

MARKET RESEARCH (PART-1)

Marketing Research

“Research is the search for and retrieval of existing, discovery or creation of new information or knowledge for a specific purpose”.

Research has many categories, from medical research to literary research.

Marketing research (also called consumer research) is a form of business research. It is a form of applied sociology which concentrates on understanding the behaviors, whims and preferences, of consumers in a market-based economy.

Other Types of Business Research

In addition to marketing research, other forms of business research include:

- Market Research is broader in scope and examines all aspects of a business environment. It asks questions about competitors, market structure, government regulations, economic trends, technological advances, and numerous other factors that make up the business environment.
- Environmental Scanning
- Product research
- New Product Development

Types of Marketing Research

Marketing research techniques come in many forms, including:

- Test marketing
- Concept testing
- Mystery shopping
- Store audit
- Demand
- Commercial eye tracking
- Sales Forecasting Advertising
- Customer Satisfaction studies
- Distribution Channel
- Price Elasticity
- Segmentation research
- Consumer Decision process research
- Positioning Research
- Brand Name testing
- Brand Equity
- Advertising and promotion research

All of these forms of marketing research can be classified as either problem-identification research or as problem-solving research.

A similar distinction exists between exploratory research and conclusive research. Exploratory research provides insights into and comprehension of an issue or situation. It should draw definitive conclusions

only with extreme caution. Conclusive research draws conclusions: the results of the study can be generalized to the whole population.

Both exploratory and conclusive researches exemplify primary research. A company collects primary research for its own purposes. This contrasts with secondary research: research published previously and usually by someone else. Secondary research costs far less than primary research, but seldom comes in a form that exactly meets the needs of the researcher.

Marketing Research Methods

Methodologically, marketing research uses four types of research designs, namely:

- **Qualitative Marketing Research** - generally used for exploratory purposes - small number of respondents - not generalizable to the whole population - statistical significance and confidence not calculated - examples include focus groups, in-depth interviews, and projective techniques.
- **Quantitative Marketing Research** - generally used to draw conclusions - tests a specific hypothesis - uses random sampling techniques so as to infer from the sample to the population - involves a large number of respondents - examples include surveys and questionnaires.
- **Observational Techniques** - the researcher observes social phenomena in their natural setting - observations can occur cross-section ally (observations made at one time) or longitudinally (observations occur over several time-periods) - examples include product-use analysis and computer cookie traces.
- **Experimental Techniques** - the researcher creates a quasi-artificial environment to try to control spurious factors, then manipulates at least one of the variables - examples include purchase laboratories and test markets.

Researchers often use more than one research design. They may start with secondary research to get background information, then conduct a focus group (qualitative research design) to explore the issues. Finally they might do a full nation-wide survey (quantitative research design) in order to devise specific recommendations for the client.

Some commonly used marketing research terms

Many of these techniques resemble those used in political polling and social science research.

- **Meta-analysis** refers to a statistical method of combining data from multiple studies or from several types of studies.
- **Conceptualization** means the process of converting vague mental images into definable concepts.
- **Operationalization** is the process of converting concepts into specific observable behaviors that a researcher can measure. Precision refers to the exactness of any given measure.
- **Reliability** refers to the likelihood that a given operationalized construct will yield the same results if re-measured.
- **Validity** refers to the extent to which a measure provides data that captures the meaning of the operational zed construct as defined in the study. It asks, —Are we measuring what we intended to measure?]

- **Applied research** sets out to prove a specific hypothesis of value to the clients paying for the research. For example, a cigarette company might commission research that attempts to show that cigarettes are good for one's health. Many researchers have ethical misgivings about doing applied research.