questions which are answered instantly. You can raise any problem encountered in the course of your study. To gain the maximum benefit from course tutorials, prepare a question list before attending them. You will gain a lot from participating in discussion actively.

SUMMARY

Problem definition in research involves stating the general problem and identifying its general characteristics. Once the problem has been identified and properly defined and delineated, the researcher can move to the next logical steps of developing the research approach and research design.

Research problem can be defined through interrogative or question form, theoretical form and in analytical (empirical form). All the approaches to problem definition lead to the choice of the appropriate research design being the third stage in a research process. It is vindicative, that problem should not be mistaken to symptom.

Primary or field research involves collecting data about a given subject directly from the real world. This section includes information on what primary research is, how to get started, ethics involved with primary research and different types of research you can do. It includes details about interviews, surveys observations and analysis.

There are a few issues that researchers must confront all of the time- over generalizing your results, biased methodology, correlation does not imply causation, Not considered other related factors, being able to know what data is valid, Reported behaviour vs actual behaviour.

Personal interview involves face-to-face meeting of interviewers and respondent. Interviewers visit respondents in their houses, offices, market places or on the street, ask necessary questions and enter the answers obtained in special sheets called questionnaires. This method is usually limited to where human being are to be interviewed. For example, during a household inquiry. The major advantages is that, since the researcher is present, he will be able to explain certain questions which are not clear to the respondent. Against this, intellectual dishonesty in the form of intimidation may arise (disadvantage).

Telephone interview: This involves the use of telephone by the investigator to gather information from respondents. It is very useful where the telephone communication network is efficient

Unlike interview method, postal surveys involves sending questionnaires by post to respondents. Such questionnaires are to be completed by the respondent and returned to the researcher by post.

It is cheaper because no researcher is to be trained and catered for. Although there may be respondents bias. Investigators bias will be completely absent and, The respondent feels free and has enough time to consult sources in supplying some answers.

Postal surveys require less skill to administer. It can be administered to a large number of people at the same time. With a given amount of money, a wider, area can be covered. Impersonal nature of questionnaires with standardized wording and order of questions.

A panel is a group of people who represent a target marketed and are recruited and pre-qualified to participate in market research studies on an on-going basis panel basically offer a pre-qualified audience that is matched to the demographics of the target audience. Since they are in a sense 'Ready for action" at any given time, they offer you the advantages of:

* Quick survey results

* Higher respondents participation rate

* Opinion that are projectable to your target market

* Efficiency i.e increases because your panel members have been carefully screened and qualified.

* The ability to track behaviour over time.

* Potential cost savings (set up cost are sped over several surveys)

Panel method is not often useful owning, to the belief that it is extremely costly and therefore difficult to justify. The major advantage of focused groups over quantitative methods are time and money.

COURSE MAIN

MKT 403
MARKETING RESEARCH

NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

COURSE MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT

(MKT 403)

MARKETING RESEARCH

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MODULE 1 MARKETING RESEARCH

UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION TO MARKETING RESEARCH/RESEARCH CONCEPTS

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Marketing research is the development, interpretations, communication of decision oriented information, which is used in all phases to describe the procedures normally followed when carrying out a marketing research study-before the growth of the market information.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

1. Define Marketing Research
2. Identify the basic concepts in Marketing Research
3. Understand the objectives of Marketing Research

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Marketing Research

The role of marketing research is to gather and categorize information pertaining to various macro – environmental variables then interpret the information in the content strategic consequences. We will see the core philosophy of marketing as is one that puts to the firm the customer at the centre of the organization activity. As the focus of marketing is, or should be onward, towards markets, customers and the environment. Marketing research can play a role in many different activities. Research can be useful to help understand what customers want to decide whether to launch a new product or not, to get feedback from customers about ongoing levels of service, to measure the effectiveness of a sponsorship campaign and so on.

Marketing research is a development interpretation and communication of decision oriented information, which is used in all phases of the marketing process.

3.2 Research Concepts

Just close your eyes for a minute and utter the word research to yourself, what kind of image does this word conjure up for you? Do visualize a laboratory with scientists at work with Bunsen burners and test tubes or an Einstein–like character writing dissertations on some complex subject, or someone collecting data to study the impacts of an advertising campaign on sales. Most certainly, all these images do represent different aspects of research.

Research is simply the process of finding solutions to a problem after a thorough study and analysis of the situational factors.

Marketing Research is simply defined as the function that links organization to its market through the gathering of information. This information allows for the identification and definition of market – driven opportunities and problems. The information allows for the generation, refinement and evaluation of marketing actions. It allows for the monitoring of marketing performance and improved understanding of marketing as business process.

The American Marketing Association defines marketing research as a process specifically the collection of information as it applies to marketing research is a systematic process. The specific tasks in this process include designing methods for collecting information, managing the information collection process, analyzing and interpreting results and communicating findings to decision makers. Marketing Research is the mechanism for generating information.

This module opener shows that designing a single question/scale for collecting a specific type of raw data is different from taking a set of scale measurement and creating a good scientific questionnaire. A researcher's ability to design a good scale measurement is by itself not enough to guarantee that the appropriate raw data will automatically be collected.

This module focuses on developing a clear understanding of the importance of questionnaire designs and the process that should be undertaken in the development of survey instruments. Understanding questionnaire designs will require that you integrate many of the concepts discussed in the earlier chapters.
As a future marketing or business decision maker, you might not have to ever personally design a questionnaire for collecting primary data, but most certainly you will be in a client position of determining whether a survey designed for you is good or bad. Therefore, you should know about the considerations, preliminary activities, and processes that are undertaken in designing a scientific questionnaire.

As the case may be, much of the primary data necessary to create new information for resolving business and marketing information problems requires the researcher to ask people questions and record their responses in some recognizable fashion. If business information problems were simple and require only one bit of raw data, questionnaires will not be necessary. A researcher could develop simple question measurement and administer it to a sample of respondents, collect the raw data, analyze it and derive a meaningful bit of information from the data structure. For example, let's say a retailer – like – pay – less wants to know if having a 50% off sale on Saturday, January 5 2013, would increase sales revenue that day. A researcher could develop the following question. If pay less had a store wide 50% off sale on all merchandise Saturday, January 5 2013, would you come to pay – less and buy at least one item?
_______ Yes or _____ No and administer it to 101,000 consumers representative of the general population. Let's assume that 650 people say yes (65%) and 350 people say no (35%) of shoppers would come to pay less and buy merchandise. By having this one bit of information, does pay – less have enough information to decide whether or not to hold the sale.
In reality, it is highly unlikely that this one bit of information would be a good predictor of actual shopping behavior. Some of the other factors that also directly affect a person's decision to shop at pay – less might be

Attitude towards pay – less and its merchandise.
Other obligations or activities the day of the sale.
Lack of a means of transportation on that particular day.
Limited financial resources.

The point is that many business situations or problems are not un-dimensional and therefore one bit of information about a defined problem situation is normally not sufficient to resolve it.

3.3 The Objectives of Marketing Research

To elaborate on Marketing Research and provide a fundamental understanding of its relationship to marketing practices-The purposes or objectives of Marketing Research are listed below;

Define the objective – It is essential for researchers to understand clearly what they are – and are not – attempting to achieve with the study.

Conduct situation analysis – The researchers obtains an understanding of the situation surrounding a problem by collecting and analyzing relevant internal information about a company and its business environment. This analysis may also involve developing one or more hypotheses to be tested.

> Decode if exploratory studies indicate that for the research is necessary. A reassessment of the problem and the research objective might be required before major costs are incurred.
> Plan and conduct a formal investigation. The research describes where and how to obtain the desired information. He or she will select the data sources – primary and or secondary – prepare and pretest data – gathering forms, plan the sample and collect the data.
> Analyze the data. Meaningful and useable information is extracted from the raw data.
> Prepare a written report. The report should include an executive summary, methodology, findings & perhaps recommendations.
> Follow up the study. It is in the Researcher's interests to follow up the study to assess its use &its influence on marketing strategy.

Meaningful and useful information is extracted from the raw data.

> Prepare a written report. The report should include an executive summary, methodology, findings and perhaps recommendations.
> Follow up the study. It is in the researcher's interest to follow up the study to assess the use and its influence on marketing strategy.

Marketing research is the development, interpretations and communication of decision oriented information, which is used in all phases to describe the procedures normally followed when carrying out a marketing research study – before the growth of the market information.

3.3.1 The Importance of Marketing Research

Marketing research is the systematic design, collection, interpretation, and reporting of information to help marketers solve specific marketing problems or take advantage of marketing opportunities. As the word *research* implies, it is a process for gathering information not currently available to decision makers. The purpose of marketing research is to inform an organization about customers' needs and desires, marketing opportunities

3.3.2 The Marketing Research Process

To maintain the control needed to obtain accurate information, marketers approach marketing research as a process with logical step: (1) Locating and defining issues or problems, (2) designing the research project, (3) collecting data, (4) interpreting research findings, and (5) reporting research findings approach to conducting research rather than as a rigid set of rules to be followed in each project. In planning research projects, marketers must consider each step carefully and determine how they can best adapt them to resolve the particular issues at hand.

3.3.3 Locating and Defining Research Issues or Problems

The first step in launching a research study is issue or problem definition, which focuses on uncovering the nature and boundaries of a situation or question related to marketing strategy or implementation. The first sign of a problem is typically a departure from some normal function, such as failure to attain objectives. If a corporation's objective is a 12 percent sales increase and the current marketing strategy resulted in a 6 percent increase, this discrepancy should be analyzed to help guide future marketing strategies. Declining sales, increasing expenses, and decreasing profits also signal problems. Armed with this knowledge, a firm could define a problem as finding a way to adjust for biases stemming from existing customers when gathering data or to develop methods for gathering information to help find new customers. Conversely, when an organization experiences a dramatic rise in sales or some other positive event, it may conduct marketing research to discover the reasons and maximize the opportunities stemming from them.

Marketing research often focuses on identifying and defining market opportunities or changes in the environment. When a firm discovers a market opportunity, it may need to conduct research to understand the situation more precisely so that it can craft an appropriate marketing strategy. For example, Cisco saw an opportunity to appeal to a $34 billion market of businesses that wished to engage in collaborative projects. Cisco conducted marketing research to determine that it would take 3 to 5 years to build a good reputation among businesses that use the Internet and want to collaborate online. Cisco also discovered that it needed to customize software utilized by specific users and to avoid introducing products too similar to ones already sold by competitors.' The company can use this information to focus its efforts on specific target markets and to refine its marketing strategy appropriately.

To pin down the specific boundaries of a problem or an issue through research, marketers must define the nature and scope of the situation in a way that requires probing beneath the superficial symptoms. The interaction between the marketing manager and the marketing researcher should yield a clear definition of the research need. Researchers and decision makers should remain in the issue or problem definition stage until they have determined precisely what they want from marketing research and how they will use it. Deciding how to refine a broad, indefinite issue or problem into a precise, researchable statement is a prerequisite for the next step in the research process.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we observed that Marketing Research is the development, interpretation and communication of decision oriented information, which is used in all phases of the marketing process. Also impact of marketing Research on the strategic development of payless really shown that as a future marketing or business decision maker, you might not have to ever personally design a questionnaire for collecting primary data, but most certainly you will be in a clients, position of determining whether a survey designed for you is good or bad. Therefore one should know about the considerations, preliminary activities, and processes that are undertaken in designing scientific questions.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has examined the nature and role of marketing research. The following key issues were addressed:

1. The importance of marketing research; Marketing Research is the key if an organization is to be truly market – led .It can provide answers to all sorts of marketing questions that the organization may face.

2. The types of marketing research; Marketing Research can be either ad hoc (to solve specific problems as appoint in time) or continuous (to gather information on an ongoing basis).
3. The approaches to conducting Research; Marketing Research can be conducted either by the organization itself or by employing the services of a professional marketing research firm.
4. The stages in the market research process: These include initial contact, the research brief, the research proposal, exploratory research, the main data collection phase, data-analyses and report writing/presentation.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKEDASSIGNMENT

1. Select any product or service of your choice, visit the two websites and evaluate what secondary research is available on it.
2. Differentiate between marketing information systems, decision support systems and marketing research projects.

7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 THE ROLE OF MARKETING INTELLIGENCE IN CORPORATE PLANNING

CONTENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Management is the direction of a firm through planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling of its human and material resources towards the achievement of predetermined goals. It is the process of coordinating individual and group activities towards group goals. It is the art and science of getting things done through others. Management is a process which takes place at all levels in an organization (Koontz and Weihrich, 1988).

Typically, three levels of management can be identified in most Nigerian organizations: top management, middle management, and rational management. Top management co-ordinates the activities of corporate business as a whole and has a strategic view of the organization. It is concerned with establishing overall objectives for the corporate business and developing appropriate policies and strategies to achieve the objectives. Typical functions of top management include long range corporate planning, capital investment decisions, organization structuring, middle management appointments, acquisition and mergers, etc. Middle management can be termed the tactical level of management whose overall function is to implement top management policy and strategy. Typical of the functions of middle management - purchasing, product planning, discount and credit policy, implementation of marketing and advertising policies, sales promotion, appointment, etc. Operational management level is concerned with day-to-day process of supervision and directives of business, .e.g. production, dispatch, sales, accounts, etc. All the above levels of management need relevant information (internal and external) for corporate decision -making, including corporate planning (Eyre, 1982).

Corporate planning is strategic in nature. It is the systematic, objective, and comprehensive process of long-range planning taking account of the company and the environment within which it has to operate, and looking at the company as a total, corporate entity. By its e, corporate planning takes the long-term view. As with other types arming, the type of business activity the company is engaged in mines to a large extent the period for the corporate plan. Also, the corporate plan must be frequently updated, and performance reviewed so relevant modifications can be made. All these require relevant and external pieces of information.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to;

Identify specifically all the achievable long-term objectives and decide which one to pursue.
Evaluate all the internal resources of the organization, including lance, marketing expertise, production capacity, etc.
Appraise the external environment of the organization within which it operates, including economic environment present and future government action, laws, political environment, technological environment, socio-cultural environment, and Competitive environment. This appraisal will be efficient and effective if relevant information are isolated and analyzed.
Establish internal strengths and weaknesses of the organization, and the possible external opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis).
Recognize that corporate planning requires constant reviewing and updating (through relevant information) if it is to be efficient and effective.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Strategic Co-Operate Planning Process

The essence of strategic corporate planning is to cope with competition. Industry analysis sets the stage for digging deeply into the industry's competitive process such as the sources of competitive pressures, how strong those pressures are, what competitors are doing, and what future competitive conditions will be like. Relevant information and data are to be isolated in the following areas:

What competitive forces exist and how strong are they?
What are the relative cost positions of rival companies in the industry?
What are the competitive positions and relative strengths of key rivals, what are their strategies, how well are they working, why are some rivals doing better than others, and who has what kind of competitive edge? What moves can key rivals be expected to make?

Competitor information analysis is good for two reasons. First, good corporate planning strategy cannot be formulated in a competitive vacuum. Without adequate understanding of rivals' strategies, efficient and effective corporate planning activity will be difficult. It is impossible to out-manoeuvre business rivals' without adequate information and knowledge about what strategies rivals are using, why some rival have been more successful than others, and what moves rivals firms are likely to make in the future. Second, because rivals' strategies are highly interdependent (i.e. the strategic moves of one rival directly impact on the others and may stimulate counter strategies), the positions and success of competitors have direct relevance to choosing one's own best strategy.

Going through a strategic management job of diagnosing what competitors are doing and predicting what strategic management moves hey may make require systematic and objective collection of strategic management information which will aid rational corporate planning job. Such information pertains to:

Assessing whether the competitor is under pressure to improve performance.
Listening to what competitors' managers are saying about likely happenings in the industry.
Examining the competitors' current competitive strategy and how well it is working
Studying the background and experiences of the competitor's managers for clues about what moves they may be intending to make, and
Appraising the competitive capabilities of close competitors in terms of their strengths and weaknesses.

3.2 SWOT

SWOT is an acronym for a company's internal strengths and weaknesses and its external opportunities and threats. SWOT analysis consists of a candid appraisal of a company. It is a method of diagnosing a firm's overall situation so that future managerial decisions can be made. The diagnostic bent of SWOT analysis is not on identifying just any kind of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, but rather on singling out those that are strategy-inclined. SWOT is in effect a distillation of all the steps and considerations that should be of relevance corporate strategy plan with respect to:

Strengths: In this area will be found all the advantageous aspects of the firm. Examples include exceptional customer good will and brand loyalty, highly efficient technical staff, adequate financial resources, and enthusiastic sales force. The strengths represent the foundations on which continued success can be built relative to those of competitors.

Weaknesses: Weaknesses occur in all areas of a firm, some examples of which include obsolescent machinery, no provision for senior management succession, inadequate research and development facilities resulting in lack of new products. What corporate remedies to apply would depend on information available.

Opportunities: while strengths and weaknesses mainly emanate from inside the firm, opportunities are usually external. They may come about through objective and systematic research on the actions of competitors. The important point is that opportunities and related information should be recognised and grasped firmly when they arise. Some examples of opportunities are a new market opening-up which could be filled from existing organisation resources; the opportunity to take over another company which would improve the firm's capabilities, such as a manufacturer taking over a retail chain; or the opportunity to take on a company's management expert in a particular area of specialisation who would improve the firm's performance.

Threats: Like opportunities, threats are most often from outside. Therefore, relevant information to organization's threats must be collected for efficient and effective strategic management job. Though the actual threats to an organization are mostly external, their disadvantageous repercussions on the organization are mainly due to weak or inept corporate management planning. Two very important threats emanating internally include management complacency and inadequate financial management. Managerial complacency results from the assumption that things will always remain as they are and corporate management planners, therefore, have no plans to meet certain changes resulting from competition, technology, and regulations, among others. Some examples of threats to corporate planning actions include changing technology competition (especially from advanced countries), economic and political uncertainty, government rules and regulations, among others. Relevant information should be collected on competitors' perceptions of the impacts of these threats and their likely strategic reactions to these threats. This may be done through bench marking practices.

The advantage of SWOT analysis in corporate planning is that it requires corporate management to look closely and analytically at every aspect of its operations so that objectives can be assessed, information collected on relevant internal and external (controllable and uncontrollable) variables, and corporate planning activities undertaken rationally, systematically, scientifically, and effectively. Every corporate planning strategy must also be examined with care so that the constraints under which corporate planning operations have to be conducted will be recognized.

The kinds of strategic corporate intelligence (information) to be collected about competitors' action are a function of clearly defining the corporate planning activity where the information is to be used. Only after a corporate planning problem has been defined clearly is management in a position to determine what strategic information is needed to make corporate planning decisions. In some cases, the corporate planning decision can be made on the basis of experience and judgement without any systematic assembly of facts on the strategic actions of competitors. Sometimes the needed information for corporate planning decisions is already available, and it is simply a matter of assembling the information and organising it. Also, sometimes, it is necessary to collect and analyse new information and data for corporate planning activities by means of formal research.

Competitor intelligence (information) is important in:

a) Personnel functional activities
b) Marketing functional activities
c) Financial functional activities, and
d) Production functional activities.

Corporate planners are well advised to collect relevant information on the organic business functions, the controllable and uncontrollable factors of the firm, and more especially the behaviour of competitors. Success in modern business corporate operations in Nigeria is a function of collecting and applying reliable and adequate information on the actions of competitors, among others.

Effective management of information is a prerequisite for successful marketing decision-making. Put simply, the better the information, the better the marketing decision because information reduces uncertainly, and the less uncertainty, the less risky is the marketing decision.

Marketing managers are usually faced with three marketing information related tasks. They must first determine the kind and amount of information necessary for making a correct decision. They must then compare the costs of acquiring this information with its value in reducing uncertainty. Finally, marketing managers must be able to organize, interpret, and evaluate information as it relates to the decision at hand.

Market research is one source of information for the Marketing manager. It can be thought of as a systematic procedure for providing managers with actionable decision-making information. As such, it facilitates project decision-making by providing information that is useful in both the identification and the solution of the marketing problem.

Typically, some marketing managers are not directly involved in the practice of marketing research. Technical functions such as date, collection, sampling, or statistical analysis are more likely to be performed by marketing specialists. Still, it is imperative that the manager be familiar with both the procedures and the techniques of market research. Only this familiarity will enable the manager to ascertain the true value of the information provided by market research.

Because the decision making process directly interfaces with the marketing research process, the manager must be able to evaluate the following:

a) Value of market research based information
b) Marketing research information gathering process

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to quantity marketing decision making without an organized flow of information. The types of marketing research information available for decisions may be said to consist of knowledge, opinion, and speculation (Jolson and Hise, 1973). When available marketing information is highly confirmed, the information can be called knowledge. If there is little or no evidential backing, this information is called speculation. In between knowledge and speculation a category lies the category for which there is some basis for belief, but which is not sufficiently confirmed to warrant being called knowledge. This category is called opinion, which serves as the foundation for stochastic models, probabilistic approaches, and the Bayesian decision-making method. The degree of uncertainty associated with the outcomes of most marketing decisions is a result of a mixture of all the three information inputs: speculation, opinion and knowledge. Marketing research is a veritable source of useful information for 1, efficient, and effective corporate decisions.

Marketing decisions are most often made in the context of insufficient information about processes that are dynamic, most often unpredictable, Lear, and interdependent. The marketing decision- maker has 3 strategies to use. The specific goals set, the peculiarities of the ament, and the availability of adequate, accurate, and relevant information should determine the particular decision strategy to be pursued.

The marketing management should play an active role in the market research information acquisition process. Specific responsibilities include:

Delineating the information requirements by defining the problem to studied
Devising the best way to obtain the information
Determining the amount to spend for the information
Deciding on the types of analysis and interpretation that will best solve the problem, and
Developing actionable decision strategies from the available information.

The most critical and difficult task, which a marketing manager faces, specification of information needed to make decision. Specification of the kinds and amounts of information needed is based on an understanding of the problem confronting the manager. Once a marketing problem has been defined, existing sources of information be examined first. Not only is this information readily available marketing decision, but also it is often the most inexpensive and relevant information available. Only if it is inadequate should additional nation be collected through marketing research, for example.

The costs of marketing research information for marketing decisions depend on the means for obtaining it. The best means for getting the nation necessary for marketing decisions depends on the manager's nation requirements, potential or available funds, time constraints, and an appraisal of the usefulness of the information, among others.

Marketing research information decisions has a monetary cost in that acquisition of information must be paid for. Also, information has a time cost in that the time spent to gather information dictates when the decision can be made. An important determinant in evaluating expenditures of money and time for marketing research information acquisition is the value of the information. Therefore, the marketing manager must evaluate its accuracy, currency, availability, sufficiency, and relevancy to arrive at a decision about the amount of money and time that should be allocated to obtaining the information.

Since marketing managers must ultimately make a decision based on the information provided by research, they should be involved in specifying the types of analyses performed on the information. For example, a manager of a new product development project should specify how information should be organised. A product manager examining the sales of a product might find it useful to have sales data organised by geographical location of the sale, the type of intermediary selling the product, buyer characteristics amongst others.

A final responsibility of the marketing manager is the development of actionable strategies based on the marketing research information. If the information obtained is not actionable, in that it does not lend itself to effective decision-making, then its costs have exceeded its value. By specifying in advance, either implicitly or explicitly, what various information inputs will lead to in terms of specific actions, the marketing manager can ensure that the entire marketing research information acquisition process is a worthwhile venture.

3.3 Evaluating Value of Marketing Research Information

From a conceptual perspective, the value of marketing research information is reflected by the extent to which information can reduce decision uncertainty. Alternatively, the value of market research information is reflected by the degree to which the chances of a making a correct decision are increased by use of that information. Implicit in this perspective is the notion that there is value in the information. Hence information value implicitly refers to the value of incremental information.

Given this perspective, marketing research information is more valuable in certain decision situations than in others. Since the value of information may be defined as information benefits minus information costs, value increases as benefits increase or cost decreases. Additionally, information is potentially more valuable in a marketing decision situation in which there is a great deal of uncertainty present and the consequences of an incorrect decision are substantial.

3.4 Quantitative Evaluation of Market Research Information for Marketing Decisions

There are several methods of establishing the value of marketing research information for marketing decisions. Each method is applicable primarily to the individual decision rather than the total research effort. Ideally, information value should be established before the marketing research is conducted, but this is not always feasible.

Some of the quantitative methods for evaluating research information for marketing decisions include:

a) Simple savings method: This method assumes that marketing management can make a single reasonably accurate estimate of the cost of making a wrong decision as well as estimate the chance of making such an incorrect decision. The value of information is determined as follows:

Value = E (cost) n - E (cost) t,

Where, E (cost) n = estimated cost of mistake using no additional information E (Cost) t = estimated cost of mistake using additional information.

b) Return on investment: Another approach views research information for marketing decisions as an investment after the research has been completed and acted upon.

c) Present value method: This method also treats marketing research expenditures as an investment. This approach can be applied to individual marketing decisions and total market research effort by an organisation.

d) Cost benefit approach: This approach involves determining value through a cost benefit framework and suggests that marketing research information evaluation be done by:

Setting a cost figure and maximizing benefits from that cost.
Establishing a desired level of benefits and minimizing cost, or
Maximizing benefits.

Decision theory analysis can be used to determine the value of research information for marketing decisions. Decision analysis is used to link together uncertainties in the marketing environment and the alternatives available to a marketing manager, and it can be extended to identify the upper limit to spend for market research information, as discussed and illustrated previously.

3.4.1 Qualitative Evaluation of Market Research Information for Marketing Management Decision

Although cost may be an overriding concern in determining whether a particular kind of research information is to be utilized in a specific marketing decision context, cost probably should not be the only factor taken into account. The value of research information for marketing management decision can also be evaluated according to some qualitative characteristics.

To be maximally useful for decision-making, marketing research information must possess the following characteristics:

a) Accuracy: This refers to the degree to which the information reflects reality. That is, the information must closely approximate the true in the present time period. The information for marketing decision must be up to date.
b) Sufficiency: This refers to whether there is enough information to make a correct marketing decision
c) Availability: This refers to having information accessible (in hand) when a marketing decision is being made.
d) Relevancy: This refers to the pertinence and applicability of information to the marketing decision issue at hand. This is perhaps the single most important factor.

Even if research information for marketing decisions processes all the other qualitative characteristics of good information, it is of no use unless it is relevant. Although trade off must be made among other characteristics, relevancy should be the one characteristic that should not be compromised. It is the one information ingredient essential for successful marketing management decision-making.

Bad information (i.e. information that does not possess the above characteristics) may be worse than no information at all. Even if a marketing decision- maker does not have information, there is always a chance of making a correct decision. Though good information does not ensure good decisions (judgement, intuition, etc. are still required), bad information will normally result in poor decision.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Marketing research has been seen as a means by which the cycle of communication between manufacturer and the consumer or client may be efficiently and effectively achieved and maintained. The major objective of marketing research is to collect data, to monitor the performance of the existing products, to explore ways to improve on the product, and to research the possibility of new products, among others.

5.0 SUMMARY

We can observed that all the steps and considerations that should be of relevance corporate strategy plan on SWOT were mentioned.

In carrying out marketing research it must be decided whether the research shall be in-house or it will be contracted out to an agency. It must be noted, however, that in-house marketing researches are often cheaper than the one contracted out to agency. It is when a marketing research is contracted out that the issue of research brief, research proposal, agency, and research budget come in. Each of these items will be discussed below, (In the remaining units below).

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. List and explain the several method of establishing the value of marketing research information for marketing decision.
2a. List and explain all the steps and considerations that should be of relevance in corporate strategy plan on SWOT.
2b. What is SWOT?
3. Mention the ways of collecting and analyzing new information and data for corporate planning activities by means of formal research.

