

SOURCE OF DATA.

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Source of Data

Data can be defined as the quantitative or qualitative values of a variable. Data is plural of datum which literally means to give or something given. Data is thought to be the lowest unit of information from which other measurements and analysis can be done. Data can be numbers, images, words, figures, facts or ideas. Data in itself cannot be understood and to get information from the data one must interpret it into meaningful information. There are various methods of interpreting data. Data sources are broadly classified into primary and secondary data.

IMPORTANCE OF DATA AND DATA COLLECTION

Data is one of the most important and vital aspect of any research studies. Researchers conducted in different fields of study can be different in methodology but every research is based on data which is analyzed and interpreted to get information. Data is the basic unit in statistical studies. Statistical information like census, population variables, health statistics, and road accidents records are all developed from data.

DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

There are two sources of data collection techniques. Primary and Secondary data collection techniques, Primary data collection uses surveys, experiments or direct observations. Secondary data collection may be conducted by collecting information from a diverse source of documents or electronically stored information, census and market studies are examples of a common sources of secondary data. This is also referred to as "data mining."

PRIMARY DATA

Primary data means original data that has been collected specially for the purpose in mind. It means someone collected the data from the original source first hand. Data collected this way is called primary data.

Primary data has not been published yet and is more reliable, authentic and objective. Primary data has not been changed or altered by human beings; therefore its validity is greater than secondary data.

Survey

Survey is most commonly used method in social sciences, management, marketing and psychology to some extent. Surveys can be conducted in different methods.

Questionnaire

Questionnaire is the most commonly used method in survey. Questionnaires are a list of questions either an open-ended or close-ended for which the respondent give answers. Questionnaire can be conducted via telephone, mail, live in a public area, or in an institute, through electronic mail or through fax and other methods.

Interview

Interview is a face-to-face conversation with the respondent. It is slow, expensive, and they take people away from their regular jobs, but they allow in-depth questioning and follow-up questions.

Observations

Observations can be done while letting the observing person know that he is being observed or without letting him know. Observations can also be made in natural settings as well as in artificially created environment.

ADVANTAGES OF PRIMARY DATA

- ❖ Data interpretation is better.
- ❖ Targeted Issues are addressed.
- ❖ Efficient Spending for Information.
- ❖ Decency of Data.
- ❖ Addresses Specific Research Issues.
- ❖ Greater Control.
- ❖ Proprietary Issues.

DISADVANTAGES OF PRIMARY RESEARCH

- ✓ **High Cost**
- ✓ **Time Consuming**
- ✓ **Inaccurate Feed-backs**
- ✓ **More number of resources is required**

SECONDARY DATA

Secondary data is the data that has been already collected by and readily available from other sources. When we use Statistical Method with Primary Data from another purpose for our purpose we refer to it as Secondary Data. It means that one purpose's Primary Data is another purpose's Secondary Data. So that secondary data is data that is being reused. Such data are more quickly obtainable than the primary data.

These secondary data may be obtained from many sources, including literature, industry surveys, compilations from computerized databases and information systems, and computerized or mathematical models of environmental processes.

Published Printed Sources

There are varieties of published printed sources. Their credibility depends on many factors. For example, on the writer, publishing company and time and date when published. New sources are preferred and old sources should be avoided as new technology and researches bring new facts into light.

Books

Books are available today on any topic that you want to research. The uses of books start before even you have selected the topic. After selection of topics books provide insight on how much work has already been done on the same topic and you can prepare your literature review. Books are secondary source but most authentic one in secondary sources.

Journals/periodicals

Journals and periodicals are becoming more important as far as data collection is concerned. The reason is that journals provide up-to-date information which at times books cannot and secondly, journals can give information on the very specific topic on which you are researching rather talking about more general topics.

Magazines/Newspapers

Magazines are also effective but not very reliable. Newspaper on the other hand is more reliable and in some cases the information can only be obtained from newspapers as in the case of some political studies.

Published Electronic Sources

As internet is becoming more advance, fast and reachable to the masses; it has been seen that much information that is not available in printed form is available on internet. In the past the credibility of internet was questionable but today it is not. The reason is that in the past journals and books were seldom published on internet but today almost every journal and book is available online. Some are free and for others you have to pay the price.

E-journals: e-journals are more commonly available than printed journals. Latest journals are difficult to retrieve without subscription but if your university has an e-library you can view any journal, print it and those that are not available you can make an order for them.

General Websites; Generally websites do not contain very reliable information so their content should be checked for the reliability before quoting from them.

Weblogs: Weblogs are also becoming common. They are actually diaries written by different people. These diaries are as reliable to use as personal written diaries.

ADVANTAGES OF SECONDARY DATA

- Inexpensive**
- Easily accessible**
- Immediately available**
- Will provide essential background and help to clarify or refine research problem – essential for literature review**
- Secondary data sources will provide research method alternatives.**
- Will also alert the researcher to any potential difficulties.**

DISADVANTAGES OF SECONDARY DATA

- * Expensive
- * Not immediately available – takes time to define problem, sampling frame, method and analysis.
- * Not as readily accessible
- * Incomplete Information

CONCLUSION

Primary research entails the use of immediate data in determining the survival of the market. The popular ways to collect primary data consist of surveys, interviews and focus groups, which shows that direct relationship between potential customers and the companies. Whereas secondary research is a means to reprocess and reuse collected information as an indication for betterments of the service or product.