**Lecture 11**

**Collecting Data Using Attitudinal Scales**

The underlying need for Data collection is to capture quality evidence that seeks to answer all the questions that have been posed. Through data collection businesses or management can deduce quality information that is a prerequisite for making informed decisions.

To improve the quality of information, it is expedient that data is collected so that you can draw inferences and make informed decisions on what is considered factual.

At the end of this article, you would understand why picking the best data collection method is necessary for achieving your set objective.

**Data collection** is a methodical process of gathering and analyzing specific information to proffer solutions to relevant questions and evaluate the results. It focuses on finding out all there is to a particular subject matter. Data is collected to be further subjected to hypothesis testing which seeks to explain a phenomenon.

Hypothesis testing eliminates assumptions while making a proposition from the basis of reason.

For collectors of data, there is a range of outcomes for which the data is collected. But the key purpose for which data is collected is to put a researcher in a vantage position to make predictions about future probabilities and trends.

The core forms in which data can be collected are primary and secondary data. While the former is collected by a researcher through first-hand sources, the latter is collected by an individual other than the user.

**Types of Data Collection**

Before broaching the subject of the various types of data collection. It is pertinent to note that data collection in itself falls under two broad categories; Primary data collection and secondary data collection.

**Primary Data Collection**

Primary data collection by definition is the gathering of raw data collected at the source. It is a process of collecting the original data collected by a researcher for a specific research purpose. It could be further analyzed into two segments; qualitative research and quantitative data collection methods.

**Qualitative Research Method**

The qualitative research methods of data collection do not involve the collection of data that involves numbers or a need to be deduced through a mathematical calculation, rather it is based on the non-quantifiable elements like the feeling or emotion of the researcher. An example of such a method is an open-ended questionnaire.



Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data collection, on the other hand, is referred to as the gathering of second-hand data collected by an individual who is not the original user. It is the process of collecting data that is already existing, be it already published books, journals, and/or online portals. In terms of ease, it is much less expensive and easier to collect.

Your choice between Primary data collection and secondary data collection depends on the nature, scope, and area of your research as well as its aims and objectives.

**IMPORTANCE OF DATA COLLECTION**

There are a bunch of underlying reasons for collecting data, especially for a researcher. Walking you through them, here are a few reasons;

**Integrity of the Research**

A key reason for collecting data, be it through quantitative or qualitative methods is to ensure that the integrity of the research question is indeed maintained.

**Reduce the likelihood of errors**

The correct use of appropriate data collection of methods reduces the likelihood of errors consistent with the results.

**Decision Making**

To minimize the risk of errors in decision-making, it is important that accurate data is collected so that the researcher doesn’t make uninformed decisions.

**Save Cost and Time**

Data collection saves the researcher time and funds that would otherwise be misspent without a deeper understanding of the topic or subject matter.

To support a need for a new idea, change, and/or innovation

To prove the need for a change in the norm or the introduction of new information that will be widely accepted, it is important to collect data as evidence to support these claims.

**What is a Data Collection Tool?**

Data collection tools refer to the devices/instruments used to collect data, such as a paper questionnaire or computer-assisted interviewing system. Case Studies, Checklists, Interviews, Observation sometimes, and Surveys or Questionnaires are all tools used to collect data.

It is important to decide the tools for data collection because research is carried out in different ways and for different purposes. The objective behind data collection is to capture quality evidence that allows analysis to lead to the formulation of convincing and credible answers to the posed questions.

The objective behind data collection is to capture quality evidence that allows analysis to lead to the formulation of convincing and credible answers to the questions that have been posed – Click to Tweet

The Formplus’ online data collection tool is perfect for gathering primary data, i.e. raw data collected from the source. You can easily get data with at least three data collection methods with our online and offline data gathering tool. I.e Online Questionnaires, Focus Groups, and Reporting.

In our previous articles, we’ve explained why quantitative research methods are more effective than qualitative methods. However, with the Formplus data collection tool, you can gather all types of primary data for academic, opinion or product research.

Collect Online & Offline Data with Formplus

Here are 7 top data collection methods and tools for Academic, Opinion or Product Research

The following are the top 7 data collection methods for Academic, Opinion-based or product research. Also discussed in detail is the nature, pros and cons of each one. At the end of this segment, you will be best informed about which method best suits your research.

INTERVIEW

An interview is a face-to-face conversation between two individuals with the sole purpose of collecting relevant information to satisfy a research purpose. Interviews are of different types namely; Structured, Semi-structured, and unstructured with each having a slight variation from the other.

Use this interview consent form template to let an interviewee give you consent to use data gotten from your interviews for investigative research purposes.

Structured Interviews – Simply put, it is a verbally administered questionnaire. In terms of depth, it is surface level and is usually completed within a short period. For speed and efficiency, it is highly recommendable, but it lacks depth.

Semi-structured Interviews – In this method, there subsist several key questions which cover the scope of the areas to be explored. It allows a little more leeway for the researcher to explore the subject matter.

Unstructured Interviews – It is an in-depth interview that allows the researcher to collect a wide range of information with a purpose. An advantage of this method is the freedom it gives a researcher to combine structure with flexibility even though it is more time-consuming.

**Pros**

In-depth information

Freedom of flexibility

Accurate data.

**Cons**

Time-consuming

Expensive to collect.

What are the best Data Collection Tools for Interviews?

For collecting data through interviews, here are a few tools you can use to easily collect data.

**Audio Recorder**

An audio recorder is used for recording sound on disc, tape, or film. Audio information can meet the needs of a wide range of people, as well as provide alternatives to print data collection tools.

**Digital Camera**

An advantage of a digital camera is that it can be used for transmitting those images to a monitor screen when the need arises.

Camcorder

A camcorder is used for collecting data through interviews. It provides a combination of both an audio recorder and a video camera. The data provided is qualitative in nature and allows the respondents to answer questions asked exhaustively. If you need to collect sensitive information during an interview, a camcorder might not work for you as you would need to maintain your subject’s privacy.

Want to conduct an interview for qualitative data research or special report? Use this online interview consent form template to allow the interviewee to give their consent before you use the interview data for research or report. With premium features like e-signature, upload fields, form security, etc., Formplus Builder is the perfect tool to create your preferred online consent forms without coding experience.

**QUESTIONNAIRES**

This is the process of collecting data through an instrument consisting of a series of questions and prompts to receive a response from individuals it is administered to. Questionnaires are designed to collect data from a group.

For clarity, it is important to note that a questionnaire isn’t a survey, rather it forms a part of it. A survey is a process of data gathering involving a variety of data collection methods, including a questionnaire.

On a questionnaire, there are three kinds of questions used. They are; fixed-alternative, scale, and open-ended. With each of the questions tailored to the nature and scope of the research.

**Pros**

Can be administered in large numbers and is cost-effective.

It can be used to compare and contrast previous research to measure change.

Easy to visualize and analyze.

Questionnaires offer actionable data.

Respondent identity is protected.

Questionnaires can cover all areas of a topic.

Relatively inexpensive.

**Cons**

Answers may be dishonest or the respondents lose interest midway.

Questionnaires can’t produce qualitative data.

Questions might be left unanswered.

Respondents may have a hidden agenda.

Not all questions can be analyzed easily.

**Resources for Further Reading**

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