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UNIT 3 MARKETING RESEARCH BRIEF/ PROPOSAL

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to briefly discuss what is meant by research brief, proposal, and also the responsibilities of Clients and agents. We shall also discuss research budget and criteria for evaluating marketing research results. Each of the mentioned topics shall be discussed under different sub-sections and relevant examples shall be given in order to give a proper understanding of the salient issues involved.

The main purpose of establishing a company is to make profit (or any other benefit index). Profit can come when a large amount of the company's products and services are sold. Large quantity of products and services can be sold when those products are the types that satisfy the customer's or clients. Needs or wants. To understand consumer behaviour for products, the marketer should go beyond adjusting the marketing mix arbitrarily without finding out whether such adjustment will meet the customer's needs, or not; hence the need for marketing research.

Marketing research has been seen as a means by which the cycle of communication between manufacturer and the consumer or client may be efficiently and effectively achieved and maintained. The major objective of marketing research is to collect data, to monitor the performance of the existing products, to explore ways to improve on the product, and to research the possibility of new products, among others.

In carrying out marketing research it must be decided whether the research shall be in-house or it will be contracted out to an agency. It must be noted, however, that in-house marketing researches are often cheaper than the one contracted out to agency. It is when a marketing research is contracted out that the issue of research brief, research proposal, agency, and research budget come in. Each of these items will be discussed below.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

explain briefly what is required in marketing research

Explain how often alters the client's perception of the problem and even provide the solution to the problem.

Explain briefly how the researcher and the client will understand the problem properly.

Understand the marketing research brief how it elicits response from the research agency, which comes in form of proposal.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Marketing Research Brief

A research brief is a write-up from the client to the research agency. It clearly outlines the technical background stating the objective and action standard for the study. A marketing research brief is a write-up drawn up at the marketing department of an organisation on the problems identified, i.e., what the problems are, how and why is the problems, etc. It is a clear statement of the problem situation of the company.

A brief is required in marketing research for the following reasons:

i. It imposes the necessary discipline on the client to think about the problem and

ii. It often alters the client's perception of the problem and may even provide the solution. The brief helps the researcher and the client to understand the problem properly. Also a marketing research brief elicits response from the research agency, which comes in form of proposal.

The contents of a marketing research brief include:

Introduction; usually called Background
The Research Objective
Action standard
Timing.

Given below is a hypothetical research brief.

3.2 Marketing Research Brief (Hypothetical example)

Background

OLC Manufacturing Company Nig. Ltd is a private Nigeria company, which has been in business for the past five years. The company has just introduced into the market a seasoning condiment (BB) to its MC tomato- paste, which is still doing very fine in the market.

Before the introduction of the product, information was gathered in the food seasoning market in Lagos where largest volume of sales takes place. The test-marketing was successful before the launch and mass production started.

During the initial survey in the market on the competing brands, it was discovered that all the other brands like MM, DD, etc. are brown in colour and packaged in cubes. The company decided to produce white-colour seasoning condiment to arouse interest in consumers and also provide a change. The package is also done in polythene bags for both family sizes and industrial sizes like restaurants and hotels.

In the first year of its operation, there was rapid growth in production. With the success recorded, the desire to extend marketing beyond Lagos became appealing and this led to opening of distribution outlets across Nigeria based on the favourable sales recorded in Lagos State Prior to the expansion in market outlets and production, a market research was carried out in Benin area where the study showed a favourable result of wide acceptability. Sales volume after the national launch was good in the average for some few months after which a sudden decline followed for about eight months, now almost pushing the product out of the market.

The OLC management after critically looking at the issue feels the problem may have to do with the sudden launch nation-wide without caution, and basing decision on Benin and Lagos alone without considering factors outside those areas and the suspicion of a change in product quality.

It is essential that the company explores the customers' reaction and the general market situation as well as competitors.

3.3 Research Objectives

In line with the background information given above, the objective of this study is to explore the reasons behind the sudden downward turn in sales volume with special attention to customer reaction to the product as against other seasoning products in the market. At the same time, attempt should be made at identifying any inherent deficiency in product quality, appeal, and competition.

i. Action Standard

In view of the objective set out, OLC Management would like the research to cover Lagos and Benin, the two areas previously researched on, and a good presentation of how the product is doing nationally. Special attention should be paid to the new areas opened up after Lagos and Benin. Distinction should be made between household food seasoning for commercial catering services, i.e. hotels and big restaurants. OLC would want to find out if it is viable to continue with the national distribution outlets. OLC expects the report to bring out causes of low or downward trend in sales in the regions. Alternatively, there must be an identification of unviable outlets or sectors that need either closing down or stepping up of marketing efforts.

ii Timing

It is the desire of OLC Company that a quick solution is found to the problem of declining sales. Perhaps it would be of interest to know that the Board of Directors is expected to hold their quarterly meeting in three months time. The management would, therefore, appreciate if the research agency can prepare and submit its research proposal, and possibly carry out the research and then submit its final report within two months to enable the Board take a decision on the findings.

3.4 Marketing Research Proposal

A marketing research proposal is a response from the research agency to the research brief written by the management. A written research proposal is often required when a study is being suggested. It ensures that the parties understand the project's purpose and proposed methods of investigation. Cost and time budgets are often spelled out as are other responsibilities and obligations. Depending upon the needs and desires of the clients, there may also be substantial background detail and elaboration of proposed research techniques.

A commercial research proposal, regardless of length, may include the sections stated below:

i. Background
ii. Study Objectives
iii. Proposed methodology
iv. Action Standard
v. Analysis and Calculation
vi. Time Schedule
vii. Cost Estimate
viii. Terms of Business.

It should be noted, however, that academic research proposals do not contain all the items stated above.

A hypothetical marketing research proposal is given below to show what a typical research proposal looks like.

3.5 Marketing Research Proposal (A Hypothetical Example)

i. Background

The study involves the investigation of the problem of declining sales of *BB* food- seasoning product introduced into the Nigerian market by OLC *Manufacturing Company Nigeria Limited.* During the first year of production, the company recorded good sales in the Lagos State area, ' and subsequent market survey in Benin also showed acceptability of the product. Based on this, the company went into mass-production aimed at covering the national market. Distribution outlets were opened in various regions within the country for a wider coverage.

Apart from the research done in Lagos and Benin, no purposeful effort was made at researching into other areas.

The client, OLC manufacturing Nig. Ltd, discovered that the product is just at the very beginning of its growth period. Therefore, its decline is an abnormal situation especially coming after a good performance in its first year in a smaller market. The impact of competition, the difference in colour to other brands, and good marketing effort and other related problems are the area to be investigated in other to find solution to the problems.

ii. Research Objectives

From the research brief submitted, and personal discussions on the problems associated with the products, we (the research agency) want to recognise that the objectives of this research is to investigate into the product quality to find out if there had been deficiency in recent productions when mass production is being undertaken following the national launch. There are factors (like the competition from other popular brands which have already taken a big share of the market with brand loyalty of large followership) which should be investigated; the sudden downward turn in sales in all areas which must be arrested; market share and popularity of the product across the country to determine viable channels.

iii. Proposed Methodology

In view of the scope of the survey, we (the research agency) intend to use field survey for the national coverage. The instruments will be structured questionnaire and the respondents will be interviewed personally; we plan to depend on observation in the major markets also. We recommend further that a sample of 250 (two hundred and fifty) respondents shall be chosen randomly from among identified users like students, women, restaurants, hotels and distributors. These research method and sample sizes are ideal for effective result and operational convenience.

The aspect involving the product quality will also depend on the field survey but an additional method of using results of experiments, which will be limited to Lagos metropolis, will be used. This additional method is to reveal if there are some defects in the products as seen by users. This will give added proof to whatever information the questionnaire will bring out.

iv. Action Standard

The research will take a look at the production department to investigate if there is any deficiency in the product manufactured. A national survey will then be carried out with special reference to areas outside Lagos and Benin. The survey will focus on distinction between household users and industrial users. Other areas of interest will be the identification of unviable outlets and to recommend those that need more marketing efforts or complete close-down, if need be. The area of coverage will be all regional centres and important towns.

v. Timing

We (the research agency) submit that when mobilized within a week of presenting this report, we shall commence work in another week from then at all centres. Action will be co-ordinated at our Abuja head-office. The entire survey will take about four weeks to complete. Fieldwork will end in 20 days time. Preliminary report will be ready by the fourth week of commencement of work. The final report will be submitted two weeks after the preliminary report.

vi. Cost Estimate/Research Budget

~~N~~	
Personnel Emoluments:	
(a) Enumerators	100,000
(b) Supervisors	30,000
(c) Executives	30,000
	160,000
Travelling:	
Supervisor	10,000
Executives	15,000
	25,000
Hotel Accommodation/out of station:	
Supervisor	50,000
(b) Executives	40,000
	90,000
Car Hire	120,000
Stationery Admin. Charges	40,000
Company margin	50,000
Total:	**N485, 000**

vii. Terms of Business

a) Financial: We are proposing that if our terms in the proposal are acceptable to management, an arrangement should be made by management to pay 50% of the contract sum to enable us mobilize to begin work on the project. The balance of 50% is payable on completion of the project.

b) Time Limitation: The cost of the project and the duration for completion as stated in the proposal remain binding for two months. If within this period no action has been taken, we reserve the right to amend the quotation to reflect the possible cost changes in the period.

c) Proposal Copyright: This proposal is our copyright and is confidential to the client to whom it is submitted. The acceptance of this proposal and the commissioning of the research will be deemed to be acceptance also of all these terms of business. (For a comprehensive discussion of Research Brief and Proposal, see Asika, N. and Osuagwu, L. (1997), Research Methods for Marketing Decisions, Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd: also, see Osuagwu, L., Business Research Methods: Principles and Practice, Lagos: Grey Resources Ltd., 1999).

3.6 Criteria for Evaluating Marketing Research Request

Marketing managers' motivations for seeking research help vary, and may not always be fully evident. They may feel a real need for specific information and data by which to guide a decision. At other times the marketing research study may be authorized mainly because its presence may promote approval for a decision the managers are quite willing to make without research. At other times, research may be authorized as a measure of personal protection for the decision makers in case the decision is criticized later.

An appropriate marketing research study can help managers avoid losses and increase profits or it can be a waste. The decision- makers usually must face this evaluation question. Typically, they want a solid cost estimate for a project and an equally precise assurance that useful information will result from the research. Even if the marketing researcher can give good cost and information estimates, the marketing managers still must judge whether the benefits outweigh the costs. The evaluation is usually a subjective one, although two other approaches have been tried; they are ex-post facto evaluation and decision theory approach. These approaches are briefly discussed below.

Subjective Valuation Criterion

Conceptually, the value of marketing research is not difficult to determine. In a business situation, the research should produce added revenues or reduce expenses in much the same way as any other investment of resources. The value of research information may be judged in terms of the difference between the results of decisions made with the information and the results that would be made without it.

While such a criterion is simple to state, its actual use presents some difficult measurement problems.

3.7 Ex Post Facto Evaluations

If there is any measurement of the value of marketing research, it is usually an after-the-fact event. This could be in form of return on investment, that is, where an objective estimate of the contribution of each project to corporate profitability is determined after the marketing research must have been carried out.

The effort at cost-benefit analysis is commendable, even though it is only a tentative first step. A marketing manager may be able to judge after the fact whether the research study was justified, given certain assumptions. While the results may come too late to guide the current research decision, such analysis may sharpen the manager's ability to make judgements about future research proposals. However, the critical problem remains that of marketing project evaluation before the study is done. The challenge of effective marketing research valuation is the inability of the evaluator to measure or forecast the benefits and costs of the project. For example, a proposal to conduct a thorough marketing management audit of operations in a company may be a very worthy one, but neither its costs nor its benefits are easily estimated in advance. Such decisions are sufficiently unique that managerial experience seldom provides much aid in evaluating such a proposal.

Even in these complex situations, however, marketing managers often can make some useful judgements. They may be able to determine that a management audit is needed because the company is in dire stress, and management does not understand the scope of its problems. The marketing management information need may be so great as to assure that the research is approved. In such cases they may decide to control the research expenditure risk by requesting a gradual marketing research study. They can then review costs and benefits at the end of each step, and give or withhold further authorization for marketing research grants or budgets.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What do you understand by the term EX POST FACTO evaluations?

Option Analysis

Some progress has been made in the development of methods for assessing the value of marketing research input when the management problem is a choice between well-defined options each alternative can be judged in terms of estimated costs and benefits associated with it, and a formal analysis can be conducted and managerial judgement still plays a major role.

While both costs and benefits present in major estimating problems, the development of the cost side is normally easier. If the marketing research design can be stated clearly, one can estimate an approximate cost. The salient task is to qualify the benefits from the research. At best, estimates of benefits are crude and largely reflect a more orderly way to estimate outcomes under uncertain conditions.

3.8 Decision Theory Approach

To compare two or more alternatives, a marketing manager must estimate the expected outcome of each alternative. When there are alternatives from which to choose, a rational way to approach the decision is to try to assess the outcomes of each course of action; then one can choose the outcome which best meets the criterion established for judging alternatives. This criterion is a combination of decision rule and decision variables (see the section on quantitative evaluation of marketing research information).

4.0 CONCLUSION

Conclusively, marketing research has been classified in this chapter into market research and sales research, pricing research, media selection research, and distribution research, among others. The chapter shows that the purpose of marketing research is to collect data and information about market/customer so as to obtain accurate information for decision making. In any marketing research process, the following steps must be adopted: problem definition, data collection, sampling selection, development of an analysis plans and time estimation. Data can be obtained from two sources: primary sources and secondary ones. A good marketing research is characterized by scientific method, research activity, multiple methods, interdependence of models and data. Decision process in marketing research is concerned with establishment of goals, and determination of alternative strategies. The major decisions should be on advertising, packaging, distribution method, sales force, pricing policies, product, as well as market studies. Marketing research can be designed as being exploratory, descriptive, experimental survey, conclusive, field study, qualitative, and quantitative. Consideration should be given in marketing research effort to the value and cost of information. Information gathering storage and retrieval should be timely and relevant in evaluating and calculating the cost, which involves a calculation of interviewer time, equipment used, and data processing, among others.

5.0 SUMMARY

Marketing research has been seen as the systematic and objective collection, recording, analysis, interpretation and reporting of information and data about existing or potential markets, marketing strategies and tactics and the interaction between markets, marketing methods and current or potential products or services. This definition above emphasizes the importance of objectivity and accuracy in gathering, recording and analysing marketing research data In fact, the success or failure of any marketing research effort depends on the researcher.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMEMNT

1. Describe the main methods of collecting primary and secondary data, and the advantages and disadvantages of each.
2. How does a marketing information system different from marketing Research?

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UNIT 4 MARKETING MANAGEMENT DECISION-MAKING & MARKETING RESEARCH

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Decision is a choice made out of alternatives, these alternatives relate to some objectives aimed to be achieved. No decision is involved when one has choice. In this unit, we are going to look at the process of carrying out decision- making and so on.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

identify the process of decision- making in an organization.
identify the categories of marketing research design
discuss the application of decision making to marketing research.
discuss marketing survey research decision

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Decision Making Process

The process of carrying out an exhaustive consideration is decision-making. A decision making process requires possessing information and data about the elements that are involved and relevant, and how they interrelate. It is the process by which we apply appropriate methods and techniques of analysis in order to make good decisions.

Good decision is one that is based on logic, considers all available data, information and possible alternatives, and applies the quantitative and qualitative approaches. Good decision results occasionally in an unexpected or unfavourable outcome. Therefore, a bad decision is one that is not based on logic, does not use all available information, does not consider all alternatives, and does not apply appropriate quantitative and qualitative techniques.

The following elements may be found in any marketing decision situation:

1) *Decision-maker:* that is, who is responsible for, and will be committed to, the final choice
2) *Value system:* This reflects the fundamental preference structure of the marketing decision- maker and the terms of which the objectives to pursue have to be articulated, and evaluation criteria selected.
3) Objectives of the decision-maker, which can conflict, could change overtime.
4) Alternative courses of action, which must be exhaustively identified and analysed.
5) Environmental factors, which include cultural, economic, political, social, and technological factors, among others.
6) Evaluation criteria, which are bases for comparing the options
7) Choice made which reflects the inner values and psychology of thedecision-maker.
8) Intelligence activity phase, which is when a marketing decision-maker becomes aware of the needs to make a decision to do something.
9) Marketing research activity phase, which is when the decision-maker makes the final choice.

Render *and* Stair (1985) define decision theory as an analytic and systematic approach to studying decision- making. According to them, a good management decision is based on the following steps:

1. Clearly define the problem at hand
2. List possible alternatives
3. Identify the possible outcomes
4. List the pay off or profit of each combination of alternatives and outcomes in a decision table.
5. Select one of the decision theory models
6. Apply the model and make the decision.
7. Decision Objective is expressed as some variable to be optimized subject to a set of explicitly expressed constraints.

Statistical decision theory or Bayesian decision theory model, for example, calls for:

a) Identifying major decision alternatives facing the firm (company).
b) Distinguishing the events (state of nature) that might bring about a distinct outcome
c) Estimating the probability of each state of nature.
d) Estimating the value of each outcome
e) Determining the expected value of each decision
f) Choosing the decision with the highest expected value.

There are three phases into which marketing management decision making process can be put, and these include:

i. Intelligence activity phase, which is the stage in which the marketing decision-maker becomes aware of the need for a decision.
ii. Research activity phase is the phase at which an articulation of what objective to pursue is carried out and the research for the options and their comparative evaluation carried out to show their relative merit.

The types of decisions marketing managers make depend on how much knowledge, information, or data they have about the situation. Therefore, three kinds of decision-making environments have been identified, and they include:

a) *Decision making under certainty:* In this case, the marketing decision-maker knows with certainty the consequence of every alternative or decision choice.
b) *Decision making under risk:* Here, the marketing decision- maker knows the probability of occurrence of each outcome. Also, the decision- maker will attempt to maximise his/her value or expected well-being. Two types of

criteria are employed: maximization of expected value and minimization of expected loss.

c) *Decision making under uncertainty:* In this category, the marketing decision-maker does not even know the probabilities of the various outcomes. Types of criteria employed are maximax, maximin, equally likely, criteria of realism, and minimax, among others.

(iii) Choice activity phase is the phase at which the decision- maker (marketing manager) considers the recommendations and makes the final choice.

A marketing problem arises when there is some difficulty in achieving specific objectives. Major problems that may exist in marketing decision situation *are:*

a) Lack of required skill for analysis
b) Lack of information

Generally, a marketing decision-making process requires possession of data and information about the elements that are involved and how they interrelate.

c) Lack of finance to conduct the research. The marketing researcher needs sufficient fund to conduct his research.
d) Lack of time to gather information and data and analyse the situation exhaustively.
(e) Lack of facilities

The marketing decision - maker needs some facilities such as computer to process and store the data.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

List and Explain the elements in marketing decision situation.

3.2 Application of Decision Making to Marketing Research

Marketing decisions should be emphasised on:

Market
Marketing programme
Marketing organization
Product - price

Place
Promotion
Advertising
Sales promotion and publicity
Sales management and personal selling.

Some of these issues are briefly discussed below.

3.3 Market Decision

Market decision is concerned with how to enter the market and which market to enter. Marketing decision should be on marketing organization and the marketing program to be achieved. Other relevant marketing decision areas include:

3.3.1 Product Decisions

In this case, decision should be made on:

Product quality
Product features
Product style, packaging and labeling, branding, colour, etc.

In developing a product, the manufacturer has to choose a quality level that will support the product's intended position in the target market in relation to competition. The concept of optimum competition should be considered. (See Achumba and Osuagwu (1994) for a comprehensive discussion of this concept).

Product features are a competitive tool for differentiating the company's product from competitors' products. Also, decision should be made on style as good design offers several benefits. For example, it can create product replacement cycles for products in the maturity stage of their product life cycle.

In branding decision, the decision is whether the company should put a brand name on its products. Also, decision must be made to provide legal protection of unique product features. Branding decision helps the marketer segment markets. Good brands also help to build corporate image.

Developing an effective packaging for a new product requires a large number of decisions. The first decision should be carried on packaging concept. Also, decisions must be made on further elements of packaging design such as size, shape, materials, colour, texture and brand mark. Marketers will also design labels for their products.

Decisions should be made to survey customers to identify the main product services that might be offered and their relative importance. These include discounts, after sales service, credit facilities, and replacement guarantee, among others.

3.3.2 Pricing Decisions

All profit and non- profit organisations face the task of setting a price on their products or services. A Nigerian company has to decide what it wants to accomplish with the particular product or service. Also, the company has to consider the following factors in setting the price:

Selecting the pricing objective
Determining demand
Estimating costs
Analysing competitors' prices and offers
Selecting a pricing method, and
Selecting the final price, among other relevant issues to pricing.

3.3.3 Distribution Decisions

Place or distribution channel decisions should be emphasised on:

(a) Retailer marketing decisions: A retailer must make decisions on target market, product assortment and service, pricing, promotion. *etc.*
(b) Physical distribution decision: Physical distribution involves planning, implementing, controlling the physical flows of material and final goods from points of origin or manufacture to points of use to meet customer needs at a profit. In this situation, decision should be made on transportation cost, warehousing, inventory carrying, receiving and shipping administration, and order processing.

3.3.4 Decision on Promotion Mix

Promotion mix consists of four elements, which include:

Advertising

Sales promotions
Public relations
Personal selling

Advertising consists of non-personal forms of communication conducted through paid media under clear sponsorship. Marketing managers must make decisions in developing an advertising programme, which include the following questions/considerations:

What are the advertising missions?
How much can be spent?
What message to be sent?
What media to use to carry the advertising message?
How to measure the advertising result?

Sales promotion consists of short-term incentives to encourage purchase or sale of a product, service, or idea. In using sales promotions, a company must decide how to establish objectives, select the tools, develop the program, pretest the sales promotions program, implement and control it, and finally evaluate the results. In deciding when and how to use product publicity, management should decide how to carry out the publicity objectives, choose the publicity messages and vehicles that will implement the publicity plan, and evaluate the results.

Most companies use sales representative and assign them an important role in the marketing mix. Marketing managers must decide how to design and manage the personal selling resources of their firms. Sales force design calls for decisions on sales objectives, strategy, structure, size, compensations, evaluations, etc. Managing the sales force includes recruitment and selection of sales representatives, training, directing, motivation, and evaluation, among others.

3.4 Categories of Marketing Research Design

Research design (RD) is the programme that guides the researcher in the process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting data, information and observation. Research defines the domain of general ability. According to Achumba and Osuagwu (1994), citing Kerlinger (1983), research design is viewed as the plan, structure, and strategy for investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions and control variance. Research design specifies the direction the marketing researcher is going and how he is going about getting relevant pieces of information/data. Research design in marketing research is the specification of methods and procedures for acquiring the marketing Information and data needed. If the methods and procedures for the research are cheap or insufficient, the resulting data and finding will be inadequate or even misleading. Marketing research designs are generally categorized into:

(a) Exploratory
(b) Descriptive design
(c) Conclusive design
(d) Observational
(e) Experimental
(f) Survey
(g) Field study

These categories are briefly discussed below:

Exploratory design

The exploratory phase of the research is designed to:

Clarify the marketing opportunity or problem
Locate relevant variables
Produce new hypotheses
Determine whether primary research is required
Identify the area of information to be collected.

Henry (1985) identified the following three phases in exploratory research:

The preliminary investigation phase, which is designed to determine whether the company has internal data that might be useful.
A search of secondary data sources conducted to determine if relevant studies have been done previously.
Qualitative research, which is used as a means of identifying information to be collected.

Exploratory research should be quite flexible, since the marketing researcher is uncertain about the exact nature of the marketing problem. Exploratory marketing research study is also designed to generate data that suggests meaningful research questions. It is also based on the examination of analogous situations including case histories and simulations. Case histories help the marketing researcher to focus on past marketing approaches or similar problems.

3.5 Descriptive Design

Some market research studies attempt to describe market characteristics or functions, for e.g. a sales analysis for a Nigerian shoe manufacturer may show the company's sales by territory, type of customers, model of product, or any other variables. A common descriptive research in marketing is the one that seeks to determine a product's consumer profile.

Descriptive research is used in marketing research to:

Portray the attitudes, behaviour, and other characteristics of consumers, clients, groups, or organisations.
Determine the extent of association among two or more variables. Draw inferences about these relationships among variables.
Make predictions about the future.

In general, descriptive marketing research can be subdivided into two, which include:

(a) Cross- sectional studies, which examine the population of interest at one point in time.
(b) Longitudinal studies, which investigate a fixed sample of consumers, clients, or other people who are measured at a number of points in time.

Common characteristics of descriptive marketing research studies are:

a) The association of two or more key variables; for instance a sales analysis nay break down the frequency distribution among various income levels. This can help the firm to develop prediction and marketing strategies.
b) Specific research question used to:

Test specific components of the marketing mix to determine which is most effective:
'

Control marketing variable and produce change.
Discover and refine marketing theories and hypotheses
Formulate hypotheses related to other experimentally or non-experimentally tested hypotheses.
Help build theoretical systems.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

List and Explain the categories of marketing research design.

3.6 Marketing Survey Research Design

When marketing researchers require information and data of a personal nature such as consumer's feeling, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, vital facts of consumers, motivations and behaviour, they turn to the questionnaire or survey research approach. There are generally four main types of survey, which include:

Personal interview,
Telephone interview,
Mail interview, and controlled observation.

Survey research in marketing involves selecting a representative sample of respondents/consumers from the population. In this type of study, the marketing researcher begins with a solid knowledge of a problem and a clear idea about hypotheses and testing methods. The survey research design strictly controls sources of information and procedures for marketing research data gathering.
One of the important limitations of descriptive marketing research is that it cannot establish causation - i.e. why something happens. A descriptive study may show a strong connection between two or more variables, but it cannot provide solid scientific evidence

4.0 CONCLUSION

A decision making process requires information and data about the elements that are involved and relevant, and how they interrelated Identifying the process of decision making and understanding the application of decision making to marketing research have distinguished between theory and law in marketing research.

5.0 SUMMARY

The importance of management decision- making in marketing research is an essential and unavoidable action in the decision – making process. Decision is a choice made out of alternatives. NO decision is involved when one has no choice.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. List and Explain the application of decision making to Marketing Research.
2a. Distinguish between theory and law in marketing research.
2b. List and Explain the four elements of promotion mix.
3. What are the importance of survey research in Marketing Research
4. Mention the major problems that may exist in marketing decision situation.

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UNIT 5 PROBLEM OF DEFINITION

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Management problem must first be translated into a research problem. Once you approach the problem from a research angle, you can find a solution. For example, “Sales are not growing” is a management problem.

Translated into a research problem, we may examine the expectation and experience of several groups: Potential customers, first time buyers, and repeat purchasers. We will determine if the lack of sales is due to:

Poor expectations that lead to a general lack of desire to buy.
Poor performance experience and a lack of desire to repurchase.

Marketing arises generally when an organization fails to one or some of its marketing objective.

This is perhaps the most important and difficult stage in the research process. It is often said that a problem well defined is half solved. This is true to a large extent. A well defined problem will ensure that relevant data is collected and appropriate solutions found. Improper definition of the research problem will guarantee that inappropriate solutions are applied to the situation.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you are expected to:

Ascertain how marketing research problem is defined.
Distinguish between theory and law in marketing research.
Draw an analogy between a research problem and symptom.
Show the practical combination of marketing research induction and deductions.
Differentiate marketing research from management research.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Problem Definition/Identification of the Marketing Research Problem

A research should be business-like in stating the problem. A marketing problem arises generally when an organization fails to meet one or some of its marketing objectives.

Problem definition is the first and one of the most important stages in the research process, because it defines exactly what the project is about and as such influences how the subsequent stages are conducted, and ultimately the success of the project itself. The organization sponsoring the research, whether it intends to use in-house researchers or an agency, needs to define precisely what the problem is and how that translates into research objectives. This may also lead to the identification of other concerns or problems that need to be included in the project. For example, if the fundamental problem has been defined as ‘people are not buying our product; the organization may feel that it should not only explore people’s attitudes to the product itself, but also look at how they rate the product on other aspects of the marketing mix in comparison with the competition.

