

Your topic: My essay should be about research methods: survey and interview. The task is to compare them by looking at their strengths and weaknesses. The analysis should be linked to advertising and public relations field.

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[Comparison between survey and interview as a research tool in advertising and public relations researches]

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Introduction

Research is an investigation process used to increase or revise existing knowledge through discovering new facts. Research is a broad field and is divided into two basic categories i.e. basic research and applied research. Basic research is mostly used in scientific processes while applied

research aims to solve the problem thus used in social or management sciences. In advertising and public relations research is the most significant tool of gathering information about the target customers. Thus, we can say that research is the back bone of these fields. There are two broad types of research i.e. qualitative and quantitative in all fields. Both types of research methods use various types of research tools for data collection such as questionnaire, surveys, polls, interviews, case studies, field notes, participatory observations etc. All types of data collection tools are important and different from another. There are two tools of data collection that are survey and interview mostly used in fields of advertising and public research. This essay will explore the significance of both data collection tool by comparing and analysing their strengths and weaknesses (Case, 2012).

Discussion

In researches which employ survey tool for data collection method extract information through a sample of individuals by getting them answer survey questions. Surveys are most widely used research tool in advertising and public relations research because it facilitates communications between customers and producers. Advertisers or producers tend to use survey research tool in order understand their customers' demand and preference. In the same way, interviews are conducted in advertising and public relation researches in order to extract descriptive information about products or services. Interviews as data collection tool is also helpful in understanding the meanings of central themes of research object. Most of the advertisers as well as public relation officers use interviews during research for recognizing factual and meaningful information (Dunn, et.al, 2002).

Similarities and differences between survey and interview

The most basic difference between the survey and interview is that interview is mostly oral i.e. verbal communication is used and survey can be both oral and written. The fundamental similarity between interview and survey both are comprised of questionnaire but the types of questions are usually different. For example, open ended questions are commonly used in interviews. On the other hand, close ended or multiple choice questions are used in surveys. Surveys are mostly used in quantitative researches. As we know that quantitative research consists of those studies in which the information concerned can be evaluated in terms of statistics. On the other hand, qualitative research emphasize on describing events, person and behaviours. Interviews are used in qualitative researches. However, it is not specified as mixed approach is also adapted by some researcher. In this way, both of the data collection tools can also be used in a single research. Information taken through survey is mostly captured with a set of pre-determined answer options leaving the respondents with restricted responses. On the other hand, interview questions allow respondents to share significant information about their experiences. surveys tends to put emphasis on relatively large-scale and representative sets of data, and is often, falsely in our view, presented or perceived as being about the gathering of facts. On the other hand, interviews are concerned with collecting and analysing information in as many forms, chiefly non-numeric, as possible. It tends to stress on investigating detail as much as possible, smaller numbers of instances or examples which are seen as being interesting or instructive, and intends to attain depth rather than size. In this way, both interviews and survey are significant in researches of advertising and public relations (Cohen, et.al, 2013).

Survey

A survey is a study of things, people, area, and situations in which the surveyor collects data by evaluating ideas, attitudes, impressions or opinions of people about research topic. For instance, in advertising a soap company can do a survey about people's preference regarding soap fragrance and effectiveness. In the same way, a public relation officer can conduct a survey to collect information about their company (Case, 2012).

Strengths of survey

Survey is most extensively used research type due to its various strengths. First of all survey is relatively easier than other type of data collection method. It is also mostly adopted data collection method because it can be developed in less time as compare to other types of data collection. It is also convenient to manage and administer. It is not only cost effective but also efficiently used through technology i.e. telephone or internet surveys. In this way, survey does not restrict the researcher in wasting time on geographical location. This particular data collection method is significant in advertising researches because of its capacity of collecting data from a larger number of respondents. In the same way, the researcher can also ask numerous questions in order to attain extensive flexibility in data analysis. The usefulness of survey tool is also enhanced with the creation of survey software along with advancements in statistical techniques. Moreover, survey is an effective tool of data collection for collecting a broad range of information (Blair, et.al, 2013).

Weaknesses in survey

There are also certain weaknesses in the survey method of data collection. These weaknesses should be kept in mind while using survey as data collection tool in order to avoid any kind of loophole in gathering of information. The most potential weaknesses of survey data collection method are inflexibility and validity issues. As we know survey use questionnaire for gathering information, thus, the limited nature of questionnaire makes survey inflexible. In the same way, information collected through surveys can also be manipulated by the respondents as respondent can give inaccurate and dishonest answers, respondent can provide partial information, respondents can give wrong answers due to lack of memory or understanding. Furthermore, the questions use in survey have lower validity rate because most of the questions are closed ended or multiple choice. In this way, there are more chances of data errors in this type of data collection method than other (Dunn, et.al, 2002).

Interview

Interview is data collection method particularly useful for extracting information in the form of stories behind respondents' experiences. In advertising and public relation research, interview as data collection method is employed for gathering in-depth information about the topic (Cohen, et.al, 2013).

Strengths of interview

Interview as a data collection tool has many beneficial aspects. Interview is data collection method good for measuring attitudes as well as other detailed desire information. Interviews are useful in gaining in-depth knowledge as they enable researcher to probe and pose follow up questions from respondents. In this way, interview is the most adopted data collection tool for gathering in-depth information. Researchers are also able to recognize ways of meaning through this data collection tool. Telephone and e-mail interviews are also convenient in timely manner. Interviews are also considered as highly valid and reliable tools for data collection as they are well constructed and authentic. Another advantage of interview is its use with probability samples. It is also useful for exploration with conformation of information at the same time (Bryman, 2012).

Weaknesses of interview

The main weakness associated with conducting interviews in research is they are time-consuming as well as expensive. In the same way, interviews have reactive effects i.e. respondents in interview shares only information that is socially accepted. Interviews are also sometimes negatively affected with investigators own experience such as untrained interview can distort data due to personal bias or poor interviewing skills. Additionally, the information taken from interview can be useless in case of interviewees' lack of awareness or lack of knowledge. In interviews, the perceived anonymity can be minimum by respondents. As interview questions

are mostly open ended, thus, the analysis of data is time consuming for researcher. In interview, the data collection measures need validation (Åkerlind, 2012).

Conclusion

In advertising and public relations research is the most significant tool of gathering information about the target customers. Thus, we can say that research is the back bone of these fields. There are two broad types of research i.e. qualitative and quantitative in all fields. Both types of research methods use various types of research tools for data collection such as questionnaire, surveys, polls, interviews, case studies, field notes, participatory observations etc. In researches which employ survey tool for data collection method extract information through a sample of individuals by getting them answer survey questions. Surveys are most widely used research tool in advertising and public relations research because it facilitates communications between customers and producers. Survey is most extensively used research type due to its various strengths. Survey is relatively easier than other type of data collection method. The most potential weaknesses of survey data collection method are inflexibility and validity issues. Interviews are useful in gaining in-depth knowledge as they enable researcher to probe and pose follow up questions from respondents. The main weakness associated with conducting interviews in research is they are time-consuming as well as expensive. In this way, we cannot say that survey is better than interview or interview is better than survey.

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