



# **Research Methodologies for Media**

**Study Material for Students**



## **Research Methodologies for Media**

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### **CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN MEDIA WORLD**

Mass communication and Journalism is institutionalized and source specific. It functions through well-organized professionals and has an ever increasing interlace. Mass media has a global availability and it has converted the whole world in to a global village. A qualified journalism professional can take up a job of educating, entertaining, informing, persuading, interpreting, and guiding. Working in print media offers the opportunities to be a news reporter, news presenter, an editor, a feature writer, a photojournalist, etc. Electronic media offers great opportunities of being a news reporter, news editor, newsreader, programme host, interviewer, cameraman, producer, director, etc.

Other titles of Mass Communication and Journalism professionals are script writer, production assistant, technical director, floor manager, lighting director, scenic director, coordinator, creative director, advertiser, media planner, media consultant, public relation officer, counselor, front office executive, event manager and others.



## **Research Methodologies for Media**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The book defines the meaning of a communication research. Students will learn the types of researches and the problems that may arise while doing a research programme. The book also has the steps involved in data collection and the various techniques that go in the process of data collection.

In today's time, the computer plays a significant role in conducting a research programme which will also be discussed in the book.



## : Research Methodologies for Media

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# INDEX

## 503 Research Methodologies for Media

<b>1 Research:</b>	<b>7-26</b>
1.1 Definitions	
1.2. Types of research	
1.3. Methods of Research	
1.4. Research problems	
1.5. Objectives of a research	
1.6 Research Designs	
1.7. Design Notation Examples	
1.8. Hypotheses	
1.9. Media research	
1.10. Methods of media research	
<b>2. Writing support materials of research</b>	<b>26-32</b>
2.1. Questionnaire	
2.2. Designing Evaluation Tools and Techniques	
2.3. Market Research	
<b>3. Know your audience</b>	<b>32 - 39</b>
3.1. Program testing	
<b>4. Survey</b>	<b>39- 45</b>
4.1. Sampling and the population	
4.2. Bias	
4.3. Presentation of Results	
<b>5. Public opinion survey</b>	<b>45 - 56</b>
5.1. Critical elements in a survey	
5.2. Readership Survey	
5.2.1. Conducting Readership Surveys	
5.2.2. Elements of an Effective Survey	
5.3. What Survey Results Will Provide	
5.4. National Readership Survey Key Findings	
5.5. The growth in C&S penetration is more than twice the growth in TV owning homes	
5.6. Radio is still stagnant	



## **: Research Methodologies for Media**

---

<b>6. Principles of Marketing Research</b>	<b>56-70</b>
6.1. Research Validity	
6.2. Research Reliability	
6.3. Risk in Marketing Research	
6.4. Trends in Marketing Research	
6.5. Internet Technologies	
6.5.1. Other Technologies	
6.6. Merging of Data Sources	
6.7. Privacy Concerns	
6.8. Respondent Cooperation at Issue	
6.9. Research as a Promotional Tool	
6.10. Pre-Testing & Post –Testing	
6.10.1. Pre-Testing	
6.10.2. Post –Testing	
6.11. Data	
6.12. Research Report Writing	
<b>Summery</b>	<b>70-73</b>
<b>Questions for Practice</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Suggested Reading</b>	<b>73</b>



## Research Methodologies for Media

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# SYLLABUS

### Research Methodologies for Media

**Research:** Definitions, Methods, Selection & Formulation of Research Problem, Hypothesis, Sampling, Research Designs, Processing & Analysis of data, Statistical Analysis, Findings, Report Writing.

**Survey:** Meaning, Concept, Utility, Planning, Organizing & Conducting survey, Public Opinion Survey, Readership Survey.

**Data:** Meaning, Kinds - Demographic, Socio - Economic, Socio - Psychological data.

**Tools of Data Collection:** Questionnaire, Schedule, Interview, Case study, Observation, Content Analysis etc.

**Media Research:** Measuring Impact, Evaluation, Monitoring, and Feedback.

**Market Research:** Principles of Market Research, Theories of Segmentation & Positioning, Pre-Testing, Post -Testing.



## : Research Methodologies for Media

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# RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES FOR MEDIA

## OBJECTIVES

- To learn the meaning of research
- To know the process of conducting a research programme
- To learn the steps involved in data collection
- To know the significance of report writing after conducting a research programme

## UNIT 1. RESEARCH

**R**esearch is the systematic process of collecting and analyzing information to increase our understanding of the phenomenon under study. It is the function of the researcher to contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon and to communicate that understanding to others.

**1.1. DEFINATION . Media Research** is a study of radio, television and print media for the purpose of reaching the optimal consumer audience. It is Research centered on issues of media selection and efficiency.

**Any research is a quest for knowledge.** It may be study of natural phenomenon or the rational study of the relation between the concepts in which these phenomena are expressed. The knowledge should be gathered, organized and systematized, tested and validated with the help of observation. If the observations are precise, the results will be more reliable.

**The term research is thus a systematic way of collecting, classifying and analyzing information, both quantitative and qualitative.** Rusk said, 'Research is a point of view, an attitude of enquiry or a frame of mind'. Research is an attempt to elicit facts and analyze them once they have been collected to get solutions for a variety of problems.

Research has to be a professional affair involving systematic, accurate and expert handling of the research information. Data has to be gathered through systematic



## Research Methodologies for Media

---

planning. It has to be done by having control on data collecting procedures. The collected data has to be subjected to rigorous analysis.

### 1.2. TYPES OF RESEARCH

There are two types of researches:

- **Primary Research**
- **Secondary Research**

#### Primary Research

Primary data is collected for a particular purpose and is new information. This is conducted using some means of questioning usually via a survey or interviews, or the information can be gathered through observation. It is typically more time-consuming and expensive to collect than secondary data, and is often the second stage in a research project, following secondary research.

#### Secondary Research

Secondary research gathers information which has already been collected. This is a valuable way to start a research project if possible, as it identifies any relevant data before time and money are spent on new primary research, which may result in duplication.

Examples of secondary data include:

- published market research reports
- articles which can be downloaded from the Internet
- publications in libraries including online libraries
- company reports and data
- trend data

**Primary research** is any type of research that you go out and collect yourself. Examples include surveys, interviews, observations, and ethnographic research. A good researcher knows how to use both primary and secondary sources in her writing and to integrate them in a cohesive fashion.

Conducting primary research is a useful skill to acquire as it can greatly supplement your research in secondary sources, such as journals, magazines, or books. You can also use it as the focus of your writing project. Primary research is





## Research Methodologies for Media

---

an excellent skill to learn as it can be useful in a variety of settings including business, personal, and academic.

Many types of primary research exist. This guide is designed to provide you with an overview of primary research that is often done in writing classes.

**Interviews:** Interviews are one-on-one or small group question and answer sessions. Interviews will provide a lot of information from a small number of people and are useful when you want to get an expert or knowledgeable opinion on a subject.

**Surveys:** Surveys are a form of questioning that is more rigid than interviews and that involve larger groups of people. Surveys will provide a limited amount of information from a large group of people and are useful when you want to learn what a larger population thinks.

**Observations:** Observations involve taking organized notes about occurrences in the world. Observations provide you insight about specific people, events, or locales and are useful when you want to learn more about an event without the biased viewpoint of an interview.

**Analysis:** Analysis involves collecting data and organizing it in some fashion based on criteria you develop. They are useful when you want to find some trend or pattern. A type of analysis would be to record commercials on three major television networks and analyze gender roles.

Consider the following questions when beginning to think about conducting primary research:

- What do I want to discover?
- How do I plan on discovering it? This is called your research methods or methodology
- Who am I going to talk to/observe/survey? These people are called your subjects or participants
- How am I going to be able gain access to these groups or individuals?
- What are my biases about this topic?
- How can I make sure my biases are not reflected in my research methods?
- What do I expect to discover?



## Research Methodologies for Media

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**Secondary research** occurs when a project requires a summary or collection of existing data. As opposed to data collected directly from respondents or "research subjects" for the express purposes of a project, often called "empirical" or "primary research", secondary sources already exist.

These secondary sources could include previous research reports, newspaper, magazine and journal content, and government and NGO statistics. Sometimes secondary research is required in the preliminary stages of research to determine what is known already and what new data are required, or to inform research design. At other times, it may make be the only research technique used. A key performance area in secondary research is the full citation of original sources, usually in the form of a complete listing or annotated listing.

Generally, research is understood to follow a certain **structural process**. Though step order may vary depending on the subject matter and researcher, the following steps are usually part of most formal research, both basic and applied:

- ✓ Formation of the topic
- ✓ Hypothesis
- ✓ Conceptual definitions
- ✓ Operational definition
- ✓ Gathering of data
- ✓ Analysis of data
- ✓ Test, revising of hypothesis
- ✓ Conclusion

The goal of the research process is to produce new knowledge, which takes three main:

- Exploratory research, which structures and identifies new problems
- Constructive research, which develops solutions to a problem
- Empirical research, which tests the feasibility of a solution using empirical evidence

**Research can also fall into two distinct types:**

- Primary research collection of data that does not already exist
- Secondary research summary, collation and/or synthesis of existing research



## : Research Methodologies for Media

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In social sciences and later in other disciplines, the following two research methods can be applied, depending on the properties of the subject matter and on the objective of the research:

- Qualitative research understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior
- Quantitative research systematic empirical investigation of quantitative properties and phenomena and their relationships

### A good Research has:

1. **A focus on facts-** facts becomes significant only when interpreted in the light of accepted standards and assumptions, which are normative in character.
2. **Insight and imagination of the researcher-** these are needed to interpret explain and draw inferences. Using insight and foresight can solve many puzzles.
3. **Approach to the study of man and society and provides solutions to problems-** the research should contribute to the widening of knowledge and to the solution of problems confronting human society.

As a result of advance in science, technology and other fields, research has become imperative. The development and discrimination of knowledge is not possible without research. Research contributes to new facts and generalizations. It keeps the professional researcher abreast with the latest in discipline. It helps him to develop, interpret and reinterpret facts and concepts in the light of changing situations. Research creates an urge for further strides in one's discipline. It modifies all partial theories and helps dispel myths by examining them scientifically. Without research there is no progress and no growth knowledge.

### 1.3. Methods of Research

There are many ways to get information. The most common research methods are: literature searches, talking with people, focus groups, questionnaire, personal interviews, telephone surveys, mail surveys, email surveys, and internet surveys.

A **literature search** involves reviewing all readily available materials. These materials can include internal company information, relevant trade publications, newspapers, magazines, annual reports, company literature, on-line data bases, and any other published materials. It is a very inexpensive method of gathering

## Research Methodologies for Media

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information, although it often does not yield timely information. Literature searches over the web are the fastest, while library literature searches can take between one and eight weeks.

**Talking with people** is a good way to get information during the initial stages of a research project. It can be used to gather information that is not publicly available, or that is too new to be found in the literature. Examples might include meetings with prospects, customers, suppliers, and other types of business conversations at trade shows, seminars, and association meetings. Although often valuable, the information has questionable validity because it is highly subjective and might not be representative of the population.

A **focus group** is used as a preliminary research technique to explore people's ideas and attitudes. It is often used to test new approaches such as products or advertising, and to discover customer concerns. A group of 6 to 20 people meet in a conference-room-like setting with a trained moderator. The room usually contains a one-way mirror for viewing, including audio and video capabilities. The moderator leads the group's discussion and keeps the focus on the areas you want to explore. Focus groups can be conducted within a couple of weeks and cost between two and three thousand dollars. Their disadvantage is that the sample is small and may not be representative of the population in general.

**Personal interviews** are a way to get in-depth and comprehensive information. They involve one person interviewing another person for personal or detailed information. Personal interviews are very expensive because of the one-to-one nature of the interview. Typically, an interviewer will ask questions from a written questionnaire and record the answers verbatim. Sometimes, the **questionnaire** is simply a list of topics that the research wants to discuss with an industry expert. Personal interviews (because of their expense) are generally used only when subjects are not likely to respond to other survey methods.

**Telephone surveys** are the fastest method of gathering information from a relatively large sample 100 -400 respondents. The interviewer follows a prepared script that is essentially the same as a written questionnaire. However, unlike a mail survey, the telephone survey allows the opportunity for some opinion probing. Telephone surveys generally last less than ten minutes.

**Mail surveys** are a cost effective method of gathering information. They are ideal for large sample sizes, or when the sample comes from a wide geographic area. They cost a little less than telephone interviews, however, they take over twice as



## Research Methodologies for Media

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long to complete eight to twelve weeks. Because there is no interviewer, there is no possibility of interviewer bias. The main disadvantage is the inability to probe respondents for more detailed information.

**Email and internet surveys** are relatively new and little is known about the effect of sampling bias in internet surveys. While it is clearly the most cost effective and fastest method of distributing a survey, the demographic profile of the internet user does not represent the general population, although this is changing. Before doing an email or internet survey, carefully consider the effect that this bias might have on the results.

### 1.4. RESEARCH PROBLEMS

#### Finding research problem

Without a strong research question, your collaborative research project is going to lack momentum and result in a weak response. In order to make sure you are taking your respondents in the right direction, carefully facilitate the selection of the research problem to be addressed, whether it is one you choose or one that your respondents come to through consensus. It may take some time and effort, but finding the “right” problem for a particular learning community is essential.

**A good research problem is compelling.** The problem that you and your respondents choose to explore must be important to them, to you, and to a larger community you share. The problem chosen must be one that motivates respondents to address it—to authentically engage in the goal of reasoned decision making.

**A good research problem must support multiple perspectives.** The problem must be phrased in a way that avoids dichotomies and instead supports the generation and exploration of multiple perspectives. A general rule of thumb is that a good problem is one that would generate a variety of viewpoints from a composite audience made up of reasonable people.

**A good research problem must be researchable.** It seems a bit obvious, but more than one instructor has found herself or himself in the midst of a complex collaborative research project and realized that respondents don’t have much to draw on for research, nor opportunities to conduct sufficient primary research. Choose research problems that can be supported by the resources available to your respondents.