We shall consider a firm suddenly experiencing falling demand (sales) for its popular brand of product. We assume that the sales objective for the brand is one million naira/units per annum. At present sales level, the manager believes he cannot meet the target for the year. Care should be taken not to confuse problems with symptoms. The problem here is not falling sales. This is simply an indication of the problem. It will be wrong therefore to define the problem as what can be done to halt falling sales objective – achieving a given sales volume or put differently reversing falling sales to rising sales. To locate the problem in this instance, we must seek to discover why sales are falling. What eventually comes to be the cause of falling sales will be problem of the research.

The possible causes of falling sales can be traced to changes in the marketing environment, actions of competitors and weakness in the firms marketing strategy (Craven and Lamb, 1986). Pinpointing the problem for a given research situation will require extensive appraisal of all these three areas. This however can be expensive and time consuming. The manager here will be expected to do an exploratory research to help him eliminate some possible causes and identify the most likely ones. An exploratory research into this falling sales situation, may reveal that environmental changes and actions of competitors are not the likely causes.

3.2 Approaches Employed in Addressing a Research Problem

A researcher should be business-like in stating the problem. The problem can be stated as a relationship between two or more variables. The problem can be stated in question form or as a declarative statement.

It is however a safe, simple and economical way to state the problem of the study in interrogative form. It should be stated in such a way as to imply the possibility of empirical testing. By empirical testing here, we mean the use of observation, facts and processed data to test the validity or otherwise of the statement.
In summary, they three approaches suggested above for making problem statement in marketing research are:

3.3 Relational Approach

This approach opines that the problem be stated as a relationship between two or more variables (product/service). A variable is defined as a concept of reality, which takes different values over time and space.

For example, in conceptualizing, the problem of a firm's profitability designated Y, we use price of product, P, as one of the concept of profitability. P (Price) can take different values over time. A concept taking different values overtime is one way of saying that it varies over time, or changes over a period of time.

Price (P) is capable of changing over time. The firms factory building (B) also contributes to the firms profitability but because of its nature it is assumed to be a constant in the calculation of the firms profitability or it is "held constant" in the profitability equation.

We may therefore, through the process of conceptualizing profitability, identify the following concepts or variables of profitability. Y = profit, P = price, S = Sales, C= Cost (of production) and B = Building (a constant).

3.3.1 Interrogative Approach

The researcher may also render market research problem in a question form. Research questions are like statement of the problem and hypothesis except for the relationship between variables. Research questions are not supposed to be too wide. They should be narrow enough to be answered and proved right or wrong statistically. Research problem in marketing are presented in questions form to direct the researchers efforts towards the provision of answers to such questions in a soft and exploratory studies.

3.3.2 Empirical Testing Approach (Hypothesis)

A scientific problem statement is a testable statement. It implies the possibility of empirical testing. This approach is a tentative knowledge claim or a conjectural proposition which is subject to empirical confirmation or rejection. Hypothesis should be generated from the statement of the research problem. Research hypothesis must be specific and clear. For example:

"E- marketing technique is better off compared to personal selling: This research problem could be tested through responses gathered from the field presented empirically thus;

Alternative hypothesis (Hi); e- marketing technique is better compared to personal selling.
Null hypothesis (Ho); e- marketing technique is not better off compared to personal selling.

3.3.3 Theoretical Approach

A theory is defined as a statement of invariant relationship among the variables of a problem, which has the property of explaining and predicting the behaviour or nature of the research problem. We may also define a theory as an analytical framework based on fundamental statements or axioms that are assumed to be true.

3.4 Distinction between Theory and Law in Marketing Research

When a theory is in use it stands out to be challenged by new competing similar theories. It however remains THE THEORY until a new higher superior theory comes into existence. A new superior theory cannot exist side-by-side with an “inferior” theory. Therefore the higher theory displaces the existing lower theory. If a theory ages perfectly over time, it earns the position of Law of science, which is virtually synonymous with the law of nature. Law is defined ordinarily, as a system of rules that must be obeyed or the way in which things happen in an activity, which is assumed or accepted to be the rule because it is unchangeable rule. Law of science is a product of scientific enquiry e.g. the law of gravity.

3.5 Marketing Research Problems and Symptoms Often Confused

The moral of marketing manager should understand the target market and what needs the firm can satisfy. Then the manager can focus on lower-level problems – namely, how sensitive the target market is to a change in one or more of the marketing mix ingredients. Without such a framework, marketing researchers can waste time, and money, working on the wrong problem.

The problem definition step sounds simple – and that’s the danger. It’s easy to confuse symptoms with the problem. Suppose a firm’s Miss shows that the company’s sales are decreasing in certain territories while expenses are remaining the same resulting in a decline in profits. Will it help to define the problem by asking: How can we stop the sales decline? Probably not. This would be like fitting a hearing – impaired patient with a hearing aid without first trying to find out why the patient was having trouble hearing.

It’s easy to fall into the trap of mistaking symptoms for the problem. When this happens, the research objectives are not clear, and researchers may ignore relevant questions – while analyzing unimportant question in expensive detail.

3.6 Combining Induction and Deduction in Marketing Research

Induction and deduction are used in research reasoning in a sequential manner. John Dewey describes this process as the double movement of reflective thought.

Induction occurs when we observe a fact and ask. Why is this? In answer to this question, we advance a tentative explanation (hypothesis). The hypothesis is plausible if it explains the event or condition (fact) that prompted the question.

Deduction is the process by which we test whether the hypothesis is capable of explaining the fact.

Examine these:

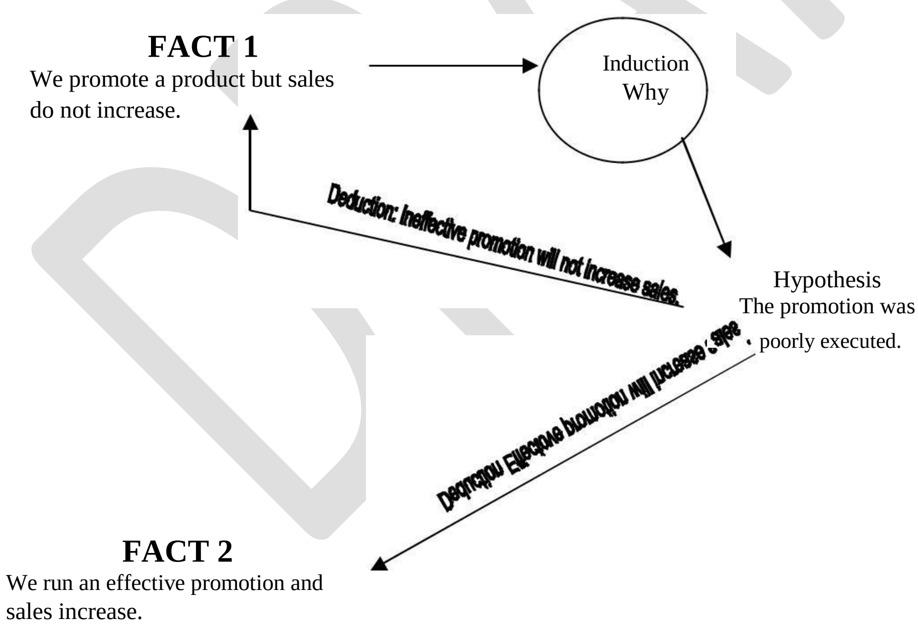
You promote a product but sales don't increase (fact 1)
You ask the question. Why didn't sales increase? (induction)

> You infer confusion (hypothesis) to answer the question. The promotion was poorly executed. (Hypothesis).

You use this hypothesis to conclude (deduce) that the sales will not increase during a poorly executed promotion. You know from experience that ineffective promotion will not increase sales (Deduction).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Why Didn't Sales Increase?



3.7 Differentiating Management Problem from Research Problem

What then is the difference between a management problem and a research problem?
Management problems focus on an action. Do we advertise more? Do we change our advertising message? Do we change an under-performing product configuration? So how?

Research problem, on the other hand, focus on providing the information you need in order to solve the management problem.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Carefully summarize the major approaches adopted in defining marketing research complex problem.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have been drilled on the various approaches to defining research problem; you have studied the difference between theory and the National Law, problem with symptom often confused. This unit also broadens your knowledge exposing you to making inductive and deductive inference in marketing research problem, as far as differentiating management problem from research problem.

5.0 SUMMARY

Problem definition in research involves stating the general problem and identifying its general characteristics. Once the problem has been identified and properly defined and delineated, the researcher can move to the next logical steps of developing the research approach and research design.

Research problem can be defined through interrogative or question form, theoretical form and in analytical (empirical form). All the approaches to problem definition lead to the choice of the appropriate research design being the third stage in a research process. It is vindicative, that problem should not be mistaken to symptom.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Research problem is not management research and management research is not research problem. Discuss.

ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Making research problem statement could be:

i. Stating the problem as a relationship between two or more variables.
ii. Rendering the statement of the problem in an interrogative or question form.
iii. Conducting empirical testing.
iv. Applying analytical marketing research models.

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UNIT 6 DECISION ALTERNATIVE IN MARKETING RESEARCH PROCESS

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The value of research information can be assessed by several means, one of which is decision alternative.

Markets change constantly and businesses need to have a clear understanding of both the supply and demand. The principal role of market research, therefore, is to provide a business with a comprehensive view of consumers in order to develop products and services that satisfy their needs better than the competition. Also given the increased complexity of the business environment, it is not longer enough to make key decision using a 'gut-feel' approach alone. Decisions need to be informed and make research helps to support this process, significantly reducing the level of financial risk attached with investment decisions.

In the business world, to make a proper decision is related to success directly. Every manager is confronted with the same question which is how to complete this mission. Economists cannot figure out a solution to gain the 100% of correct rate in decision making, but they build a number of models and find many methods to increase the possibility.

Decision making is the cognitive process of reaching a decision; "a good executive must be good at decision making.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

define decision making
identify some of the usefulness of making effective decision in marketing research.
evaluating/analyzing decision making using certain conditions.
explain the concept of decision tree or flow diagram.
describe the various phases in decision making
explain the relevant decision making models in marketing research and decision under a risk

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Definition and Meaning of Decision Alternative or Decision Making in Marketing Research

Problem solving and decision–making are important skills for business, marketing and life problem-solving often involves decision making, and decision–making is especially important for management and leadership.

According to Fishburn, solving the decision model consist of finding a strategy or action, the expected relative values of which is at least a great as the expected

value of any other strategy set. The prescriptive criterion of a strategy will be maximization of the decision-makers total expected relative value.
However, decision–making or decision alternative is an embracing activity taking place at every level in the organization covering both the short and long term.

Yalokwu (1999); posits that "Decision-making is important to all managers, customers and administrators, that the real test of managerial effectiveness will depend on the managers anxiety to make decision.

According to Lucy (1992), decision–alternative is defined as "making choice between future, uncertain alternatives. He also emphasized that all decision–making relates to the future and that a decision can be choice between alternatives in pursuit of an objective. Where no alternative exists, no decision can be made.

> Ofsad (1961) defined a decision as follows: "To say that a person has made a decision may mean:
> That he (customer) has started a series of behavioural reactions in favour of a product or service.
> That the consumer/customer has made up his or her mind to do a certain action, which he (the researcher in this case) has no doubts that he ought to do.
> To make a judgment regarding what one ought to do in a certain situation after having deliberated on some alternative courses of action.
> In a nutshell, decision-alternative is the cognitive process of reaching a decision.
> Hence, the strategy by which an individual operates to reach a decision or solve a problem is termed cognitive style.

3.2 Phases in Decision Making Process/Marketing Decision Making Components

According to Aghedo (1995), "Whether you are deciding about getting a haircut today, building a multimillion naira plant, or buying a new camera, the steps in making a good decision are basically the same. "The processes are:

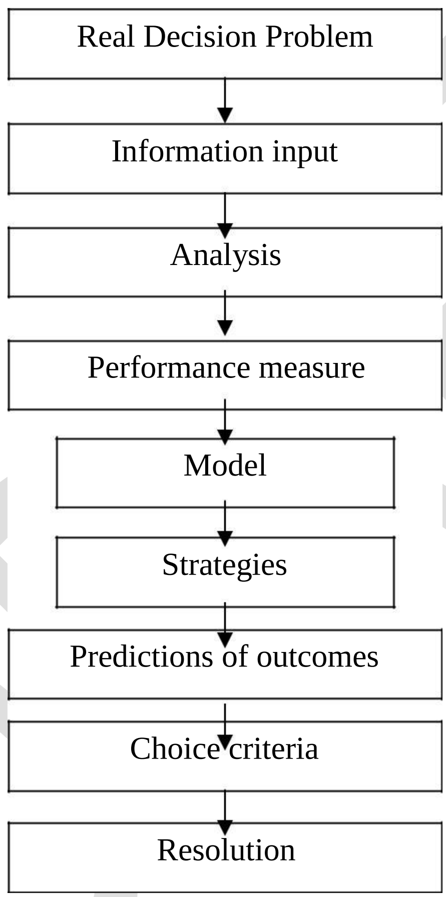
Clearly define the problem at hand
List the possible alternatives
Identify the possible outcomes

List the pay-off or profit of each combination of alternatives and outcomes.

Select one of the mathematical decision theory models.

Apply the model and make your decision.

However, Samuel Eilon (1969), in the decision process, "it is necessary to consider the decision activity as a whole". What are the mental processes that the decision maker goes through before he arrives at his conclusion. He describes the decision process using a flow-chart, which is as follows:



Steps in the decision process

The first stage in the process is to input information from some data processing machinery. This is followed by an analysis of the information material with the purpose of ascertaining its validity and distinguishing between its significant and insignificant parts. The analysis leads to the specification of performance measures, which provide the basis for determining how a particular course of action is to be judged, and to the construction of a model in order to describe the behaviour of the system for which the manager is asked to make a decision. In a production-marketing system, the measures of performance may include profit, mean level and or variance of plant, utilization, level of meeting customer demand, and so on. However, any given courses of action, whether they represent existing policies or whether they are hypothetical propositions for new policies, can be described by arrays of the measures of performance that are thought to be most relevant. A set of alternatives (or strategies) is enumerated and predictions are then made regarding the possible outcomes of each alternative. In order to be able to select between them, a criterion for comparing outcomes in the light of their respective measures of performance is set up and finally the selection (called here resolution) is made.

Components of Decision Making

1. **Alternative**: There are two or more alternatives. Decision making means to select the best alternative.
2. **Choice:** Decision making involves a choice. It means to choose the best solution for solving the problem.
3. **Objective or problem:** Decision making is objective oriented. It is done to achieve an objective or to solve a problem.

3.3 Evaluating Research Result under Condition of

3.3.1 Conditions of Certainty

Assumes that the pay-offs are certain to occur if the particular action is chosen and the probability of the additional business being secured is 1.0. Here, the decision maker presumes that only one event is relevant for his purpose. He identifies that events take it for granted and presumes complete knowledge as to its occurrence.

3.3.2 Conditions of Uncertainty

When a decision maker cannot assess the outcome probability with confidence or when virtually no probability data are available, other decision criteria are required. This type of marketing research problem has been referred to as "decision making under uncertainty'.

3.3.3 Decision Making Criterions in Marketing Research

Criteria decision making analysis whether multiple or simple is a sub topic in marketing research that explicitly considers multiple criteria in decision –making environments. Whether in our daily lives or in professional settings, there are typically multiple conflicting criteria that need to be evaluated in making decisions. Costs or price is usually one of the main criteria.

3.3.3.1 Optimism or Maximax Criterion the Maximum Decision

This is diametrically opposed to the maximize decision criterion. It is also called Hurwitz criterion (suggested by Leonid Hurwitz). This criterion finds the alternative that matches the maximum outcome or consequence for every alternative strategy. The decision maker first locates the maximum outcome within every alternative strategy and then selects the alternative with the maximum number. Since this decision criterion locates the alternative with the highest gain, it has been called an optimistic decision criterion.

3.3.3.2 Criteria Decision Making under Risk

It is conservative approach under which the decision maker attempts in maximizing the minimum possible profits. In other words, the strategy for which minimum pay-off is maximum is chosen under this criterion. This may be achieved by selecting the act (row) due to which row minimum is maximum in the pay-offs matrix. For problems in which costs are being minimized, maximum approach is reversed. In this case, the decision maker first finds the maximum cost for each act and then selects the minimum of the maximum. e.g. minimax criterion. Then decision maker with a pessimistic attitude, i.e. one who always thinks what worst will happen if a particular act is chosen.

3.3.4 Decision Making Model

In this situation, the decision maker faces several events. But he is supposed to have believable evidential information, knowledge, experience or judgment to enable him to assign probability values to the likelihood of occurrence of each state of nature.

For decision problems involving risk, the most popular method (or decision criterion) for evaluating the alternative strategies is expected monetary value of the expected payoff. That is, either the maximization of expected profit or minimization of expected regret.

Research shows that customers go through five distinct stages in decision–making process as discussed earlier on. Models are important for anyone making marketing decisions. It forces marketer to consider the whole buying process rather than just the purchase decision (when it may be too late for a business to influence the choice). Buyer behaviour implies that customers pass through all stages in every purchase.

However, in more routine purchases, customers often skip or reverse some of the stages.

An “aroused” customer then needs to decide how much information (if any) is required. If the need is strong and a product or service that meets the need close to hand, then a purchase decision is likely to be made there and then, if not the process of information search begins through right decision making models.

3.3.5 Classic Model of Decision Making

This is a prescriptive approach that tells marketers and managers how they should make decisions. It assumes that managers are logical and rational and that their decisions will be in the best interest of the organization. In contrast to the classical marketing decision making model, the administrative model argues that decision makers have incomplete and imperfect information, are constrained by bounded rationality, and tend to “satisfies” when making decisions.

3.3.6 Bounded Rationality Model

This model suggests that decision makers are limited by their values and unconscious reflexes, skills, and habits. They are also limited by less-than-complete information and knowledge. Satisfying is the tendency to search for alternatives only until one is found that meets some minimum standard of sufficiency. They do not conduct an exhaustive search for the best possible alternative.

For decision–making to be made rational, the problem or opportunity must be identified, alternative solutions must be generated, and evaluation of the alternatives required and then selects a solution. Finally, implement and evaluate the chosen solution.

3.4 Judgment Base Marketing Decision Making

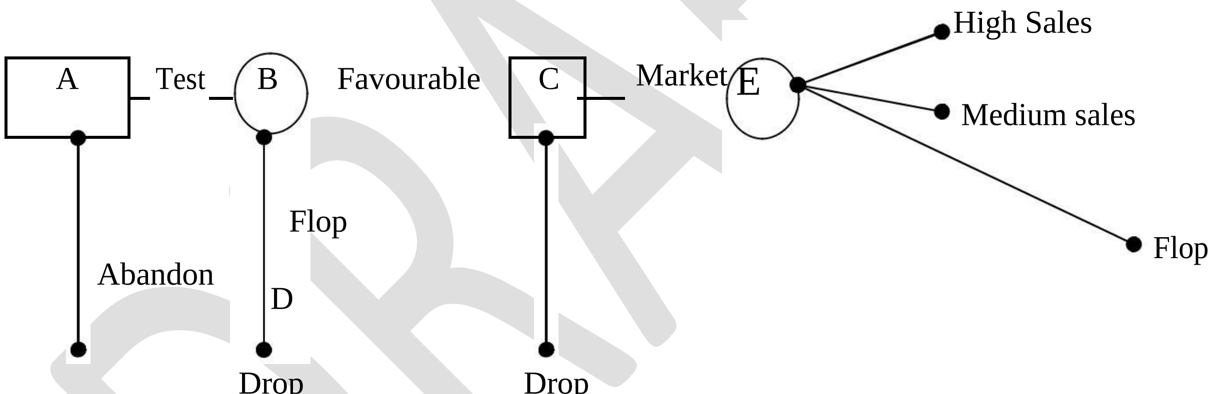
This model goes with parents’ prioritized marketing needs. His analysis is often referred to as the 30/20 rule. That is to say, 20% of the work generates 80% of the results. More so, that 20% of your product or service accounts for 80% of your profit. 80% of your customer complains arise from 20% of your products or services.

3.5 Brainstorming

This model involves bringing together a group of people to propose alternative solution to a problem. A group meeting is conducted on a problem, and each participant is asked to submit an idea (or list of ideas) relevant to the decision being made. Any idea is welcome, however, strange. Many ideas may be generated. The more ideas generated the better. The ideas are not judged or analysed at this stage.

3.6 Decision Flow Diagram (Decision Tree)

This is a diagram that illustrates the chronological ordering of actions and events in a decision analysis problem. Let's consider the case of a firm with a new product, whose primary action is either to test the product or a band on it. Other actions follow suit depending on outcome.



Key:

A: This is a decision node (customarily shown as a square) in the decision flow diagram. Here, the decision is taken either to test the product or to drop it,

B: This is an outcome node (customarily shown as a circle). From this point, action lines run to denote all possible outcomes of the action taken as a result of the proceeding decision.

C: Another decision node: The market test having proved favourable, management must decide whether now to go ahead with full marketing, or to drop the product.

D: Another decision node: but with no choice shown. In this example, the managerial policy is "drop a product if the marketer test is unfavourable".

E: Another outcome node: Observes that the filled –in-circles denote endnotes or terminations. Also each act or event is depicted by branch on the decision tree.

3.7 Types of Marketing Research Decision

Marketers must consider how consumers decide to buy their product. Consumers use nominal, limited and extended decision making. In order to successfully reach their target market, marketers must have some idea of how much time and effort consumers will put into purchase decision.

3.8 Nominal Decision Making

It's the least involved type of decision making. We realize we have a need, reach back in our long-term memory, and make a repeat purchase. The only time nominal decision making moves into a more evaluative state is when the product fails to meet our expectations. Keep in mind, at one point this nominal decision might not have seen so nominal. You may have initially sought out several different alternative and gone through an extensive decision making process before choosing one particular brand that you feel outperforms all others. In this case, your purchase is now nominal because you are brand loyal.

3.9 Programmed Marketing Decision Making

This type of marketing decision relates to day-to-day running of an organization. These kinds of decisions are made at the lower management level. The scope of decision is narrow. A programmed decision is used to solve routine, repetitive but complex problems. These techniques are also called quantitative techniques.

3.10 Non-Programmed Marketing Decisions

These are made in response to unusual opportunities and threats or to deal with exceptional problems. They are non-routine decisions which are associated with problems that do not come up often enough to be covered by standardized rules or guidelines. Non-programmed decisions do not occur frequently. They have a broad decision scope because they usually affect the entire organization. They are top management decisions.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Briefly identify the steps involved in marketing decision making process.

4.0 CONCLUSION

I believed you have had a good time having been exposed broadly through decision alternative in marketing research (MKT 403).

This unit has given you an in-read as per what decision making is all about, how research results are evaluation under condition of certainty, uncertainty and Risk. You have also learnt about the various models in decision alternatives and even as far as the different types of decision making.

5.0 SUMMARY

Decision-making is the process of identifying alternatives and selecting one of the alternatives to deal with a specific problem or take advantage of an opportunity. A problem arises when an organization is unable to reach its goals: actual performance or result is less than expected performance or result.

Opportunity is a situation which allows an organization to reach or exceed its goals: actual performance or result is equal to or more than expected performance or result.

Marketers and customer are faced with many decisions situation. As such decisions are taken as a result of disturbances, opportunities, Resource allocation and Negotiations. The various marketing research decision models are: nominal, limited, programmed and non-programmed decision models.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Differentiate carefully between decision making and decision making model. What is non-programmed marketing decision?

ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. Identifying/clarifying the decision to be made.
2. Identifying possible decision options: spelling out clearly what the decision alternatives are.
3. Gathering/processing information
4. Making/implementing the decision
5. Evaluating the decision – determining how appropriate the decision is.

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UNIT 7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

CONTENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The tight specification of research objectives is important to ensure that the project is developed along the right lines. Usually primary objectives need to be distinguished from secondary objectives. The primary objective for an electrical components manufacturer seeking to enter the French market, for example, might be to establish the market potential for the products specified and to indicate appropriate market entry strategies. The secondary objectives tend to be more specific and comprehensive. For the components manufacturer they might include:

Defining market trends and competitive structure over the years.

Profiling the existing main suppliers in terms of strengths and weakness (products, prices, distribution, branding, service etc.) Identifying the main buying criteria when purchasing. Surveying potential trade and end users for willingness to switch supply source.

The list above is not exhaustive, but the main point is that objectives clearly drive the whole research process, and should provide the necessary foundations for whatever management decision will have to be taken at the end.

In all cases, the research objectives need to be clearly and concisely stated in writing to ensure that the research brief can be adequately prepared.

The skill at this stage lies in being sufficiently broad-minded and flexible to avoid being misled by assumptions and prejudices that may not be valid, yet being focused enough to allow the project a strong sense of direction and a chance of being achieved within time and cost constraints.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After you have studied this unit, you should be able to:

define research objective.
examine the roles of objective in marketing research.
differentiate between business objective and research objectives.
identify the various types of business and marketing research objectives
explain the complex nature of customer behaviourial objectives

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Definition and Meaning of Marketing Research Objectives

Research objective can generally be defined in terms of finding appropriate solutions to identified problems that when applied to the situation will help the organization in achieving its sales objective. The objective for any research should link recommended solutions to identified situational problems and predetermined sales/marketing objective. The objective can specifically be stated as finding solutions that when applied to the problem at hand will enable the organizations achieve its preset objectives at the lowest costs.

With the problem identified and properly defined, and the objectives of the research clearly stated, the researcher should now have a good idea of his information needs. Proper specification of the information needs of a given research will equip the researcher to choose an appropriate research design.

Objectives are the ends that state superficially how the goals shall be achieved. They are more concrete and specific, they tend to be mainly quantitative in specification, measurable and comparable. Objectives are operational definitions of the goals of an organization. They are parameter for evaluating the performance of the organization products and service. It has a time dimension, and this demonstrates how such organization can move towards achievement of it goals.

Objectives are the goals to be achieved at the end of any project or instrument. Statement of objectives for a market research is the setting down of what the researcher is trying to achieve. Problem definition, action plan and evaluation in the research process is completely tied to the set objectives.

Objectives are also the explicit statements of the ways in which customers are expected to be changed by the selling process. That is the ways in which they will change in their thinking, perception, reasoning, feeling and their actions towards a given market situation.

3.2 The Roles of Objective In Marketing Research

According to Kazmi (2008), objectives play an important role in marketing research process. These are;

It defines the organization's (market) relationship with the environment it operates. This makes organization commits itself what it has to achieve for its customer, employees and the entire social system.

It helps organization/the researcher pursue its vision and mission. This is possible because organization has defined the long-term position it wishes to attain.

