

Module 3 Part4
Methods of data collection

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Means of survey data collection

Survey is the most commonly used method of primary data collection. Statistical survey is a method used to collect information from a sample of individuals in a systematic manner. Majority of the people are familiar with public opinion surveys that are reported in the press. Most surveys are not public opinion polls), but are used for scientific purposes. The survey method of obtaining information is based on the questioning of respondents. The respondents are asked a multiplicity of questions regarding their behavior, attitudes, intentions, consciousness, motivations and demographic and life style uniqueness. Surveys provide important information for all kinds of research fields, e.g., marketing research, psychology, health professionals and sociology. The data collection phase of the survey process is absolutely vital and not only needs careful planning, but careful monitoring as well. If the data is to be of a high quality the researcher must ensure that they do everything in their power to maximize the response rates, ensure that interviewers are collecting the data correctly and checking the data coming in for inconsistency and error. Once the researcher decides to use survey method for collecting primary data, he should make a decision in connection with the technique or method of data collection. There are several methods or means for data collection.

1. Interview: Personal interview, Telephonic interview
2. Mail Questionnaire
3. Internet – on line data collection

Interview

The interview is one of the important and power tools for collection of primary data. This method is best suited to the problems of developing countries like India. The

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interview technique is a verbal method of securing data specially in the field research connected with the social problems. It is an important tool for data collection in social research. It is a direct method of enquiry. In interview, there is face –to-face communication.

The person who is interviewing is called interviewer and the person who is giving interview is called interviewee or respondent or informant. The respondent is asked to provide information in the form of facts, attitudes, opinions and intensions. Interview is an interactional process. The researcher is able to gather different types of data intensively and extensively.

Process of Interview

Interview process consists of the following steps.

1. Preparation
2. Introduction
3. Developing relationship
4. Carrying the interview
5. Recording the interview
6. Closing the interview.

1. Preparation

Some preplanning and preparation is required to carry on an interview. The interviewer should keep a copy of interview schedule for ready use. He should also keep a list of the names and addresses of the respondents. He should regroup the list of names of the respondents according to the place. It will save time and the cost of travelling. He should mentally prepare for the interview. He also

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should determine the way of approach, the way of introduction, what situations are to be faced etc. He is bound to face situations like suspicion, avoidance, reluctance, indifference, inadequate response, distortion etc. If he is not prepared to face such situation, he is not able to get necessary information from the respondents.

Introduction

As the respondents are concerned interviewer is a stranger. So he will be properly introduced to the respondents. There is no universal mode for introduction. It depends upon the situation and the group of persons who are going to be interviewed. If the study is related with an organization, it is better to approach the head of the organization and get the cooperation to meet the sample employees. If the study is related with a community, then it is better to approach the community leaders first. After introducing himself to the respondents in a suitable manner, the interviewer should follow the following steps for motivating the respondents.

1. Greet the respondents with a smile,
2. Identify the respondents by name
3. Explain the method of selection of respondent as sample.
4. IF it is organization, tell the respondents the name of the organization.
5. Explain the confidential nature of the interview
6. Describe the use of study.
7. Give stress on the value of the cooperation of the respondents for gathering information.

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Developing rapport

Before stating the interview, a relationship is to be developed with the respondents. Then start the conversation with general top in of interest. IT is helpful to create a friendly atmosphere.

Carrying the interview

After establishing a friendly relationship, questions are asked from the interview schedule. Care, self restraint, alertness, ability to listen with understanding is required to ask questions. Questions are to be explained if it is not understood by respondent. If the conversation is going out of track, then the interviewer should try to get it on track.

Recording the Interview

All the required responses are to be noted as they take place. Noting of information should be done in the schedule under respective question. Tape-records can be used to note the responds.

Closing of the interview

After the interview, close the interview by saying thanks with a smile to respondent. If the respondent wants to know the result of the whole responses, then note his address for sending the result after the study.

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Types of Interview

The interview methods can be classified as follows.

1. On the basis of their function, interview can be classified as diagnostic interview, research interview and sample interview.
2. On the basis of number of person participating, interview can be classified as group or individual interview.
3. On the basis of length of interview, the interview can be classified as short interview or long interview.
4. On the basis of nature of approach, the interview can be classified into structured or directive interview and unstructured interview.

Personal Interview

The personal interview may be defined as an effective informal verbal and nonverbal conversation initiated for specified purpose and focused on certain planned content areas. In this case a single person is interviewed to establish close personal contact. There is a face to face meeting. Personal interviews may be conducted on a door to door basis or in public places. Knowledge about the confidential personal aspects of an individual is collected through his way. It may be a structured or unstructured one. Generally personal interview is conducted in a structured way.

Group Interview

This interview is conducted for gathering routine or customary information by interviewing two or more person's simultaneously; Data is collected from a number of individuals with a common interest. A group includes six to eight personal with a

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common interest. This type of interview is conducted by the researcher to identify people's reactions on public amenities, public health projects, welfare schemes etc.