## : Research Methodologies for Media

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**Umbrella topics must be sufficiently complex.** If you are using an umbrella topic for a large number of respondents who will be working on related, more manageable problems in their learning teams, make sure that there is sufficient complexity in the research problems that the umbrella topic includes. These research topics must relate strongly to one another in such a way that there will be a strong sense of coherence in the overall class effort.

### **Overcoming common difficulties**

#### **Problem – Making a start**

Sometimes you spend a lot of time researching your subject, but cannot devise a ‘thesis’ or a proposal. You are doing a lot of preparatory work, reading or gathering information, but you are unable to focus your ideas or come up with a topic you think will be original or fruitful.

#### **Solution**

In cases like this, you can try making a digest of your notes, or try to extract from your information those aspects of your subject which interest you most. Have a look at some other examples of research in the same subject area. Remember that you can change your chosen topic later if necessary. It’s often better to make a start with something half-formed, rather than not make a start at all.

#### **Problem – False start**

Sometimes a project begins well, but then gradually appears to be unsound. When inspected closely, the central idea might seem incorrect or fruitless. You might find that there’s not as much information on your topic as you had first hoped. Take care! You will need to make a careful distinction between a lack of material, and just a lack of interest in it. An additional problem in such cases is that by this time, you might have produced a substantial amount of work.

#### **Solution**

In this case you have some tough decisions to make, and they will be dependent upon how much time you have before you. You can either start afresh or make different use of the same material. Of course, you should discuss this decision with your supervisor. If you have only recently started, you could abandon your idea completely. Scrap the materials you have produced, and start work on something new. This is drastic, but better than continuing with a flawed idea. The work you have abandoned might not be entirely wasted. It will have given you the experience of tackling a longer project.



## **: Research Methodologies for Media**

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You will have learned something about handling more material than usual. It will also form background information for your next choice of topic. The experience of abandoning work already completed might be quite painful. Try to think of it in this positive light.

### **Solution**

If your first idea was not so bad, choose a different aspect of it. Try to look at the same topic or materials from a different perspective. Do all this in consultation with your tutor, so that you don't make the same mistake again. Reworking your material may involve a fresh approach, or a new analysis of the information.

Alternatively, you could chop out parts and replace them with new material. Don't feel guilty about any of this drastic re-working: it's quite common. The final result might even be improved for this process of renewal.

### **Problem – Getting bogged down**

One common experience is starting off well, then becoming bored with the subject. What at first seemed interesting now becomes labored and tedious. You might think that you have embarked upon the wrong project, and the work which lies ahead might seem doubly onerous.

### **Solution**

If you have time, take a short break and start again, using a different writing strategy. Alternatively, if you must press on, approach the work from a different angle. For instance, start working on a different part of the task. Remember – you do not need to write your materials in the same order as the contents page.

### **Problem – Changing your title or subject**

It's quite common to re-define a research project whilst it is in progress. However, this carries with it the danger that the topic is never properly defined or pinned down. In some cases the re-definition takes you in a different direction, then the subject is re-defined yet again – and you end up with a completely different topic. You are also likely to be using up a lot of the time available for completion.

### **Solution**

Re-definition should always be done within the context of a sound plan. You should always have a clear picture of what you intend to do, even if you have not yet done it. If the discovery of new evidence causes you to change your





## **: Research Methodologies for Media**

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hypothesis, then think through the implications for the whole piece of work. Resist the temptation to make more changes than are necessary.

### **Problem – Meeting deadlines**

Meeting the completion date is a very common problem. This is partly because it is quite difficult to estimate the time required for research and writing. An interesting discovery part way through the project might unexpectedly capture your attention for longer than you had planned. And of course any number of personal issues might crop up unexpectedly to delay the production of your work. Feeling guilty or procrastinating just makes matters worse.

### **Solution**

The best way to avoid this problem is to be aware of it in advance, and work to a plan. Create a realistic timetable or a schedule of work – and stick to it. If that isn't enough, you might need to sacrifice other activity to release time for completing the project. In the most extreme cases, you might have to re-negotiate a new cut-off date with your tutor.

## **1.5. OBJECTIVES OF A RESEARCH**

The research seeks to determine:

1. The nature, extent and effect of psychological influences on choices, including a desire to achieve personal goals or meet individual needs.
2. The nature, extent and effect of sociological influences on choices, including background, personal and social expectations, previous educational experience and social role.
3. The nature and influence of individual perceptions of courses, institutions and subject, and how these relate to self-perception and concept of self.
4. The influence on choice of a number of variables such as age, gender, ethnicity and social class.
5. The role and possible influence of significant others on choice, such as advice and guidance workers, peers, relatives and employers.
6. The nature and extent of possible influences on choice of available provision, institutional advertising and marketing.
7. The nature and extent of possible influences on choice of mode of study, teaching methods and type of course.
8. How and to what extent influencing factors change as adults re-enter and progress through their chosen route.



## Research Methodologies for Media

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### 1.6. RESEARCH DESIGN

#### *What is Research Design?*

Research design can be thought of as the *structure* of research -- it is the "glue" that holds all of the elements in a research project together. We often describe a design using a concise notation that enables us to summarize a complex design structure efficiently. What are the "elements" that a design includes?

They are:

- **Observations or Measures**

These are symbolized by an 'O' in design notation. An O can refer to a single measure e.g., a measure of body weight, a single instrument with multiple items e.g., a 10 -item self-esteem scale), a complex multi-part instrument e.g., a survey, or a whole battery of tests or measures given out on one occasion. If you need to distinguish among specific measures, you can use subscripts with the O, as in O<sub>1</sub>, O<sub>2</sub>, and so on.

- **Treatments or Programs**

These are symbolized with an 'X' in design notations. The X can refer to a simple intervention e.g., a one -time surgical technique) or to a complex hodgepodge program e.g., an employment training program. Usually, a no -treatment control or comparison group has no symbol for the treatment some researchers use X<sup>+</sup> and X<sup>-</sup> to indicate the treatment and control respectively. As with observations, you can use subscripts to distinguish different programs or program variations.

- **Groups**

Each group in a design is given its own line in the design structure. If the design notation has three lines, there are three groups in the design.

- **Assignment to Group**

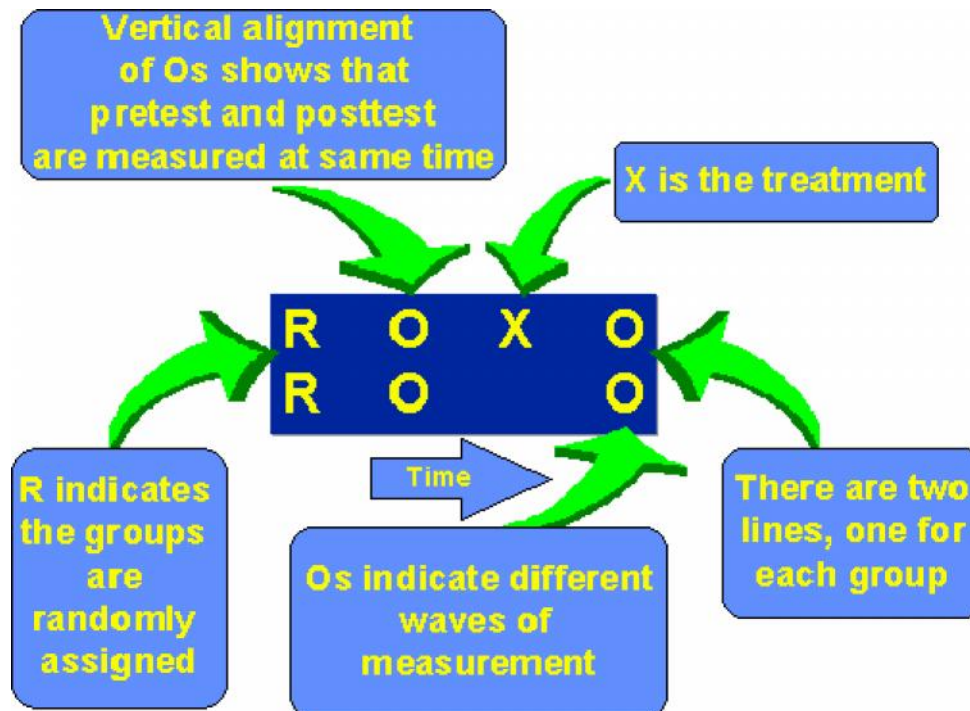
Assignment to group is designated by a letter at the beginning of each line i.e., group that describes how the group was assigned. The major types of assignment are:

- **R** = random assignment
- **N** = nonequivalent groups
- **C** = assignment by cutoff
- **Time**

## Research Methodologies for Media

Time moves from left to right. Elements that are listed on the left occur before elements that are listed on the right.

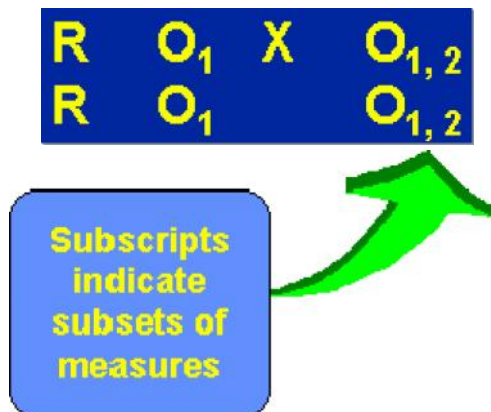
### 1.7. Design Notation Examples



It's always easier to explain design notation through examples than it is to describe it in words.

The figure shows the design notation for a *pretest-posttest or before-after treatment versus comparison group randomized experimental design*. Let's go through each of the parts of the design. There are two lines in the notation, so you should realize that the study has two groups. There are four **O**s in the notation, two on each line and two for each group. When the **O**s are stacked vertically on top of each other it means they are collected at the same time. In the notation you can see that we have two **O**s that are taken before i.e., to the left of any treatment is given -- the pretest -- and two **O**s taken after the treatment is given -- the posttest. The **R** at the beginning of each line signifies that the two groups are randomly assigned making it an experimental design.

## Research Methodologies for Media



The design is a treatment versus comparison group one because the top line treatment group has an **X** while the bottom line control group does not. You should be able to see why many of my students have called this type of notation the "tic-tac-toe" method of design notation -- there are lots of **Xs** and **Os**! Sometimes we have to be more specific in describing the **Os** or **Xs** than just using a single letter. In the second figure, we have the identical research design with some subscripting of the **Os**. What does this mean? Because all of the **Os** have a subscript of **1**, there is some measure or set of measures that is collected for both groups on both occasions. But the design also has two **Os** with a subscript of **2**, both taken at the posttest. This means that there was some measure or set of measures that were collected *only* at the posttest.

With this simple set of rules for describing a research design in notational form, you can concisely explain even complex design structures. And, using a notation helps to show common design sub-structures across different designs that we might not recognize as easily without the notation.

### 1.8. HYPOTHESES

The research hypothesis is a paring down of the problem into something testable and falsifiable. A **hypothesis** is a proposed explanation for an observable phenomenon.

A hypothesis is a specific statement of prediction. It describes in concrete rather than theoretical terms what you expect will happen in your study. Not all studies have hypotheses. Sometimes a study is designed to be exploratory. There is no formal hypothesis, and perhaps the purpose of the study is to explore some area more thoroughly in order to develop some specific hypothesis or prediction that



## : Research Methodologies for Media

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can be tested in future research. A single study may have one or many hypotheses.

The way we would formally set up the hypothesis test is to formulate two hypothesis statements, one that describes your prediction and one that describes all the other possible outcomes with respect to the hypothesized relationship. Your prediction is that variable A and variable B will be related you don't care whether it's a positive or negative relationship. Then the only other possible outcome would be that variable A and variable B are *not* related. Usually, we call the hypothesis that you support your prediction the **alternative** hypothesis, and we call the hypothesis that describes the remaining possible outcomes the **null** hypothesis. Sometimes we use a notation like  $H_A$  or  $H_1$  to represent the alternative hypothesis or your prediction, and  $H_O$  or  $H_0$  to represent the null case. You have to be careful here, though. In some studies, your prediction might very well be that there will be no difference or change. In this case, you are essentially trying to find support for the null hypothesis and you are opposed to the alternative.

If your prediction specifies a direction, and the null therefore is the no difference prediction and the prediction of the opposite direction, we call this a **one-tailed hypothesis**. For instance, let's imagine that you are investigating the effects of a new employee training program and that you believe one of the outcomes will be that there will be *less* employee absenteeism. Your two hypotheses might be stated something like this:

The null hypothesis for this study is:

$H_0$ : As a result of the XYZ company employee training program, there will either be no significant difference in employee absenteeism or there will be a significant *increase*.

Which is tested against the alternative hypothesis:

$H_A$ : As a result of the XYZ company employee training program, there will be a significant *decrease* in employee absenteeism.

When your prediction does *not* specify a direction, we say you have a **two-tailed hypothesis**. For instance, let's assume you are studying a new drug treatment for depression. The drug has gone through some initial animal trials, but has not yet been tested on humans. You believe based on theory and the previous research that the drug will have an effect, but you are not confident enough to hypothesize a direction and say the drug will reduce depression after all, you've seen more than



## Research Methodologies for Media

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enough promising drug treatments come along that eventually were shown to have severe side effects that actually worsened symptoms.

In this case, you might state the two hypotheses like this:

The null hypothesis for this study is:

$H_0$ : As a result of 300mg./day of the ABC drug, there will be no significant difference in depression.

Which is tested against the alternative hypothesis:

$H_A$ : As a result of 300mg/day of the ABC drug, there will be a significant difference in depression.

### 1.9. MEDIA RESEARCH

**Media Research** includes a whole range of discussions about the development of media, their achievements and effects during the past fifty years. It includes the methods used in collecting and analyzing information in regard to newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, cinema or other modern and traditional media of communication. Media Research will also study the social, psychological and physical effects of the medium and will investigate in what ways and in what areas the media can be improved both in its use and in matter of hardware technology.