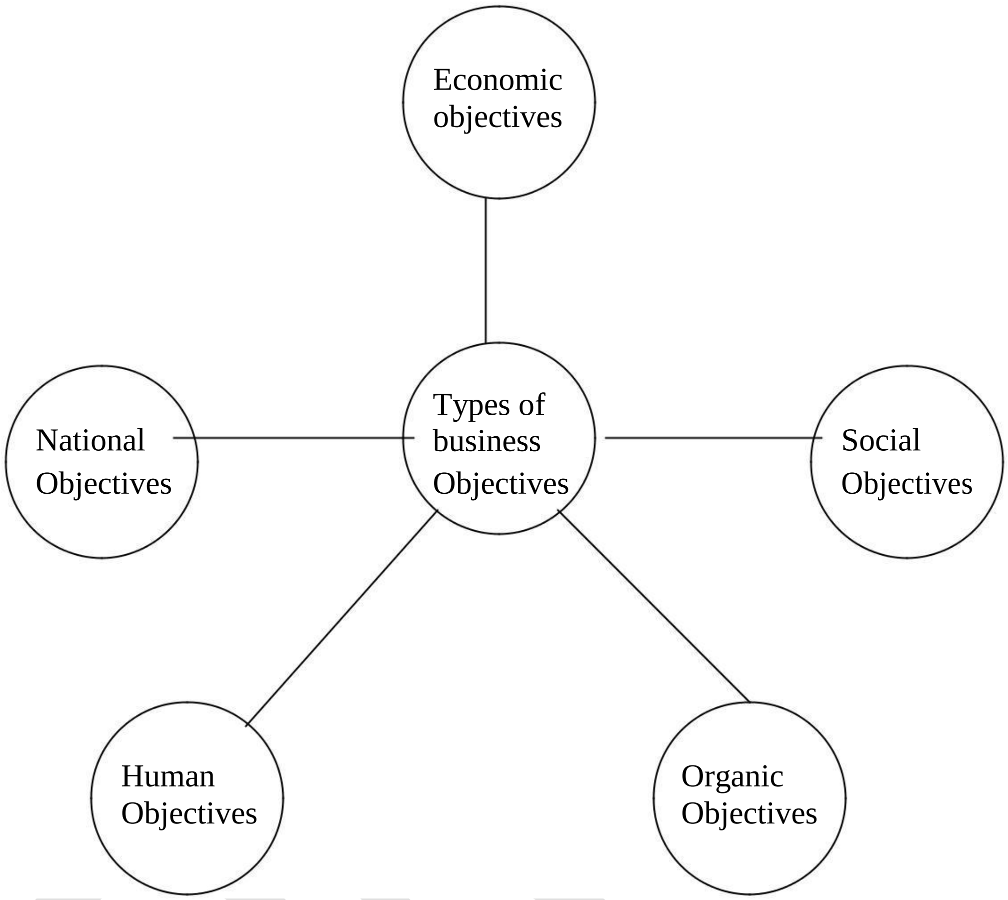
Research objective provides standard for performance/research appraisal and evaluation. By stating target to be achieved in a given time period and the measures to be adopted to achieve them, objective lay down the standard against which organizational as well as individual performance could be judged (Base of judgment).

Research objective provides basis for market research decision-making.

3.3 Business Research Objective vs Marketing Research Objective

Business objectives are the goals, aims or purpose of the business. The business tries to achieve these goals. Profits are the main objective of business. However, the business cannot have only one objective. This is because it has to satisfy different groups such as share holders, employees, customers, creditors etc. So, it has to fix objectives for each group.

The ring below shows the various types of business objectives.



Objectives give direction to the business. It motivates the owners, managers and employees to work hard. It helps in planning and decision–making. It is used to evaluate (measure) the performance of the employees. Objectives are goals established to guide the efforts of the company and each of its components (Louis Allen, 2009).

On the other hand, research objectives are a specification of the ultimate reason for carrying out research in the first place. They help in developing a specific list of information needs. Only when the researcher knows the problem that management wants to solve can the research project be designed to provide the pertinent information. Research objective is diligent and systematic inquiry or investigation into a subject in order to discover or revise facts, theories or applications.

Research objectives are formulated by careful identification of the product or service you want to evaluate. Specify the stakeholders in the decisions to be made from the research. Look up all aspect of marketing. Since marketing is such a broad subject, there are thousands of directions research objective can take. Thus, defining research objectives is the most significant step in planning a marketing research plan. Objectives choose interview themes. Problem definition and research objectives are crucial in the marketing research process. The consumer is one who pays to consume the goods and services produced. As such consumers play a vital role in the economic system of a nation. In the absence of their effective demand, and producers would lack a key motivation to produce, which is to sell to consumers and the prospective customers. Thus, marketing research is the function that links the consumers' customers, and public to the market. This information is used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems; generate, refine and evaluate marketing actions; monitor marketing performance; and improve understanding of marketing as a process.

3.3.1 Types of Research Objectives

The following are examples of marketing research objectives:

Time-related research objective. They are short term, media term and long term ranging from one month to years.

To carry on a diversified growing and profitable wide range of manufacturing products and services.

To achieve a high return on investment.

Intensify distribution of products i.e. manufacturers obtain maximum exposure through numerous retail outlets.

Extensive distribution of products i.e. the choice of a single retailer in a particular location (expensive product).

Routine research objective: some objective doesn't have a specific time frame but deal with expected results from routine, continuous activities.

Development research objective: This result from new initiatives, external change imposed on a business or internal changes motivated by new goals result in planning for new development. Such plans specify new activities and estimate the result.

3.4 Characteristics of a Good Research Objectives

For objectives to be effective, measure organization behaviours and performance, it should possess the following attributes;

Research objective should be understandable by those who have to achieve them.
It should be concrete and specifics so as to lead and motivate the managers.
It should be related to time frame so that manager/marketers know the duration within which they have to be achieved.

Research objective should be measurable and controllable.

It should be challenging, not too high or too low so that it can lead to success.

Objective of one line of product or service should correlate and stand competition of other organizations and avert any prevailing problems.

Research objective should have bearing with both internal and external constraints.

Research objective in marketing should be stated in terms of customers buying behaviour.

3.5 Nature of Customers Behaviour Objectives

Although different consumers belong to the same market segments, they do not behave like, and the characteristics of the products and services would not appeal to them in the same degree. Just almost as income tastes and other factors influence the demand for a product, so the behaviour of consumers are influenced by socio-economic and cultural factors. Unless these factors are identified d and taken care of the marketing manager may be chasing shadows.
The way out is the use of marketing research methods that actually determine the socio-cultural factors and measures, which will then cultural influence has been a major set back for the market both internally and externally. For effective marketing, cultural influence of individual on aggressive marketing has to be taken care of that vicinity.

Though locally, different culture of many ethnic groups in Nigeria tends to influence the decision of many consumers. Consumers behaviour is constantly being attacked by culture so for effective and efficient marketing in Nigeria, marketing managers should under take a research on the influence of culture in consumer buying behaviour.

Most behavioural research objectives are normally stated with the following common elements (in this order):
It begins with the phrase "At the end of the research, the researcher should be able to …"

The (a) above is followed by an acceptable action like, list, define, explain, identify, illustrate etc.

(a) and (b) are followed by the conditions or content under which the objective is to be observed.

Minimum acceptable level of achievement.

In addition, behaviour objectives should be stated in a way not only to indicate the behavioural changes expected of the researcher but must also contain the content of instruction in which the behaviours are to operate.

3.6 Categories of Market Research Objectives

This content is on the principles guiding marketing research objectives (Bloom at al, 2000), suggests three categories of research objective as;

3.6.1 The Cognitive Domain

This category of research objective consists of that call for the recall or recognition of market research tools and the development of intellectual abilities and skill. When it comes to the launching of a new product or service of organizations achievement, cognitive domain is the most relevant of the marketing objectives. Here, research objectives are said to be clearly defined if they are phrased in such a way that describes the desire customer/consumer buying behaviour.

3.6.2 The Effective Domain

Has to do with functionality of a product/service in relation to values, the feelings, interest the customer has on, attitude of customers and appreciation based on satisfaction derived.

3.6.3 The Psychomotor Domain

This has to do with the skills and astute sales technique requires to arrest the customer emotions and perception towards a product or services. Here, assessment and evaluation is based on the customer relationship managers' participation, cooperation, individual practice, achievement resourcefulness, creativity and initiative.

3.7 The Objectives of Marketing Research

Marketing decisions require that important information must be collected, and collated in an objective and systematic manner. The process of doing this is called market research. American Marketing Association (2004) define market research as the function that links the consumer, customer and public to the marketer through information-used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems, generate, refine and evaluate marketing actions; monitor marketing performance; and improve understanding of marketing as a process.

However, marketing research is useful in the following
ways; It can be used to generate new product.
It brings about product improvement and can make it more attractive to new and old customers.
It can help target the people who are likely to buy the product or service.
It helps in packaging and advertising design.
All the objectives above are achieved through a well designed research plan.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Assess the nexus between routine research objective and time related research objective.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Great job, well done on unit three of marketing research (MKT403). This unit is very interesting. The unit has exposed you to why objective is so crucial in any research process. You have now studied the meaning and definition of research objective. The roles played by research objective comparison between business objective and research objective. This unit has also taught you the various characteristics of research objective the nature of customer behavioural objective. Not only that, you have also studied the categorization of marketing research objectives taking cognizance of the cognitive, effective domain and psychomotor research objectives.

5.0 SUMMARY

The main objective of marketing research is to provide information to the marketing manager. The marketing manager uses this information to make marketing decision and to solve persistent marketing problem.

Research is the act of seeking and obtaining knowledge by studying books, literature, the internet; performing experiments and tests in order to prove or disprove a theory, and even realize a new discovery.

Research objective are a specification of the ultimate reason for carrying out research in the first place. They help in developing a specific list of information needs. Only when the researcher knows the problem that management wants to solve can the research project be designed to provide the pertinent information.
How to write research objectives – write down the research problem. This means to identify what product or service you want to evaluate. Specify the stakeholders in the decisions to be made from the research.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

In five sentences, how useful is marketing research (if any)?

ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Time Related Research Objectives	Routine Research Objective
These are short term, medium term and long term ranging from one month to many years.	These set of objectives do not have specific time frame but deal with expected results from routine, continuous activities.

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UNIT 8 RESEARCH PLAN: SALES EFFORTS AND ADVERTISING WITH EMPHASIS ON PLANNING

CONTENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A well planned and executed research will have to follow a systematic procedure. Following this procedure, we observe that there are many stages in a research.

The research stages are:

Recognition of need for research
Analysis of the parameters which predicate this need problem definition.
Exact statement of the objective of the research.
Formulation of an experimental or survey design.
Data collection
Tabulation and analysis of data
    Interpretation of results and the formulation of conclusion and recommendations.

Preparation and presentation of a report containing the findings.
Evaluation of results of action initiated on basis of research findings i.e. feedback.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

identify the general purpose of a research plan, explain how research are planned and execute
explain the specific aim of a research plan as it relates to sales efforts and advertising.
analyse the background and significance of the research plan and obtain preliminary results.
explain a typical research design and method.
consider the risks/pitfalls surrounding researching plan.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Planning and Execution of Research

As discussed in the introductory part of this unit, a marketing problem arises generally when an organization facts to meet one or some of its marketing objectives.

According to cravens and Lamb (1986). An organization facing any or a combination of a situation requiring choice among two or more alternatives, a situation involving selecting information needed to track the performance of strategies that have been implemented and a situation requiring the use of marketing information to uncover opportunities and problems, will have need for marketing research, then a clearly objective research plan is t be drawn up.

3.2 The Purpose of Research Plan

The purpose of the research plan is to describe the what, why and how of the research proposal.

This is the core of the proposal and will be reviewed with particular care.
What will be specific aim?
The why will be the background and significance of the proposal?

The preliminary result contributes to both the why and how.

And the research design and methods. The assessment of this research plan will largely determine whether or not the proposal is favourably recommended for funding.

The research plan should answer the following questions?

What do you intended to do?

Why is this worth doing? How is it innovative?

What has already been done in general, and what have other researchers done in this field? Use appropriate references. What will this new work add to the field of knowledge?

What have you (and your collaborators) done to establish the feasibility of what you are proposing to do?

How will the research be accomplished? Who? What? When? Where? And why?

3.3 Specific Aim of a Research Plan

The specific aim of a research plan should cover:

Broad, long term goals;
The hypothesis or hypotheses to be tested;
Specific time-phased research objectives.

Generally, the specific Aims Section of a research plan should begin a brief narrative describing the long term goals of the project and the hypothesis guiding the research. State the hypothesis clearly. Makes sure it is understandable testable and adequately supported by citations in the background and by data in the preliminary results sections. Be sure to explain how the results to be obtained will be used to test the hypothesis. Hence, show that the objectives are attainable within the stated time frame.

Be as brief and specifics as possible. For clarity each aim should consist of only one sentence.

3.3.1 Background and Significance of Research Plan

The purpose of the background and significance section of a research is to state the problem to be investigated the rationale for the proposed research, the current state of knowledge relevant to the proposal and the potential contribution of the research to the problems addressed. Use citations not only as support for specific statements but also to establish familiarity with all of the relevant publications and points of view.

For instance, sales research measures the effectiveness of salesmen, the need and basis for revision of sales territories, evaluation of sales methods and incentive and retails audits.

Thus, the possible causes of falling of sales can be traced to charges in the marketing environment, actions of competitors and weaknesses in the firms marketing strategy (Cravens and Lamb, 1986).

3.3.2 Preliminary Results/Progress Report

The purpose of the preliminary result section is to describe prior work by the investigators relevant to the proposed project. In a new application, the preliminary results are important to establish the experience and capabilities of the applicant investigators in the area of proposed research and to provide experimental support for the hypothesis and the research design. Results of previous studies by the applicant not directly relevant to the proposed project if they are needed to establish the applicants competence and experience with the experimental techniques to be used in the proposed project.

3.3.3 Research Design and Method

A research faces a choice of a way to collect the data that will satisfy his information needs. In the formulation of an appropriate research design, the researcher must make three critical decisions. The decisions are in the area of data collecting method, research instrument and sampling plan.

The purpose of the research design and methods section is to decides how the research will be carried out. This section crucial to how favourably and application is reviewed. A projected sequence or timetable (work play) is required. A description of any new methodology used and why it represents an improvement over the existing ones. Also a discussion of the potential difficulties and limitations and how these will be overcome or mitigated.

Expected results, and alternative approaches that will be used it unexpected results are found.

Lastly, precautions to be exercise with respect to any procedures, situations or materials that may be hazardous to personnel or human subjects.

3.4 The Design and Development Plans

Research design and development plans of product status or service seeks to examine; the current status of the product or service, special difficulties and associated problems, the costs of product development and product improvement and development of new products.

Planning the research design is a framework, or blueprint for conducting the marketing research project. It details the procedures necessary for obtaining the required information and its purpose is to design a study that will test the hypothesis of interest, determine possible answers to the research questions, and provide the information needed for decision making. Decisions are also made regarding what data should be obtained from the respondents (e.g. by conducting a survey or an experiment). A questionnaire and sampling plan also be designed in order to select the most appropriate respondents for the study. The following steps are involved in formulating a research design:

1. Data analysis/collection (through survey, observation and experimentation.
2. Definition of the information needed.
3. Measurement and scaling procedures.
4. Questionnaire design.
5. Sampling process and sample size

In becoming proficient at doing one thing very well, thereby building a distinctive competence and promoting a high degree of internal efficiency.

One has to acquire a solid reputation through its identification with a particular technology – customer-product application combination. In marketing research, Hall et al (1980) says, it is not necessarily implying that an enterprise is constrained to doing the same thing in the same ways but proffered how a concentration strategy can be kept and effective are given as follows:

i. Create and promote more uses for a product
ii. Take a commodity item and make a broader differentiated product out of it.
iii. Use advertising and promotional efforts to stimulate demand.
iv. Attract non users to buy the product.
v. Turn an apparent disadvantage into advantage.
vi. Use price cuts to build volume, market share and profitability.
vii. Seek market outlets for complementary by-products.

viii. Develop a more compelling sales appeal.
ix. Capitalize on social concerns.
x. Make the product available through additional types of distribution channels.

3.5 The Production and Operations Plan

EXAMINES

The facilities employed in a research process and improvement of the result expected.
The production process/service delivery process.

3.6 The Marketing Management and Staffing Plan

EXAMINES

The general staff and compensated plan in marketing research process.
Supporting professional services and other frontiers (field sales personnel).

3.7 The Major Risks and Problems/Constraints when Drawing Up Research Plan

Problem of recruitment of research participant. Problems with recruitment can disrupt the timetable for a research project, preoccupy staff, reduce the ability of a therapeutic study to detect treatment differences and ultimately, result in a trial being abandoned (Ashery and McAuliffe, 1992). During recruitment, the sampling process can suffer from associated problems of non-response and the resultant selection bias. The proportion of eligible participants who agree to enter the study (the response rate) influences the validity of the inference that the sample represents the population of interest (Hulley et al 2000). People who are difficult to reach and those who refuse to participate once they have been contacted tend to be different from people who do not control others are:

Cost of research in developing countries like Nigeria is very high.
Environmental Hazard
Respondent management
Timing
Revising plans and procedures
Recording issues

Types of information sources.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What do you understand by the term a research plan?

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit explains to you the planning and execution of research, the purpose of research plan and the specification you have also studied about the background and significance of a good research plan, the preliminary results.

In this unit, you have studied how research design and methods are formulated and the possible development plan and the major constraints towards a good research plan.

5.0 SUMMARY

The research plan outline sources of existing data and spells out the specific research approaches, contact methods, sampling plans, and instruments that researchers will use to gather data. The research plan includes a written proposal that outlines the marketing management problems, research objectives, information required, how the results will help management decisions and the budget allocated for research.

The steps and elements in your research plan will vary depending on your assignment. Identifying your information need is usually the first step in an effective research plan. Another important element of a research plan is a timeline. Plan your research well ahead of deadline and leave plenty of time for searching and locating the items you will need. Though the steps vary depending on the researcher's assignment.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Identify the major steps to be taken when drawing up an effective research

plan. **ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Research plan is a document written by a researcher that provides a detailed description of the proposed program. It is like an outline of the entire research process that gives a reader a summary of the information discussed in a project.

The steps involved in a good research plan are: determining the assignment requirements, identify a topic, identify the types of sources needed, search for relevant sources, locate the sources, and cite your sources.

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UNIT 9 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PUBLISHED DATA CONTENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Research data are categorized into Primary and Secondary. These data are generated internally or externally to suit the purpose of the desired research work. Secondary data is data that already exists and has been collected by someone else for another purpose. Secondary research involves the investigation of secondary sources of data. Sources of secondary data can come from within the firm itself- this is known as internal secondary data. External secondary data, on the other hand, is data that has been published by other organizations.

At present, data publication is one of the most dynamic topics in Research (electronic). While the fundamental problems of electronic text publication have been solved in the past decade, standards for the internal and external organization of data repositories are advanced in some research disciplines but underdeveloped in others.

In the research community the culture of conveying knowledge by publishing papers has a long tradition, and in the last decade digital text publication has been fully established.

In all research endeavours where data play a central role the expectations of verifiability of experiments have grown and the need for reusing and recombining existing data sets for further investigations is growing too.

The publication of data is still under development, and the state of the part differs a lot in the research communities and disciplines.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After you have studied this unit, you should be able to:

differentiate between internal and external published research data, primary and secondary data.
identify the sources of primary and secondary data.
define syndicate market research services and the disadvantages.
explain the prevailing challenges of using published research data in research work.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Internal and External Published Data

The concept of internal and external information sounds very complex, but in actual facts, it is relatively simple.

Some useful research data or knowledge stuff is known as information. There are various sources of information. From the business perspective, internal sources of information in a company are those which have a direct involvement in the company and the external sources of information are the external stakeholders; which have the interest in the company.

Examples of internal sources of information in a company for marketing research are:

Employees
Accounting resources
Management
Sales force reports
Internal auditors
Miscellaneous reports or operational reports.
Report of the company (Sales report & purchase forecast); Newsletters.

Financial statements. On the other hand, the external sources of research data for companies include; News agents, government budgets/agent, advertising agencies, central statistical organizations, National sample survey (done by ministry of planning).

3.2 Primary and Secondary Research Data in Marketing

Primary sources of marketing research data provide the “raw data” that that you use first to test the working hypothesis and then as evidence to support the researcher claim. Autobiographies, correspondence, descriptions of travel, diaries, literary works, interviews, personal narratives, painting and photographs. The sources of secondary data involve; Biographies, prior booklet. Secondary data is all the information collected for the purpose other than the completion of a market research project and it’s used to gain initial insight into the research problem. It is classified in terms of its source either internal or external.

Secondary data tends to be readily available and inexpensive to obtain. In addition, secondary data can be examined over a longer period of time.
The syndicate services provide information data from both household as well as institutions through wholesalers, retailers and industrial firms. The disadvantage is that the information is not exclusive.
Department of Economic Affairs Conducts economic survey and also generates information on income, consumption, expenditure, investment, savings and foreign trade.

3.3 Internal Source of Secondary Data

Every department within an organization will have its own records that represent a potential source of valuable data. For instance, records of pasts advertising campaigns within the marketing department can be compared with copies of invoices held in the sales department in order to judge their effectiveness and get ideas for future campaigns. Past sales figures can also be used to spot trends and forecast future figures.

The increasing availability and use of loyalty cards has given retail outlets the chance to gather a wide range of valuable information on consumer buying habits, allowing them to target promotional campaigns more effectively.

Internal sources of data should always be considered as a first line of enquiry for any investigation because they are usually the quickest, cheapest and most convenient source of information available. Internal data will also be exclusive to the organization that generated it, so that rival firms will not have access to it.

However, internal data may be incomplete or out of data, and if a project is new, there may be no relevant data act all. In such cases, an organization may need to consider using external sources of secondary data.

3.3.1 External Sources of Secondary Data

There are several sources of existing data available from outside the organization that may be value.

These include:

Commercial market research organizations-including MINTEL and Others.

The Government – e.g. Monthly digest of statistics, Annual/Abstract of statistics, social trends. In addition, there are now a number of government website, such as www.statistics.gov.

Competitors – Company reports and website are easily accessible and contain a limited amount of information.

Trade publications – e.g. the Grocer.
The general media – to the archives of newspaper such as the Financial Times and the Guardian and journals such as the Economists are now accessible online, making them a useful starting point for research.

3.3.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Secondary Data

Secondary data sources should always be considered by any firm conducting research. No firm can afford to waste time and money conducting expensive surveys to gather data that already exists!

However, secondary data may have been collected some time ago and, therefore, be out-of-date. Because it has been collected for another purpose, it may be in the wrong format or incomplete. The advantages and disadvantages of using secondary data will vary from source to source.

Government data, for example, is usually cheap or even free to access. It is likely to be accurate and updated regularly.

However, it may be too general and, because it is unlikely to given an organization any competitive edge.

Some information on competitors may be easily available via company reports, or website, but these are unlikely to contain sensitive information or data that gives the firm a negative image.

3.4 Challenges of Data Publication

In comparison of traditional text publications, data publications present some new challenges. Whenever the researcher thinks of term paper we think of all kinds of publications in text form like journal articles, presentations, books, etc.
For text publications, there are several widely accepted file formats such as plain text, HTML, Rich text Format, Microsoft word, open office documents, Adobe's portable document format (PDF), Latex code, etc. All these formats are used by researchers worldwide in all disciplines.

For research data (syndicate):

The information provided is not exclusive. A number of research agencies provide customized service which suits the requirement of each individual organization.

Non-governmental publications may be biased
Reliability; Internal sources of published data are more reliable as they supply accurate data. Verification of data is not required.

Coverage: There is limited coverage in externally published research data as they relate to company only.

Information available from external sources cannot be used directly as it is more of modification as per the nature of research work required.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Identify the major sources of internal and external research data.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit in MKT 403 is designed to exposed students and researchers to sources of information (data) that might be required in any research work they wish to conduct. That is outlining some of the main internal and external sources of data available for commercial research purposes from dependence upon published sources of secondary data to also electronically stored data. You have also learnt

that collection of external data is more difficult because the data have much greater variety and the sources are much more numerous.
This unit has also add to your knowledge about what research data is all about, the composition of primary and secondary data and the possible challenges in their acquisition and supply.

5.0 SUMMARY

While primary data can be collected through questionnaire, depth interview, focus group interviews, case studies, experimentation and observation; the secondary data can be obtained through –internal sources (these are within the organization), external sources (These are outside the organization).

Internal sources of data – Accounting sources (gives so much information which can be used by the marketing researcher. They give information about internal factors).

Sales force report gives information about the sale of a product and service. The information provided is of outside the organization.

Internal expert – people who are heading the various departments they can give an idea of how a particular product or services is working and *Miscellaneous reports.*

External published data include – government publications, non governmental publications (various challenges of commerce, stock exchange various association of press media and

Syndicate service – Services are provided by certain organizations which collect and tabulate the marketing information on a regular basis for a number of clients who are the subscribers of these services.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Distinguish critically between internal and external published research

data. **ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Internal sources of data collection means data collected from the document available with the company while external sources of data collection means the use of data published by external agencies purchase records, sales records periodical sales reports and annual reports are the examples of internal/sources of data collection. Trade journals, annual reports of companies, surveys conducted by press, census reports etc. are example of external sources of data collection.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 10 FIELD OR PRIMARY RESEARCH

CONTENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Primary or field research involves collecting data about a given subject directly from the real world. This section includes information on what primary research is, how to get started, ethics involved with primary research and different types of research you can do. Any activity aimed at collecting primary (original or otherwise unavailable) data, using methods such as face –to-face interviewing, telephone and postal surveys, and direct observation. Conducting primary research is a useful skill to acquire as it can greatly supplement your research in secondary sources, such as journals, magazines, or books. You can also use it as the focus of your writing project primary research is an excellent skill to learn as it can be useful in a variety of setting including business personal and academic.
With some careful planning, primary research can be done by anyone, even students new to writing at the university level. When you are working on a logical problem that may not have been addressed before and little research there to back it up.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

define and explain primary or field research and identify their major examples.
explain how to conduct primary or field research and examine the various purpose of conducting field research
explain the various approaches for data collection in primary or field research, the merits and demerit of primary or field research.
distinguish between laboratory research and field research
explain a typical marketing field research programme in Nigeria.
discuss extensively “obtrusive research”

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Primary/Field Research Defined and Explain

Primary or field data is the collection of information outside of a laboratory or workplace settings. Primary research consists of a collection of original primary data. It is often undertaken after the researcher has gained some insight into the issue by reviewing secondary research or by analyzing previously collected primary data. A good researcher knows how to use both primary and secondary sources in her writing and to integrate them in a cohesive fashion.

Conducting primary research is a useful skill to acquire as it can greatly supplement your research in secondary sources, such as journals, magazines or books. You can also use it as the focus of your writing project. Primary research is an excellent skills to learn as it can be useful in a variety of settings including business, personal.

Field research is the collection of information outside of a laboratory, library or workplace setting. The approaches and methods used in field research vary across disciplines. For example, biologists who conduct field research may simply observe annuals interacting with their environment. Whereas, social scientists conducting field research may interview or observe people in their natural environments to learn their language, folklore, and social structures. Field research involves a range of well-defined, although variable methods.

3.2 Broad Examples and Types of Field Research

An example of primary research in opinion research:

Government want to know if people are pleased with how the government is being run, so they hand out questionnaires to the public asking if they are happy and if not, how to improve.

Survey research
Analysis
Interviews
Observations and
Ethnographic research.

Interviews: Are one-on-one or small group question and answer sessions. Interviews will provide a lot of information from a small number of people and are useful when you want to get an expert or knowledgeable opinion on a subject. Can also be by telephone.

Survey: Are forms 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 large population thinks.
Observations: Involves taking organized notes about occurrences in the world. Observations provide you insight about specific people, events or locales are useful when you want to learn about an events without the biased viewpoint of an interview.

Analysis: Involves collecting data and organizing it in some fashion based on criteria you develop. They are useful when you want to find some trend or pattern.

3.3 How to Conduct Field Research and who are Involved

With some careful planning, primary research can be done by anyone, even students new to writing at the university level.

3.3.1 The Purpose of Field Research

The collection of original data by way of a research study is termed primary research.

Primary research is design to answer specific questions and data is gathered directly from the market or the field. Typical primary market research includes surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, interviews and direct observation.

3.3.2 Field Research Data Collection Methods/Approaches

Primary research can be accomplished through various methods, including:
Questionnaires and telephone interviews in market research or experiments.
Direct observations in the physical sciences, amongst others.

3.3.3 The Scope of Primary Research

The term primary research is widely used in;
Academic research
Market research
Competitive intelligence.

