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WHY CONDUCT PR RESEARCH? BEST PR PRACTICES

Unit Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

- Appreciate the role, scope, and need for research in public relation.
- Understand the theoretical underpinnings of public relations.
- Describe the various kinds of research and methodologies adopted by PR researchers.
- Decipher which research method to use when.
- Differentiate between Field and Desk research techniques.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Research is the foundation of any field, whether it be science, medicine, or the humanities. Because, to become robust, any profession needs a body of knowledge, and Public Relations is no different.

Make a profession relevant, it is crucial to conduct research inside and about it.

In this Unit, we will cover the significance of research in Public Relations and the many research methodologies used by professionals in the field.

1.3 RESEARCH AND EVALUATION IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

According to several analysts, public relations professionals do not value research. It is frequently perceived in a limited manner. Many may lack the confidence to do research and evaluation studies, while others may lack the educational background and experience in social science research necessary to conduct such investigations. Numerous practitioners rely on output measurement via media coverage to reflect the contribution of the programme.

Pseudo Research:

Other reasons for not conducting research could be that management does not support expenditures on a discipline that it perceives to be intangible, or that research is time-consuming and complicated, therefore the public relations manager does not undertake it. It is considered that good research reflects issue areas that practitioners would prefer to stay dormant to avoid being "exposed" upon failure. Many conduct a semblance of study to impress the management or the client, which is ineffective.

Stewart A. Smith provides the following explanations for the many causes of bogus research:

a) Organizational politics: In this instance, research is employed to obtain authority, defend choices, or serve as a scapegoat.

b) Service promotion: To impress clients or prospects with the sponsor's sophistication, modernity, or authenticity.

c) Personal satisfaction: In this instance, the study is an exercise in boosting one's ego to keep up with trends or to display gained talents.

A practitioner of public relations does not need to be a research expert, but he or she must believe in research and have a working grasp of the research process to outsource work to external research companies. Someone has correctly stated that one does not need to be a motor technician to drive a car, but it is helpful to know a few basics about car mechanics while visiting a garage.

Research is Instinctive:

Researchers feel that research is innate to most individuals. As humans who strive for excellence, we routinely conduct study. For instance, when we visit a supermarket, we examine numerous brands of a product before selecting the one that meets our need/desire, budget, and level of

satisfaction. Students frequently conduct extensive desk and primary research when applying to several universities for college admission.

When they have more than two colleges to pick from, they collect information on their rating, speak with faculty, and may even chat with alumni before deciding. Similarly, public relations managers have depended on research in one form or another to demonstrate to the client that.

a) Their work has had an influence on the public or audience, and

b) They have studied media vehicles to determine whether they have disseminated the press release's news.

According to Stacks, research in any activity or programme is "the beginning of a process designed to achieve a certain goal." As public relations are a management role, choices cannot be made in the absence of study.

Research is Strategic:

According to Dolphin, research not only serves a function, but also seeks to determine whether the means of communication are suitable. It also helps determine what sorts of messaging and topics may be necessary to improve the organization's perception or develop a new image.

Facilitate decision-making, public relations uses both informal and formal research methods. After addressing a few models used in PR research, we will examine a variety of methodologies for both types of study.

1.4 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS IN PUBLIC RELATION RESEARCH

Scholars of public relations feel that practitioners will soon have to use public relations as a multidisciplinary body of knowledge. "Communication expertise," asserts 6andra Oliver, "is initiative-taking, initiative-taking, catalytic, precognitive, and supporting; its conventional methods of strategic programming with comprehensive plans now embrace post-technological management thinking."

Mintzberg believes that the detailed plans manage the role of communication and serve in three directions, namely the external environment, the organisation, and the input end of the strategy formulation process. For example, Mintzberg argues that the issue for the role of stakeholder relations in the policy and practice of research on corporate strategy is to guarantee that the research focus is based on what he calls "re-conceived strategic programming rather than pre-conceived strategic programming."

The Process of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (PRE):

The Institute of Public Relations recommends The Planning, Research, and Evaluation Process (PRE) as a component of a PR campaign.