#### Steps for Media Research Methodology

##### STEP 1: Select Your Topic

1. Choose an area of interest to start your topic selection
2. Use the **Best of the Library** to drill down into subject areas for more specific ideas
3. Search for publications related to your topic
4. Search every page of the entire Question library for relevant books and articles
5. Narrow down your topic to refine search results
6. Organize your results by media or publication date; focus your research by using "Search within Results".
7. You can also refer to Question's **Best of the Library** for ideas

##### STEP 2: Gather Information

1. Formulate a research questions to guide your research . Scan books to see if they are relevant
2. Use Table of Contents, index and Find function to quickly locate useful information



## Research Methodologies for Media

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3. Highlight interesting passages as you encounter them
4. Highlight in up to 7 different colors. All highlights are saved, with links back to sources
5. Make notes to capture thoughts, questions, and ideas as you read
6. Place notes directly into the text with "Add a Note" function
7. Refine your research question and do further information gathering

### STEP 3: Write Your Paper

1. Write down your working thesis or research question
2. Review and reflect on work done
3. All your work, including bookmarks, notes, and highlights, is saved in your Workspace, where it is easily organized and printed.
4. Construct your argument, with main points organized in an outline
5. Write a rough draft, expanding outline to fulfill paper length requirements
6. Use your Bookshelf to quickly return to books later for additional material.

### STEP 4: Finalize Your Paper

1. Revise rough draft to ensure strong, logical argument
2. Document referenced works by creating a bibliography
3. Let Question create a bibliography from your sources, in your choice of citation style Revise paper for spelling, punctuation and grammar errors
4. Print out final revision of your paper and bibliography

### Methods of Research

All methods of research can be classified as **quantitative** and **qualitative**.

**Quantitative methods:** many studies concentrate on numbers. In such studies, observations are expressed in numerical terms. Quantitative research is basically explanatory in nature and mostly involves experiments. Such studies attempt to use precise statistical models to achieve comprehensive understanding of communication behavior and phenomena. The best examples are surveys and opinion polls. Such methods often try to interpret the present behavior or predict future behavior in various communication situations. In such studies statistical methods and numerical data are used as a means to an end. Quantitative methods



## Research Methodologies for Media

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help in providing precise explanation about processes and help measure communication behavior.

**Qualitative methods:** here the emphasis is not on numerical data. Rather these methods depend on description and interpretation of meanings of communication messages by way of subjective treatment. Instead of going for large number of examples, qualitative research concentrates on individual examples. Qualitative research does not try to find patterns. It makes intensive inquiries about single events, individuals and social or communication units.

### 1.10. METHODS OF MEDIA RESEARCH

A lot of methods for research are used in media or communication research. These include **Census, Survey, Observation, Case Studies, interviews**, etc.

**1. Census Method:** this method involves studying the entire population or universe of study and is a quantitative method. No single element of the universe is left uncovered in this method. Thus the result is always good. Also there is less danger of biases or prejudices being introduced. The main drawbacks of the census method are, it is highly expensive and also involves large manpower and a lot of efforts. For these reasons, the census method is rarely used for media research. One good example of census method is the **population census** of different countries.

**2. Survey:** survey means looking at things in its entirety. The term survey comes from two words '*sure* and *vor*' which mean to see a particular thing from a high place. But this term is used differently in different sciences. In communication research, it means looking at something process, behavior, etc) in its entirety. In quantitative communication research, a survey is an empirical study that uses questionnaires or interviews to discover descriptive characteristics of communication phenomena.

The people mostly think that surveys are means of studying large number of people. However, relatively smaller groups-like the employees of an office can be surveyed. Surveys can be used for all kinds of communication studies. There are two basic forms of surveys-**questionnaire surveys** and **interview based surveys**.

**Questionnaire surveys** involve the following steps: -

- **Sampling subjects** respondents -one can rarely study the entire population or the universe. A representative sample is thus selected. Many methods are



## : Research Methodologies for Media

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used for this purpose. Whatever the method is, the researcher should justify the size and method of sampling.

- **Selecting and framing questions**-developing or framing question is often a difficult task. It requires extensive reading on the subject, composing a rough draft, putting them into a proper format. Questions can be direct or indirect, specific or general. Also there could be questions or statements to which reactions are sought. Again questions can be closed or open ended. The research is free to adopt one type of questions or a variety of question types. The second opinion would obviously result in a broad variety of response modes.
- **Formatting**-the basic format of questionnaires includes a brief statement about the study at the beginning, request for participation, assurance of confidentiality if required. Then come the questions regarding socio - economic-demographic information about gender, age, academics, income, etc). Next come the questions on the topic. Usually questions of same response modes like *yes* or *no* questions are grouped together. Some researchers put questions on the same issue together. Researchers usually try to have less number of questions. However, some studies require long questionnaires of 30 to 40 questions. Putting large number of questions in a proper format becomes a big problem.
- **Determining validity and reliability**-after framing questions and formatting them, researchers must test the validity (relevance) and reliability (consistency of the questions). For this, researchers often put *check questions* in the questionnaire. This involves putting the same questions in different ways at different places. Many methods of testing validity and reliability are available. These *include test scales, polarity rotation*, etc.
- **Administering the questionnaire**-questionnaires can be delivered by mail, through fax or personally. However, it is always good to get the questionnaire filled up personally.
- **Analyzing and interpreting results**-mostly researchers use statistical means for analyzing data collected through the questionnaire. They try to show averages or spread of data. Whatever means used, this form of research tries to reveal the problems posed in the study.



## : Research Methodologies for Media

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**3. Observation Method:** observation means seeing things with a purpose. In research terms observation is perception with a purpose. Observation is the process of acquiring knowledge through the use of the sense organs.

**Observation involves three components: -**

- Sensation or experiencing through the sense organs
- Attention or the ability to concentrate on the subject matter
- Perception or the ability to recognize facts and putting them in proper perspective

The observation methods usually look into an occurrence, event or phenomena as it is taking place. It is basically a qualitative method. The two basic types of observation are **participatory** and **non-participatory**.

**Participatory observation-** this is also called naturalistic studies as the studies are conducted in natural environment or settings. These are non-experimental studies or inquires that are conducted as the subjects people are engaged in the natural course of their lives. Participatory observation is the most important form of fieldwork. Here researchers study groups by becoming a part of the group. Researchers try to establish close relationships with the group members and observe and record their behavior. Such studies produce both qualitative and quantitative data. Researchers try to use non-intrusive methods to gather information regardless of the fact that whether it is qualitative or quantitative. Researchers try to get close and personal with the group members. They do not ask questions as in case of surveys. They join the group and **‘observe’**.

**Non-participatory-**sometimes researchers don't try to become part of the group they are studying. They observe the group's behavior from the outside and not as a part of the group. Here the chances of getting personal details of behavior are less. In case of participative observation, the interpretations become more subjective. But in case of out side observation, which involves no close relationship between the group and the researchers, the interpretations are more or less objective. In full participative observation, the researcher's sympathy and concern are reflected in the interpretations. In case of non-participatory observation the researcher observes from a distance. This kind of observation is detached and does not provide any first hand experience.

The accuracy of observation depends on the precise and clear formulation of the problem, studying items and issues individually objectivity of inquiry and application of the five Ws and one H formula *what, where, who, when, why and*



## : Research Methodologies for Media

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*how*. The reliability of the observation depends on the techniques and tools used, the situation, setting or environment being observed and of course the quality of the observer. It also depends on the quality of sampling. A lot of cross checking is required to make sure that relevant and valid information is being collected. Along with objectivity, the observer should have relevant experiences, knowledge, maturity, un-biasness, and alertness. Observation should be noted down immediately and should be properly categorized.

**4. Case Studies-** these are intensive inquiries about single events, individuals, social units, or institutions. Case studies throw light on individual events or processes. The results are not generalized able in the statistical sense. Case studies help the research know precisely the factors and causes of a particular phenomenon. It is a kind of qualitative analysis. Whether an individual, an institution, or a social unit or an entire community is studies, the subject is considered as a whole or a unit. The case study method covers every aspect of the unit very intensively.

In the case study method, information is collected through personal interviews, interview with people close to the subject or unit being studied, documents personal and official as in case of individuals and institutions respectively. Unlike most other methods where only general aspects are covered, the case study method covers emotional and psychological aspects too. The case study method involves subjective treatment unlike in other methods where the emphasis is on numbers.

While case studies generate adequate and comprehensive information, which help solve many problems, this method has some disadvantages also. These include a false sense of confidence. Researchers often become over confident as they cover all the aspects. However, case studies are used as a highly effective method of research both in the social sciences and communication fields.

**5. Interviews-** like in the participative observation method, collection of information in the interview method is done personally by the researcher. Many people use questionnaire to collect information. But this is an impersonal method as questionnaires are often distributed through mail. Also many people ignore the questionnaire and do not respond. But interviews are not generally ignored. Also the researchers can observe and record such information about the manner, behavior and non-verbal actions of the respondents. These things are usually lost if questionnaires are being sent through mail. The interview method involves the following steps.



## : Research Methodologies for Media

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The first and foremost thing for an interview is to select questions. The key here is relevance. Sometimes interviewers use specially prepared formats as in case of questionnaires. These are called questionnaire schedules. Here, the questions are selected, framed and organized in a particular format. These are called **structured interviews**. In some other cases, the interviewer does not have a set of pre-framed questions. This method is called **unstructured interviewing**. Unstructured interviews offer a lot of flexibility. Here the respondents are free to give their reactions on the topic and related issues. This method also allows extended explorations and follows ups. Researchers use a variety of strategies to organize their questions. Some put the demographic questions at the end, unlike in case of questionnaires. For initial questioning two strategies are used- **funnel questioning** and **inverted funnel questioning**. Funnel questioning starts with a general and open-ended question followed by narrow or specific questions. Inverted funnel questioning begins with a very specific question, which is then followed by general questions.

### UNIT 2. WRITING SUPPORT MATERIALS OF RESEARCH

Media research materials include a whole range of discussions about the development of media, their achievements and effects during the past fifty years. It includes the methods used in collecting and analyzing information in regard to newspapers, magazines, radio, T.V. cinema or other modern and traditional media of communication. It also concerns with an expanded discussion of the scientific method of research.

Various writing support materials of Media research are:

- **Questionnaire**
- **Case study**
- **Interviews**
- **Surveys**
- **Observations**

**2.1. Questionnaire-** preparation of a questionnaire involves the following steps-

- 1. Sampling subjects**
- 2. Selecting and framing questions-** Developing or framing question is often a difficult task. It requires extensive reading on the subject, composing a rough draft, putting them into proper format. Questions can be direct or

## Research Methodologies for Media

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indirect, specific or general. Again questions can be close or open ended. The researcher is free to adopt one type of questions or a variety of question types.

3. **Formatting-** the basic format of questionnaires includes a brief statement about the study at the beginning and assurance of confidentiality if required. Some researchers put questions on the same issue together. Researchers usually try to have less number of questions. However some studies require long questionnaires of 30 to 40 questions.
4. **Determining validity and reliability-** after framing question and formatting them, researchers must test the validity and reliability of the questions. For this, researchers often put check questions in the questionnaire. This involves putting the same question in different ways at different places.
5. **Administering the questionnaire-**questionnaire can be delivered by mail, through fax or personally. However, it is always good to get the questionnaire filled up personally.
6. **Analyzing and interpreting results-**mostly researcher use statistical means for analyzing data collected through the questionnaire. They try to show average or spread of data. Whatever means used this form of research tries to reveal answers to the problems posed in the study.

### 2.2. Designing Evaluation Tools and Techniques

As with any other empirical research, the first step of the research process is the collection of data. Since the late 1990s, more and more newspapers issue online editions, which are frequently archived. In addition, a number of databases for newspaper data exist. Collection of news data has thus become much less labor intensive. However, not all tools for data collection are equally suited the harvest of data. And the wealth of data that can be collected naturally also requires new tools for data organization.

## : Research Methodologies for Media

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### 2.3. Market Research

#### Evaluation and field testing of programmes

This mainly deals with “*Know Your Audience*” and, is divided into three parts:

1. Samples and populations
2. Selecting a sample
3. Sampling households and people

**Sampling is the key to survey research.** No matter how well a study is done in other ways, if the sample has not been properly found, the results cannot be regarded as correct. It applies mainly to surveys, but is also important for planning other types of research.

#### 1. Populations

The first concept you need to understand is the difference between a population and a sample.

To make a sample, you first need a population. In non-technical language, **population** means "**the number of people living in an area.**" This meaning of population is also used in survey research, but this is only one of many possible definitions of population. The word **universe** is sometimes used in survey research, and means exactly the same in this context as population.

The **unit of population** is whatever you are counting: there can be a population of people, a population of households, a population of events, institutions, transactions, and so forth. Anything you can count can be a population unit. But if you can't get information from it, and you can't measure it in some way, it's not a unit of population that is suitable for survey research. For a survey, various limits (geographical and otherwise) can be placed on a population.

Even though some populations can't be questioned directly, they're still populations. For example, schools can't fill in questionnaires, but somebody can do so on behalf of each school.

Often, the population you end up surveying is not the population you really wanted, because some part of the population cannot be surveyed. For example, if you want to survey opinions among the whole population of an area, and choose



## : Research Methodologies for Media

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to do the survey by telephoning people at home, the population you actually survey will be people with a telephone in their home. If the people with no telephone have different opinions, you will not discover this.

As long as the surveyed population is a high proportion of the wanted population, the results obtained should also be true for the larger population. For example, if 90% of homes have a telephone, the 10% without a phone would have to be very different, for the survey's results not to be true for the whole population.

### 2. Sampling frames

A sampling frame can be one of two things: **either a list of all members of a population, or a method of selecting any member of the population.** The term **general population** refers to everybody in a particular geographical area. Common sampling frames for the general population are electoral rolls, street directories, telephone directories, and customer lists from utilities which are used by almost all households: water, electricity, sewerage, and so on.

It is best to use the list that is most accurate, most complete, and most up to date. This differs from country to country. In some countries, the best lists are of households, in other countries, they are of people. For most surveys, a list of households (especially if it is in street order) is more useful than a list of people. Another commonly used sampling frame which is not recommended for sampling people) is a **map**.