3.4 Differences between Laboratory Research and Field Research

Field experiment is the research you go out and do by talking and listening to individuals. Also to approve or disprove your theory or hypothesis. Experiment usually happens in the lab with animals or some times humans in a controlled environment.

3.5 Advantages and Disadvantage of Primary or Field Research

There are advantages and disadvantages to primary or field research:

1. Researcher can focus on both qualitative and quantitative issues.
2. Addresses specific research issues as the researcher controls the search design to fit their needs.
3. Great control not only does primary research enable the marketer to focus on specific subjects, it also enables the researcher to have a higher control over how the information is collected. Taking this into account, the researcher can decide on such requirement as size of project, time frame and goal.

Disadvantages

Compared to secondary research, primary data may be very expensive in preparing and carrying out the research. Costs can be incurred in producing the paper for questionnaires or the equipment for an experiment of some sort.

In order to be done properly, primary data collection requires the development and execution of a research plan. It takes longer to undertake primary research than the acquire secondary data.

Some research projects, while potentially offering information that could prove quite valuable, may not be within the reach of a researcher.

By the time the research is complete, it may be out of date.

Low response rate has to be expected.

3.6 Ethical Considerations in Primary or Field Research

Primary research is conducted all of the time-journalists use it as their primary means of reporting news and events; national polls and survey discover what population thinks about a particular political figure or proposal; and companies collect data on their consumer base and market trends. When conducting research in an academic or professional setting, you need to be aware of the ethics behind your research activity.

Here are some specific points to consider:

1. You should have the permission of the people who you will be studying to conduct research involving them.
2. Not all types of research require permission for example if you are interested in analyzing something that is available publicly (such as in the case of commercials, public message boards, etc.). You do not necessarily need the permission of the authors.
3. You do not want to do anything that cause physical or emotional harm to your subjects. This could be something as simple as being careful how your word sensitive or difficult questions during your interviews.
4. Objectivity vs. subjectivity in your research is another important consideration. Be sure your own personal biases and opinions do not get in the way of your research and that you give both side fair considerations.
5. Many types of research such as surveys or observations should be conducted under the assumption that you will keep your findings anonymous etc.

3.7 Field Research and Unobtrusive Research often Confused

Unobtrusive research is otherwise called unobtrusive measures. It is a method of data collection used primarily in the social sciences. The term unobtrusive measures "was first coined by web, Campbell. The authors described methodologies which do not involve direct elicitation of data from the research subject. Unobtrusive measures are controlled with interviews and questionnaires. In that they try to find indirect ways to obtain the necessary data. The unobtrusive approach often seeks unusual data sources, such as garbage, graffiti and obituaries, as well as more conventional ones such as published statistics, unobtrusive research should not be perceived as an alternative to more reactive methods such as an alternative to more reactive methods such as interviews, surveys and experiment.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Itemize the various types of field research you know and explain one.

4.0 CONCLUSION

After you have studied this unit, you have learnt what primary or field research is. You have also learnt the various types of field or primary research, how to conduct primary or field research, the general purpose of field research.

The unit also explained in-depth how laboratory research is different from primary research.
You have added to your knowledge in this unit some of the advantages and disadvantages of primary or research data and ethical issues in primary research.

5.0 SUMMARY

Primary or field research involves collecting data about a given subject directly from the real world. This section includes information on what primary research is, how to get started, ethics involved with primary research and different types of research you can do. It includes details about interviews, surveys observations and analysis.

There are a few issues that researchers must confront all of the time- over generalizing your results, biased methodology, correlation does not imply causation, not considered other related factors, being able to know what data is valid, Reported behaviour vs actual behaviour.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Critically differentiate between laboratory research and field

research. **ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE** Field

or primary research are of the following types:

i. Interviews
ii. Surveys
iii. Ethnographic research
iv. Observation

Interview research involves one-on-one or small group question and answer sessions, which provide a lot of information from a small number of people and are useful when you want to get an expert or knowledgeable opinion on a subject.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 11 POSTAL SURVEY

CONTENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A postal survey will involve a questionnaire being mailed out to an individual or an address and include a pre-paid return envelop. Postal surveys are used when there is a reliable contact database available and questioning is predominantly simply and in a closed (yes or no) form.

When conducting a postal survey, unlike interview method, this involves sending questionnaires by post to respondents. Such questionnaires are to be completed by the respondent and returned to the investigator or researcher by post. This method is widely used in operation surveys and market research.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After you studying this unit, you should be able to:

define and explain postal survey and mail method.
anazyse cases where most organizations jettisoned postal survey
explain survey questionnaire, argument for postal survey/mail method
analyse why postal method is different from personal interview.

explain the concept of opinion research services (ORS).

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Definition and Meaning of Postal Survey/Mailing System

Unlike interview method, this involves sending questionnaire by post to respondents. Such questionnaires are to be completed by the respondent and returned to the researcher by post. This method is widely used in operation surveys and market research.

The survey approach can employ a range of methods to answer the research question. Common survey methods include postal questionnaire s, face-to-face interviews, and telephone interviews.

This method involves sending questionnaire to a large sample of people covering a wide geographical area. Postal questionnaires are usually received "cold" without any previous contact between researcher and respondent. The response rate for this type of method is usually low, 20% depend on the content and length of the questionnaire. As response rate are low, a large sample is required when using postal questionnaires, for two main reasons: first, to ensure that the demographic profile of survey respondents reflects that of the survey population; and secondly, to provide a sufficiently large data set for analysis questionnaire used in postal survey research should be clear and well presented. The use of capital (upper case) letters only should be avoided, as this format is hard to read. Questions should be numbered and clearly grouped by subject.

3.2 Advantages of Postal Survey/Mailing System

Postal surveys can generate a large sample costs effectively.
Postal surveys or mailing method can reach all groups (including off-line/without telecommunication).

Respondents can complete questions in their own time and without time pressure. Useful qualitative research which requires information over a set period of time (i.e. in the form of a diary).

It is cheaper because no researcher is to be trained and catered for.
Although there may be respondents bias, investigator's bias will be completely absent.

The respondent feels free and has enough time to consult sources in supplying some answers.

3.3 Disadvantages of Postal Survey/Mailing System

There is a very high incidence of non-response either due to ignorance or illiteracy
Some answers may be influenced by those who are not supposed to complete the questionnaires.
There would be no investigator to explain some intricate questions especially when the questionnaire is poorly designed.
A high percentage of questionnaires will be placed in the recycled/waste bin.
Only when used in conjunction with online surveys can a "typical" representative group be achieved.
Postal survey/mail method does not allow for in-depth responses and detailed verbatim response.
Cannot be 100% certain who has answered the questions?
Incompleted surveys and partially completed surveys questions are common.

3.3.1 The Pitfalls of a Postal Survey

Postal survey have a very bad image, so much so that by far the majority of industrial markets dismiss them as being inappropriate as a research technique.

There are two reasons for this view:

First most postal questionnaires end up in the waste bin and this implies that whatever response is generated comes from a typical minority.

Secondly, postal questionnaires do not allow a subject to be discussed in the detail that is possible in a face-to-face interview or even in one held over the telephone.

3.3.2 Trade Off/Argument

Though there are some truth in both these assertions, they can be countered. The representatives of postal response can be assessed by a telephone check on a sample of non replying companies white the physical absence of an interview can on occasions be beneficially as it allows the respondents to consider answers with no bias caused by the researcher's presence or questioning technique. Postal surveys are a specialized research tool which have an important role to play in industrial marketing research as long as they are used in the right circumstances and with the necessary controls.

3.3.3 Survey Questionnaire

Survey questionnaires usually provide fixed responses to questions to simplify analysis of the replies. This multiple-choice approach also makes it easier and faster for respondents to reply. Simple fill-in-a number questions are also widely used in quantitative research. Fixed responses are also more convenient for computer analysis, which is how most surveys are analysed.

Decisions about what specific questions to ask and how to ask them usually depend on how respondents will be contacted – by mail (or electronic mail), via a website, on the phone, or in person. What question and response approach is used may also affect the survey. There are many possibilities. For example, whether the survey is self-administered or handled by an interview, the questionnaire may be on paper or in an interactive computer format (perhaps distributed on a CD or disk or displayed on a website).

3.4 Computerized Mails Questionnaires

The computer can be programmed to skip certain questions in the questionnaire depending on answers given. Computerized questionnaires also allow the research to show pictures or play audio/video clips (for example, to get reactions to an advertising jinde).

In an automated telephone interview, questions may be pre recorded on an audio tape or computer and the subject responds by posting touch tone buttons on the phone.

3.5 The Conveniency of Mail and Online Surveys

A questionnaire distributed mail, e-mail, or online is useful when extensive questioning is necessary. Respondents can complete the questions at their convenience. They may be more willing to provide personal information – since a questionnaire can be completed anonymously. But the questions must be simple and easy to follow since no interviewer is there to help. If the respondent is likely to be a computer user, it may be possible to send the questionnaire on a disk (or put it on a website) and include a help feature with additional directions for people who need them.

A big problem with questionnaires is that many people don't complete them. The response rate-the percentage of people contacted who complete the questionnaire is often low and respondents may not be representative, e-mail and online surveys are economical if a large number of people respond.

Distributing questionnaires by e-mail or at a website is popular. It is quick and the responses come back in computer form.

Surveys sent by regular mail usually take a lot longer. In business markets, questionnaires can sometime be sent by fax. Regardless of how quickly a questionnaire is distributed, it often takes a month or more to get the data back, which is too slow for some decisions. Moreover, it is difficult to get respondents to expand on particular points.

3.6 Opinion Research Service (ORS)

Opinion research service (ORS) has considerable experience administering large scale postal surveys on a range of topics, including satisfaction with and view of council service, emergency services, tenants satisfaction. Postal surveys are an extremely useful and cost effective method of collecting large amounts of information. Other means of collecting information are:

Maximizing Response Rate: It is vital to maximize the response to postal surveys. We have developed a number of important methods to encourage people to complete and return their questionnaire. Targeted Reminders.

User friendly designs.
Free post returns.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss exhaustively the advantages of postal/mail survey.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt the definition and meaning of postal and mail survey, the advantages and disadvantages, the pitfalls of postal surveys. You have also studied about the argument against postal surveys. The unit has also exposed you to survey questionnaire and opinion research service.

5.0 SUMMARY

Unlike interview method, a postal survey involves sending questionnaires by post to respondents. Such questionnaires are to be completed by the respondent and returned to the researcher by post.

It is cheaper because no researcher is to be trained and catered for. Although there may be respondents bias. Investigators bias will be completely absent and, The respondent feels free and has enough time to consult sources in supplying some answers.

Postal surveys require less skill to administer. It can be administered to a large number of people at the same time. With a given amount of money, a wider, area can be covered. Impersonal nature of questionnaires with standardized wording and order of questions.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)

Give two genuine reasons why industrial marketers jettisoned the use of postal surveys in marketing research.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 12 PERSONAL AND TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

CONTENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Personal interview is a method similar to or even an extension of the mail questionnaire method of descriptive research in which the researcher designs an instrument such as the questionnaires, but more appropriately called an Interview schedule, which he administers on specially selected respondents.

An interview schedule is a list of sequentially arranged, broadly related questions which the researcher uses as a guide in his interview with the respondents. The questions are generally open ended and therefore elicit extended responses from the respondents.

However, the interview may use tape recorders to record the responses from respondents. The approval for the use of recorders must be obtained from the respondents before the interview begins.

Telephone method or interview involves the use of telephone by the investigator to gather information from respondents. It is very useful where the telephone communication network is efficient. A more common method of personal interview involves a combination of the type of questionnaire used in mail questionnaires method and the method of personal interviews. In this improved method of personal interviews the researcher designs a complete questionnaire which he administers personally on all the respondents who would otherwise not have been reached by mail. He reads the questionnaire to the respondents and personally completes the questionnaires during the interview. This method is made more practicable when the researcher employees the services of trained interviewers who are trained in the technique of questionnaire administration. This improved method of personal interview is majorly a method of interviewing used extensively in marketing research.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At this unit succinctly, you should be able to:

explain the different forms which personal interview and telephone interview can take
explain how to structure both individual and group interviews
identify the difficulties encountered when conducting personal and telephone interview
explain the role of the moderator in focus group session
define instrumentation
identify the basic qualities of questionnaire and differentiate between field testing and field trial.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Definition and Meaning of Personal and Telephone Interview

An interview schedule is a list of sequentially arranged, broadly related questions which the researcher uses as a guide in his interview with the respondents.

Marketing research data is essentially of two types that have already been defined: secondary and primary. With respect to primary research, the foremost tool is the personal interview. The face-to-face contact between researcher and respondents is not equal in terms of the potential equality of data that can be obtained. In the face-to-face interview. It is possible to record more than the verbal responses of the interviewee, which are often superficial. When human beings communicate directly with each other much more information is communicated between them.

When two people face one another, the dialogue is conducted on several levels. It goes beyond verbal expression. The nature of words used, facial expressions and body language all communicate what the other party means. Personal interview involves face-to-face meting of interviewers and respondents. Interviewers visit the respondents their offices, houses, market place or on the streets.

3.2 Types of Interviews Conducted In Marketing Research

The types of interviews conducted in marketing research are three. They are structured, unstructured and depth interviews.

Unstructured Informal Interview

This is normally conducted as a preliminary step in the research process to generate ideas/hypothesis about the subject being investigated so that these might be tested later in the survey proper. Such interviews are entirely informed and are not controlled by a specific set of detailed questions. Rather the interviewer is guided by a pre-defined list of issues. These interviews amount to an informal conversation about the subject. Informal interviewing is not concerned with discovering 'how many' respondents think in a particular way on an issue (this is what the final survey itself will discover). The aim is to find out how people think and how they react to issues, so that the ultimate survey questionnaire can be framed along the lines of thought that will be most natural to respondents. The respondents is encouraged to talk freely about the subject, but is kept to the point on issues of interest to the researcher. The respondent is encouraged to reveal everything that he/she feels and thinks about these points. The interviewer must note/or tape-record) all remarks that may be relevant and pursue them until he/she is satisfied that there is no more to be gained by further probing. Properly conducted, informal interviews can give the researcher an accurate feel for the subject to be surveyed. Focus group, discussed later in this unit.

Structured/Standardized Interview

With structured standardized interviews, the format is entirely different. A structured interview follows a specific questionnaire and this research instrument is usually used as the basis for most quantitative surveys. A standardized structured questionnaire is administered where specific questions are asked in a set order and in a set manner to ensure no variation between interviews.

Respondents' answers are recorded on a questionnaire form (usually with pre-specified response formats) during the interview process, and the completed questionnaire are most often analysed quantitatively. The structured interview usually denies the interviewer the opportunity to either add or remove questions, change their sequence or alter the wording of questions.

Depth Interview

These are one-on-one encounters in which the interviewer makes use of an unstructured or semi- structured set of issues/topics to guide the discussion. The object of the exercises is to explore and uncover deep-seated emotions, motivations and attitudes. They are most often employed when dealing with sensitive matters and respondents are likely to give evasive or even misleading answers when directly questioned. Most of the techniques used in the conduct of depth interviews have been borrowed from the field of psychoanalysis.

Dept interviews are usually only successful when conducted by a well trained and highly skilled interviewer. Depth interviewers can be particularly effective where the study involves an investigation of complex behaviour or decision-making process; when the target respondents are difficult to gather together for group interviews (e.g. farmers, veterinary surgeons, haulage contractors surgeons, government officials).

3.3 Advantages of Personal Interview

Since the investigation is present, he will be able to explain certain questions which are not clear to the respondent.

The investigator will be able to assess the situation under which the respondents will be answering the questions.

The two parties will be able to reach a compromise on some.

3.3.1 Disadvantages of Personal Interview

The interviewers have to be catered for in terms of accommodation, transportation, feeding and other allowances. Hence, this method is quite expensive.

The appearance of the interviewers, especially his mode of dressing and his approach to questions may cause biasness in the mind of the respondents. Intellectual dishonesty in the form of intimidation may arise.

3.3.2 Telephone Method/Interview

This research method involves the use of telephone by the researcher to gather information from respondents. It is very useful where telephone communication network is efficient.

Whilst telephone interviews among consumers, are very common in the developed world, these are conducted with far less frequency in the developing world. The reason is somewhat obvious, i.e. only a relatively small proportion of the total has a telephone in the house. Moreover, telephone owners tend to be urban dwellers and have above average incomes and are therefore unrepresentative of the population as a whole.

To a greater extent, telephone interviewing has potential in surveys of businesses, government agencies and other organizations or institutions.

Even then, it is still the case that telephone surveys are rarely without bias. Whilst it is true that many businesses have a telephone, small businesses and even medium-sized enterprises are far less likely to have access to telephones. Telephone interviews afford a certain amount of flexibility. It is possible, for example, for interviewers to put complex questions over the telephone. The interviewers can probe, skip questions that prove irrelevant to the case of a particular respondent and change the sequence of questions in response to the flow of the discussion, and earlier replies can be revisited. The interaction between interviewer and interviewee that is possible over the telephone simply is not achievable through a mailed questionnaire. In comparison to personal interviews, telephone interviews do not appear to enjoy any margin of advantage. Perhaps the only advantages are those of speed and cost in developing countries tend to be very low and so only speed remains as a potential advantage over personal interviews.

In the developed world, the era of computer – assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) has begun.

Researchers conduct the telephone interview whilst seated at a computer. Responses are entered directly into the computer, by the interviewer. The screen displays the questionnaire and any skipping of questions, due to earlier responses directing that some questions are not applicable in the case of the interviewee, is controlled automatically by the computer. Since the responses are entered directly into the computer, the data is instantaneously processed. The computer can also be programmed to produce standardized marketing reports.

3.3.3 Advantages of Telephone Interview

The cost is low
There is no clustering in the sample
There is absence of interviewers bias

Respondents can consult others for information and take their time to consider their answers.

3.3.4 Disadvantages of Telephone Interview

The interview has inadequate control over the identity of the respondents.
The interviewer cannot control whom he consult
He cannot control the order of questions
He cannot use complex questions
He cannot secure spontaneous reaction
The interview is not a position to observe certain attributes of the respondent.

3.4 Definition and Meaning of Instrumentation

With regard to instrumentation; two perspectives become obvious the first perspective concerns the development of an instrument as a major focus or purpose of a study. In this regard, this kind of study. In this regard, this kind of study is an instrumentation design study (IDS). The second perspective concerns the development/modification/adaptation of an instrument for the sole purpose of data collection.

3.5 Forms of Interview Instrumentation

Development Studies: These are very rigorous and indeed all instrumentation studies are also developmental, regardless of the purpose of an instrument for a research, the;

Face Validation

This is the second approach to developing a valid instrument. This involves given an already developed instrument to experts or range of experts who are supposed to build in element of clarity internal consistency and even the overall appearance of the instrument. Persons selected for face validation may not necessarily be so identified merely because they are of great integrity and highly placed or because they are many as much as merely because they are expert. Ideally, no matter the instruments someone from measurement and evaluation and in curriculum should be included as face validators but more importantly it is advisable that suggestions of experts be included in the final draft of the instrument.

3.6 Features of Interview Instrumentation

The following conditions made an instrument valid, appropriate, reliable and efficient;

The instrument must have a name for example; poor patronage to a certain product or service.

There must be a clear purpose or indication of what the instrument is used, for example, the purpose of this instrument is to identify those factors responsible for low patronage of a product or service.

The instrument should be clearly and accurately described in terms of the different sections (e.g. how many sections does the instrument say questionnaire have – ABCD).

Every instrument must be clearly presented in terms of possible responses.
An instrument should ensure that each item is closely linked with other items, so as to ensure a high internal consistency.

3.7 The Concept of Field Testing and Field Trial

Every researcher instrument deserves two forms of validation especially if such an instrument was/is developed by the researcher: The first form of validation involves administering it to a random sample similar (not identical) to the proposed research subjects e.g. administering factors responsible for low patronage of a product or service not measure to be employed in upgrading problematic product or service. In such a case, don't use your research instrument with the same sample that you will use for your actual research during trial research (pilot survey). Go to another place that is similar. This approach to instrument development is commonly referred to as field testing or field trail. They should be carefully thought through as an important aspect of any research work.

3.8 Types of Research Tools

There are varieties of tools of research used in collecting data. These include:

Test- aptitude test; achievement test; personality test
Questionnaires
Opinionnaire or attitude scale
Quantitative interviews
Focus groups
Observations
Qualitative interviews

3.9 Distinction between Questionnaire and Opinionative

John W. Best (1992), a questionnaire is used when factual information is desired, when opinion rather than facts are desired, an opinionative or attitude scale is used.

Questionnaire is a self-report data collection instrument that each research participant fills out as part of a search study. Researchers use questionnaire to obtain information to obtain information about the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, perceptions, personality and behaviourial intentions of research participants.

The opinionative or attitude scale. The information form that attempt as an opinionative or attitude scale. Howe can individual feel or what he believes, is his attitude.

3.10 Qualities of a Good Questionnaire

A research questionnaire should contain simple sentences so as to avoid confusion or misunderstanding.

The questions should be clear and at the same time as short as possible.
Pre-printed questions to be ticked are preferred to any other type.

Questions that are too personal should be avoided completely except in extreme cases.

Irrelevant question should be avoided
Leading questions should be avoided

Most importantly, an introductory letter must accompany the questionnaire explaining to the respondent the purpose of the research and at the same time assuming him that any information released should be treated as confidential.

3.11 Personal Interview and Postal Interview Often Confused

Personal Interview	Postal Method
Only appropriate for respondent for a reasonable level of education. Many people have little facilities for writing. Appropriate technique for large segments of the population in contrast with the questionnaire. Interviews cannot be used on all segments of the population in contrast with the questionnaire. There is problem of limiting the verbose individual. Very flexible. The rate of return of questionnaire usually low.	It is less expensive Requires much less skill to administer. Simply mailed or handed to the respondent with minimum explanation. It can be administered to a large number of people at the same time. Questionnaire can be sent through the mail. Respondents feel free to express their views. Impersonal nature of questionnaires with standardized wording and order of questions.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have studied the meaning of personal interview and telephone interview, various types of personal interview, merits and demerits of personal and telephone interview. This unit has also exposed you to the various forms of research tools (instrumentation), features, field testing and field trial and the qualities of a good questionnaire.

5.0 SUMMARY

Personal interview involves face-to-face meeting of interviewers and respondent. Interviewers visit respondents in their houses, offices, market places or on the street, ask necessary questions and enter the answers obtained in special sheets called questionnaires. This method is usually limited to where human beings are to be interviewed. For example, during a household inquiry. The major advantage is that, since the researcher is present, he will be able to explain certain questions which are not clear to the respondent. Against this, intellectual dishonesty in the form of intimidation may arise (disadvantage).

Telephone interview: This involves the use of telephone by the investigator to gather information from respondents. It is very useful where the telephone communication network is efficient.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss succinctly the distinction between personal interview and postal interview (if any).
2. What is opinionative?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 13 PANEL RESEARCH

CONTENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Market research panels are comprised people meeting certain demographic criterion. They are commonly used for obtaining business information about product sales and are sometimes mistakenly referred to as focus groups. There are two forms, one for the consumer market, and the other for collecting business – to-business (B2B) purchasing information. Consumer market research panels are most recognized and known to the public, as many people may have been asked to participate in some manner at some time in their lives.

Market research panels are comprised pre-recruited groups of people who have agreed to participate, so although the selection method to approach these people may be random, the group is not random in that they are all chosen from the group of people who wants to do this task.

Panel can be chosen from a target audience segment, current customers, or any other particular group the originator of the study want to include.

Obviously it would make more sense to include those people who may have some interest in the products under study, because they would be most likely to have opinions about the produce in question. The actual panel activity may include focus groups, surveys, or test. Members generally are given some type of incentive reward for their participation, which could be cash or a gift.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the meaning of panel research and how panel market research is being conducted.
- distinguish between general consumer research and business related research
- explain the general overview of available research types taking cognizance of panel research, qualitative research and quantitative research.

the orientation about business market research panel
consumer panel and panel data and
how panel works and the advantages of panel survey.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Definition and Meaning of Panel Survey

This is a method where teams or panel of investigators are specifically trained and sent to certain areas or localities to interview certain people.

The consumer panel group usually is a good cross section of the population. They may be asked to keep diary, answer questions online, or attend a focus grouping meeting. Less commonly, there may be a visit to their actual homes for research of buying habits. These panels run over some period of time.

Surveys and focus groups differ some what. The focus groups involve more opinion and emotional descriptions, where the survey is just a matter of answering pre-formed questions. A focus group will have a facilitator to direct the questioning and take a record of answers.

3.2 Distinction between Consumer General Research and Business Related Research

The general consumer market research focuses on buying habits of consumers, while business related research focuses on products sold in the business- to-business arena.

Research can investigate behaviourial factors that influence buying decisions, or emotions, or other subjective factors. To do this research, it is necessary to collect facts and opinions in an objective manner, in an orderly process. The objective is to pull out from the panel what people want to buy, more just how they feel about a particular product, once the wants are discovered, they can be incorporated into products.

3.3 How Panel Market Research Is Conducted

A market research panel study may be ordered by the manufacturer of an item, or by a retail organization trying to determine what products or service to add to their inventory list. Usually management or marketing departments are the instigators of such research. They may devise their own groups, or call upon marketing research companies who specialize in this type of research on a regular basis.
The major disadvantage of panel research is that, it is prone to biasness if the investigators (researchers) allow themselves to be bought over.

3.3.1 Overview of Available Research Types Haven Taken into Cognizance of Panel Research

The qualitative research is more explorative, and uses smaller numbers of person's focus group, and interviews.

3.3.2 Quantitative Research

The quantitative research is more random, and used to draw conclusions from test and sampling. It will use higher numbers of respondents for surveys and questionnaire research methods.

Research involves collecting information, analysis and interpreting data for the client. It is necessary to first define a problem, or the reason for ordering the study. Then it is necessary to determine what information is needed to obtain in order to work with the problem for improvement, and draw inferences between the two.

After the panel answers, those findings must be interpreted, implications made, and the researchers draw up a set of recommendations to fix the problem or make improvements to the product to better met consumer demand.

3.4 Business Market Research Panel – The Orientation

Business market research panels are more specifically oriented towards the world of business. There would be more questions or discussions about competition, government legislation, the market the impact of the economy and other factors that are related to that type of business. There would be more hard facts rather than the emotional aspect of business decision making. The business panels may be more specialized towards specific markets. Some market research firms have these specialized panels available on a regular basis, rather than creating them from scratch every time they are needed and they may have many different types of specialized panels available to the business community.

3.5 Panel Data Analysis

Refers to multidimensional data frequently involving measurements over time.

Panel data contain observations of multiple phenomena obtained over multiple time periods for the same firms or individuals. Time series and cross-sectional data are special cases of panel data that are in one dimension only (one panel member or individual for the former, one time period for the later).

EXAMPLE

Person	Balanced Year	Panel Income
1	2001	1300
1	2002	1600
1	2003	2000
2	2001	2000
2	2002	2300
2	2003	2400

In a panel survey, it is obvious that repeated observations are derived by following a sample of personal (a panel) over time and by collecting data from a

sequence of interviews (or waves). These interviews are conducted at usually fixed occasions that in most cases are regularly spaced.
There are many variations under this general description of panel survey including cohort panel surveys, household panel surveys and rotating panel surveys.

3.6 Consumer Panel

Your business is all about your consumers. So understanding them is essential in ensuring your products, and services meet their needs, and in identifying opportunities for growth. Your consumer panel data ought to be offers detailed insights into your customers. Who they are, their attitudes and behaviours, across channels or demographic area (territories).

3.7 How Do Panel Work

Panel members are recruited (either by mail or more typically by phone) and are asked to participate. They are told that they will be called upon several times for their input about a given product category. Most panel members agree to participate because they believe they are helping improve the quality of products offered by the manufacturers. As an added incentive, it is common for panel members to receive a gift for their participation. Membership is also anonymous a gift for their participation. Membership is also anonymous; members do not know each other.