The first phase of audit Where are we? entails conducting research and collecting data to provide the foundation for the program's campaign.

The objectives that must be linked with organisational goals and objectives are determined in Stage 2 by "Where we need to be."

In Stage 3, "How do we get there?" research and evaluation must be prioritised, and decisions must be made regarding the sort of measurement to be applied and the pre-testing methodologies to be implemented.

In Stage 4, "Are we getting there?" is concerned with ongoing research to ensure the programme is on track, and decisions are made regarding any necessary adjustments. It may also indicate that the programme must be terminated.

Examines the extent to which the campaign or program's objectives were met.

This dynamic cyclical research process can be represented as a pyramid with four levels.

1.5 CUTLIP, CENTER, AND BROOM'S PII MODEL

Cutlip et al. contend that evaluation means many things to different individuals, but evaluation ideally refers to planning, implementation, and impact levels of a comprehensive programme assessment (PII). The evaluation process includes the following stages:

Stage One:

- The initial evaluation phase consists of the following:
- Adequacy of the background knowledge base for programme design
- Content appropriateness of messages and activities

Stage Two:

Quality of message and activity content

- The following constitutes the second stage:
- Number of messages sent to media and number of actions planned.
- Number of activities placed, and number of activities conducted.
- Number of recipients and participants
- Participants in messages and activities
- Various levels and phases of programme evaluation

Level Three:

The following constitutes the third stage:

- Number of recipients who learn message content.
- Number of recipients who change viewpoint.
- Number of recipients who change attitude.
- Number of recipients who behave as requested.
- Number of recipients who repeat behaviour.

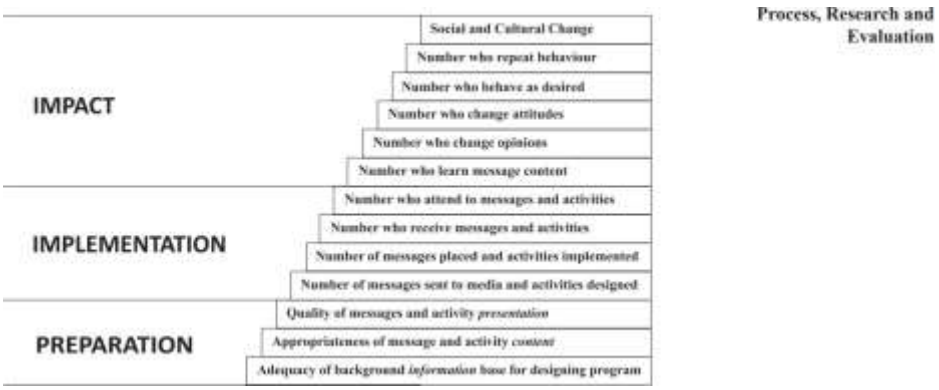
Social and cultural evolution

The PII model is progressive and provides additional information for evaluating effectiveness.

The bottom rung, reflected as stage one above, is the preparation of evaluation and examines if sufficient background information is available to organise the programme appropriately. The content of created input is evaluated to determine whether it conforms to the plan, and the presentation of material is evaluated to determine whether it contributes to the desired response. A professionally written press release, for instance, does not guarantee that it reached the media on time and was covered.

In phase two, implementation research would examine how tactics and efforts have been implemented, including distribution of materials, attendance at events, and exposure of target audiences to the messaging.

According to Cutlip et al., each phase of programme evaluation contributes to increased comprehension and adds information for assessing effectiveness. For example, the evaluation of preparation evaluates the quality and sufficiency of information and strategic planning. Implementation of evaluation chronicles the adequacy of the techniques and effort, while impact evaluation reflects feedback on the program's outcomes.