Formal Interview

In this case the interview is conducted for collecting information by presenting a set of well-defined questions.

Informal Interview

It is a flexible form of interview. The interviewer has full freedom to make adequate alterations in the questions to suit the specific needs of the interviewer.

Focused Interview

It is meant to focus attention on the given experience of the respondent and its effects. Here also the interviewer has freedom to decide the manner and sequence in which the question may be asked and has also the freedom to explore reasons and motives. In other words it focuses on the background of emotional and intellectual atmosphere of the problem, usually with unstructured questions.

Non-directive or unstructured interview

It is a type of interview in which the interviewer exercises no control, provides no direction, and has no predetermined questions. He simply acts as a catalyst by encouraging the respondent to tell about his/her experiences and feeling. It does not follow any standardized technique of recording information. The interviewer asks questions only if there is a need to do so.

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Diagnostic Interview

This type of interview is carried out among patients. In this case the interviewer **tries to understand the causes of problem.**

Treatment Interview

This type of interview is carried out to make the patients aware of the causes of their deceases and advices then to change the mode of life.

Research Interview

These types of interviews are conducted to gather information related to a specified problem. The questions are asked on a predetermined basis.

Mixed Interview

This type of interview is applied when customary and specified type of data is required.

Benefits of Personal Interview

The Following are the main benefits of personal interview.

1. More information can be collected.
2. In-depth information can be collected
3. The information secured through personal interview is more reliable than the information collected through other methods.
4. It can be made to yield an almost perfect sample of general population
5. There is greater flexibility. The interviewer can modify the questions according to his needs.

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6. Personal information can be gathered without any difficulty
7. The interviewer can secure the spontaneous reaction of the respondent
8. The interviewer can collect the supplementary information from the respondent.

Limitations

Even though there are number of advantage for this method it has certain weakness. They are given below.

1. It is an expensive method.
2. There is the possibility of bias of interviewer as well as that of the respondent
3. Certain higher groups like officials and high-income group personal are not easily accessible.
4. It is time consuming process.
5. Sometimes the respondent gives imaginary pictures just to make the interview interesting.
6. A number of specialized trained staff is required to conduct interview.
7. There is a possibility of occurring systematic errors.

Telephone Interview

Telephone is used for conducting personal interviews. It is one of the least cost methods for obtaining primary information. This method is widely adopted by the business houses, advertising firms etc. The respondent is contacted through telephones to gather information. Computer assisted telephone interviewing from a central location is now more popular. In this case computerize questionnaire is

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administered to respondents over the telephone. The computer systematically guides the interviewer.

Merits

The important merits of telephone interview are as follows.

1. It is more flexible compared interview
2. It is faster and it is cheaper.
3. Call backs are simple and economical
4. There is highest rate of response, because the respondent is contacted through telephones.
5. The researcher can record the replies without causing humiliation to respondents.
6. The study can be covered in a wider geographical area.
7. The interview bias is less because there is no face to face to contact.

Limitations

However there are certain limitations in the telephone interview.

1. The method has limited use, as it is possible to conduct study among telephone holders.
2. Relatively small amount of information can only be gathered.
3. It is also not possible to use visual aids while conducting interview.
4. Limited time is given to respondents to answer the questions.
5. It is not suitable for comprehensive surreys, in which detailed information is required.

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6. Questions asked through telephones may be short and it will create problems while answering.

In-Depth Interviews

These are typically unstructured, one –on-one conversation between a skilled interviewer and a member of a target population. This type of interview is designed to discover underlying motives and desires and is often used in motivational research. Such types of interviews are held to explore needs, desired and feelings of respondents. In other words, they aim to elicit unconscious as also other types of material relating especially to personality dynamics and motivations. To effectively operate an in-depth interview, the following guidelines should be followed.

1. Allow between a half hour and two hours for each session
2. Each respondent should be screened carefully.
3. It is to make sure that the interviewer is capable of conducting an in depth interview.
4. A tape or video recorder is to be used to record the interview.
5. It is the duty of the interviewer to make the interview setting comfortable.
6. Proper rewards are given to participants of interview.

Advantages of in-depth interviews.

1. The respondents feel more comfortable with discussing sensitive topics in in-depth-interview
2. It can be more detailed one and it will reveal more information than in-group discussions.
3. It is easier to schedule
4. It can handle more complex topics than other techniques.

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Disadvantages of in-depth interviews.

1. The participants are unable to interact with others
2. Cost of implementation is high.
3. The success of the in-depth interview depends upon the reliability of interviewers.
4. It will deplete the energy of the interviewer
5. It lacks consistency.
6. It lacks statistical validity.

To summarize the discussion, an effective interview will be one that provides researchers with the necessary data to know the object of study and that this information is applicable to the decisions researchers make. A researcher has to conduct interviews with a group of participants in the research where information can only be obtained by meeting and personally connecting with a section of their target audience. Interviews offer the researchers with a platform to prompt their participants and obtain inputs in the desired detail.