One of the key ingredients for the success of a panel is its on-going maintenance. It is essential for the members of the panel to be balanced demographically and according to other key variables (like region, sex psychologists, etc). This is to ensure that the panel is representative of the population under investigation. It is the research company ‘job to ensure that the integrity of the sample is maintained

4.0 CONCLUSION

In unit nine of marketing 403: marketing research, you have successfully learn about the meaning of panel research, the distinction between general consumer research and business related research. You have also learnt about how panel market research is conducted, qualitative and quantitative research, the orientation behind business market research panel, data analysis and how panel work in a market researches.

5.0 SUMMARY

A panel is a group of people who represent a target marketed and are recruited and pre- qualified to participate in market research studies on an on-going basis panel basically offer a pre-qualified audience that is matched to the demographics of the target audience. Since they are in a sense ‘Ready for action” at any given time, they offer you the advantages of:

Quick survey results
Higher respondents participation rate
Opinion that are projectable to your target market
Efficiency i.e. increases because your panel members have been carefully screened and qualified.
The ability to track behaviour over time.
Potential cost savings (set up cost are sped over several surveys)

Panel method is not often useful owning, to the belief that it is extremely costly and therefore difficult to justify. The major advantages of focused groups over quantitative methods are time and money.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What is a panel in marketing research?
2. Do you think they are of any merit in the research process? If yes what are your reasons?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Armstrong P.A (2001): Strategic Approach to Marketing Research, 4th Edition Mcgraw Hill, London.

Asika N. (2004); Research Methodology: A Process Approach Mugukamu & Brother Enterprise, Somolu, Lagos.

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MODULE 4 MARKETING RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIT 14 OVERVIEW OF MARKETING RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

CONTENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In our present unit we are going to discuss the theoretical principles of questionnaire design and guidelines for questionnaire design.

This unit opener shows that designing a single question/scale for collecting a specific type of raw data is different from taking a set of scale measurements and creating a good scientific questionnaire. A researcher's ability to design a good scale measurement is by itself not enough to guarantee that the appropriate primary raw data will automatically be collected.

This unit focuses on developing a clear understanding of the importance of questionnaire designs and the process that should be undertaken in the development of survey instruments. Understanding questionnaire designs will require that you integrate many of the concepts discussed in earlier modules.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

Discuss the theoretical principles of questionnaire design.

- Explain why a questionnaire is more than just asking a respondent some questions.
- Identify and discuss the critical factors that can contribute to directly improving the accuracy of surveys and explain why questionnaire development is not a simple process.
- Identify and explain the communication roles of questionnaire in the data collection process.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Questionnaire Design

One of the great weaknesses of questionnaire design today is that many researchers believe that designing questionnaire is an art rather than a science. Where art relates to the researcher's creative use of words in asking the right questions and developing the related scale points, while there is some level of creativity involved in designing a questionnaire, the process itself should be a scientific one that integrates established rules of logic objectivity, discriminatory powers and systematic procedures. Everyone understands that words go into questions but not everyone understands that writing questions give you a questionnaire.

3.2 Guidelines for Questionnaire Design

Sound questionnaire design principles should focus on three areas. The first relates to the wording of the question. The second refers to the planning of issues with regard to how variables will be categorized, scaled and coded after receipt of the responses. The third pertains to the general appearance of the questionnaire. All three are important issues in questionnaire design because they can minimize bias in research.

Here are some of the issues to be considered in designing questionnaires:

Question selection: The only questions that should be asked are those that will provide answers of definite use to the researcher. The reliability of respondent's answers often decreases as a questionnaire's length increases. Researchers should ask of each proposed questions.

How will the answer to this question help us in this study?

Question form. The two basic forms are closed-ended questions and open-ended question. As their names imply, closed-end questions provide all possible answers and respondents simply nominate their choice from the selection, whereas open-end question invite respondents to answer in their own words. Within the two main questions types, these are many variations.

Question wording - it is important to design questions that will be understood. And, it is essential to use language that is clear, unambiguous and appropriate to the particular respondent group. Avoiding bias in the wording of questions is also important. However you should not underestimate the difficulty of designing questions that are genuinely neutral and do not need respondents towards particular responses.

Question Sequencing

The question sequence should be logical and easy to follow. The aim here should be use early questions to gain respondents' interest without offering them, and leave controversial or personal questions until last. Sometimes, however, early questions are probing in order to screen respondents-that is, to avoid wasting time with unsuitable or unwilling respondents.

Some common errors in question design.

Questions that make respondent feel the information requested is none of your business.

What is your family's income?
How old are you?
How much alcohol did you consume last Saturday night?

Questions that lack a standard of reference.

Do you have a large kitchen? (there is no indication of what is meant by large)

Do you attend church regularly?

Questions to which the respondent will probably not know the answer.
What is your wife's favourite brand of lipstick?

Question about details the respondent cannot remember, and therefore guesses
How many calls did you (as a sales representative) make on office-supply lenses during the past year?

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What are the theoretical principles of Questionnaire design?

3.3 Questionnaire Construction

A carefully constructed questionnaire is essential to the success of any survey. Questions must be clear, easy to understand, and directed toward a specific objective; that is, they must be designed to elicit information that meets the study's data requirements. Researchers need to define the objective before trying to develop a questionnaire because the objective determines the substance of the questions and the amount of detail. A common mistake in constructing questionnaires is to ask questions that interest the researchers but do not yield information useful in deciding whether to accept or reject a hypothesis. Finally, the most important rule in composing questions is to maintain impartiality.

The questions are usually of three kinds:

Open-ended, dichotomous, and multiple-choice.

Open-Ended Question

What is your general opinion about broadband Internet access?

3.4 Definition of Questionnaire and Questionnaire Construction

A questionnaire also called a survey instrument is a formalized framework consisting of a set of questions and scales designed to generate primary raw data. Questionnaire construction involves taking established set of scale measurements and formatting them into a complete instrument for communicating with and collecting raw data from respondents.

Bruner (2001) defined a questionnaire as a pre-formulated written set of questions record their answers usually within rather closely defined alternatives. Questionnaires are an efficient data collection mechanism when the researcher knows exactly what is required and how to measure the variables of interest. Questionnaire can be administered personally, mailed to the respondent (s) or electronically distributed.

3.5 Four Theoretical Components of a Questionnaire

Theoretically, a questionnaire consists of several components – words, questions, formats and hypotheses – that are integrated into a recognizable hierarchical layer system.

Words

The most obvious component is words. The researcher must carefully consider which words to use in creating the questions and scales for collecting raw data from respondents. A few examples of the wording problems include ambiguity, abstraction and connotation. The words selected by the researcher can definitely influence a respondent’s answer to a given question. The following examples are used to illustrate the points.

Do you think anything could be done to make it more convenient for people to conduct their financial transactions at Diamond Bank?
Do you think anything might be done to make it more convenient for people to conduct their financial transactions at Diamond Bank?
Do you think anything should be done to make it more convenient for people to conduct their financial transactions at Diamond Bank?

The different answered each of these questions will generally show how word phrasing variations can become significant in questionnaire designs. Slight changes in wording can introduce different concepts or emotional levels into the questionnaire.

Structured questions or Closed – ended, require the respondents to choose from a predetermined set of responses or scale points. The question format reduces the amount of thinking and effort required by respondents. In general, structured questions are more popular than unstructured ones in offline and eliminated because either the interviewer simply checks a box or line, circles a category.

Unstructured questions or Open – ended questions, formatted to allow respondents to reply in their own words. Unstructured questions can provide the researcher with a rich array of information. The actual format of open – ended questions might vary depending on the data collection method e.g. personal interview, telephone interview or self – administered – survey. There is no predetermined list of responses available to aid or limit the respondent's answer. This type of question requires more thinking and effort on the part of the respondents. In most cases, an interviewer is required for purposes of asking follow up probing question if administered correctly.

3.6 Questionnaire Format

This component does not directly relate to the process of developing the individual questions but rather the integrated layout of sets of questions or scale measurements into a systematic instrument. The questionnaire's format should allow for clear communication.

Hypothesis Development

This final component focuses on the notion that questionnaires are designed for collecting meaningful raw data to test a hypothesis rather than merely to gather facts about objects under investigation. Theoretically, each of the questions and scale measurements used within a questionnaire design should either directly or indirectly relate to a recognizable – research hypothesis that is pertinent to the overall research objectives. Hypothesis can relate to:

The nature of the respondents.

The relationship between the expressed attitudes and behavior of the respondent (e.g. motivation).

The sociological structure and their influence on the respondent.

The meaning of words and the respondent's grasp of language and/or concepts.

The relationships among respondents' knowledge, attitudes and market place behaviors.

The descriptive and predictive capabilities of attributes and dimensions with regards to the investigated constructs and concepts (e.g. customer satisfaction, product or service quality and behavioral intentions).

By taking the time to identify the hypothesis associated with each of the questions or scale measurements to be included in a questionnaire design, researchers can enhance their ability to determine which measurements are necessary for collecting primary raw data and which ones are nice but not necessarily collecting “nice but not necessary” data only increases the length of the questionnaire and the likelihood of non – response bias.

3.7 Ex Post Facto or Correlational Research

Ex Post Facto or Correlation Research -The first broad class of non – experimental research is ex post facto research. The literal translation of the Latin term ex post facto is’ from after the fact. This expression is meant to indicate that the research in question has been conducted after the variations in the independent variable have occurred in the natural course of events. Ex Post Facto research attempts to understand relationships among phenomena as they naturally occur without any researcher intervention. Sometimes Ex Post Facto research is referred to as correlation research. The precise meaning of correlation will become clear when some statistical concepts are covered. Basically a correlation is interrelationship or association between two variables that is a tendency for variation in one variables leads to a corresponding variation in another variable. For example in human adults, height and weight tend to be directly related because there is a tendency for taller people to weight more than shorter people Ex Post Facto or correlation studies obviously share a number of structural and design characteristics with experimental, quasi- experimental and pre-experimental research.

In Ex Post Facto research, on the other hand, the investigator does not have control of the independent variable because it has already occurred.”The examination of the independent variable-the presumed causative factor- is the after the fact. As a result, attempts to draw out cause –and – effect conclusions are often problematic. For example, we might hypothesize that there is a correlation between the number of cigarettes smoked and the incidence of lung cancer, and empirical data would most likely corroborate this expectation.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have looked at Questionnaire Design and Issues. Many Researchers, unaware of the underlying theory, still believe that questionnaire designing is an art rather than a science. Questionnaires are however hierarchical structures consisting of four different components: words, questions, formats, and hypotheses. Most surveys are descriptive instruments that rely heavily on the collection of state-of-being or state of intention data that allow for predicting changes in people's attitudes and behaviours as well as testing hypotheses. Good questionnaires allow researchers to gain a true report of the respondent's attitudes, preferences, beliefs, feelings, behavioural intentions, and actions/reactions in a holistic manner, not just a fragment. Through carefully worded questions and clear instructions, a researcher has the ability to control a respondent's thoughts and ensure objectivity .By understanding good communication principles, researchers can avoid bad questioning procedures that might result in either incomprehensible information requests, unanswerable questions that obscure, prohibit, or distort the meaning of a person's responses

5.0 SUMMARY

Questionnaire development is much more than just writing a set f questions and people to answer them. Designing good surveys goes beyond just developing reliable and valid scale measurements. There are a number of design factors, systematic procedural steps and rules of logic that must be considered in the development process. In addition the process requires knowledge of sampling plans, construct development, scale measurement and types of data. It is important to remember that a questionnaire is a set of questions/scales designed to generate enough raw data to allow the researcher and decision-maker to generate information to solve the business problem.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the unstructured (open-ended) and structured (closed-ended) questions in developing a direct mail survey instrument.
2. Discuss the value of a good questionnaire design
3. Identify and discuss the guidelines available for deciding the form and the layout of a questionnaire.

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UNIT 15 THE FLOWERPOT APPROACH'S IMPACT ON QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Although the flowerpot approach is primarily used to determine the appropriate sequential order of the questions and scale measurements used to collect the raw data, it has a direct impact on several of the other development steps.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

Identify and discuss the critical factors that can contribute to directly improving the accuracy of surveys, and explain why questionnaire development is not a simple process.
Discuss and employ the flowerpot approach in developing scientific questionnaire.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Determining the Information Requirements

Rather than using general brainstorming techniques to develop all the data requirements for, the entire set of information objective, the researcher using the flowerpot approach can focus on one information topic at a time. This decreases the likelihood of generating irrelevant or "nice but not necessary" data requirements.

This approach also enhances the researcher's ability to determine the necessary order (e.g., general to specific) among the data requirements within a given pot.

3.2 Development of a Flowerpot-Designed Questionnaire

This unit describes how the flowerpot approach influences the survey instrument development system described in a detailed example concerning a study conducted for American Bank and Trust Company located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, will be integrated into the discussion. The final questionnaire is provided in of marketing research illustration at the end of the Module.

3.3 The situation

The research project was conducted on behalf of the American Bank and Trust Company, a local bank serving the greater metropolitan area of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The primary goal of the survey and subsequent analysis was to provide the American Bank's marketing management team with pertinent information regarding banking habits and patterns, well demographic and lifestyle characteristics of the bank's current customers.

Step 1 Transform Research Objectives into Information Objectives

In step 1 of the development process, the flowerpot approach guides the researcher not only in transforming the research objectives into information objectives but also in determining how many information objectives to include (the number of pots), along with parts of the base stand and those objectives which represent testable hypotheses. The researcher then determines the size of the pots). In the American Bank study, the initial order of the information objectives (in bold) were rewritten into information objectives (in italics) as follows:

To Obtain a Demographic Profile of American Bank's Current Customers:

1. (To collect data on selected demographic characteristics that can be used to a descriptive profile identifying people who are create a pie who are current American Bank customers.)

2. To obtain a partial lifestyle profile of the people who currently bank with American Bank, with particular emphasis on financial dimensions.
   (To collect data on selected financial–oriented lifestyle dimensions that can be used to create a descriptive profile that further identifies people who currently bank at American Bank.

3. To determine banking habits and patterns of these customers.
   (To collect data pertinent to identifying and describing desired and actual banking habits and patterns exhibited by customers, as well as their selected attitudes and feelings towards those banking practices.)

4. To investigate the existence of possible differences between the psychological and demographic dimensions associated with customers, perception of being either a blue-collar or white-collar person.
   (To collect data that will allow the researcher to (1) classify customers as being socially either “blue collar” or white collar” and (2) test for significant demographic and lifestyle profile differences between these two social class-based customer groups.)

5. To determine the various geographic markets now being served by American Bank on the basis of customers' length of residence in the area.
   (To collect selected state-of-being data that will allow the researcher to identify and describe existing strong geographic service markets.)

After transforming the research objectives into information objectives, the researcher determined that objectives 1 and 2 directly related to data that would be part of the questionnaire's base structure. Objective 3 represents an information flowerpot. In contrast, objectives 4 and 5 do not represent information flowerpots but rather hypotheses about data structures that will be derived from raw data obtained within either the base or the identified information flowerpot. Although there were five initial information objectives in this example, the actual structure consists of only one information flowerpot and its base.

Step 2 Determine the Appropriate Data Collection Method

On the basis of the information objectives and target population (i.e., American Bank's own current customers), bank management and the researcher jointly decided that a direct mail survey approach would be the most efficient method of reaching the randomly selected respondents and collecting raw data. This step has a direct influence on creating the individual questions and scale measurements, although these are designed only after the specific information items are determined for each objective.

Step 3 Determine Information Requirements for Each Objective

The flowerpot approach has a significant impact on this predesign step of the development process. In this step, the researcher interacts with bank management to determine what specific data requirements are needed to achieve each of the stated information objectives as well as the classification factors that will make up the questionnaire's base. The researcher must establish the general-to-specific order among the identified data requirements. The study's data requirements and flow are detailed as follows:

1. **Flowerpot 1** (the third objective): To collect data that are pertinent to identifying and describing desired and actual banking habits and patterns exhibited by customers as well as their selected attitudes and feelings toward those banking practices.

a. Consideration toward the bank patronized most often.

b. Bank items (characteristics) deemed important in selecting a bank (e.g., convenience/location, banking hours, good service charges, interest rates on savings accounts, knew a person at the bank, bank's reputation, bank's promotional advertisements, interest rates on loans).

c. Considerations toward having personal savings accounts at various types of financial institutions.

d. Preference considerations toward selected banking methods (e.g., inside the bank, drive-up window, 24-hour ATM, electronic banking, bank by mail, bank by phone, some other person).

e. Actual usage considerations toward various banking methods (e.g., inside the bank, drive-up window, 24-hour ATM, electronic banking, bank by mail, bank by phone, some other person).

f. Frequency of balancing a checkbook as well as the number of non-sufficient-funds (NSE) charges.

2. **Flowerpot base-lifestyle dimensions** (the second objective): To collect data on selected financial-oriented lifestyle dimensions that can be used to create a descriptive profile that further identifies people who currently bank at American Bank.

   Belief statements that will measure the existence of a customer’s lifestyle as being financial optimist, financially dissatisfied, information exchanger, credit card user, advertising viewer, family oriented, price conscious, blue/white-collar oriented.

3. **Flowerpot base-demographic characteristics** (the first objective): To collect data on selected demographic characteristics that can be used to create a descriptive profile identifying people who are current American Bank customers.

Include characteristics of gender, years in area, years at current residence, present employment status, present marital status, spouse's current employment status, number of dependent children, education level, age, occupation, nature of work, union membership, income level, zip code.

Notice that the fourth and fifth information objectives have no direct bearing on determining the data requirements because they incorporate data factors that are covered either in the information flowerpot or its base. Therefore, the researcher does not have to integrate them into this particular step of the development process.

Step 4 Develop Specific Question/Scale Measurement Formats

The flowerpot approach does not have any real impact on the activities that take place in this development process step. Nevertheless, this step remains a critical part of questionnaire design. The researcher must use his or her construct and scale measurement knowledge in developing complete scale measurements (e.g., question/setup, dimension/attributes, scale points/responses) for each individual data factor identified in step 3. The researcher must make three key decisions for each factor: (1) the type of data (e.g., state of being, mind, behavior, intention); (2) question/scale format (e.g., open-ended or closed-ended format and nominal, ordinal, interval, or ratio structure); and (3) the question and specific scale point wording.

The flowerpot approach advocates that when designing the specific question/scale measurements, researchers should split their mind as if they were two different people, one thinking like a technical, logical researcher and the other like a respondent. (Revisit Module 4 for details.) The results of this step can be seen in the final questionnaire displayed in the Marketing Research Illustration at the end of this Unit.

Step 5 Evaluate Question/Scale Measurements

Again, the flowerpot approach does not have any real impact on the activities that take place in this step of the development process. The researcher must individually assess each question and scale measurement for reliability and validity. He or she would also evaluate the instructions and revise where necessary. Unit, for a summary of the guidelines for evaluating the adequacy of questions.

Step 6 Establish Flowerpot Format and Layout

This step is at the center of the flowerpot approach to questionnaire designs. Taking all the individual questions and scales developed in step 4, the researcher must present them in a specific, logical order. After creating a title for the questionnaire, the researcher must include a brief introductory section and communicate any general instructions prior to asking the first question. The questions that make up the first on this example, the only) information flowerpot must be asked in a natural general-to-specific order, to reduce the potential for sequence bias. In any self-administered questionnaire (offline or online), all instructions should be included within each question or scale, where appropriate. After completing the information flowerpot, the researcher must stabilize the structure by building a base. In the American Bank example, there is a two-part base structure. The lifestyle belief (i.e., general opinions) section is presented first, and then the more standardized classification section (i.e. demographic descriptors). The final part of any base is the thank-you statement

At the beginning of the classification section is this statement to the respondent: Now just a few more questions so that we can combine your answers with those of the other people taking part in this study, This is a “transition phrase,” which serves three basic purposes. First, it communicates to the respondents that a change in their thinking process is about to take place. No longer do they have to think about their specific belief structures; they can clear their mind before thinking about their personal data. Second, it hints that the task of completing the survey is almost over. Third, it assures the respondent that the information she or he gives will be used only in aggregate combinations-that is, it will be blended with information from other respondents participating in the survey.

Step 7 Evaluate the Questionnaire and Layout

After drafting the questionnaire, but before submitting it to the marketing management team for approval, the researcher should review the layout to make sure the questionnaire meet all stated information objectives. Normally, this step would focus on determining whether the each question is necessary and whether the overall length is acceptable. In contrast, the flowerpot approach would give more attention to (1) checking whether the instrument meets the overall objectives, (2) checking the scale format, scaling properties, and measures of central tendencies and variations; and (3) checking general-to-specific order.

An easy method of evaluating questionnaires is to answer the following five questions for each question or scale measurement including in the design:

1. What specific types of raw data (state of being, mind, behavior, or intention) are being sought in the question, and to what purpose?
2. What types of questions or scale measurements (nominal, ordinal, interval, ration, ordinally interval) are being used?
3. What scaling properties (assignment, order, distance, origin) are being activated in the scale measurement?

4. What is the most appropriate measure of central tendency (mode, median, mean)?
5. What is the most appropriate measure of dispersion (frequency distribution, range, standard deviation)?

Step 8 Obtain the Client's Approval

The flowerpot concept does not have any unique impact in this step of the overall development process other than providing the researcher with a solid framework for explaining why the particular questions or scale measurements were chosen and the resulting layout of the survey instrument. Copies of the questionnaire draft should be made and distributed to all parties that have authority over and interest in the project. Realistically, the client may step in at any time in the design process to express a need for some type of modification.

Nevertheless, it is important to get final approval of the questionnaire prior to pretesting it. The logic behind client approval is that it commits the management team to the body of data and eventually to the information that will result from the specific questionnaire design. This step helps reduce unnecessary surprises and saves time and money. If fundamental changes (major or minor) are deemed necessary, this is where they should occur, The researcher must make sure that any changes adhere to the design requirements.

Step 9 Pretest and Revise the Questionnaire

While fine-tuning of the questionnaire can take place via discussions between the researcher and client, the final evaluation should come from people representing the individuals who will be asked to actually fill out the survey. Remember, pretesting the questionnaire does not mean that one researcher administers the questionnaire to another researcher, or to client's management or staff. Furthermore, it does not mean that the pretest is done with college students unless they are representative of the study's target population.

An appropriate pretest involves a simulated administration of the survey to a small, representative group of respondents. How many respondents should be included in a pretest is open to debate. Some researchers will use as few as 5 respondents, while others might use as many as 50 depending on the purpose of the pretest, the method of administering the survey, and how the survey was developed. For example, if the questions were not properly tested for reliability and validity in step 5, then the pretest should include at least 50 respondents so that the researcher can run the proper statistical testing procedures on the data structures to address reliability and validity issues. In contrast, if the main purpose of the pretest is to check for specific wording problems, then only about 10 respondents are needed in the pretest. Normally in a pretest, the respondents are asked to pay attention to such elements as words, phrases, instructions, and question flow patterns and point out anything they feel is confusing, difficult to understand, or otherwise a problem.

When using the flowerpot approach, the researcher should find no reliability/validity or wording issues at this point, since those issues would have been addressed back in steps 4 and 5. Rather, the pretest should help the researcher determine how much time respondents will need to complete the survey, whether to add any instructions, and what to say in the cover letter. If any problems or concerns arise in the pretest, modifications must be made and approved by the client prior to moving to the next step. In the American Bank study, the pretest, administered to 25 randomly selected bank customers, revealed no surprises.

Step 10 Finalize the Questionnaire Format

In this step, the questionnaire is placed in final format. Decisions are made about typing instructions, spacing, numbers for questions and pages, folding, and stapling-all of which relate to the professional appearance of the questionnaire. Quality in appearance is more important in self-administered surveys than in personal or telephone interview documents. Duplication considerations would also come in this step. Any support materials-such as interview instructions, cover letter, rating cards, and mailing and return envelopes are finalize and reproduced for distribution. Support materials are discussed in later section. Another set of decisions relates to the pro coding of the response categories used to represent the scaling points. In American Bank study, the questionnaire was formatted as a four-page booklet with a separate cover letter and a self-addressed, stamped return envelope.

Step 11 Implementing the Survey

This last step really has nothing to do with the actual design process of the questionnaire. Its purpose is to bring closure to the development process. This step indicates the processes that must be followed to begin the collection of the required raw data. These will vary according to the data collection method.

Although the American Bank example does illustrate how the flowerpot approach plays an important and useful role in the development process of survey instruments, no one study can exemplify all of the numerous factors researchers and practitioners must consider when designing a scientific questionnaire. We offer a general summary of the major considerations in questionnaire designs. Today’s firms are also faced with new challenges as they expand into global markets.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

How does flower pot approach influence the survey instrument.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The illustration extends the unit discussions on questionnaire development via the flowerpot approach. To use the American Bank and Trust from this unit, the cover letter and questionnaire represent the actual instruments developed for the American Bank and Trust marketing management team to collect the primary raw data needed to address its initial research problems and the questionnaire was designed so that data entry could be achieved through the use of optical scanning techniques.

5.0 SUMMARY

The flowerpot approach serves as a unique framework or blueprint for integrating different sets of questions and scale measurements into a scientific structure for collecting high-quality raw data. This ordered approach helps researchers make critical decisions regarding (1) construct development, (2) the appropriate dimensions and attributes of objects (3) question/scale measurement formats, (4) wording of actual questions and directives, and (5) scale points and descriptors. Following the flowerpot approach assures that the data flow will correctly go from a general information level down to a more specific level.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Discuss the flowerpot approach in developing scientific questionnaires.
Evaluate the extent to which selected questionnaire follows the flowerpot approach.

7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING

Alreck and Settle: The Research Handbook, pp. 97-100; and Labaw, Advanced Questionnaire Design, p. 34.

Jim L. Finlay and Fazal J. Seyyed, “The Impact of Sponsorship and Respondent Attitudes on Response Rate to Telephone Surveys: An Exploratory

Investigation," in Proceeding of the Atlantic Marketing Association, ed. D. L. Moore (1988), pp. 715-21.

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Hair J, Bush R, Ortinau D, Marketing Research within a Changing Information Environment 2nd Ed. (McGraw-Hill 2003

UNIT 16 SUPPLEMENT DOCUMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH SURVEY INSTRUMENT DESIGNS

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Although the main focus of this unit is the development process and flowerpot approach to designing scientifically based questionnaires for data collection purposes, several supplement documents required to execute the fieldwork activities in marketing research are worthy of discussion. When the decision is made to collect raw data by means of either personal or telephone interviews, there is a need to develop good supervisor and interviewer instructions as well as screening forms, rating cards, and call record sheets. These types of docu-ment forms help ensure that the process of collecting high-quality raw data will be successful. We will discuss the highlights of each of these forms in this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

Appreciate the supervisor/interviewer instructions.
Identify the scale measurements that make up the actual survey instrument.
Examine on the reporting or tracking sheets.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Supervisor Instructions

As discussed in module 1, most commercial research interviewing is conducted by field interviewing service companies located within selected geographic test markets. These service companies may be seen as the production line for collecting raw data with in the research industry. Normally, it is the responsibility of this type of company to complete the interviews and send them back to the research company for processing. **A supervisor instruction form** serves as a blueprint for informing and training people on how to execute the interview process in a standardized fashion. The instructions outline the process for conducting the study and are vitally important to any research project that utilize personal or telephone interviews. They include detailed information about the nature of study, start and completion dates, sampling instructions, number of interviewer required, equipment and facility requirements, reporting forms, quotas, and validation procedures. Displays a sample page from a set of supervisor instructions for a retail banking study that uses trained student interviewers to administer personal interviews for collecting role page from a set of supervisor instructions for a student interview to administer personal interviews for collecting the raw data.