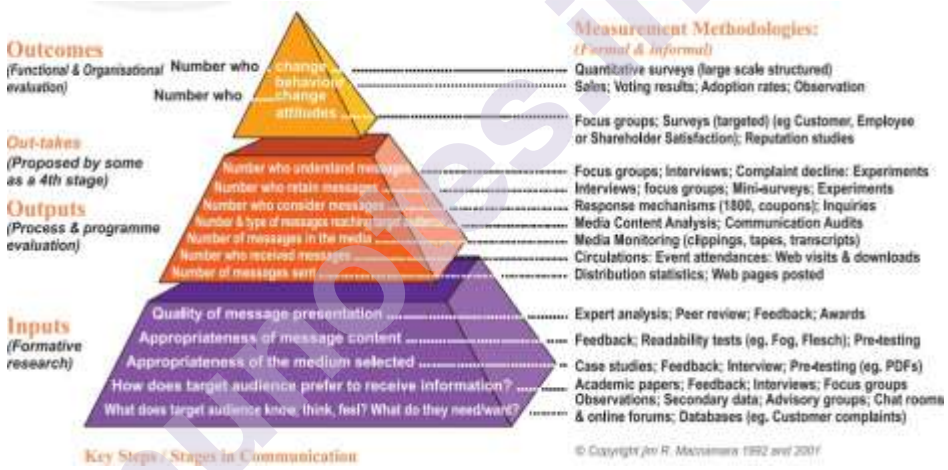


The PII model, Cutlip, Center and Broom's Evaluation Model

1.6 MCNAMARA'S PYRAMID MODEL

The framework of McNamara's model, formerly known as the "macro model" and now as the "Pyramid Model of PR research," is "bottom up." According to McNamara, "the pyramid metaphor is excellent for emphasising that, at the base, when communication planning is initiated, practitioners have a vast quantity of information to gather and a variety of media and activity alternatives. Choices and selections are made to deliver messages to specific target audiences via specific media to finally achieve clearly defined goals (the peak of the programme or project).

Using McNamara as a source, Watson et al. state that 'Cutlip et al PII's model was used to extract the essential steps of the communication process. In contrast, the pyramid model provides additional value by detailing the evaluation procedures for each of its three levels. Although feedback loops are not explicitly depicted on the model, "it is implicit in this model that research findings from each step are continuously fed back into planning."



Pyramid Model of PR Research, Jim. R. McNamara

(Image Source: Egyankosh)

1.7 INFORMAL RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

Many feel that informal research methodologies continue to dominate the public relations industry, despite the availability of very sophisticated research instruments. Among the informal research methods are the following:

Personal Contacts:

Public relations managers, like other managers, develop the ability to network with individuals who can serve as crucial contacts. Since public relations is all about information, pictures, perceptions, and reputation, having personal contacts within the organisation and among diverse stakeholders outside the organisation is quite beneficial for reading the

pulse of different TA groups. Many individuals believe that no survey can provide the same level of insight as personal connections.

Gatekeepers:

Gatekeepers are characterised as opinion leaders whose opinions matter to those groups of people who rely on them for social, economic, political, or emotional support. There are gatekeepers in all professions and social groups. An opinion leader can be a physician, an engineer, a teacher, a politician, a celebrity, or a village chief. In the Indian context, it is often said that mail carriers in rural areas and village barbers are influential opinion leaders. This is because it is not uncommon for a postman to read letters to their recipients and assist them in sending replies. It is only natural that his opinion is sought on various issues, as he is regarded as a wise individual.

Similarly, in Indian villages, one could observe groups of people conversing in barbershops that are frequently situated beneath trees. Numerous political leaders in India assert that the forecasts made by these opinion leaders are even more accurate than those made by psephologists.

It is considered that if the gatekeepers are swayed, so will the individuals who view them as informed and, in some situations, as their role models.

Mail Analysis:

Most of the letters that product line companies receive from their customers may not be complimentary. Periodic study of letters can assist in identifying areas of disapproval and concern. Numerous businesses now use their websites to address customer complaints.

The Intranet of Satyam computers, which connects its employees in numerous cities and countries, was developed to reflect how clients saw the company's services so that staff could receive feedback and improve.