### 3. Samples

A sample is a part of the population from which it was drawn. Survey research is based on sampling, which involves getting information from only some members of the population.

If information is obtained from the whole population, it's not a sample, but a census. Some surveys, based on very small populations such as all members of an organization in fact are censuses and not sample surveys. When you do a census, the techniques given in this book still apply, but there is no sampling error - as long as the whole group participates in the census. **Samples can be drawn in several different ways, such as probability samples, quota samples, purposive samples, and volunteer samples.**

## : Research Methodologies for Media

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### Choosing the sampling unit

Now you need to choose your sampling unit: what will you sample? It seems obvious at first: your sample will be people, because only people can be interviewed. In fact, it's not that simple, especially with door to door surveys. **Most door to door surveys begin by sampling dwellings.** A dwelling is the place where the household lives: households are people, dwellings are homes. Dwellings are easier to find than people: they don't move around. Even if you make your initial sample from a list of people, such as an electoral roll, you'll find that some people have moved since the list was compiled. It's much easier to sample dwellings, and then, as a second stage, interview the people who live in those selected dwellings.

**Sometimes it's more appropriate to sample households than people.** For example, one can organize an Indian survey about media usage. Part of this survey asked about the types of media equipment that were available in households. In each household, the interviewers asked for the person who knew most about technology. This person was then asked questions such as "How many radios in this household can receive FM programs?" The average numbers reported in the survey were then applied to the whole population of Indian households. We were able to make statements such as "there are between 29 and 31 million FM radios in India."

**When the sampling unit is people, some parts of the population are usually excluded.** Usually, children below some minimum age are excluded - because they don't do the activity the survey deals with e.g. reading newspapers, and also because interviews with children must be done differently. Normal questionnaires are usually too difficult for them. Depending on the subject of the survey, the minimum age is usually between 10 and 18 - most commonly, 15. Children under 10 seldom listen to radio, or read newspapers, so there's no problem excluding them if this is the subject of your survey. But children as young as 2 watches TV, so any TV survey that does not involve young viewers will be incomplete. The best solution is usually to survey only people aged 10 or over, acknowledges the lack of data from younger viewers, and to do a separate study among children aged under 10, using observation instead of questionnaires.

**Door-to-door surveys usually exclude people who don't live in private households: visitors in hotels, troops in barracks, homeless people, and so on.** These people are usually only a few percent of the population, so excluding them





## : Research Methodologies for Media

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makes very little difference to the survey results. For any proposed door-to-door survey, you should try to find out how many people you will not be able to reach, and whether these people are likely to give different answers from the others.

In the 1980s, an Australian government department did a telephone survey with teenagers, and found a surprisingly low rate of unemployment - because it mainly reached teenagers who were living with their parents, in households rich enough to have telephones. At the time, only 10% of households had no telephones - but these were the poorest households.

### UNIT 3. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

#### Principles of questionnaires

Here we explain how to construct a questionnaire, mainly for use in surveys. Other types of audience research don't use questionnaires much.

**A questionnaire is a strange type of communication.** It's like a play, in which one actor **the interviewer** is following rules and reading from the script, while the other actor **the respondent** can reply however he or she likes - but only certain types of reply will be recorded. This is an unnatural social situation, and in countries with no tradition of this kind of conversation, respondents may need to have the principles explained to them. Though it is easy to write a questionnaire, you need a lot of skill and experience to write a good questionnaire: one in which every question is clear, can be answered accurately, and has usable results.

#### Planning the Questionnaire

##### 1. Working out what you need to know

It seems to be a natural human tendency to jump into action: to start writing a questionnaire the moment you decide to do a survey. However **better questionnaires result from planning the structure before you start writing any questions.** If you simply start writing questions, you are likely to find out, too late, that some important questions were omitted, and other questions were not asked in a useful way.

Some of your internal questions might be:

- What sorts of people tune in to our station?
- How long do they tune in for?



## Research Methodologies for Media

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### 2. Question wording

Of all parts of survey research, it is the wording of questions that is least a science and most an art. Here are some principles for question wording, divided into two sections: **What to Do**, and **What Not To Do**.

### 3. What to do

#### **Keep questions short and simple.**

It is suggested to have a 25-word limit for a survey question. In a spoken survey, this limit should apply to any multiple-choice answers that form part of the question.

### 4. Always encourage multiple answers for questions beginning

#### **"Why"**

People do things for many reasons. If you ask "Why did you watch that TV program?" one respondent might give any or all of these answers:

- ✓ My husband wanted to watch it, so I watched it with him.
- ✓ I always watch it
- ✓ I thought I could learn something from it
- ✓ It's an excellent program
- ✓ I like it
- ✓ I didn't like the program on the other channel

**Any open-ended question that asks for reasons will probably produce almost as many reasons as there are respondents.** Most people have several reasons for doing whatever they do. So any person could probably answer a question beginning "Why" with ten completely different answers, all of them true.

If a respondent is asked to give only one answer to a "Why" question, it will be the answer he or she thought of first. With such questions, the interviewer must try to get all the reasons that apply. After a respondent gives each reason, the interviewer should ask "Do you have any more reasons?" and allow the respondent a little time to think of more reasons.

### 5. Beware of the implied "always"

"Should police carry guns?" This question is ambiguous: does it mean "Should all police always carry guns?" or "Should some police sometimes carry guns?" — Or



## Research Methodologies for Media

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something in between? Make it specific, so that everybody can answer the same question, not what they guess it might be asking.

### **6. Beware of implied regularity**

"Do you ever listen to FM radio?" is not the same as "Have you ever listened to FM radio?" The first implies a regularity that may not exist for many people. The second version is more specific. Other suitable versions include "When did you last listen to FM radio?" Which may not produce a very accurate answer, if it was not recently, and "Have you listened to FM radio in the last week?" Ask about the last week, and some people will answer for the last two weeks.

### **7. Habits are not always the same as behaviour**

"Do you listen to FM radio every day?" may be answered 'Yes' by the same person who answers No to "Did you listen to FM radio yesterday?" Most people have a mental picture of their habits, which may differ quite sharply from their actual behaviour. They see themselves as often doing things that in practice they rarely do.

### **8. Ask precise questions**

Avoid vague terms, and those that have different meaning to different people. Don't ask "Are you a listener to FM radio?", or you'll get answers like "Well I listen now and then, but I'm not really a FM radio listener." Other common words to be wary of are "local" and "community": if these are used in a question, the exact geographical scope should be made clear. **So spell out exactly what you mean.**

**To get highly accurate answers to questions about behaviour, you need to specify as much detail as respondents can stand.** For example, even a simple question on the number of radios in a household can produce answers that depend very much on exact wording. For example, compare these sets of wording:

- 1 "How many radios are there in your household?"
- 2 "How many radios are owned by people in your household?"
- 3 "How many working radios are there in your household, including car radios?"

### **9. when asking about radio, define "listening" explicitly**

Be careful with any questions about listening to radio. Compared with most other types of behaviour, listening is less of an on/off activity. Partial listening is very common. Thus the exact meaning of "listening" needs to be defined within the question.

## Research Methodologies for Media

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### **10. Always try to include points of comparison**

To find out about your own programme, you also need to ask about other programmes. To measure a response to a program, that program must be compared with others. "So 59% like the program? Is that high or low?" Therefore, try to build up a context for the main question; without comparisons, survey results have little meaning.

#### **What to do: Summary**

The main principle of writing questionnaires is to try and see an organizational problem from a respondent's point of view - to make a link between the world of the audience member, and the world of the media publisher. If there seems to be any conflict here, remember that it's the audience who will be answering the questions, so the audience's view of the world should predominate in a questionnaire.

#### **What not to do in Questionnaires**

##### **1 Avoid questions beginning "Why don't"**

These are even more difficult than questions beginning "Why". Here it is important to distinguish between an internal question what the organization wants to know and a survey question what each respondent is asked.

Your internal question may be "Why don't more people listen to our marvellous programs?" If this is converted directly into a questionnaire question such as "Why don't you listen to more programs on Radio?" many respondents won't know how to answer. Some will make the first excuse that comes into their head. Some will say "I'm too busy".

You could even distinguish between strong and weak reasons, instead of just ticking one box when a respondent said that reason applied. And in case you forgot to list some important reasons, the question could conclude with the open-ended section: "Are there any other reasons I haven't mentioned? If so, what are they?"

##### **2 Avoid industry jargon**

Don't assume that respondents share your knowledge of your industry. For example, many terms are not well understood. These include "**live**" as in live broadcast, "call sign", "regional", and "network". In countries where the 24-hour



## **: Research Methodologies for Media**

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clock e.g. showing 1pm as 1300 is not widely used, many people think 1700 hours is 7pm.

### **3 Never ask two questions in one.**

Combining two questions to save space or time will cause more problems than it solves. Whenever a question contains the words "and" or "or", examine it carefully to make sure it really is one question and not two. Sometimes it can be difficult to realize that what you see as one question can be interpreted by respondents as two questions. You'll know that this has happened when you expect one answer, but get two.

### **4 Never use double negatives**

For example, questions beginning "Don't you think X should not ..." Many people will answer Yes when they should have said No, and vice versa. Double negatives are particularly bad when you are asking a group of questions using the same scale - e.g. agree/neutral/disagree.

### **5 Don't expect memory feats**

Memory feats include asking people exactly what they did a week ago. Sometimes you have no alternative - but don't expect accurate answers. For many, memory has a telescoping effect, by which two months seems like one, a year ago seems like six months, and so on.

### **6 Avoid questions beginning If**

If you ask hypothetical questions - such as "What station would you listen to at 9 a.m. if your favorite RJ was no longer on FM radio?" — you will get hypothetical replies, such as "It would depend who replaced him." Similarly, if you have a new program in mind, and describe it in a survey, and get a favourable response, don't be too surprised if it turns out to be unpopular.

### **7 Avoid tongue-twisters**

If interviewers will have to read the questions aloud, the questionnaire writer should also read each question aloud quickly before finalizing the wording.



## Research Methodologies for Media

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### 8 Avoid Ambiguity

Sometimes it's hard to realize that a question you intend to have one meaning can be understood to have quite a different meaning. For example, an ABC survey a few years ago, at a time when industrial action had caused occasional news blackouts, asked "Which channel's news do you have most confidence in?" Later, we realized that "confidence" is ambiguous — we'd taken it to mean credibility, but some respondents assumed it referred to regularity.

In fact, "confidence" almost comes under the heading of Vague Term, To Be Avoided. A better wording would have been "If you saw differing reports of the same event, in news bulletins on channels 2, 7, 9, and 10, which channel would you believe most?"

### 9 Avoid leading questions

Leading questions are those that make it clear by their wording that one answer is preferred. An example appeared in an advertisement in major Australian newspapers, opposing the UN convention on eliminating discrimination against women. One question in this pseudo-questionnaire was "Do you want Soviet-style laws on women's rights imposed on Australia?" Who would dare answer 'Yes' to a question including words like "Soviet-style" and "imposed"? Try to avoid such statements.

### 10 Avoid easy escapes

By an "easy escape" it means an alternative answer seemingly so obvious that many respondents will accept it without thinking. This applies mainly to multiple choice questions. If you ask a difficult question, which requires some thought, and offer an alternative that seems to cover all the others, many people will choose that one.

Try not to offer people a choice of answers which includes "it depends," or words to that effect. This is such an easy choice that many respondents will choose that answer, without considering the other possibilities.

### 11 Avoid ranking

Sometimes a questionnaire will include a question like this:



## : Research Methodologies for Media

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"Please indicate how much you like these programs by writing 1 beside the program you like most, 2 beside the program you like next most, and so on, down to 8.

**Respondents hate this type of question.** They keep changing their minds, they can't decide, and they become very frustrated. In spoken questionnaires, they ask the interviewer for help. In written questionnaires, answers to this type of question are often unreadable, because of all the crossings-out.

### 3.1. PROGRAM TESTING

A common purpose for audience research is to find out how to improve a radio or TV programs, by interviewing people who listen to or watch the station. Stations with small audiences usually have less money than stations with large audiences, so cannot afford surveys with such large samples. However, **the smaller the audience a station has, the more expensive it is to survey.**

#### Format of Questionnaires

Questionnaires that are intended to be read aloud should be laid out quite differently from questionnaires which respondents will fill in themselves. With spoken questionnaires, the interviewers are trained in using the questionnaire for each survey, and will repeat it many times, interviewing a variety of different people. When interviewers are used, **a spoken questionnaire can omit a lot of detail.** Interviewers don't need to be shown how to indicate answers, how to follow arrows to skip destinations, and so on.

But a written questionnaire is read and filled in by the respondent. Each respondent will see only one questionnaire for a particular survey, so everything has to be explained in detail - but not so much detail that the respondent gets bored with reading it all.

**The method of answering each question needs to be spelled out.** Does the question need one answer only, or all answers that apply, or some limited number of answers? Is the question answered by ticking a box, circling a code, or writing in a full answer? A written questionnaire needs to explain all this clearly. It must look easy, attractive, interesting, error-free, and professional - otherwise the response rate and completion quality will suffer.

## : Research Methodologies for Media

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A spoken questionnaire should make allowance for the difficulty that interviewers have in recording answers while they are standing up, perhaps outdoors in wind or rain or poor light, resting the questionnaire on a clipboard. If you don't leave enough space between codes, some interviewers may circle the wrong code by mistake.

Therefore spoken questionnaires shouldn't try to cram too much onto each page. You may spend a little more on paper with this type of layout, but repeating a single interview may cost more than hundreds of sheets of paper.

**Qualitative Analysis:** a process that is often the precursor to quantitative, statistical work; a process to make the tacit underpinnings of an issue explicit; a process you can use to deepen your understanding of complex social and human factors that cannot be understood with numbers; a process that helps you figure out what to count and what to measure.

Qualitative Research is a process we can use to deepen our understanding of complex social and human factors in ways that cannot be understood with numbers. Qualitative research has many faces, each with its own theoretical and epistemological orientation, each exploring different issues, and posing different kinds of questions.

