Chapter 9

Descriptive Research Designs: Survey Methodologies and Errors

Overview of Survey Research Methods

Survey research methods are large scale research design procedures for collecting large amounts of raw data using question/answer formats (or questionnaires).

Surveys collect raw data from large groups of people (i.e. 200 or more people).

Main goal of surveys is to provide facts and estimates that can be used by decision makers to:
- make accurate predictions about relationships between market factors and behaviors.
- gain insights to understanding the relationships and differences.
- verify or validate the existing relationships.

Advantages of Survey Methods (Ex. 9.1)

- Ability to Accommodate Large Sample Sizes
- Ability to Distinguish Small Differences
- Ease of Administering and Recording Questions and Answers
- Capabilities of Using Advanced
- Statistical Analysis
- Abilities of Tapping Into Factors and Relationships Not Directly Measurable

Disadvantages of Survey Methods (Ex. 9.1)

- Development of Accurate Survey Instruments
- Inaccuracies Created in Construct and Scale Measurements of Factors
- Limits to the In-Depth Detail of Data Structures
- Lack of Control Over Long Time Frames & Potentially Low Response Rates
- Difficulties in Determining if Respondents Are Responding Truthfully
- Misrepresentations of Data Results and Inappropriate Use of Data Analysis procedures

Types of Survey Methodologies

- Person Administered
- Self-Administered
- Telephone Administered
- Automatic or Computer Assisted

Person Administered Types of Survey Research (Ex. 9.2)

- In-Home Interviews: Takes place in a respondent’s home or within the respondent’s work environment.
- Executive Interviews: Personal interview of a business executive.
- Mall-Intercept: Shopping patrons are stopped and asked for feedback during their visit to a shopping mall.
Purchase-Intercept: Respondent is stopped and asked for feedback at the point of purchase.

8 ☐ Telephone Administered Types of Survey Research (Ex. 9.2)

- Telephone Interview -- Major source of market information obtained through a question/answer exchange conducted via the telephone.
  - Plus-One Dialing
  - Systematic Random Digit Dialing
  - Random Digit Dialing

- Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI)
  - Fully automated system where the respondent listens to an electronic voice and responds by pushing keys on keypad.

9 ☐ Self-Administered Types of Survey Research (Ex. 9.2)

- Direct Mail Survey Questionnaire is distributed to and returned from respondents via the postal service.
- Mail Panel Survey
  - Selected group of individuals that have made an advance agreement to participate in a series of direct mail surveys.
- Drop Off Survey
  - Questionnaires are left with respondent to be completed at a later time and returned to the researcher.

10 ☐ Computer Assisted Types of Survey Research (Ex. 9.2)

- Fax Survey
  - Survey is distributed to and returned from respondents via fax machine
- E-mail Survey
  - Survey is distributed to and returned from respondents via electronic mail.
- Internet Survey
  - Internet is used to ask questions and record responses from respondents.

11 ☐ Situational Characteristics Relating to Selecting a Survey Method (Ex. 9.5)

- Budget of Available Resources
  - What are the total dollars and human resource hours available for committing to the research project?
- Completion Time Frame
  - How quickly does the data gathering, analysis and information generation activities have to be completed?
- Quality Requirement of the Data
  - Focus on completeness, generalizability and precision.

12 ☐ Task Characteristics Relating to Selecting a to Survey Method (Ex. 9.5)

- Difficulty of Task: How hard does a respondent need to work to respond to a question?
- Stimuli Needed to Elicit a Response: Do respondents need to be exposed to stimuli to obtain a response?
- Research Topic Sensitivity: To what degree does a question lead a respondent to give a socially expected response?
- Amount of Information Needed from Respondents: How detailed does the respondent’s answer have to be?
13 ☐ **Respondent Characteristics Relating to Survey Methods**

(Ex. 9.5)

- **Diversity**: Degree that respondents share some similarities
- **Incidence of Respondent**: Percent of the general population that is the subject of the market research.
- **Degree of Survey Participation**
  - Ability to Participate?
  - Willingness to Participate?
  - Knowledge Level?

14 ☐ **Overview of the Types of Errors in Survey Research Methods**

1. **Random Sampling Error**
   - Statistically measured difference between the actual sampled results and the estimated true population results.

2. **Nonsampling Error (Systematic Error)**
   - All errors that can enter the survey research design which are not a source of sampling method or sample size.

15 ☐ **Nonsampling Errors**

**Types of Nonsampling Errors**

- **Respondent Error**
- **Researcher’s Administration Error**
- **Researcher’s Measurement/Design Error**
- **Faulty Problem Definition**

16 ☐ **Summary of Learning Objectives**

- Explain the advantages and disadvantages of using quantitative survey research designs to collect primary raw data.
- Discuss the many types of survey methods available to researchers. Identify and discuss the factors that drive the choice of survey methods.
- Explain how the growing electronic revolution is impacting the administration of survey research designs.
- Identify and describe the strengths and weaknesses of each type of survey method.
- Identify and explain the types of errors (or biases) that occur in survey research.