3.2 Interviewer Instructions

To ensure quality of data, the interviewing process must maintain a level of consistency; therefore, it is very important to train those people who will actually be conducting the interviews. Interviewer Instructors serve as the vehicle for training the interviewers to (1) correctly select a prospective respondent for inclusion in the study,
(2) screen prospectors and record responses). Although these instructions cover many of the same points found in supervisor's instructions include detailed information about the nature of the study; start and completion dates; sampling instructions; screening procedures; quotas; number of interviews required; guidelines to asking questions, using rating cards, and recording responses; reporting forms; and verification form procedures. Displays a sample page from a set of interviewer instructions for a retail banking study that used personal interviews to collect the raw data.

Although not explicitly displayed, many interviewer instructions would separately list each general instruction and those within each question of the survey. In addition, the instructions would include specific comments on procedures for asking each question and recording responses. All the necessary instructions do appear on the survey. The main importance of interviewer instructions is to ensure that all the interviews are conducted in basically the same fashion. It is critical for all interviewers to read each survey question as it was written, with no modifications. The interviewer instructions constitute a training tool to enhance the likelihood that all interviews will be conducted in the same manner, thus reducing the possibility that potential interviewer bias will enter the study and negatively impact the quality level of the collected raw data.

3.3 Screening Forms

Although screening forms are not of direct concern to the researcher in developing any survey, they play an important role in ensuring that the sampled respondents of a study are, in fact, representative of the defined target population. Determining the eligibility of a prospective respondent up front increases the likelihood that the resulting raw data, structures, and information can be used by the researcher and marketing practitioner to make inductive inferences about the larger defined target population. Screening forms represent a set of preliminary questions that are used to determine the eligibility of a prospective respondent for inclusion in the survey. Normally, any set of special characteristics or requirements that a person must have to be included into the sampled pool of prospective respondents is decided by the researcher and client group. Almost any factor or characteristics about an individual can be used as a screener. For example, a person’s age, marital status, education level, number of purchases in a given time frame or level of satisfaction toward a product or service might serve as a useful screener in a particular survey.

In contrast, screening characteristics should be used to ensure that certain types of prospective respondents are *not* included in the study. What this means is that there are many marketing situations where it is desirable to have a good cross section of yet within the cross section there are particular types of individuals that should automatically be excluded from group membership. This occurs most frequently when a person’s direct occupation or a family member's occupation in a particular industry would eliminate the person from inclusion in the study. For example, let's assume that J. D. Power and Associates was hired to conduct a study among the general population on the impact of advertising on perceived quality of automobiles manufactured by the Ford Motor Company. To ensure objectivity in the raw data and results, J. D. Power and Associates would want to automatically exclude people who themselves or whose immediate family members work for a marketing research firm, an advertising firm, the Ford Motor Company, or an automobile dealership that sold Ford vehicles. The reason behind excluding people who have (or whose family members have) any association with these particular types of occupations is that they normally hold inherent biases toward Ford vehicles or they have bias knowledge about the advertising industry. Their opinions, attitudes, and feelings about the impact of advertising and/or quality of Ford vehicles *are not representative* of the people who make up the general population.

Whenever possible, screening questions should be incorporated into the administration process of any survey (e.g., offline or online telephone interviews, personal interviews, or self-administered surveys). In reality, screening forms tend to be used during either personal or telephone interviews rather than any type of self-administered survey. The basic reason for this is that the researcher needs a human being to control the screening process and make the final judgment about eligibility.

The self-administered questionnaire approach to collecting raw data does not directly lend itself to this type of control factor. This does not mean that screening of prospective respondents cannot be achieved in self-administered survey studies. It would require an additional process prior to administering the questionnaires. This process normally involves conducting a separate screening procedure either by telephone or with a personal interviewer before the prospective respondent receives his/her questionnaire packet. An exception to the need for a human being to serve as the control mechanism would be a survey that is self-administered through a computer (e.g., e-mail, Internet, Web surveys) or telephone network (e.g., hotel guest survey that is programmed on the TV in a guest's room). In these methods, the questionnaire can be reprogrammed to automatically terminate the survey depending how respondents themselves answered the prelisted screening questions. The screening form used in the retail banking study among college students.

3.4 Quota Sheets

In any type of information research study (e.g. exploratory, descriptive, casual), there are situations when the researcher and client decide that the prospective respondents should automatically represent specifically defined subgroups or categories of pre specified sizes (or quotas). **Quota Sheets** represent a simple tracking form that enhances the interviewer's ability to collect raw data from the right type of respondents. This type of form helps ensure that the identifiable respondent groups meet the pre specified representative requirements. Quotas also help an interviewer determine who is and is not eligible for inclusion in the study. When a particular quota for a subgroup of respondent is filled, it indicates to the interviewer that although a particular prospective respondent might quality on the basis of all the screening factors, she or he is not needed for the specific subgroup of respondents. Therefore, the interview would be terminated at that point.

In our retail banking example, it was noted that 90 interviewers were used to collect the primary data for the study. Each interviewer was required to complete 30 interviews, for a total of 2,700 interviews. Among that total, overall quotas of 16.67 percent were established for Bank of America, Sun Trust Bank Citicorp, Capital Bank, and First Union as well as for "Other Banks." Once the quota was reached for a particular bank, let's say Capital One, any prospective respondent who qualified on the screening questions but indicated that Capital One was his or her primary bank would be terminated from the survey. Illustrates how the quota system worked for the retail banking survey.

3.5 Rating Cards

When collecting data by means of personal interviews, the researcher needs to develop another type of support document, referred to as rating cards. These cards serve as a tool to help the interviewer and respondent speed up the process of asking and answering the question/scale measurements that make up the actual survey instrument. A **rating card** represents a reproduction of the set of actual scale points and their descriptions used to the respond to a specific question/setup in the survey. Whenever there is a question that asks the respondent to express some degree of intensity as part of the response, the interviewer should provide the respondent with a rating card that reflects the possible scale responses. Before asking the survey question, the interviewer would hand the respondent the rating card and explain how to use the information on the card to respond to the question. Then the interviewer would read the question and each prelisted attribute statement to the respondent and record the person's response. Normally, the respondent's response would be in the form of a letter or numerical descriptor that was specifically assigned to represent each actual scaled response on the card offers a specific example of a question/scale and the appropriate rating card tiled in a retail banking survey that was administered through personal interviews.

3.6 Call Record Sheets

Call record sheets, also referred to as either *reporting* or *tracking* sheets, are developed and used to help the researcher estimate the efficiency of interviewers' performance. While there is no one best format for designing a call record sheet, the form usually indicates some basic summary information regarding the number of contacts (or attempts) made by each interviewer and the results of those contact attempts. Normally, record sheets are used in data collection methods that require the use of an interviewer. Examples of the types of information gathered from a call record sheet would include number of calls or contacts made per hour, number of contacts per completed interview, length of time of the interview, completions by quota categories, number of terminated interviews, basic reasons for termination, and number of callback attempts.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Mention the types of document form that help ensure that the process of collecting high quality raw data will be successful.

4.0 CONCLUSION

A researcher or supervisor can examine the information in an effort to assess an inter-viewer's efficiency in gathering the required raw data or to identify potential problem areas within the process of data collection. For example, if the supervisor notices that an interviewer's number of contacts per completed survey is significantly above the average of all interviewers, he or she should investigate the reasons behind it. Perhaps the interviewer was not appropriately trained or is not using the proper approach in securing the prospective respondents' willingness to participate. From a cost perspective, the researcher might find that the high cost per interview associated with a particular field services operation was due to a larger number of contacts needed to get a completed interview. Further investigations might indicate that the field service company did a poor job in either selecting the needed interviewers or provided inadequate training.

5.0 SUMMARY

After transforming the research objectives into information objectives, the researcher must evaluate each information objectives for broadness. This activity achieves two things for the researcher, first it helps the researcher decide which information objectives truly represent a survey of information. Second, it helps the researcher to determine how survey method will need to be stacked up in the questionnaire design.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Write short notes on the following- below
   A. Supervisor instruction, B. interviewer instruction C. Screening Forms, D. Quota sheets.
2. What do we mean by the term Reporting or Tracking sheet.
3. Discuss the critical factors that contribute to the successfulness of survey methods.

7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING

Alreck and Settle: The Research Handbook, pp. 97-100; and Labaw, Advanced Questionnaire Design, p. 34.

Jim L. Finlay and Fazal J. Seyyed, "The Impact of Sponsorship and Respondent Attitudes on Response Rate to Telephone Surveys: An Exploratory Investigation," in Proceeding of the Atlantic Marketing Association, ed. D. L. Moore (1988), pp. 715-21.

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UNIT 17 DEVELOPMENT OF COVER LETTERS

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A critical aspect associated with good questionnaire design is the development of an appropriate cover letter. Many marketing research textbooks tend to offer little to no discussion of cover letter development. Normally, a **cover letter,** or letter of introduction, is restrictively viewed as a letter accompanying a self-administered questionnaire (e.g., online or direct mail survey) that serves to explain the nature of the survey. With personal or telephone interviews, researchers might not think to use a cover letter. However, cover letters play several important roles in the successful collection of primary raw data, regardless of the data collection method.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

Identify the role and importance of the cover Letter.
Identify the guideline for developing cover letters and organization doing the study.

3.0 MAIN CONTENTS

3.1 The Role of a Cover Letter

The main role of the cover letter should be that of winning over the respondent's cooperation and willingness to participate in the research project. In other words, the cover letter should help persuade a prospective respondent either to fill out the questionnaire and return it in a timely fashion or to participate in the current interview. With self-administered surveys many times a research project falls short of its goal because the response rate (i.e. the number of completed surveys compared to the number of surveys administered) ends up very low (e.g. 25 percent or less). Usually when the response rate is low, the researcher can only guess at why. With either telephone or personal interviewing, similar problems occur when large numbers of prospective respondents decline to participate. Secondary roles of a cover letter include *(a)* introducing the respondent to the research project and the researcher, *(b)* informing the respondent of the importance of the study, and *(c)* communicating the study's legitimacy and other particulars such as the deadline for returning the completed survey, and where to return it.

Having a standardized cover letter that will fit all survey or interviewing situations is highly unlikely, but there are several factors that should be included in any cover letter, as well as an appropriate order of inclusion. Presents guidelines for developing cover letters; each of these is discussed in the next section.

3.2 Guidelines for Developing Cover Letters

Regardless of a research project's chosen method of data collection, the researcher should include a well-developed cover letter that directly pertains to the survey instrument. For self-administered questionnaires, a separate cover letter should be sent with the questionnaire. For most telephone surveys and some types of personal interviews, a cover letter should be mailed to each prospective respondent before the initial contact by the interviewer.

Although the prior mailing of cover letters in interviewing situations is not a common practice among researchers, this procedure can definitely help increase the prospective respondent's willingness to participate. The reason for this comes from an understanding of human behavior. For example, the prospective respondent and interviewer are normally strangers to each other. People are more hesitant to express their opinions or feelings about a topic to a stranger than to someone they know, even to a limited extent. Mailing a cover letter to prospective respondents enables the researcher to break the ice prior to the actual interview.

The cover letter should introduce the potential respondent to the research project, stress its legitimacy, encourage participation, and let the respondent know that a representative (i.e., interviewer) will be contacting him or her in the near future. Using a cover letter in interviewing situations does increase the initial cost of data collection, but the resulting increase in the response rate can reduce the overall cost of the project.

While the exact wording of a cover letter will vary from researcher to researcher and from situation to situation, any cover letter should include as many of the factors displayed in as possible.

Factor 1 Personalization

Whenever possible, the cover letter should be addressed to the particular person who was randomly selected as a prospective respondent. The cover letter should be typed on professional letterhead that represents the researching organization's affiliation, not the client's.

Factor 2 Identification of the Organization Doing the Study

The first comments should identify the research company that is conducting the survey but not necessarily the sponsor or client. If the sponsor wants or needs to be identified, then the researcher can choose one of two options: an undisguised or a disguised approach. With an undisguised approach, the actual sponsor's name will appear as part of the introduction statement. For example, the opening statement might read as follows:

We at the Nationwide Opinion Research Company here in New York are conducting an interesting study on people's banking practices for Citibank.

In contrast, a disguised approach would not divulge the sponsor's identify to the respondent and would appear like this:

We at the Nationwide Opinion Company here in New York are conducting an interesting study on people's banking habits and would like to include your opinions.

Which sponsorship approach to use will be determined by the overall research objectives or a mutual agreement between the researcher and client regarding the possible benefits and drawbacks of reveling the sponsor's name to the respondent. One reason for going with a distinguish approach is that it prevents competitors from finding out about the survey.

Factor 3 Clear statement of the study's Purpose and Importance

One or two statement must be included in any cover letter to describe the general nature or topic of the survey and emphasize its importance. In the American Bank survey example discussed earlier, the researcher might use the following statements:

Consumer banking practices are rapidly changing in the 2000s. With more bank locations, many new bank services, new technologies, the growth of credit unions and savings and loans, and the increase complexity of people's financial needs and wants, financial institutions are indeed changing. These changes are having important effects on you and your family. We would like to gain insights into these changes and their impact from the consumer's perspective by better understanding your opinions about different banking services, habits, and patterns.

Will think you will find the survey interesting.

When you state the purpose of the survey, it is important that you introduce the general topic of the survey in an interesting manner using words that are familiar to most members of the target audience. The purpose statement should be followed by a statement that conveys the importance of the respondent’s opinions on the topic. Some researchers like to follow up the purpose by adding a disclaimer that strongly emphasizes that (1) the company is not trying to sell anything and (2) the respondent's name will not be added to any type of mailing list.

Factor 4 Anonymity and Confidentiality

After the describing the purpose of the survey, the researcher must let the respondent know how and why people were selected for the study. The researcher can use a statement like this:

Your name was one of only 2,000 names randomly selected from a representative list of people living in the Baton Rogue community. Because the success of the survey depends upon the cooperation of all people who were selected, we would especially appreciate your willingness to help.

The phrasing should emphasize the importance of the respondent's participation to the success of the study and indirectly suggest that the respondent is special.

If the researcher and client decide that assurances about anonymity and confidentiality are necessary, those factors should be incorporated at this point. **Anonymity** simply relates to assurance that the prospective respondent's name or any identifiable designation will not be associated with his/her responses. Among the different data collection methods, anonymity statements are most appropriately associated with self-administered questionnaires. The researcher might use the following as an anonymity statement:

The information obtained from the survey will in no way reflect the identities of the people participating in the study.

When an interview is used to collect raw data, an anonymity statement can appear in the letter of introduction that is mailed prior to the interviewer’s initial contract with a prospective respondent.

A statement of **confidentiality** assures the prospective respondent that his or her name, while known to the researcher, will not be divulged to a third party, especially the client.

Regardless of the data collection method, a confidentiality statement should always be included in a cover letter. A confidentiality statement might be phrased as follows:

Your cooperation, attitudes, and opinions are very important to the success of the study and will be kept strictly confidential. Your opinions and responses will only be used when grouped with those of the other people participating in the survey.

Once the prospective respondent is promised confidentiality, it is the researcher's responsibility to keep that promise.

Factor 5 Time Frame

The cover letter should identify the general time frame for the survey. To encourage a prospective respondent to participate, it should state the actual completion time requirements and any compensation that might be offered. When using an interview, for example, the researcher would include a statement or phrase like the following:

In the next couple of days, one of our trained representatives will be contacting you by phone… The survey will only take a few moments of your time.

The key consideration with this factor is not to use a question format that requires a simple yes or no response. For example, "May I have one of our trained representatives contact you in the next couple of days?" or "May we have a few moments of your time?"

If the researcher allows the prospective respondent to answer no to a question asked in the cover letter, he or she is not likely to participate in the study.

Factor 6 Reinforcement of the Importance for Not Participating in the Study

The researcher can incorporate simple phrases into any part of the cover letter to reinforce the point that the respondent's participation is critical to the success of the study. Such phrases should be worded positively, not negatively.

Factor 7 Acknowledgment of Reasons for Not Participating in the Study

People offer numerous reasons when declining the role of being a respondent in a survey. Numerous focus group interviews over a 10-year period among a variety of different groups of people show that three of the most common reasons for not participating in a survey are (1) not having enough time, (2) seeing surveys as junk mail, and (3) forgetting about the survey.

First, people treasure their leisure time and feel they do not have enough of it. There-fore, when they receive a survey or telephone call or are asked on the spot to answer a few questions, potential respondents tend to use "do not have the time" as a reason not to participate. Since, as we mentioned before, people are more likely to take the time to answer questions from someone they know, or are at least aware of, than from a stranger, there searcher has to acknowledge the time factor in the cover letter. To do this, a researcher should use a statement like this:

We realize that to most of us in the community our leisure time is scare and important and that we do not like to spend it filling out a questionnaire for some unknown person's or organization's study. Please remember that you are among a few being asked to participate in this study and your opinions are very important to the success of it.

This type of statement can easily be combined with statements about time requirements and compensation to effectively negate the time objection.

Second, many people have the tendency to classify surveys received through the mail "junk mail" or a telephone interviewer's call as an attempt to sell them something they do not need or want. To acknowledge this, something like the following statement could be used:

We realize that many of us in the community receive a lot of things through the mail which we classify as "junk mail" and not important to respond to, but please do not consider the attached survey as being "junk mail". Your opinions, attitudes, and viewpoints toward each question are very important to us and the success of this study.

And for interviews, the researcher should incorporate a statement like the following:

We realize that many of us in the community receive a lot of phone calls from strangers trying to sell us some product or services that we neither need nor want. Let me assure you that I am not trying to sell you anything. I would just like to get your honest opinions on several questions pertaining to your banking habits and preferences; they are important to the success of this study.

Third, the issue of forgetting the survey primarily relates to direct mail surveys. To help eliminate this problem, the researcher should incorporate a statement in the cover letter something like this:

Past research has suggested that many questionnaires received through the mail, if not completed and returned within the first 36 hours, have a tendency to get misplaced or forgotten about. Upon receiving this survey, please take the time to complete it. Your opinions are very important to us.

By taking away these three main reasons for not participating in a research study, the researcher significantly improves the likelihood that the prospective respondent will complete and return the direct mail survey or cooperate in a telephone interview.

Factor 8 Time Requirements and Compensation

In an effort to win over a prospective respondent, the researcher might emphasize in the cover letter that the survey will not take much time or effort. For a self-administered survey, the researcher can incorporate statements like the following:

We have designed the questionnaire to include all the directions and instructions necessary to complete the survey without the assistance of an interviewer. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Please take your time in responding to each question. Your honest responses are very important to the success of the study.

For interviews, the researcher could incorporate the following statement into the letter of introduction: "The interview will take approximately 15 minutes to complete." These of statements reinforce the notion that the survey will not take up much of the person's leisure time.

As we discussed in earlier modules, the researcher and client might decide that some form of compensation is needed to encourage the respondent's participation. The type of compensation will depend on the study's topic and the data collection method. A token dollar amount (e.g., $1 or $5) can be offered to each prospective respondent and included in the questionnaire packet. The idea is that giving respondents a reward up front for participating will make them feel obligated to complete the survey and return it as requested. Experience with this method, however, suggests that people tend to assign a higher price than $1 or even $5 to their leisure time. In other situations, nonmonetary incentives (e.g., a sample product, tickets to a movie, a certificate redeemable for specific products or services) might be used to encourage a respondent's participation.

An alternative to the individual reward system is the lottery approach, in which the incentive money forms a significantly larger dollar amount and everyone who completes and returns the survey has an equal chance of receiving the incentive. A significant reward is most likely to increase the response rate. The lottery approach is not, however, restricted to direct monetary rewards. Alternative rewards might be the chance to win an expense-paid trip somewhere. For example, the JP Hotel Corporation has used a "three-day, two-night all expenses-paid weekend stay for two people" at one of its luxury hotel complexes as the incentive for respondents who completed and returned their questionnaire by the specified date.

Among the different incentive programs available to the researcher, the lottery incentive system is advocated whenever possible. When a lottery is used, extra effort is required by the researcher to develop and include a *separate* identification form in the questionnaire packet that can be filled out and returned with a respondent's completed questionnaire. This incentive system tends to be most appropriate for self-administered surveys. Comments concerning incentives in a cover letter might be phrased, for example, as follows:

To show, in part, our appreciation for your taking the time to participate in this study, we are going to hold a thawing for $500 among those of you who donate some of your leisure time to help us in completing this survey. The drawing procedure has been designed in such a way that everyone who completes and returns the questionnaire will have an equal opportunity to receive the appreciation gift of $500.

Factor 9 Completion Date and Where and How to Return the Survey

At the end of the cover letter, the researcher must give the respondent instructions for how, where, and when to return their completed survey. The *how* and *where* instructions can be simply expressed through the following type of statement:

After completing all the questions in the survey, please use the enclosed stamped, addressed envelope to return your completed survey and appreciation gift card.

To deal with the return deadline date, the researcher should include a statement like this:

To help us complete the study in a timely fashion, we need your cooperation in returning the completed questionnaire and incentive drawing card by no later than

Friday, June 21, 2014

Factor 10 Advance Thanks

Prior to closing the cover letter with a thank-you statement, the researcher might want to include a final reassurance that she or he is not trying to sell the prospective respondent anything. In addition, legitimacy can be reinforced by supplying a name and telephone number if there are any concerns or questions, as follows:

Again, let me give you my personal guarantee that we are not trying to sell you something. If you have any doubts, concerns, or questions about this survey, please give me a call at (504) 974-6236. Thank you in advance; we deeply appreciate your cooperation in taking part in our study.

The researcher should sign the cover letter and include his or her title.

As you can see, a good cover letter or letter of introduction entails as much thought, care, and effort as the questionnaire itself while the actual factors will vary from researcher to researcher, these 10 are standard elements of any good cover letter. The specific examples given above should not be viewed as standardized phrases that must be included in all cover letters, but they do show how a researcher might increase a prospective respondent's willingness to participate in a given study.

A rarely discussed design question that directly affects the development of cover letters is How long should the cover letter be? There is no simple answer that is correct in all situations, and in fact there are two opposing views. First, many researchers believe that the cover letter should be simple, direct to the point, and no longer than one page. The In the Field box above illustrates a hypothetical cover letter for the American Bank and Trust survey that follows the direct, one-page approach.

While the one-page cover letter includes some of the factors we have discussed for influencing a prospective respondent's willingness to participate, it tends to lack the intensity level and clarity needed to win over a stranger. Still, many researchers tend to go with a one- page design because of the cost factor and because they believe that people do not like to read correspondence from unknown commercial organizations like a research company. It is true that it costs less to develop. Reproduce, and mail a one-page cover letter than a multiple- page letter, but if the one -page cover letter does not produce an adequate response rate, the study will cost more in the long run. The notion that people do not like to read correspondence from unknown commercial senders is basically true and, as we discussed earlier, is one of the reasons people use to justify not participating in a survey.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Elucidate the factors of cover letters.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The contrasting view focuses on the need to deliver an emotion-laden story that compels the prospective respondent to cooperate. If a cover letter is well crafted and interesting, the prospective respondent will read not only the first page but the complete cm or letter and move on to the questionnaire. As always, the researcher should keep in mind the importance of ethical behaviour. The Ethic box discusses a carpet cleaning company's misuse of a telephone survey to gain new sale.

5.0 SUMMARY

Cover letters plays several important roles in the successful collection of primary data regardless of the data collection method. A cover letter is neither the same as the introductory section on the actual questionnaire nor the same as a screener.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. List and Mention the roles cover letters play in the successful collection of primary raw data.
2. List and Explain the guideline for developing cover letters.

7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING

Jim L. Finlay and Fazal J. Seyyed, "The Impact of Sponsorship and Respondent Attitudes on Response Rate to Telephone Surveys: An Exploratory Investigation," in Proceeding of the Atlantic Marketing Association, ed. D. L. Moore (1988), pp. 715-21.

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UNIT 18 MARKETING RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE CONSTRUCTIONS

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A carefully constructed questionnaire is essential to the success of any survey. Questions must be clear, easy to understand, and directed toward a specific objective; that is, they must be designed to elicit information that meets the study's data requirements. Researchers need to define the objective before trying to develop a questionnaire because the objective determines the substance of the questions and the amount of detail.

The questions are usually of three kinds: open-ended, dichotomous, and multi-choice.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

Identify open ended question and observation methods.
Examine and view questionnaire sample.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Open-Ended Question

What is your general opinion about board band Internet access?

Researchers must be very careful about questions that a respondent might consider too personal or that might require an admission of activities that other people are likely to condemn. Questions of this type should be worded to make them less offensive.

3.2 Observation Methods

In using observation methods, researchers record individuals 'overt behavior, taking note of physical conditions and events. Direct contact with them is avoided; instead their actions are examined and noted systematically. For instance, researchers might use observation methods to answer the question, "How long does the average McDonald's restaurant customer have to wait in line before being served?" Observation may include the use of ethnographic techniques, such as watching customers interact with a product in a real-world environment.

Microsoft employed ethnographic techniques when it sent researchers into 50 consumers' homes to observe and videotape how the entire family used the firm's Vista operating system software, which had not yet been released to the public. Based on the company's observations and interactions with the households, Microsoft made a number of changes to improve the system, including correcting about 1,000 problems identified by the participant households.

Observation also may be combined with interviews. For example, during a personal interview, the condition of a respondent's home or other possessions may be observed and recorded The interviewer also can observe directly and confirm demographic information such as race, approximate age, and sex.

Data gathered through observation sometimes can be biased if the person is aware of the observation process. However, an observer can be placed in a natural market environment, such as a grocery store, without biasing or influencing shoppers' actions. If the presence of a human observer is likely to bias the outcome, of human sensory abilities are inadequate, mechanical means may be used to record behavior. Mechanical observation devices include cameras, recorders, counting machines, scanners, and equipment that records physiologic changes. The electronic scanners used in supermarkets are very useful in marketing research. They provide accurate data on sales and customers' purchase patterns, and marketing researchers may obtain such data from the supermarkets.

Observation is straightforward and avoids a central problem of survey methods: motivating respondents to state their true feelings or opinions. However, observation tends to be descriptive. When it is the only method of data collection, it may not provide insights into causal relationships. Another drawback is that analyses based on observation are subject to the biases of the observer or the limitations of the mechanical device.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Differentiate between open-ended and observation methods.

QUESTIONNAIRE SAMPLE

Bio Data

1. Gender
a. Male
b. Female

2. Please select your level of Education?
a. PhD
b. Masters
c. Graduate Degree

3. What Income Bracket do you into (in Naira)
a. =N=40,000 and Below
b. =N=41,000 to =N=80,000
c. =N=81,000 to =N=120,000
d. =N=121,000 and Above

4. Please indicate your current marital status.
a. Married.
b. Single (Widowed, Divorced or Separated)
c. Single (never married).

5. How long have you lived at your current address?
a. Less than 1 year.
b. 1 to 3 years.
c. 4 to 6 years.
d. 7 to 10 years.
e. 11 to 20 years.
f. 20 years and above

6. Please indicate your current employment status.
a. Employed full time.
b. Employed part time
c. Not currently employed
d. Retired.

7. If married please indicate your spouse's current employment status.
a. Employed full-time.
b. Employed part –time
c. Not currently employed.
d. Retired.

8. If you have children, please indicate the number of children under the age of 18 in your household. (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,).

9. Which one of the following categories best corresponds with your last completed year in school?
a. Post graduate studies.
b. Graduate studies or degree.
c. HND/NCE.
d. SSCE/WAEC.

10. Which one of the following categories best describes the nature of your work?
a. Government (FED. State LGA)
b. Petro-chemical
c. Education.
d. Legal
e. Manufacturing.
f. Medical.
g. Financial and transportation.
h. Retailing/Wholesaling
i. Insurance
j. Consulting.

Section B

Next to each statement, please fill in the response box that best expresses the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement. Remember there are no rights or wrong answers. The researcher just wants your opinions.