### UNIT 4. SURVEY

A **public survey** is a list of questions aimed at extracting specific data from a particular group of people. Surveys may be conducted by phone, mail, via the internet, and sometimes face-to-face on busy street corners or in malls. The census is the most widely-known form of public survey. Some form of census is performed with varying degrees of accuracy in almost every nation, with the results used to determine governmental budgets and taxation. Law enforcement and other public services such as public schools depend upon accurate census information.

**Whenever using a survey in a story, journalists need to obtain basic methodological information on the data. They are:**

1. Who commissioned the survey?
2. Who conducted the survey?
3. The purpose of the survey
4. The universe the survey covers





### 3: Research Methodologies for Media

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5. Sampling method and procedures
6. Non-response rate
7. Sample size number of cases
8. Weighting procedures
9. Data collection method
10. When data collected
11. Results
12. Characteristics of interviewers and coders and their training
13. Copy of questionnaire
14. Results for sub-samples vs. whole sample
15. Precision of findings and sampling error when applicable
16. Standard, scientific use of technical terms

#### **The following information about surveys should be disclosed:**

- Who conducted the survey?
- Sample Design
- Sample Size
- Mode of Data Collection
- When Collected/Dates
- Question Wording
- Sample Population
- Response Rate

As many of these essential facts as possible should be included in news reports using surveys. Typically all of this information can be covered in two-to-three sentences. When it is not possible to include all of the information, journalists should be prepared to provide it upon request.

Conducting a survey is often a useful way of finding something out, especially when **'human factors'** are under investigation. Although surveys often investigate subjective issues, a well-designed survey should produce *quantitative*, rather than *qualitative*, results. That is, the results should be expressed numerically, and be capable of rigorous analysis.

The most important issue to keep in mind when planning a survey is that you are trying **to find something out**. If you don't know in advance what the survey's objectives are, then you should question whether you really need the survey. The objectives of a survey can usually be phrased in the form of questions. On the





### 3: Research Methodologies for Media

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whole questions that start with 'Why...?' tend to be harder to answer than those that start with 'Which...?' or 'What...?' They usually have to be translated into a series of 'What?' and 'How?' questions to be capable of rigorous interpretation.

To ask questions of a large number of people, many experimenters make use of questionnaires. In most cases, only a small number of people surveyed will respond, and the more complex the questionnaire the fewer responses there will be. The design of questionnaires is an issue about which complete books have been written.

#### Here are a few general guidelines:

- If you are personally **able to supervise the filling-in of each questionnaire, your survey group is probably inadequate**. It is unlikely that 'family and friends of the experimenter' will be a representative sample of anything.
- If you are expecting people to reply by post, you will need to **enclose a self-addressed envelope**. Otherwise the recipient will almost certainly throw the questionnaire straight in the bin.
- If you can collect adequate results anonymously, then you should. In this case you should make it clear to potential respondents that anonymity will be assured. Even if you don't explicitly ask for a person's name, **the statement of confidentiality will reassure people**.
- If you can get meaningful results even if some questions are not answered, make this clear. **A busy person is more likely to answer part of the questionnaire than all of it.**
- You *must* **ask the respondent for enough personal information to check that your sample group is adequately composed**. If you are asking a person to reply on behalf of an organization, then you need to ask these questions about the organization. Alternatively, you can mark or number the forms in some way that you can tell who has responded. However, doing so may deter potential responders.

It is very easy **to ask questions that are self-biasing**. A trivial example is a question like 'do you object to filling in questionnaires?' If everyone replies 'no' you can't claim that this generalizes: there could be any number of potential 'yes' replies in people's waste paper baskets. While it is unlikely that anyone would make such an obvious mistake, more subtle examples exist to trap the unwary. For example, if you ask a group of people how much time they spend playing computer games at work, you will probably obtain a larger average than really exists. Why? Because people that have time to play computer games at work are more likely to find time to fill in your questionnaire.

## Research Methodologies for Media

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- People will not find time to fill in your questionnaire **if they think it is a waste of time**. People are more likely to think this if the questionnaire is poorly presented or ungrammatical. If your grammar and spelling are weak, get the questionnaire checked by someone else before you send it off.
- If you ask questions that have a bearing on a company's financial position, even trivial ones, you should not trust the replies. A person who is prepared to answer the questions is unlikely to have accurate information to answer them with. The people who are really in a position to answer such questions will not want to, as they will feel that this information could compromise the company's trading position. What's more, if there is even one question of this type, **it will probably result in the whole questionnaire being discarded**.

### 4.1. Sampling and the population

In almost all cases we would like to be able to *generalize* the results of a survey, that is, to estimate how the results might apply outside the survey group. We call this larger group the *population*. It isn't necessarily the same as the population of a country or the world; it simply means the group of people to whom the survey results should be extendable. Beginners often forget that results of a small survey do not automatically extend to the population. There are two main reasons why this is so.

First, there is **sampling variation**. Second, in practice the second group surveyed **will not be identical** in all respects to the first. The group may consist of people of different ages, with different proportions of men and women, with different occupations, and so on. The result will be more accurate if the composition of the sample group is the same in all important respects to the composition of the population. If the sample group is very different to the population, we say it is *non-representative*. **Non-representative sampling is one of the most frequent causes of error in surveys**. If you carry out a survey by selecting people whom it's convenient to question, then you have to accept that the results of the survey will only apply to the population of which this group is representative.

### Certainty and Confidence

So how many people does one need to survey to be **certain** that the survey results will apply to the whole population? The answer is that for certainty, we must survey the entire population. It's as simple as that. Of course in practice we usually can't do this, because there isn't enough time or money for such an undertaking.



## Research Methodologies for Media

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Because we can't have **certainty** we have to settle for **confidence**. The more people we survey, the more confident we become that the results apply to the population. A typical target is that of 95% confidence. Expressed simply, **this means that we survey enough people that we can be 95% sure that the outcome applies to the population as well as the survey group.**

You can estimate the confidence level after carrying out the survey, but you must decide in advance what level of confidence will be acceptable. If your survey does not give this level of confidence you can use the results to plan a new, larger survey.

Estimating confidence levels from a given set of data is a standard statistical procedure. Estimating the size of the survey that will be needed to give the required confidence level is much more difficult, and requires consideration of the **statistical power** of your survey. **Statistical power is a measure of how sensitive the survey result is to variations in the population.**

Because it is difficult to estimate in advance how many people you need to survey, in many large projects there will be a *pilot study*, which purpose is to find out enough about the population to plan the survey properly.

**Confidence levels are nearly always improved by increasing the size of the survey, but often a change in the survey design can give an improved confidence with much less expense.**

### 4.2. Bias

A survey is **biased** if its outcome has been influenced by factors other than the one being studied. Bias is occasionally overt: the experimenter is not open-minded about the results, and interprets them wrongly. But more often **bias comes from poor survey design**. A typical problem is that of comparing two groups of people that are not really alike. For example, if there are more men than women in one group, and more women than men in another, the responses of the groups to any question will be influenced by the differences between men and women. In many cases these gender differences overwhelm the real subject of the study. Similar problems apply when groups have different age profiles.

The solution to the problem of bias is that of **randomization**. This means picking survey subjects from the population group at random. Bear in mind that if you send out questionnaires and you use all the replies, this is not a random sample of



## Research Methodologies for Media

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anything. This is because people who take the trouble to respond to the questionnaire are probably not representative of the group you sent them to.

### 4.3. Presentation of Results

When presenting the results of a survey, you should try to include the minimum amount of data that communicates the overall findings effectively. If you are using questionnaires it is not usually helpful to include copies of every response. A summary of the responses is probably enough.

It is quite important that a person reading the outcome of your survey can distinguish easily between factual or numerical results, and the experimenter's **interpretation** of the results. It is perfectly acceptable to conjecture about the reasons for a particular finding, but it is almost never helpful to mix facts and conjecture in a survey report. Bear in mind that the reader is also capable of interpreting your results, perhaps in a different way to you; to do this it needs to be easy to separate the objective results from your subjective interpretation.

The **'traditional'** model for an experimental report has a section titled **'results'** and one titled **'discussion'**. The first of these is for plain, factual results and the second for interpretation and conjecture. This is still a sound way to report on the results of a survey. If you use statistical analysis of your results, you don't need to include calculations, but you do need to include an explanation of the reason for adopting a particular statistical approach.

#### **Here are some general guidelines that summarize it all:**

- Decide what the objectives of the study are. Ensure that you can phrase these objectives as questions or measurements. If you can't, *don't start*.
- Decide what to ask in your survey, or what to measure, that will give you answers to the questions you have selected. If the questions prove to be unanswerable, don't start.
- Ensure that you know what population you are studying. Pick a sample group that is representative of the population. If you cannot do this, at least try to estimate the effect that this lack of representatives will have on your final results.
- If you can, pick a sample group large enough to give a result with a desired level of confidence or accuracy. If you can't do this, estimate the confidence

## : Research Methodologies for Media

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or accuracy after the survey. If these are lower than you anticipated, make sure you can explain why.

- When presenting your results, be careful to distinguish between the factual or numerical results, and your interpretations of the results.

**"The quality of a survey is best judged not by its size, scope, or prominence, but by how much attention is given to preventing, measuring, and dealing with the many important problems that can arise."**

### 5. PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

#### How to produce a quality survey:

1. Have specific goals
2. Consider alternatives
3. Select samples that well represent the population to be studied
4. Use designs that balance costs with errors
5. Take great care in matching question wording to the concepts being measured and the population studied
6. Pretest questionnaires and procedures
7. Train interviewers carefully on interviewing techniques and the subject matter of survey
8. Check quality at each stage
9. Maximize cooperation or response rates within the limits of ethical treatment of human subjects
10. Use appropriate statistical analytic and reporting techniques
11. Develop and fulfill pledges of confidentiality given to respondents
12. Disclose all method of the survey to allow for evaluation and replication
13. Have specific goals for the survey.

The objectives of a high quality survey or poll should be specific, clear-cut and unambiguous. Such surveys are carried out solely to develop statistical information about the subject, not to produce predetermined results, nor as a ruse for marketing, fund-raising, changing voters' minds, or similar activities.

In its initial conceptualization, the ideal survey takes seriously the important question of whether or not the information needed would best be acquired by conducting a survey or poll. **A survey generally originates when an individual or institution is confronted with a need for information for which existing**

### 3: Research Methodologies for Media

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**data appear to be insufficient.** At this point, it is important to consider if the required information can even be collected by a survey or whether a survey would actually be the best way to acquire the information needed. If a survey is indeed appropriate, then careful attention must be given as to who is to be sampled and what is to be learned about those sampled.

#### **Select samples that well represent the population to be studied.**

A replicable or **repeatable** plan is developed to randomly choose a sample capable of meeting the survey's goals. Sampling should be designed to guard against unplanned selectiveness. A survey's intent is not to describe the particular individuals who, by chance, are part of the sample, but rather to obtain a composite profile of the population. In a bonafide survey, the sample is not selected haphazardly or only from persons who volunteer to participate. It is scientifically chosen so that each person in the population will have a measurable chance of selection. This way, the results can be reliably projected from the sample to the larger population with known levels of certainty/precision.

#### **5.1. Critical elements in a survey are:**

To ensure that the right population is indeed being sampled to address the questions of interest; and b to locate or "cover" all members of the population being studied so they have a chance to be sampled. The quality of the list of such members the "sampling frame" whether it is up -to-date and complete is probably the dominant feature for ensuring adequate coverage of the desired population to be surveyed. Where a particular sample frame is suspected to provide incomplete or inadequate coverage of the population of interest, multiple frames should be used.

Virtually all surveys taken seriously by social scientists, policy makers, and the informed media use some form of **random or probability sampling**, the methods of which are well grounded in statistical theory and the theory of probability. Surveying a carefully constructed sample of a population can make reliable and efficient estimates of needed statistics, provided that a large proportion of the sample members give the requested information. The latter requires that careful and explicit estimates of potential non-response bias and sample representatives be developed.

#### **Use designs that balance costs with errors.**



## Research Methodologies for Media

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For example, allocating a survey budget to support a very large sample size, but with insufficient attention to follow-up of non respondents to produce a good response rate generally yields results that are less accurate than surveying a smaller sample with a higher response rate. Similarly, allocating most of one's funds to provide a large sample size but with little or no resources devoted to interviewer training would not be prudent. Although sampling errors can be readily estimated using probability sampling methods, they do not reflect the total error of a survey statistic or estimate, which is a function of many different features of a given survey. Survey professionals practicing at their best carefully seek to balance these various types of error in the design and conduct of a particular survey, in order to minimize the total error given the budget or resources available.

### **Take great care in matching question wording to the concepts being measured and the population studied.**

Based on the goals of a survey, questions for respondents are designed and **arranged in a logical format** and order to create a survey questionnaire. The ideal survey or poll recognizes that planning the questionnaire is one of the most critical stages in the survey development process, and gives careful attention to all phases of questionnaire development and design, including: **definition of topics, concepts and content; question wording and order; and questionnaire length and format**. One must first ensure that the questionnaire domains and elements established for the survey or poll fully and adequately cover the topics of interest. Ideally, multiple rather than single indicators or questions should be included for all key constructs.

Beyond their specific content, however, the manner in which questions are asked, as well as the specific response categories provided, can greatly affect the results of a survey. Concepts should be clearly defined and questions unambiguously phrased. **Question wording should be carefully examined for special sensitivity or bias**. Techniques should be developed to minimize the discomfort or apprehension of both respondents and interviewers when dealing with sensitive subject matter. **Ways should be devised to keep respondent mistakes and biases** e.g., memory of past events to a minimum, and to measure those that cannot be eliminated. To accomplish these objectives, well- established cognitive research methods e.g., paraphrasing and "think aloud" interviews and similar methods e.g., behavioral coding of interviewer -respondent interactions should be employed with persons similar to those to be surveyed to assess and improve all key questions along these various dimensions.