Field Reports:

Companies with a focus on marketing typically have agents, field officers, and marketing officers stationed in various locations. They transmit periodic field reports. For example, Hindustan Unilever Ltd., an FMCG firm with a big market in the rural hinterland of the country, sends all its new recruits, regardless of their discipline, to village postings for them to grasp the dynamics of the rural market.

The Department of Field Publicity of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting employs many field publicity officers who travel throughout the country to disseminate information on various social issues and the achievements of the government in the welfare sector, as well as to collect feedback for the government to take corrective action.

Focus Teams:

Focus groups are identified with the study objectives in mind. In this method, the sample is subjected to in-depth questioning to discover not only what is being said, but also why it is being said, to gain insight into the attitudes and perspectives of the targeted population.

Media Reflections:

Daily media scanning is one of the most crucial duties of a public relations manager to understand the environment and the media's reaction to it. Regular media monitoring reveals issues of popular concern and media agenda setting. Later in the Unit, monitoring the media scientifically through quantitative measures and doing content assessments through formal research procedures are explored.

Blog Monitoring:

People's engagement with the media has undergone a paradigm shift as a result of the new media. The pervasive media, which affects everything under the sun and comes from all sides and directions, transcending geographical boundaries, has made organisations even more concerned about maintaining their image. An unhappy employee, client, or enemy can wreak damage on an individual's or organization's reputation. Following the blogosphere and digging through the comments can yield a huge assortment of perspectives and viewpoints. Several types of software are now available to fast monitor the blogs on a topic to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issues.

1.8 FORMAL RESEARCH METHODS

Formal methods of research include attitude and opinion studies, image surveys, communication audits, media studies, and secondary data analysis, among others.

In addition to these, public relations professionals must have access to a wealth of syndicated research about communities, media, and the media consumption habits of the general population.

A Research-Based Planning Instrument:

Public Relations departments occasionally launch campaigns and programmes on a variety of topics, such as institutional advertising, the use of various mass media, staff motivational programmes designed to increase productivity, and crisis information distribution programmes, to mention a few.

The research must therefore be conducted as a tool for planning and not as an afterthought. The research's scope must be outlined by organisational objectives. Ineffective is research that is neither specific nor comprehensive. The practitioner must determine the most pertinent facts for study direction decision-making. Many academics believe that

research should supplement experience and judgement rather than necessarily replace them.

- In 2004, Gaunt and Wright performed an interesting online poll to which practitioners from 25 countries responded. The research gives several helpful insights, such as the following:
- The demand for measurement is fuelled by CEOs, who view it as an intrinsic component of the programme.
- In media evaluation, more external communication practitioners measured outputs than results.
- Opinion polling was deemed the most successful method. Dashboards and advertising value equivalents (AVEs) were perceived to be the least efficient.
- Many organisations employed feedback systems for internal communication. However, 23 percent of practitioners relied on instinct.
- Cost (77), time (59), lack of knowledge and dubious usefulness of results (each 58) were regarded as the leading obstacles to measurement.
- 65% of respondents believed that Return on Investment (ROI) could be implemented in their programmes.

1.9 WHAT TO RESEARCH?

As the term implies, research is the investigation of what is already present (i.e., "Re+search") but is not manifest. In other words, we intend to explore something that is either obscure or elusive.

The first step is therefore to establish the aim, i.e., what are we trying to determine? Is it the access of the target audience to a message, its recall, assimilation, and action, or is it the reaction of a certain stakeholder group after a particular decision has been made? It can also involve assessing the coverage obtained following a press conference. An additional field of inquiry might consist of analysing media content to determine the quality of coverage, i.e., the proportion of negative, good, and neutral coverage. In this situation, one must decide ahead what constitutes favourable, negative, and neutral coverage from the standpoint of the organisation.

Research is not an independent discipline; rather, it must be integrated into a programme from the outset. The program's objectives must specify the research project. Additionally, the research purpose would guide the selection of research methodology.

For instance, if the purpose of a programme is to raise awareness about an organization's CSR initiative, then the measurement criteria could be the number of target audience members who received information via each

medium (used for information dissemination). The second question may be what they think of the effort.