SA = Strongly Agree
A= Agree
N= Neutral
D = Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree
UD = Undecided

S/N	QUESTIONS	SA	A	N	D	SD	UD
9	I wish we had a lot more money.						
10	Security for my family is most important						
11	I am definitely influenced by advertising						
12	I like to pay cash for everything I buy						
13	My neighbors or friends often come to me for advice on many different matters.						
14	For most products or services, I try the ones that are most popular						
15	Unexpected situations often catch me without enough money in my pocket						
16	Five years from now, family income will probably be a lot higher that it is now						
17	Socially, I see myself more as a blue-collar person rather that a white-collar one						

4.0 CONCLUSION

A common mistake in constructing questionnaires is to ask questions that interest the researchers, but do not yield information useful in deciding whether to accept or reject a hypothesis. Finally the most important rule in composing questions is to maintain impartiality.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, open-ended and observation methods were discussed. The mechanical observation devices were analyzed, finally, Means of gathering data through observation method were mentioned and a sample of research questionnaire was displayed.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the drawbacks of observation methods.

2. List and Mention data gathered through observation method.

7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING

Alreck and Settle: The Research Handbook, pp. 97-100; and Labaw, Advanced Questionnaire Design, p. 34.

The Flowerpot design approach is a symbolic model developed in 1974 by David J. Oritinan while teaching at Illiunois State University.

Jim L. Finlay and Fazal J. Seyyed, "The Impact of Sponsorship and Respondent Attitudes on Response Rate to Telephone Surveys: An Exploratory Investigation," in Proceeding of the Atlantic Marketing Association, ed. D. L. Moore (1988), pp. 715-21.

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UNIT 19: AUDIO AND VISUAL RESEARCH AND APPLICATIONS IN MARKETING.

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

Audio data and visual data, both static (i.e., photo) and dynamic (i.e., video), are now widely available. Due to technological advancements, we are now not only able to store vast amounts of audio and visual data on computers, but we have also acquired the computational power and knowhow to glean insights from such data (Burke, 2005).

Having begun with objectives like voice recognition and face recognition, technology development has yielded applications with great utility. While technology development associated with audio data does not fall within a given established domain, technology development associated with visual data falls within a well-defined field called computer vision, which is concerned with electronically acquiring, processing, reconstructing, analyzing, interpreting, and understanding images .A wide variety of real-world applications incorporate computer vision technology, in areas such as artificial intelligence, robotics, biometrics, and marketing.

Traditionally, the domain of technological inquiry has belonged to computer scientists and engineers. Although still emergent, the adoption of audio and visual technology is becoming more common in the marketing discipline.

2.0 Objectives
At the end of this unit, you should be able to

- provide an introduction to the work in audio and visual, including data, research methods, and examples of applications in practice.
- discuss a few promising research directions using audio or visual data.
- explain a new field of research that we call artificial empathy (AE).

3.0 Main Content
3.1 Data
In this unit, we provide a brief explanation on the major types of audio and visual data available. The list is not exhaustive, but we hope it will convey three key points which are
(a) audio and visual data are abundantly available,
(b) theyare rich in information, and
(c) though large in size, such data can now be stored on regular personal computers .

Table 1: Key Terminology.

	Technical terms	**Definitions**
Audio	Fundamental frequency	A periodic sound wave consists of multiple frequency components, a.k.a. partials. The frequencies of most of the partials are related to the frequency of the lowest partial by an integer ratio. The frequency of this lowest partial is the fundamental frequency of the waveform.
	prosodic features	Variations in the parameters of frequency, amplitude, and speed of utterance (auditory pitch, loudness, and tempt), which permanently characterize speech (Crystal, 1966)
	speech recognition	The conversion of spoken language into text, especially by a machine.
	emotional speech recognition or speech emotion recognition	The detection of emotions of speakers from speech, especially by a machine.
Visual	digital image	A digital image is a two-dimensional digital depiction of a visual perception, in which spatial coordinates and intensity value of each element are all finite, discrete quantities.

	pixel	Pixels are the smallest elements that comprise a digital image. Each pixel has particular spatial coordinates and intensity value, where spatial coordinates define location in the image and intensity value defines brightness (for color images) or gray level (for grayscale images).
	RGB color model	A color digital image is usually represented as an RGB (red, green, blue) model. An image represented in the RGB color model consists of three component images, one for each primary color. It is stored on a computer as a 3-D array.
	computer vision	Computer vision is a field that concerns with electronically acquiring, processing, reconstructing, analyzing, interpreting, and understanding images.
	object recognition	Object recognition refers to the task of finding a given object in an image, based on the segmentation results. In the end, a label (e.g., ‘‘human face’’) can be assigned to an object based on its features.
	object tracking	Object tracking refers to the task of automatically identifying and following image elements of interest when they move across a video sequence.

3.1.1 Audio Data

This unit is restricted to a specific type of audio data – human voice.

Voice is essential in human communication, not only because it expresses meaning, but also because it conveys a person's inner state, such as various emotions, uncertainty, and personality. It also plays a big role in how people perceive and judge other people's traits and emotional states.

We can classify audio data into at least three types:

(a) Those produced and recorded as products which will be ‘‘consumed’’ by the target listeners,

(b) Audio recordings of daily human communication, and

(c) Voice recordings specifically made for the purpose of analysis in order to elicit information. Based on traditional data classification in marketing, the first and second types are secondary data, and the third type is primary data. Some widely available audio data of the first type includes recorded songs and all broadcasted radio content. The second type includes recorded Conversations. Given technological advancements, conversations can take place between humans (e.g., communication between a customer and a representative at a call center), as well as between humans and machines (software). Smart phones have integrated voice commands extensively and many voice-based applications have been developed, such as iPhone. The third type includes conversations specifically designed in order to collect information from voice, such as in a voice-based authentication system, where an audio recording is the explicit objective, not the byproduct, of the exchange.

In the machine learning literature, because the objective is to better train the classifier and improve prediction, various databases, called speech corpora, contain speech data mapped to corresponding emotion labels. Results show that regardless of the situation and conditions, classifiers significantly underperform humans. Three types of speech have been observed in the literature. First, natural, or spontaneous speech is collected during real situations. Difficulty arises when labeling natural speech data, because the actual emotion or attitude that a speaker is experiencing is unknown.

3.1.2 Visual Data

We can broadly classify visual data into static (i.e., images) and dynamic (i.e., videos). They are closely associated with each other in our analysis, since video is typically analyzed at the frame level, as static images. Similarly, visual data can also be classified into three types:

(a) data specifically created for consumption by other people,
(b) visual recordings of life, and
(c) data recorded for the specific purpose of capturing information.

The first two types are secondary data and the third type is primary data. The first type of visual data includes, but not limited to, photographs, print advertisements, video games, movies, television/online video commercials, and other television content. The most recent trend is making user generated videos available online.

The second type of visual data is sometimes called surveillance video, although the word 'surveillance'' may convey unnecessarily negative connotations. We define the second type as data collected to be an objective recording of what happened in real life. Although the most abundant data within this type comes from surveillance cameras, it can also include other candid recordings of life, including many home videos, or videos by someone who turn on a webcam to record his/her activities in the office. Nowadays, ATMs across Nigeria and in most parts of the world have video cameras installed in them to record all transactions.

The third type includes data specifically collected to capture information that is only available visually. Some examples of applications using static images include authentication systems based on face, fingerprint or iris recognition; optical character recognition systems used by the post office to scan and recognize handwritten zip codes; and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and x- ray images for disease diagnosis. An image with higher resolution requires more pixels to represent it, thus requiring more computer storage space.

3.2 Research Methods

In general, analysis of audio or visual data follows a three-step process. First, raw data is acquired/recorded, preprocessed and cleaned. Second, relevant features are extracted from the cleaned raw data to prepare it for processing. Third, machine-learning tools are used to obtain useful information based on the extracted features. The first and second steps are unique to audio or visual data, and we will discuss them separately in this section. In the last subsection, we will describe the underlying machine learning tools, which are the same for both types of data, although different algorithms are used in different applications.

3.2.1 Audio Data Processing.

A discussion about audio data processing requires a basic understanding of how human speech is produced. Producing human speech requires coordination of three different areas of the body: the lungs, the vocal folds and larynx, and the articulators. The lungs act as a pump to produce airflow and air pressure, which is the fuel of vocal sound. The vocal folds within the larynx vibrate and interrupt the airflow produced from the lungs to produce an audible sound source.

The intensity of the voice is how loud or soft a voice sounds, represented by the amplitude of the sound wave . It has been proven by Fourier that any waveform can be represented as a sum of different sine waves. And because some high frequency sine waves may be important to examine but are unobservable in the time domain,

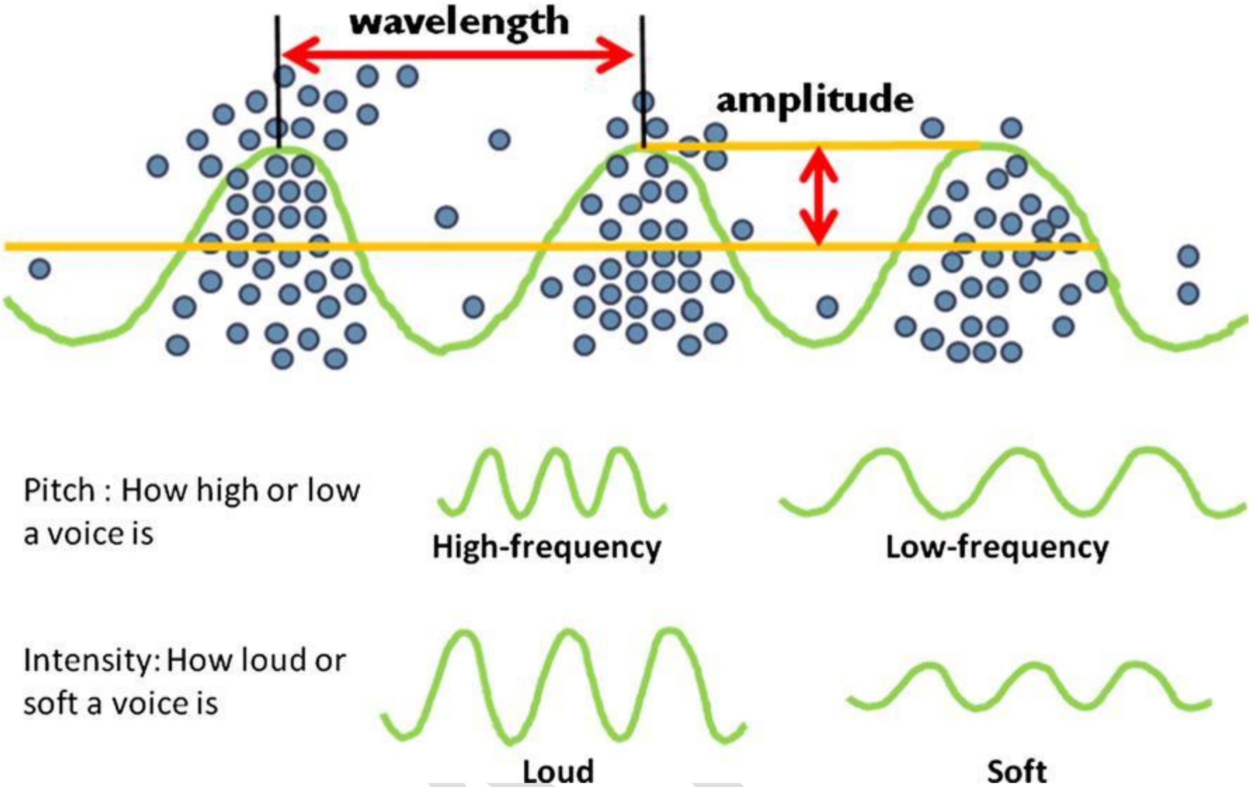

Fig. 2. Basic Terms.

Some time it is more useful to look at the sound wave from another perspective, called the frequency domain. The waveform in Fig. 3 can be represented as the sum of two sound waves, one with a high amplitude and low frequency, and one with a low amplitude and high frequency. These two sound waves can be converted to the frequency domain. A given function or signal
can be converted between the time and frequency domains with a pair of mathematical operators called a transform. An example is the Fourier transform, which decomposes a function into the sum of a (potentially infinite) number of sound wave frequency components.

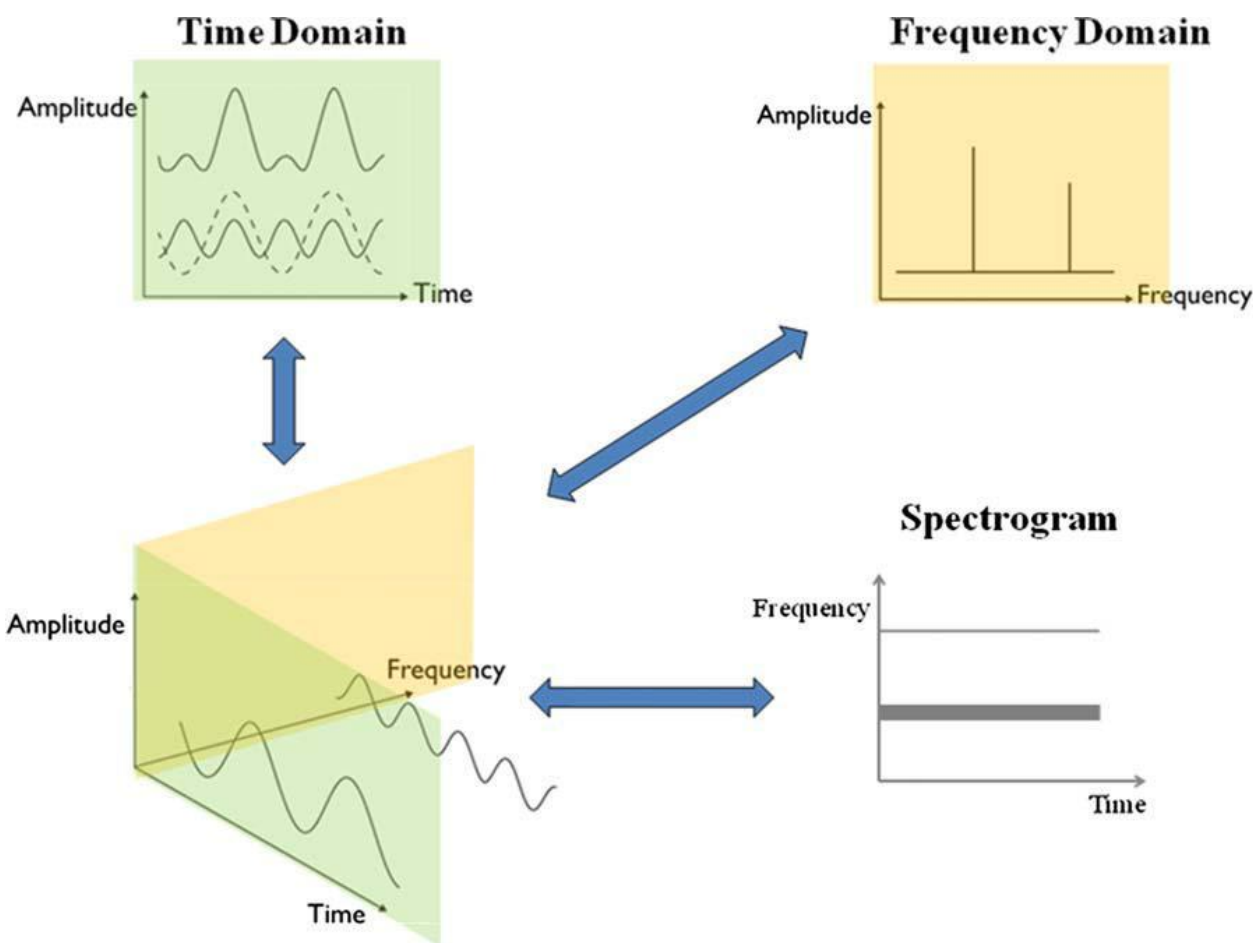

Fig. 3. Time Domain and Frequency Domain.

Depending on the task at hand, digital signal processing applications can be run on general purpose computers using specialized software, more general software such as MATLAB with an appropriate toolbox (i.e., digital signal processing toolbox), or with embedded processors that include specialized microprocessors called digital signal processors.

Once the audio recording is cleaned, the next step is to extract voice features. Typically, audio information is first cut into frames for paralinguistic analysis, where the rule of thumb is 10–40 milliseconds per frame, and features are estimated on a frame-by-frame basis, assuming stationarity. The major features to be extracted include pitch, intensity, temporal features, and the slope (first derivative) of pitch and intensity. Numerous algorithms are available to extract these features. Pitch is determined by the fundamental frequency.

The frequency of this lowest partial is defined as the fundamental frequency of the waveform. Various algorithms in pitch extraction are in either the time domain or the frequency domain.
One example of calculating fundamental frequency in the time domain is based on autocorrelation. For time signal x (t), the autocorrelation is:

Fundamental frequency is defined as F0= 1/T0, and T0 is a lag, where there is a global maxima. Intensity is often calculated as the root mean square of the amplitude of the sound wave:

RMS ¼

Temporal features include, but are not limited to, total duration, speaking duration, silence duration, percent of silenced regions, and the speaking rate (number of syllables/speaking duration). For feature extraction purposes, there is a freely available software application, Praat (the Dutch word for ‘‘talk’’), which was developed as a phonetic speech analysis tool by researchers from the Institute of Phonetic Sciences at the University of Amsterdam. It has a point-and-click interface and can be run using scripts.

3.2.2 Visual Data Processing.

As described previously, digital images are stored as arrays of discrete data on a computer. When processing a digital image, the computer is actually processing a data array that represents the image. How to extract useful information that is interpretable by humans from such data arrays is one primary objective of computer vision. Visual data processing systems are highly application dependent A typical visual data processing system may contain five fundamental steps: image acquisition, preprocessing, segmentation, feature extraction, and high level processing.

Image acquisition refers to the creation of a digital image. A digital image could be acquired by a camera, a radar, a tomography device, an electron microscope, extracting a frame from video, or simply receiving an image that is already in digital form.

The second step of image processing is preprocessing the visual data, which is actually the first step of data analysis, as it is for audio data. The objective of image preprocessing is to improve the image data quality for later analysis. Image preprocessing may involve image conversion (e.g.,from RGB to grayscale), noise reduction (e.g., illumination compensation), normalization, etc. Similar with audio data, a Fourier transform can be applied to a 2-D image, transforming it from the spatial domain to the frequency domain.

3.2.3 Machine Learning.

Machine learning is a field that includes methods and algorithms that allow computers to learn something from data. Samuel (1959) defined machine learning vaguely as a ‘‘field of study that gives computers the ability to learn without being explicitly programmed. Proposed a more formal and technical definition: ‘‘A computer program is said to learn from experience E with respect to some class of tasks T and performance measure P, if its performance at tasks in T, as measured by P improves with experience. Machine Learning is a natural outgrowth of the intersection of Computer Science and Statistics’,

Although machine learning overlaps significantly with statistics, it is still a distinct discipline Whereas Statistics has focused primarily on what conclusions can be inferred from data, Machine Learning incorporates additional questions about what computational architectures and algorithms can be used to most effectively capture, store, index, retrieve and merge these data, how multiple learning subtasks can be orchestrated in a larger system, and questions of computational .Deciding which classification method to use depends on various factors, such as:

(a) how to treat high dimensionality in the feature space,

(b) applicability to small datasets, and

(c) how to handle skewed classes

There is also a large set of algorithms that can be used for unsupervised learning. Here, we introduce only a few examples. K-means clustering is a very simple unsupervised learning algorithm that can be used for image compression and image segmentation. Second, supervised learning offers complete information about the target variable and unsupervised learning offers no information, whereas reinforcement only offers a reward signal, with which the feedback is delayed, not instantaneous. Third, in reinforcement learning, the agent must actively interact with the dynamic environment, learning from trial-and-error interactions and taking actions, which is not the case in supervised or unsupervised learning. Reinforcement learning is also used in audio/visual data processing, but not .

3.3 Overview Of Applications

In this section, we provide a brief review of applications that use either audio or visual data. As applications are by nature diverse, we do not attempt to be exhaustive. The objective is to describe some of the most common applications in practice and to inspire marketing scholars to use them. Existing applications using audio or visual data are discussed in the next section.

3.3.1 Applications Based on Audio Data

Research in voice/speech can be divided into two large subareas depending on the aspect of speech on which the research focuses (Cowie et al., 2001). First is the subarea

that focuses on linguistics, the language and the content that is being conveyed by voice. Speech recognition (or speech- to-text), and keyword recognition are included in this field. The second subarea focuses
on para-linguistics, or how words are spoken (i.e., the prosodic features,

Speech recognition is the most widely used application of audio data analysis. The goal of an automatic speech recognition (ASR) system is to convert speech data into text form. The ultimate goal is to perceive speech on par with a human listener, independent of speaker and conditional factors (i.e., background noise). The first speech recognition system was developed by researchers at AT&T Bell Labs. This system was able to detect the numerical digits 0 through 9 in English. Here, classification was dependent on the speaker, that is, the reference data for each number were collected from a particular speaker and later compared with that same speaker's speech data. It is difficult to measure progress in speech recognition performance because contexts, environments, and tasks vary dramatically. Commercially available software applications seem to perform fairly well in a speaker-dependent sense, after being ‘‘trained’’ by an individual to recognize his speech.
Application is used for a new speaker, performance is limited. A common example is automatic call center applications, which recognize words, digits, and short phrases with a fairly high error rate. A thorough review of the ASR literature can be found in Benzeghiba et al. (2007). Unlike linguistic applications like speech recognition above, paralinguistic applications are much more subtle, and effectiveness varies widely. A relatively well-researched application in this area is the detection of uncertainty. Pon-Berry (2008) examined which prosodic features are associated with a speaker's level of certainty and where these prosodic manifestations occur relative to the location of the word/phrase that the speaker is confident or uncertain about. For whole utterances, temporal features (silence and duration) are most strongly associated with perceived level of uncertainty. Certain prosodic cues regarding uncertainty are localized in the target region (i.e., the word or words that a speaker is uncertain about, such as percent silence) while other prosodic cues are manifested in the surrounding context (such as range of pitch).

3.3.2 Applications Using Visual Data.

In this subsection, we discuss a few important applications that use visual data, recognized as part of the computer vision discipline. The applications using static data (images) involve detection of important human features such as face, facial expression, iris, eye gaze, fingerprint, skin color, hand geometry, etc. Some applications involve more complex feature detection or recognition, such as gender classification. And some involve recognition of nonhuman objects, such as automobiles. Applications using dynamic data (videos) detect movement of human features movement to recognize facial expressions or gestures, count people, and determine a trajectory, among others.

Face recognition is ‘‘one of the most successful applications of.And has received significant attention from both practitioners and academics. It is the process of automatically identifying a person from a digital image, which is always done by comparing the focal face image with a large face database. Face recognition has been applied in many areas, such as suspect tracking and investigation in law enforcement, shoplifting prevention and advanced CCTV control in retail surveillance, video games, and recently, face deals in marketing. Face deal is a Facebook appliance that relies on face recognition technology. Digital cameras equipped with face recognition devices are installed at local businesses.

There are three main types of methods for automatic face detection: template matching, feature based (e.g., skin color), and image based that train machine systems on large numbers of samples (i.e., images labeled as face or non face). Among these, image-based methods perform the best and are more capable of detecting multiple faces in a single image. The human face is complex, so decomposing it into an effective set of features is critical to the ultimate success of face recognition. There are three main types of feature extraction methods: (a) generic methods based on edges, lines, and curves, (b) feature-template-based methods based on specific facial features such as eyes and chins, and (c) structural matching methods that are holistic and consider geometrical constraints on the features. Here, we introduce two structural matching methods that have been demonstrated to be efficient: Eye gaze detection is a vision-based method that tracks the eye position and eye movement to estimate the point of gaze. Eye tracking has been extensively used in consumer research in recent years, for applications ranging from packaging and copy testing to web usability. There are two main types of eye gaze detection solutions. One requires the use of special devices other than video cameras. Human trajectory detection is the process of tracking human objects in a video and then plotting their spatial locations as a function of time. This is a straightforward application of object tracking, basically detecting human objects in each frame of a video in an independent or dependent manner. Although implementation is not difficult, it has significant implications for retailing practice. Tracking shopper's moving trajectory is one important application of human trajectory detection technology in retailing practice.

3.4 Audio/Visual Data In Research

Marketing And Related Business Fields. A growing number of studies in business, and specifically marketing, use audio or visual data to help answer important questions in business research and practice.

3.4.1 Research Based on Audio Data

Using the human voice to infer various emotional constructs has been prevalent in other fields, but its application in marketing has been minimal. used voice analysis to determine positive/negative responses to different product attributes, and predicted which consumers from a target group would be most likely to try a forthcoming

product. Nelson and Schwartz (1979) applied their voice analysis methodology to test attitudinal scales, consumer interest in products, and advertising effectiveness.
Allmon and Grant (1990) used voice stress analysis to evaluate responses of real estate salespeople to ethically based questions. Some respondents showed stress while following the ethical code guidelines, while others showed no stress about breaking the formal code.(Acumba,2012) measured managerial affective states during earnings conference calls by analyzing conference call audio files using commercial emotional speech analysis software.

3.4.2 Research Based on Video Data.

Several researchers have acknowledged the potential of video data in marketing research contexts. Eye tracking data has been applied widely in visual attention research on print, TV, and online advertisements. Video-based eye trackers use eye gaze detection technology to determine what people are looking at when they watch ads. Eye tracking data could also be used in a retail context to check the effectiveness of in -store and out-of-store marketing. In a controlled experiment, the various authors have assessed joy and surprise through automated facial expression detection for a sample of advertisements.

Self Assessment Exercise
Audio Data Processing (ADP) requires the understanding of Human speech. Discuss.

4.0 Conclusion

This unit reviews the current technology in audio and visual data analysis and discusses rewarding research opportunities in marketing using these data. In this unit, we have also discussed audio and visual data, typical data analysis methods, applications in practice, and academic literature in marketing and other related business disciplines. We hope we have inspired you to utilize audio and visual data in marketing research. In this unit, we have discussed many examples that fall within the first part of AE. The advancement of multimedia technology has spurred the useof multimedia in business practice.

5.0 Summary

Compared with traditional data like survey and scanner data, audio and visual data provides richer information and is easier to collect. Given these superiority, data availability, feasibility of storage, and increasing computational power, we believe that these data will contribute to better marketing practices with the help of marketing scholars in the near future. The advancement of multimedia technology has spurred the use of multimedia in business practice. The adoption of audio and visual data will accelerate as marketing scholars become more aware of the value of audio and visual data and the technologies required to reveal insights into marketing problems.

Text data is another interesting source of data. It could be extracted from audio or visual data. For example, speech recognition techniques can be used to extract text information from audio data,while text recognition techniques are used to extract text information from image/video data. Other than being recognized from audio or visual sources, text data can also be acquired from various sources without recognition, for example, electronic documents, e-books, web pages, web blogs, and so forth. The methods of detecting useful patterns and trends from text data for decision making purpose fall into a broad area called text mining, which is a sub area.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

What do you understand by the term human trajectory detection?

Answer to Self Assessment exercise

Producing human speech requires coordination of three different areas of the body: the lungs, the vocal folds and larynx, and the articulators. The lungs act as a pump to produce airflow and air pressure, which is the fuel of vocal sound. The vocal folds within the larynx vibrate and interrupt the airflow produced from the lungs to produce an audible sound source. The muscles of the larynx can produce different pitches and tones by varying the tension and vibration of the vocal folds.

The intensity of the voice is how loud or soft a voice sounds, represented by the amplitude of the sound wave. It has been proven by Fourier that any waveform can be represented as a sum of different sine waves.

7.0 References/Further Reading

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