## : Research Methodologies for Media

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### **Pretest questionnaires and procedures to identify problems prior to the survey.**

High quality surveys and polls always provide adequate budget and time for pre-testing questionnaire(s and field procedures. **A pretest of the questionnaire and field procedures is the only way of finding out if everything "works" especially if a survey employs new techniques or a new set of questions.** Because it is rarely possible to foresee all the potential misunderstandings or biasing effects of different questions or procedures, it is vital for a well-designed survey operation to include provision for a pretest. All questions should be pre-tested to ensure that respondents understand questions, can be properly administered by interviewers, and do not adversely affect survey cooperation. In circumstances where one is uncertain about the best design or any critical component of such a design, split sample experiments, which systematically compare the effects of two or more alternatives, should be included either prior to or as part of the pre-testing process to select the most appropriate or effective designs or components.

### **Train interviewers carefully on interviewing techniques and the subject matter of the survey.**

Insisting on high standards in the recruiting and training of interviewers is also crucial to conducting a quality survey or poll. **For high quality data to be collected, interviewers in telephone or in person surveys must be carefully trained to do their work properly through face-to-face "classroom" or telephone training, self-study, or some combination of these.** Good interviewer techniques should be stressed, such as how to make initial contacts, how to deal with reluctant respondents, how to conduct interviews in a professional manner, and how to avoid influencing or biasing responses. **Training should also involve practice interviews to familiarize the interviewers with the variety of situations they are likely to encounter.** Time should be spent going over survey concepts, definitions, and procedures, including a question-by-question approach to be sure that interviewers can deal with any misunderstandings that may arise.

### **Construct quality checks for each stage of the survey**

Excellent surveys and polls are those that collect information carefully, and check and verify each step of the research process. **To assure that the proper execution of a survey corresponds to its design, every facet of a survey must be looked at during implementation.** Checks must be made at every step to ensure that the

## : Research Methodologies for Media

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sample is selected according to specifications; that the interviewers do their work properly; that the information from questionnaires is edited and coded accurately; that computer data entry is done correctly; and that the computer programs used for data analysis work properly.

Sloppy execution in the field, in particular, can seriously undermine results. **Controlling the quality of fieldwork is done by observing/monitoring, verifying and/or redoing a small sample of the interviews.** At least some questionnaire-by-questionnaire checking including interviewer "edits" and a review of frequencies to monitor questionnaire performance while in the field are also essential to detect omissions e.g., skip errors or other obvious mistakes in the data before it is too late to fix them.

### **Maximize cooperation or response rates within the limits of ethical treatment of human subjects.**

Non-response occurs when members of the sample cannot or will not participate in a survey. **Careful sample management and control to ensure that a large proportion of sample members provide the information requested is essential to good survey practice.** A low cooperation or response rate does more damage in rendering a survey's results questionable than a small sample, because there may be no valid way scientifically of inferring the characteristics of the population represented by the non-respondents. Proper sample management and control entails such things as adding sample in correctly formulated replicates, tracking the disposition of all cases, monitoring the sample while in the field for potential problems, and "metering" or rationing resources to ensure the collection of data from harder-to-reach respondents.

Interviewers must also be carefully equipped through training with effective responses to deal with concerns that reluctant respondents might express. Specific procedures designed explicitly to stimulate survey cooperation or participation should also be considered, such as where possible) sending advance letters to sample households or individuals to inform them of the pending survey, offering monetary i.e., cash or non-monetary some other valued reward incentives to encourage participation, and sending reminders or making follow-up calls to those who do not respond initially. Failure to follow up non-respondents and refusals, in particular, can severely undermine an otherwise well-designed survey.

To deal with this possibility:

## Research Methodologies for Media

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a) Visits or calls to sample households are scheduled with careful attention to such considerations as the best time of day to call or visit; b) allowance is made for repeated attempts e.g., callbacks at different times and days to thoroughly work the selected sample in not-at home and related situations; and c) special efforts i.e., reworking refusals with an experienced interviewer) are made to persuade persons who are inclined not to participate to respond. In mail surveys, it is usually necessary to send reminders and conduct several follow-up mailings, and at times to contact at least a sub-sample of the remaining non-respondents by telephone or personal visit. Where possible, specific efforts to directly observe or measure the characteristics of non-respondents should also be included in the overall survey design.

**Use statistical analytic and reporting techniques appropriate to the data collected.**

Excellence in the practice of survey and public opinion research requires that **data analysis and interpretation be competent and clear, and that findings or results be presented fully, understandably, and fairly.** The information collected should be critically examined in a search for meaning processed, refined, and thoroughly analyzed. Routine reliability studies should be conducted for all key measurements.

Special codes should be provided for missing items, indicating why the data are not included. And, ideally, the "filling in" or imputation of these missing data items based on rigorous and well validated statistical methods should be undertaken to reduce any biases arising from their absence. Statistical tables should be clearly labeled, including identification of questionnaire source, and the un-weighted number of cases forming the base for each cross-tabulation. Sampling errors should be included for all statistics presented, rather than only the statistics themselves.

**Findings and interpretations should be presented honestly and objectively, with full reporting of all relevant findings, including any that may seem contradictory or unfavorable.** Sampling and non-sampling errors including coverage, measurement and reporting errors, response variance, interviewer and respondent bias, non-response, imputation error and errors in processing the data should explicitly be taken into account in the analysis of survey data and interpretation of survey results, in a comprehensive effort to assess error from each perspective. Conclusions should be carefully distinguished from the factual

## : Research Methodologies for Media

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findings, and great care should be taken to be sure that the conclusions and the findings presented are consistent.

### **Carefully develop and fulfill pledges of confidentiality given to respondents.**

Establish clear intentions and meticulous procedures to assure the privacy of respondents and the confidentiality of the information they provide. Unless the respondent explicitly requests otherwise, or waives confidentiality for specified uses, one should hold as privileged and confidential the identity of individual respondents and all information that might identify a respondent with his or her responses.

**Exemplary survey** research practice requires that one literally do "whatever is possible" to protect the privacy of research participants and to keep collected information they provide confidential or anonymous. **One must establish clear intentions to protect the confidentiality of information collected from respondents, strive to ensure that these intentions realistically reflect one's ability to do so, and clearly state pledges of confidentiality and their realistic limitations to respondents.** That is, one must ensure that the means are adequate to protect confidentiality to the extent pledged or intended, that procedures for processing and use of data conform to the pledges made, and that appropriate care is taken in dealing with directly identifying information i.e., using such steps as destroying this type of information or removing it from the file when it is no longer needed for inquiry.

Interviewers and other research staff must be carefully trained and indoctrinated to uphold and maintain the confidentiality of respondents' identities and the information they provide and take/sign an explicit oath or pledge of confidentiality to do so before beginning work. In the verification of information, one must protect the identity of respondents from outside disclosure.

One should also assure that appropriate techniques are applied to control for potential statistical disclosure of respondent data. Individual respondents should never be identified or identifiable in reporting survey findings: all survey results should be presented in completely anonymous summaries, such as statistical tables and charts, and statistical tabulations presented by broad enough categories so that individual respondents cannot be singled out.

### **Disclose all methods of the survey to permit evaluation and replication.**



## Research Methodologies for Media

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Excellence in survey practice requires that survey methods be fully disclosed and reported in sufficient detail to permit replication by another researcher and that all data subject to appropriate safeguards to maintain privacy and confidentiality be fully documented and made available for independent examination. Good professional practice imposes an obligation upon all survey and public opinion researchers to include, in any report of research results, or to make available when that report is released, certain minimal essential information about how the research was conducted to ensure that consumers of survey results have an adequate basis for judging the reliability and validity of the results reported.

### 5.2. Readership Survey

Most surveys waste time and space asking questions that shouldn't be asked in the first place because you shouldn't need your readers to tell you how to do your job.

**Here are some of the questions that show up in many surveys questions that should never be asked:**

- How would you rate the frequency of the publication? They probably don't even know the frequency of your publication. As the editor, you have to judge frequency. You know which vehicles you have at your disposal; you know how much news is rolling through the organization; you know how many initiatives the company has going right now that you need to communicate.
- How would you rate the format and design of the publication? You are the communication professional. Pick an appealing design that allows you to communicate your messages. Make sure it's readable and clean, and don't let your designers bully you by doing "anti-reader design tricks"--like shading text to the point that people can't read it, or running words in a circle "for effect."
- How would you rate the photos in the publication? Don't bother asking questions about photography unless you're prepared to bring in a professional photographer to make things better.
- How much of the publication do you read? They are not paying attention to how much of the publication they read! Asking that question is a waste of your time--and theirs.
- What types of articles do you like to read? This question is asking for trouble. What are you going to do when they tell you they want more photo contests and recipes, and less of that "strategic stuff"? This question only



## Research Methodologies for Media

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works if you give them a list of strategic, business focused topics to choose from.

- How easy is the writing to understand? If you're writing clear, concise stories, then you shouldn't need to ask this question. And if you're not doing that ... well, then, deep in your black little heart, you already know that, don't you? You are a writer. You don't need a security guard to tell you?

### 5.2.1. Conducting Readership Surveys

Surveying readers is one of the most vital activities of any magazine publisher. Results of a well-conducted survey can tell you what editorial subjects will interest your readers and help convince advertisers that your magazine or newspaper is the right choice for them.

### 5.2.2. Elements of an Effective Survey

1. A sample size large enough to be representative of all readers and allow for cross-tabulations of data
2. An easy-to-understand questionnaire, calling for multiple-choice responses
3. Survey timing planned to take advantage of the best response rates for your industry

### 5.3. What Survey Results Will Provide

1. An indication of readership interest, based on the percentage of replies received
2. General trends of your readership. For example, do your readers prefer financial articles to industry news? Do picture stories score better than straight text?
3. Answers to marketing questions, such as demographic data
4. Competitor analyses - how are you doing in comparison?
5. Who is reading your magazine? Classifying readers can help you to direct efforts to the right audience.

### 5.4. National Readership Survey Key Findings

**Press adds 34 million readers in the last 2 years.**

Press continues to grow, adding 21 million readers between 2002 and 2005.

Over the last 3 years the number of readers of dailies and magazines put together among those aged 15 years and above has grown from 179 mn to 200 mn - a growth of 4% every year.





## **Research Methodologies for Media**

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There is still significant scope for growth, as 314 million people who can read and understand any language do not read any publication.

**There are nearly as many as rural readers as urban readers.**

Of the 200 mn readers, as many as 98 mn are from rural India and 101 mn from urban India.

**Newspapers add substantially to the reader base**

The reader base for dailies/ newspapers increased from 155 mn in 2002 to 176 mn this year - an increase of nearly 14% over three years.

However the growth in reaches of dailies is less than the literacy growth of 21% in the same period.

**The highest read Hindi Daily in India now surpasses a readership of 21 mn.**

A list of top 10 dailies and magazines is enclosed. As many as 7 of the top 10 dailies have consistently improved their rankings in the last three years.

Dainik Jagran has taken the top slot even though the previous year's No.1 Dainik Bhaskar has also grown handsomely. This is because the number of literates in UP, Bihar and Jharkhand strong Dainik Jagran markets has grown explosively - while Dainik Bhaskar has not been as fortunate in its strong markets.

**Decline of audience for magazines**

Magazines overall show a decline in the reader base, both in urban and rural India. The reach of magazines has declines from 86 mn in 2002 to 69 mn in 2005. Magazines have lost 19% of their reach since 2002.

**The time spent on press medium has increased over the years**

An urban adult now spends on press and TV an average of 17 hours a week; on press 4.9 hours and TV 11.8 hours. The time spent on radio is 10 hours a week. The time spent by the average rural adult on press and TV together is 14 hours a week and that on radio is 9 hours a week

**Press increases its share of urban media day**





## **: Research Methodologies for Media**

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Today the average urban adult spends 42 minutes per day reading dailies and magazines and 1 hour 42 minutes watching TV. The average reading time used to be 32 minutes and the average viewing time 1 hour 40 minutes 3 years ago.

Contrary to expectations, press has increased its share of the day at the expense of TV - it accounts for 30% of the time spent, up from 24% three years ago.

### **5.5. The growth in C&S penetration is more than twice the growth in TV owning homes**

Television now reaches 108 mn Indian homes, which means it crosses the 50% mark of all homes for the first time and reflects a growth of 32% since 2002.

Homes with access to C&S jumped from 40 mn in 2002 to 61 in 2005. The growth of 53% is far higher than the growth of the TV market.

C&S subscription has now penetrated 56% of all TV homes

### **Colour TV outstrips even the rapid pace of cable and satellite growth>**

Homes with colour TV have doubled 29 mn to 58 mn in 2005. The increment of 43% is in line with the growth in C&S. While in 2002 a little over half the C&S homes had colour TV, today more than two-thirds 70% do. This obviously makes the viewing pleasure of satellite channels more attractive than ever before.

### **TV and Cable & Satellite dominate in the Southern States**

Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh dominate the markets with TV reach of 77%, 68% and 74% respectively. These States also have high penetration of Cable & Satellite i.e. 55%, 44% and 55% respectively.

### **Internet now exceeds 10 mn**

The number of individuals aged 12 years and above who accessed the Internet in the last 3 months increased to 11 mn in 2005. While 8 mn of these are in urban India, nearly 3 mn Internet users reside in rural India.

### **The home is the new access point for Internet**

## Research Methodologies for Media

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As reach of Internet increases, office is no longer the main place of access. As many as 34% of users now surf from home and 32% go to a cyber cafe. Only 16% of Internet users access it from the work place.

### 5.6. Radio is still stagnant

Radio reaches 23.1% of the adult population - marginally more in rural 23.5%

#### Share of FM increases in a stagnant urban market

Among the 183 mn adults who listened to radio in last 3 months, 43% or 96.8 mn, now tune on to any FM station - an increase of more than 100% over 2002.

FM has larger audience base than Vividh Bharati 15.7% compared to 11.3% in Urban India.

#### Mobile phones: a new medium emerges

Among the fast growing tribe of mobile phone owners, 13.9% access value added features like downloads, accessing news and Cricket scores, SMS etc. The figure is higher at 24.7% in 35 metros.

## UNIT 6. PRINCIPLES OF MARKETING RESEARCH

Meeting changing conditions requires marketers have sufficient market knowledge in order to make the right adjustments to their marketing strategy. For marketers gaining knowledge is accomplished through marketing research.