Consider a hypothetical situation in which a company's plant management wants to design a programme to push employees to attain higher levels of productivity, with the support of its corporate public relations and communication department. In this instance, the programme would include a variety of media, including shop-door conversations, brainstorming meetings, a bulletin board, brochures, a house diary, the Intranet, etc. As the TA in this type of study are defined, the internal stakeholders and the programme team should preferably have access to their demographic profile to determine the most suitable media. The data is freely accessible through the Human Resources department.

In the evaluation, the study would seek to determine whether the intended TA received the messages and whether the employees understood and assimilated the messages. It would also seek to determine whether the programme was able to achieve its goal of increased productivity within a specified time frame. If there are several shifts and assembly lines, one can also determine the relative change in employee behaviour between shifts/lines. The review may also seek to determine which media were deemed more dependable.

The second area of examination is determining the appropriateness of specific messages that appeared in the employee-oriented company magazine.

Another area of study would involve determining exposure, readability, legibility, believability, and the desired action.

If the evaluation is conducted through a public opinion survey, the number of messages placed and the number of media vehicles used would determine whether the intended audience got the opportunity to view/read the message. In other words, the investigation would seek to determine whether the intended OTS was accomplished (Opportunity to See). However, exposure of messages in the media is not a guarantee that the intended audiences were reached. Not all media content is read or viewed with comprehension. In other words, reach is not necessarily equivalent to access, and access does not necessarily equate to message comprehension. Messages may be comprehended, but they may not be deemed credible. All the above may be great for the organisation, but the targeted TA may not act for assorted reasons, such as societal conditioning, self-interest, or a lack of willingness to act. The three-step research process described above can be used to find this information.

For a study of this nature, it is impossible to rely just on quantitative data; instead, qualitative research methods, such as in-depth and focus group interviews, must be used to get insight into the reasons why people do or do not act.

It is essential for the public relations professional to keep the management or client regularly informed of the research's findings and the corrective

steps he recommends. One-time study is seldom sufficient, as it may only uncover findings pertinent to that time. Research must be an ongoing endeavour. All research contributes to a corpus of information that must be preserved for future use.

When programme implementers use mass media, an analysis of mass media reach and access is conducted to determine how many individuals were exposed to the messages.

1.10 FORMATIVE RESEARCH

Program implementers perform formative research with the assistance of experts to define the problem that the proposed programme intends to address through communicative intervention. The above-mentioned PRE model covers the research method for formative research in the first three steps, namely, "where are we," "where do we need to go," and "how do we get there?"

1.11 OPINION SURVEYS

Surveys are a quantitative and qualitative method of primary research. The former refers to the collection of data in terms of number/quantity and objectivity, which can be projected scientifically; the use of closed-ended questions to obtain precise responses. The latter, qualitative research, refers to a subjective, in–depth interrogation of respondents using an open–ended or unstructured form of response.

The fundamental purpose of a survey is to determine how a target audience feels about a business, product, service, or issue. The intended audience may be quite large; thus, researchers use a scientific method to pick a cross-section of individuals from that group to determine the group's average opinion. A margin of error is also accounted for. Opinion polls are not limited to predicting political outcomes; they can be used in a range of fields. For instance, a market research firm may compile weekly music charts by analysing CD sales data from, say, 500 retail outlets. Similarly, an opinion poll can be conducted among a specialist group to assess the CSR or corporate governance score of various businesses.

1.12 RESEARCH IMPERATIVES

The following are essential components of a Research Study:

The researcher must have a reasonable understanding of what the investigation is intended to discover.

- **Research Rationale:** Frequently, the objectives determine the methodology.
- **Methodology:** It must be determined if the study will be based on secondary research or primary research. If it is the latter, specify whether the research will be quantitative through a questionnaire,

qualitative through in-depth interviews, or qualitative through focus group discussions using a research guide.

- **Universe:** It is essential to identify your intended audience, whose opinions the research seeks. This will aid in establishing the scope of investigation.

