

Surveys

At the end of this lecture, you are going to know:

- What is a Survey?
- Why are surveys used in research?
- Advantages of survey research
- Limitations of using survey research
- Surveying Methods
- Types of Surveys:

Introduction:

Most studies fall into one of three categories: exploratory, descriptive, or causal. Each has a distinct function and can only be applied in specified ways. **Surveys** are essential for gathering information needed to create plans that will keep people, workers, and customers happy. We can gather data that offers us a competitive advantage and helps us to stay ahead of the curve through a well-designed survey plan. Guesswork has the potential to be erroneous and influence poor judgments. So why not approach people personally and ask them? They are worth their weight in gold, these insightful observations.

What is a Survey?

"Surveys are a powerful tool for data collection, enabling us to collect valuable data quickly and efficiently. By understanding the purpose and process of surveys, we can gather accurate and meaningful data that can inform our decisions and lead to successful outcomes."

A **survey** is a general term that refers to the collection of data using **interviews, questionnaires, or observations**. The survey is the method of gathering information from a group of individuals by asking them questions. Surveys can be **conducted through various mediums** such as paper and pencil, online forms, telephone, or face-to-face interviews. In most cases, a formal set of questions is created and distributed to the respondents, who can then self-report their opinions. In order for survey respondents to know exactly what they are replying to, researchers employ a non-disguised method.

Why are surveys used in research?

A survey's primary objective, as we said above, is to gather data that is representative of the population being surveyed so that researchers may come to educated judgments or findings. An effective survey must be designed with clear, succinct, and unbiased questions that don't contain any loaded or leading rhetoric that can **sway** respondents' responses. Surveys, especially those conducted online, can reach a large number of participants.

Finding the information, you need to make educated decisions about anything from product development to marketing campaigns depends on survey research. Researchers conduct surveys across all industries to get the answers to particular, important questions. These questions can be asked in a number of different ways and cover a wide range of topics. Your questions should be planned and structured with attention in order to gather the most trustworthy data.

In contrast to a census, which gathers data from the whole population, surveys only interview a portion of the target audience. **In many disciplines, surveys are an important source of fundamental knowledge.** Surveys are conducted by economists, psychologists, health professionals, political scientists, and sociologists among others.

Advantages of survey research

Depending on the type of information you're looking for and the survey research method you employ, you'll find that there are several benefits, including:

- **Collect quantitative and qualitative data:** Surveys can be easily adapted to collect both quantitative and qualitative data.
- **Easy to do:** Surveys are generally easy to conduct, especially online and easy to understand and use.
- **Cost-effective:** Conducting your survey research online is likely the most cost-effective way to gather data. In-person surveys and interviews require trained staff to gather, calculate, and analyze data.
- **Gather data from a large sample:** With surveys, you can collect data from a large population in a short time.
- **Flexible** Surveys can be given in a variety of formats, including online surveys, email surveys, social media surveys, paper surveys, mobile surveys, telephone surveys, and in-person interview surveys.
- **Reliable** The anonymity of polls permits respondents to provide more candid and accurate responses. To obtain the most accurate data, respondents must be as forthcoming and truthful as possible.

Limitations of using survey research

Like any type of research, there are some disadvantages to using surveys, including:

- ***Accuracy :** Survey participants may feel that they don't have to provide honest answers because of the anonymity of taking surveys online.*
- ***Non-responses :** Respondents may choose not to respond to some questions, which can lead to bias in your results.*
- ***Interpretation differences:** If questions and answers are not specific enough, respondents may have difficulty interpreting and answering.*

Types of Surveys:

There are several types of research methods. Exploratory, descriptive, and causal are the three main types used in survey research.

1. **Exploratory survey:** Its focus is on the discovery of ideas and insights as opposed to collecting statistically accurate data. That is why exploratory survey is best suited as the beginning of your total research plan, using open-ended questions.

2. **Descriptive survey:** It is considered conclusive in nature due to its quantitative nature. Unlike exploratory survey, descriptive survey is preplanned and structured in design so the information collected can be statistically inferred on a population. The main idea behind using this type of survey is to better define an opinion, attitude, or **behaviour** held by a group of people on a given subject.
3. **Causal survey:** Like descriptive survey, causal survey is quantitative in nature as well as preplanned and structured in design. For this reason, it is also considered conclusive survey. Causal survey differs in its attempt to explain the cause-and-effect relationship between variables.

Surveying Methods

One of the most popular methods for gathering data on a subject or on individuals to characterize, compare, explain, or forecast their knowledge, attitudes, or behaviours is the usage of surveys.

It is, in a nutshell, a tool for gathering important information.

The process involves asking people for information through an offline or online questionnaire. With the arrival of new technologies, however, it is common to distribute them using digital media such as social networks, email, QR codes, or URLs.

Valuable questions are the cornerstone for the success of any survey and, subsequently, any research study.

Before we conclude, if you want to create a survey with a good design, you have to follow the following recommendations:

- **Define objective:** The survey would have no meaning if the aim and the result were unplanned before deploying it.
- **The number of questions:** The number of questions used in a research study depends on the research's end objective. It is essential to avoid redundant queries in every way possible.
- **Simple language:** One factor that can cause a high survey dropout rate is if the respondent finds the language difficult to understand. Therefore, it is imperative to use easily understandable text in the survey.
- **Question types:** There are several types of questions that can go into a survey. It is essential to use the question types that offer the most value to the research while being the easiest to understand and answer to a respondent.
- **Survey Logic:** Logic is one of the most critical aspects of the survey design. If the logic is flawed, respondents will not be able to continue further or in the desired way.

Conclusion

Surveys are a valuable tool for collecting data from a specific target audience, allowing researchers to gather important information and insights that can be used to inform decisions and strategies. By designing effective surveys that are clear, concise, and relevant, researchers can obtain reliable and useful data to help them meet their research objectives. Researchers must remember to keep their questions simple and focused and to take advantage of the various distribution methods available to get their surveys in front of the people who matter most. With a well-designed survey and a little effort,

they can gain valuable insights to help them make informed decisions and drive success in whatever endeavour they pursue.

Ref:

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