**Research, as a general concept, is the process of gathering information to learn about something that is not fully known.** Nearly everyone engages in some form of research. From the highly trained geologist investigating newly discovered earthquake faults, to the author of best selling spy novels gaining insight into new surveillance techniques, to the model train hobbyist spending hours hunting down the manufacturer of an old electric engine, each is driven by the quest for information.

For marketers, research is not only used for the purpose of learning, it is also a critical component needed to make good decisions. Market research does this by giving marketers a picture of what is occurring or likely to occur) and, when done



## **: Research Methodologies for Media**

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well, offers alternative choices that can be made. For instance, good research may suggest multiple options for introducing new products or entering new markets. In most cases marketing decisions prove less risky though they are never risk free) when the marketer can select from more than one option. Consequently, all areas of marketing and all marketing decisions should be supported with some level of research.

**While research is the key to marketing decision making, it does not always need to be elaborate to be effective.** Sometimes small efforts, such as doing a quick search on the Internet, will provide the needed information. However, for most marketers there are times when more elaborate research work is needed and understanding the right way to conduct research, whether performing the work themselves or hiring someone else to handle it, can increase the effectiveness of these projects.

**Marketing research is a process that investigates both organizations and people.** Of course, organizations are made up of people so when it comes down to it, marketing research is a branch of the social sciences. Social science studies people and their relationships and includes such areas as economics, sociology and psychology. To gain understanding into their fields, researchers in the social sciences use scientific methods that have been tested and refined over hundreds of years. Many of these methods require the institution of tight controls on research projects. For instance, many companies survey i.e., ask questions a small percentage of their customers called a sample) to see how satisfied they are with the company's efforts. For the information obtained from a small group of customers to be useful when evaluating how all customers feel, certain controls must be in place including controls on who should be included in the sample.

**Thus, doing research right means the necessary controls are in place to insure it is done correctly and increase the chance the results are relevant.** Relying on results of research conducted incorrectly to make decisions could prove problematic if not disastrous. So a big decision for marketers, when it comes to doing research, is to determine the balance between the need for obtaining relevant information and the costs involved in carrying out the research.

### **Research Validity and Reliability**

Not all research requires undertaking an elaborate study. But even marketers conducting small, informal research should know that any type of research performed poorly would not yield relevant results. In fact, all research, no matter



## **: Research Methodologies for Media**

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how well controlled, and carries the potential to be wrong. There are many reasons why research may not yield good results; however, most errors can be traced to problems with how data is gathered. In particular, many research mistakes occur due to problems associated with research validity and research reliability.

### **6.1. Research Validity**

This problem with data gathering represents several concepts that to the non-researcher may be quite complex. But basically validity boils down to whether the research is really measuring what it claims to be measuring. For instance, if a marketer is purchasing a research report from a company claiming to measure how people prefer the marketer's products to competitors' products, the marketer should understand how the data was gathered to help determine if the research really captures the information the way the research company says it does. While research validity is measured in several ways, those evaluating research results should keep asking this simple question: Is the research measuring what it is supposed to measure? If the marketer has doubts about the answer to this question then it is possible the results should also be questioned.

### **6.2. Research Reliability**

This problem relates to whether research results can be applied to a wider group than those who took part in a study. In other words, would similar results be obtained if another group containing different respondents or a different set of data points were used? For example, if 40 salespeople out of 2,000-person corporate sales force participate in a research study focusing on company policy, is the information obtained from these 40 people sufficient to conclude how the entire sales forces feels about company policies? What if the same study was done again with 40 different salespeople, would the responses be similar?

Reliability is chiefly concerned with making sure the method of data gathering leads to consistent results. For some types of research this can be measured by having different researchers follow the same methods to see if results can be duplicated. If results are similar then it is likely the method of data gathering is reliable. Assuring research can be replicated and can produce similar results is an important element of the scientific research method.

### **6.3. Risk in Marketing Research**

The discussion above regarding doing research right shows that good marketing research, especially when it involves formal research projects, requires strict



## **: Research Methodologies for Media**

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controls in order to produce relevant information. Being relevant means the probability is high that the research results reflect what is happening now or might happen in the future. But following the right procedures to produce a relevant study does not insure the results of research will be 100% correct, as there is always the potential that results are wrong.

Because of the risks associated with research, marketers are cautioned not to use the results of marketing research as the only input in making marketing decisions. Rather, smart marketing decisions require considering many factors, including management's own judgment of what is best. But being cautious with how research is used should not diminish the need to conduct research. While making decisions without research input may work sometimes, long-term success is not likely to happen without regular efforts to collect information.

Additionally, risk in research extends to research produced by others. However, in many instances the methods for collecting this information is not being fully disclosed, thus questions exist regarding research validity and reliability. Marketers using research collected by third-party sources should do so with a reasonable level of skepticism. In fact, it is wise for marketers to always make an effort to locate multiple information sources that address the same issue e.g., two or more sales forecasts reports. A good rule-of-thumb for all marketers is never to rely on one source for making definitive statements about a market.

### **6.4. Trends in Marketing Research**

In recent years the evolution of marketing research has been dramatic with marketers getting access to a wide variety of tools and techniques to improve their hunt for information.

In its role as the foundation of marketing, marketing research is arguably marketing's most important task. Today marketers not only view research as a key ingredient in making marketing decisions they also consider information to be a critical factor in gaining advantage over competitors. Because organizations recognize the power information has in helping create and maintain products that offer value, there is an insatiable appetite to gain even more insight into customers and markets. Marketers in nearly all industries are expected to direct more resources to gathering and analyzing information especially in highly competitive markets. Many of the trends discussed below are directly related to marketers' quest to acquire large amounts of customer, competitive and market information.

## : Research Methodologies for Media

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### 6.5. Internet Technologies

To address the need for more information, marketing companies are developing new methods for collecting data. This has led to the introduction of several new technologies to assist in the information gathering process. Many of these developments are Internet-based technologies that include:

- **Enhanced Tracking** - The Internet offers an unparalleled ability to track and monitor customers. Each time a visitor accesses a website they provide marketers with extensive information including how they arrived at the website (e.g., via a search engine) and what they did when on the website (e.g., what products were investigated). In many ways the vast data available through Internet tracking has yet to be used by the majority of marketers. However, as tracking software becomes more sophisticated the use of tracking data will be a routinely used research tool.
- **Improved Communication** – Not only is the Internet enabling marketers to monitor customers' website activity, it also offers significant improvement in customer-to-company communication which is vital for marketing research. For instance, the ability to encourage customers to offer feedback on the company's products and service is easy using website popup notices and email reminders. Also, as we discuss in the Planning for Market Research Tutorial, the use of the Internet for conducting online focus group research is expanding.
- **Research Tools** – A large number of Internet services have added options for conducting research. These include the ubiquitous search engines, tools for conducting online surveys, and access to large databases containing previous research studies i.e., secondary research.

#### 6.5.1. Other Technologies

In addition to the Internet, marketing research has benefited from other technological improvements including:

- **Virtual Reality and Simulations** - Marketers can use computer developed virtual worlds to simulate real world customer activity such as store shopping. While this type of research is mostly performed in a controlled laboratory setting, there are emerging virtual worlds on the Internet where marketers can test concepts and communicate with customers.

## Research Methodologies for Media

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- Global Positioning Systems – GPS enables marketers to track inventory and even track mobile sales and service personnel. Soon GPS will be a common feature of customers' communication devices, such as cell phones, offering marketers the potential to locate and track customers.
- Data Analysis Software – As we will see in the Planning for Market Research Tutorial, research includes gathering information and it also involves analyzing what is collected. A number of software and statistical programs have been refined to give marketers greater insight into what the data really means.

### Affordable Research

For many years formal research projects were considered something that only the largest marketers could afford due to the expense of carrying out relevant research. However, the technologies discussed above make it affordable for companies of all sizes to engage in research that were financially prohibitive just few years ago. For instance, surveying customers is quick and easy using one of the many online survey services, which charge low fees to create, distribute and analyze results.

### 6.6. Merging of Data Sources

The wide range of technologies used to gather data has led to the creation of data centers where information is stored. Today many of these data centers are sharing information with other centers in a manner that offers the marketer a fuller picture of their customers. In the past the information gathered at these points was often stored separately so if a customer contacted the company through one contact point they may not be recognized if they also contacted the company through a different point.

Companies now see the value in knowing what customers do across all contact points and work to integrate customer information. Additionally, some marketers are going outside their own data collection and seek information on their customers from other sources, such as information provided by credit card companies. This information is then merged with the company-owned information to get a fuller picture of customer activity.

### 6.7. Privacy Concerns





## **: Research Methodologies for Media**

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The continual demand for customer information, along with advances in technology and the merging of information sources, has lead marketing organizations to gather information in ways that raise concerns among privacy advocates. Many customers are unaware of the amount and nature of the data marketers collect. As new information gathering techniques and technologies emerge customer response to issues of privacy may determine whether these methods are feasible or forbidden.

### **6.8. Respondent Cooperation at Issue**

The growing concern with privacy is leading many customers to limit their participation in a company's research activities. This includes customers choosing not to respond to company requests to take part in research studies that may come via telephone or email solicitation. Customers are also becoming more aware of how their Internet activities are tracked and are responding by using techniques to restrict marketers tracking efforts. For example, marketers can place small data files called cookies on customers' computer and then use this to track user activity. Many customers are learning to disable the cookies and, in doing so; limit the marketer's ability to track customer activity.

### **6.9. Research as a Promotional Tool**

While most people do not equate marketing research with promotion, the fact is many companies are discovering research can also function as a major promotional tool. The practice of distributing company-produced research reports to potential customers and the news media has been used for a number of years in scientific and technology industries. In recent years the practice has expanded into many other fields, particularly among firms involved in consulting, healthcare and financial industries. Such reports often provide readers with information related to product features and benefits, comparisons with competitor's offerings and target market perceptions. These reports are produced using high quality graphs and charts backed up by carefully created narratives that proudly emphasize the company's strengths.

Unfortunately, many research reports produced for promotional reasons are not scientific and thus may not carry much value. While many companies claim the research supports their products, many of these claims may in fact be more fluff than substance since they are not grounded in good research methods.

## : Research Methodologies for Media

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### 6.10. PRE-TESTING & POST –TESTING

#### 6.10.1. Pre-Testing

**Pre-testing** is such research attempts to predict the performance of specific advertisements/TV programmes in terms of liking, motivation, etc. of audience members. Different types of copy, length of copy types of visuals, various appeals and the various types of approaches will work differently for different products and different target audiences. So producers want to finalize the best possible options that are likely to produce better results than others.

Pre-testing is a kind of insurance against bad mistakes. It finds out the appropriateness of the programme/advertisement and their individual components like headline, visuals, body copy and layout, etc. Such test is mainly confined to the communication of the advertising messages. Major methods of pre-testing include:

- **Consumer jury**-here a representative cross section of the target audience is selected as jury members to judge the advertisement being tested. These persons are most likely to be exposed to the final ads. The response of such a jury is totally different from those of advertising personnel who, on one hand, over estimate their knowledge of prospective buyers, while on the other hand, are too concerned with technical aspects like copy, visuals, layout, filming, etc.
- **Story board tests**-such test are used for TV advertisement. Before ads are shot, story -boards series of important shots drawn in the comic strip fashion is created. These s toryboards are transferred on to filmstrips and the audio part is recorded. The selected audience is shown the synchronized version of the filmstrips and audiotape in the slide and sound format. This way television ad can be evaluated even before they are prepared. Storyboard testing is a cost of saving evaluation method, but it is far distanced from the actual experience of watching TV ads. So it is not the most effective method of evaluation.
- **Laboratory tests**- when we watch a particular advertisement, we react and respond in many ways like raising of eyebrows, dilation of pupil, other eye movements, facial expressions and body movements. Special labs



## Research Methodologies for Media

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conditions are created to measure such bodily responses. These conditions provide the researchers a highly controlled environment to conduct the test. Such tests can measure attention, comprehension, and retention of the ad message. A wide variety of instruments and devices are used for this purpose.

- **Attitude tests**-attitudes are viewpoints or opinions that are characterized by a predisposition or state of readiness to act or react in a particular way to certain stimulus. Here ads are the stimuli. And through a clever mix of information and images, advertising tries to create a favorable disposition or attitudinal change towards the product among the target audience. Attitude testing tries to measure the degree and extent of these attitudinal changes as created by advertisements. Here direct questioning is not use. Rather attitude scales are used. The attitude scale measures the position of an individual's attitudes along a continuum varying from wholly favorable at one end to wholly unfavorable at the other.

Here, respondents are given a number of relevant statements and their attitudinal positions on the scale for these statements are obtained. From these scores, the favor ability of respondents towards the product is measured. However, providing respondents with statements and asking them to rank these statements on the attitude scale puts the respondents in the role of experts. This leads to a lot of biased and subjective judgment.

### 6.10.2. Post –Testing

One often faces the problem of '**artificiality**' while conducting pre-testing. This problem is easily overcome during **post-testing**. Post tests attempt to measure the 'actual effect of real advertisements in real situations'. This is a more practical approach to measure the effectiveness of advertisements. Also, post-testing measures total advertising effectiveness, while pre-testing only measures the effectiveness of specific aspects of advertisements. Different types of tests are conducted as part of post-testing advertisements. These include:

- **Recognition tests**- whatever the purpose of an advertisement, its first task is to be seen, read, or heard. Every advertisement uses some means or other to get attention and hold it. Here comes the first big hurdle- recognition. This is simply a matter of identifying an advertisement that one has seen before. Recognition is a necessary condition for effective advertising. If an advertisement cannot pass this hurdle, it will probably not be effective. Recognition tests are usually used for print ads.



## : Research Methodologies for Media

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- **Recall tests-** the recall test is a kind of a memory test that attempts to measure the impression or penetration made by an advertisement on the reader's or viewer's mind. It evaluates the memory of an advertisement by contacting audiences' members and asking them what they remember about it. As a test of memory, recall is more demanding and difficult than recognition. Various recall tests differ in the subject matter they deal with and the aid-to-memory they provide. Some deal with the print ads while others deal with broadcast ads. Some recall tests use aids to help audience members to remember while others do not use any such aids.
- **Persuasion tests-** recognition and recall tests ask the questions-do you remember, and what you remember. Persuasion tests ask- were you influenced? Persuasion tests are concerned with '**attitude shift**' on part of the audiences after they have seen the ad. Such tests evaluate the effectiveness of an advertisement by measuring whether the ad affects the customer's intentions to buy a brand. During persuasion tests, consumers are invited to a specific place usually to preview a television programme. This is pretence as the real motive is to show them the 'to be tested advertisements' in an almost 'real' situation and evaluate their effects. This is done to minimize the artificiality of the situation that occurs in recognition and recall tests.
- **Purchase behavior tests-** here researchers test the actual brand-choice in an **in-store**, real world setting, to a certain if advertising exposure has resulted in any changes in purchase behavior. Instead of asking questions to respondents about recall, recognition or persuasion, such studies try to find out their actual behavior, i.e. if they are buying the brand after being exposed to the ads. The problem with this method is that proper sampling cannot be done. Also purchase behavior is influenced by many factors and advertising is just one of these factors. Isolating the effects of advertising from all other influences in quantitative terms is very difficult.

### 6.11. DATA

**Data is a large class of practically important statements is measurements or observations of a variable.**

The word *data* means "**something given**". Such usage is the origin of *data* as a concept in computer science: *data* are numbers, words, images, etc., accepted as they stand. Experimental data are data generated within the context of a scientific investigation.



## **: Research Methodologies for Media**

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**Demographic data analysis** includes the sets of methods that allow us to measure the dimensions and dynamics of populations. These methods have primarily been developed to study human populations, but are extended to a variety of areas where researchers want to know how populations of social actors can change across time through processes of birth, death, and migration. In the context of human biological populations demographic analysis uses administrative records to develop an independent estimate of the population. Demographic analysis estimates are often considered a reliable standard for judging the accuracy of the census information gathered at any time. In the labor force demographic analysis is used to estimate sizes and flows of populations of workers; in population ecology the focus is on the birth, death and movement of firms and institutional forms.

**Data is obtained from a census of the population and from registries-records of events like birth, deaths, migrations, marriages, divorces, diseases, and employment.** To do this, there needs to be an understanding of how they are calculated and the questions they answers which is included in these four concepts: population change, standardization of population numbers, the demographic bookkeeping equation, and population composition.

### **Tools of Data Collection**

Although deciding on data collection tools and methods and actually collecting data are actually two different steps in the evaluation cycle, they are inextricably linked and we thus combine them as part of the tutorial.

**Data are a collection of information, evidence, or facts from which you can draw conclusions.**

- Data can be quantitative - numeric information - or it can be qualitative - involving stories, observations, etc.
- Data are important because they offer evidence for the outcomes your program is producing and allow you to confidently make the case for your programs.
- The data that you want to collect will be driven from the questions you want answered.

## Research Methodologies for Media

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**There are a variety of different types of data collection methods. Some of the more common types are:**

Activity Logs/Skill Sheets	Written documentation of participant's attendance, achievement or acquisition of skills	Good for what and how many questions
Document review	Review of written documents such as performance ratings, program logs, tally sheets, and other existing indicators	Good for what and how many questions
Focus groups	Moderated discussions on a particular topic or issue	Good for what, how, and why questions
Interviews	Data collection through oral conversations	Good for what and why questions
Observation	Watching people engaged in activities and recording what occurs	Good for how, what, and how many questions
Questionnaires	Written responses to clearly defined questions	Good for what and how many questions.

You can also use alternative documentation approaches including having program participants keep written, audio, or video journals of both their experiences and their thoughts, feelings, etc.

- Any of the above methods can also be implemented through pre/post tests in which people are tested both before the program has been implemented and after the program has been implemented, and changes in attitudes, skills, behaviors, etc. are measured.
- If possible, you should use more than one method to collect data as it enhances credibility of the data.
- There are many existing data collection tools available but sometimes it is necessary to create your own data collection tool. To do this you should implement the following steps:



## : Research Methodologies for Media

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- a) Finalize your evaluation questions.
- b) Decide what information you already have and what information you will need to collect.
- c) Based on the type of data you need, choose an appropriate data collection method.
- d) Develop tools to collect the data.

While it is impossible to collect data without any bias e.g., the questions you are interested in answering lead you to want to collect certain data), it is possible to *minimize* bias. You can do this by gathering as many perspectives as possible, using a variety of methods, checking your interpretations with the program stakeholders, and ensuring that data collectors aren't biasing responses by asking leading questions the respondent to answer in a particular way.

Once you have chosen your data collection methods you are ready to collect the data.

### **The following are some guidelines for collecting data:**

1. No matter what type of data collection tools you decide to use, you should test them with a small sample of volunteers before you implement data collection. This will allow you to determine whether the tools are easy to understand, whether the questions are clear, relevant, and unbiased, if the data collection could be completed in a reasonable amount of time, and whether there are any improvements that could be made to the data collection tool.
2. Establish a firm schedule for data collection.
3. Ensure the data collectors have both the training and the tools they need for collecting data.
4. Make sure data is carefully stored and that confidentiality is maintained. This does not mean that you cannot report the data, but rather that you do not associate any of the data with a particular person.

## **6.12. RESEARCH REPORT WRITING**

### **Layout of the report**

A good physical layout is important, as it will help your report:

- make a good initial impression,





## Research Methodologies for Media

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- encourage the readers, and
- give them an idea of how the material has been organized so the reader can make a quick determination of what he will read first.

Particular attention should be paid to make sure there is:

- An attractive layout for the title page and a clear table of contents.
- Consistency in margins and spacing.
- Consistency in headings and subheadings, e.g.: **font size 16 or 18 bold**, for headings of chapters; **size 14 bold** for headings of major sections; **size 12 bold**, for headings of sub-sections, etc.
- Good quality printing and photocopying. Correct drafts carefully with spell check as well as critical reading for clarity by other team-members, your facilitator and, if possible, outsiders.
- Numbering of figures and tables, provision of clear titles for tables, and clear headings for columns and rows, etc.
- Accuracy and consistency in quotations and references.

When **writing a research report**, you must remember that the main purpose of this academic assignment is to communicate the results of research, field work, or any other activity.

Successfully **written research report** presents the concrete evidence of the research conducted. In **report writing**, you also must consider clarity, organization, and content. This is difficult at times but fortunately, research report structure is similar to that of research articles, technical reports, formal reports, lab reports. Research reports have a fairly consistent structure that can and should be used to organize the information clearly.

- Be careful when relying on external sources of information in report writing – ensure that you are using specialized journals, governmental publications not to end up producing unexpected results.
- Do not use standardized sections; you can omit some sections and add others that are **unique** to the subject matter discussed in the report. Do not forget to check for the specific requirements and guidelines, as you may end up producing quality, but out of topic assignment.



### 3: Research Methodologies for Media

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#### Following steps may be taken for Report Writing:-

1. **Make an outline for your report** on a flipchart, after reviewing your objectives, your sources of information and the outcomes of your data analysis. Number proposed sections and subsections. Stick the outline to the wall in a visible place. Leave sufficient space between the lines for additions more subsections, for example) and for changes.
2. **Start writing, beginning with the chapter on findings.** Decide with your facilitator whether you will interpret the data presenting it by variable, by objective or by study population. If you are unsure in the beginning which method of organizing the presentation will work best, record your findings and interpretations by study population. In the second draft you can decide how to reorganize and shorten the presentation. **Divide writing tasks** among sub-groups of one or two persons.
3. Discuss your findings in relation to each other, to the objectives and to other literature, and write the chapter **Discussion**. Then list the major **conclusions** in relation to possible **recommendations**.
4. **Develop** at the same time **the introductory chapters** background and statement of the problem, including new literature, objectives and methodology, adapting what you prepared for the proposal.
5. **Finally, develop the summary** following the outline given earlier in this module. Take at least half a day for this, working systematically.
6. **Keep track of progress** in writing and typing, making notes on the flipchart that has the outline of your report.
7. **Go over the first draft with the group as a whole** checking it for gaps, overlaps, etc. before the second draft is prepared. Have a facilitator from another group read the whole draft report before it is finalized.

#### SUMMARY

**Research** is the systematic process of collecting and analyzing information to increase our understanding of the phenomenon under study. It is the function of the researcher to contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon and to communicate that understanding to others. **Media Research** is a study of radio, television and print media for the purpose of reaching the optimal consumer audience. It is Research centered on issues of media selection and efficiency.

**Primary data** is collected for a particular purpose and is new information. This is conducted using some means of questioning usually via a survey or interviews, or

## : Research Methodologies for Media

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the information can be gathered through observation. It is typically more time-consuming and expensive to collect than secondary data, and is often the second stage in a research project, following secondary research.

**Secondary research** gathers information which has already been collected. This is a valuable way to start a research project if possible, as it identifies any relevant data before time and money are spent on new primary research, which may result in duplication.

### **Good Research has:**

1. **A focus on facts-** facts becomes significant only when interpreted in the light of accepted standards and assumptions, which are normative in character.
2. **Insight and imagination of the researcher-** these are needed to interpret explain and draw inferences. Using insight and foresight can solve many puzzles.
3. **Approach to the study of man and society and provides solutions to problems-** the research should contribute to the widening of knowledge and to the solution of problems confronting human society.

The research hypothesis is a paring down of the problem into something testable and falsifiable. A **hypothesis** is a proposed explanation for an observable phenomenon. A hypothesis is a specific statement of prediction. It describes in concrete rather than theoretical terms what you expect will happen in your study. Not all studies have hypotheses. Sometimes a study is designed to be exploratory. There is no formal hypothesis, and perhaps the purpose of the study is to explore some area more thoroughly in order to develop some specific hypothesis or prediction that can be tested in future research. A single study may have one or many hypotheses.

**Quantitative methods:** many studies concentrate on numbers. In such studies, observations are expressed in numerical terms. Quantitative research is basically explanatory in nature and mostly involves experiments. Such studies attempt to use precise statistical models to achieve comprehensive understanding of communication behavior and phenomena. The best examples are surveys and opinion polls. Such methods often try to interpret the present behavior or predict future behavior in various communication situations. In such studies statistical methods and numerical data are used as a means to an end. Quantitative methods help in providing precise explanation about processes and help measure communication behavior.



## Research Methodologies for Media

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**Qualitative methods:** here the emphasis is not on numerical data. Rather these methods depend on description and interpretation of meanings of communication messages by way of subjective treatment. Instead of going for large number of examples, qualitative research concentrates on individual examples. Qualitative research does not try to find patterns. It makes intensive inquiries about single events, individuals and social or communication units.

**A sample** is a part of the population from which it was drawn. Survey research is based on sampling, which involves getting information from only some members of the population. If information is obtained from the whole population, it's not a sample, but a census. Some surveys, based on very small populations such as all members of an organization in fact are censuses and not sample surveys. When you do a census, the techniques given in this book still apply, but there is no sampling error - as long as the whole group participates in the census. Samples can be drawn in several different ways, such as probability samples, quota samples, purposive samples, and volunteer samples.

**A questionnaire is a strange type of communication.** It's like a play, in which one actor **the interviewer** is following rules and reading from the script, while the other actor **the respondent** can reply however he or she likes - but only certain types of reply will be recorded. This is an unnatural social situation, and in countries with no tradition of this kind of conversation, respondents may need to have the principles explained to them. Though it is easy to write a questionnaire, you need a lot of skill and experience to write a good questionnaire: one in which every question is clear, can be answered accurately, and has usable results.

**A public survey** is a list of questions aimed at extracting specific data from a particular group of people. Surveys may be conducted by phone, mail, via the internet, and sometimes face-to-face on busy street corners or in malls. The census is the most widely-known form of public survey. Some form of census is performed with varying degrees of accuracy in almost every nation, with the results used to determine governmental budgets and taxation. Law enforcement and other public services such as public schools depend upon accurate census information.

**While research is the key to marketing decision making, it does not always need to be elaborate to be effective.** Sometimes small efforts, such as doing a quick search on the Internet, will provide the needed information. However, for most marketers there are times when more elaborate research work is needed and



## : Research Methodologies for Media

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understanding the right way to conduct research, whether performing the work themselves or hiring someone else to handle it, can increase the effectiveness of these projects.

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**Data is a large class of practically important statements is measurements or observations of a variable.** The word *data* means "**something given**". Such usage is the origin of *data* as a concept in computer science: *data* are numbers, words, images, etc., accepted as they stand. Experimental data are data generated within the context of a scientific investigation.

When **writing a research report**, you must remember that the main purpose of this academic assignment is to communicate the results of research, field work, or any other activity. Successfully **written research report** presents the concrete evidence of the research conducted. In **report writing**, you also must consider clarity, organization, and content. This is difficult at times but fortunately, research report structure is similar to that of research articles, technical reports, formal reports, lab reports. Research reports have a fairly consistent structure that can and should be used to organize the information clearly.



## **: Research Methodologies for Media**

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### **QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

1. What is the scope of Research?
2. State the different methods of media research.
3. How is a research problem selected and formulated?
4. Explain the term hypothesis.
5. What is meant by survey?
6. What is a public opinion survey?
7. What are the different kinds of data?
8. Name the tools for data collection.
9. Define questionnaire.
10. What is meant by feedback in media research?
11. Write a note on research designs.
12. Describe the different sampling techniques.
13. What are the ways of measuring impact in media research? Explain.
14. Discuss the principles of market research.
15. Discuss the various types of Research.
16. What are the functions of hypothesis?
17. What is a Research Design?
18. Discuss the concept of sampling.
19. Differentiate between primary and secondary research.
20. Discuss the content of a research Report.

### **SUGGESTED READING**

1. Introduction to Communication Research by John. C. Reinard
2. Mass Media Research by Roger D. Wimmer and Joseph R. Dominick
3. Doing Media Research- An Introduction by Susanna Houring Priest
4. Introduction to Survey Research by Pamela L Alreck and Robert B Settle
5. Research Methodology and Techniques by Kothari Wiley Eastern Ltd