1.13 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Researchers use a questionnaire and administer it in person, by mail, or over the phone to inquire about respondents' perspectives on the many problems under investigation. Personal interview surveys, sometimes known as "mall intercepts," are conducted in shopping malls, private residences, and public spaces. There can be one, two, or more checkboxes on a questionnaire, or a combination of close-ended and open-ended items. In the latter scenario, more frank responses are anticipated. In the case of open-ended questions, the respondent provides a descriptive answer, which might provide valuable insights into his or her attitudes, which is not achievable with a "yes" or "no" response.

Attitude Scale, which contains Likert Scale, Semantic Differential Scale, and Rank-Order Scales, is an instrument designed to collect these evaluative data.

As it is simple to construct and analyse, the Likert scale is the most used form of attitude scale. Additionally, it is easy for responders to respond. Respondents could be given the following options: "Agree/ Disagree/ Neither agree nor disagree."

Additionally, the Semantic Differential Scale is simple to administer. The scale includes bipolar words such as "Expensive/Inexpensive, Beautiful/Ugly, etc."

In Rank-Order Scale, respondents are asked to rate objects according to some criterion, such as quality or cost-effectiveness. This allows research to get data for competitor items as well.

Using the Rank-order scale approach, (Delman, a US-based PR firm, requested respondents in a global study to rank various organisations on a scale from 1 ("I don't trust them at all") to 9 ("I trust them very much"). In the study, no specific businesses or organisations were highlighted. Some interesting findings arose. Some particulars:

Mexico, India, Japan, Brazil, South Korea, Spain, Ireland, Britain, and Russia are among the nations in which business is more trusted than the government.

Germany, Italy, Canada, France, China, the Netherlands, Australia, and the Netherlands are among the nations where the public sector is viewed as more trustworthy than the private sector.

Despite this, the economic downturn occurred in the United States, yet respondents from around the world (52) stated they trusted US-based enterprises.

Britain, Sweden, Germany, and Canada had the highest levels of trust, ranging from 68 for Britain to 75 for Sweden. At the bottom of the spectrum, at 24, were Chinese and Russian businesses.

1.14 DEFINE SAMPLING

Sampling is an essential component of a research design and must address who to survey, how many to question, and how to choose them. In other words, it is necessary to determine the sample unit, sample size, and sampling process. The size of the sample depends on the researcher's budget, available time, and desired level of precision. Sampling can be probability-based or non-probability-based.

Check Your Progress:

1. What is Public Relation research? What do you understand by Pseudo research?

2. Explain the techniques involved in Informal Research.

3. Discuss research and evaluation in public relations.

1.16 PROBABILITY SAMPLING

Simple Random Sampling:

Every member of the population has an equal probability of getting selected using this method. For example, if there are 100 students in a class, the random sampling can occur every fifth, tenth, or any other number that must be adhered to scientifically, ensuring that every individual has an equal chance of being included.

Stratified Sampling:

The population is separated into mutually exclusive categories from which random samples are obtained. For instance, if a class of 100 students includes students from both urban and rural locations, the class will be separated based on the urban/rural divide and then a random sample will be drawn from each group. In this arrangement, both groups would be represented proportionally to their class enrolment.

Cluster (Area) Group:

The researcher divides the population into mutually exclusive groups and then selects a sample from each group to interview. It is a multi-stage study in which natural groupings are sampled first, followed by sub-samples of each group for interviews. To example, a researcher may collect a sample of institutions that teach mass communication and a sample of students from each institution. Subsequently, a subsample of those selected is chosen for in-depth interviews.

Non-Probability Sampling:

Convenience Sampling: The researcher selects the most accessible people of the population from whom to collect data. Exemplify, the researcher conducts interviews in his area to gain insight into various trends.

Judgment Sampling: The researcher uses his judgement to select individuals from which to collect data. For instance, professionals in the relevant field of study, such as cardiologists to understand heart disorders or environmental scientists to comprehend the condition of the environment, etc.

Quota Sampling:

The researcher picks a predetermined number of respondents from one or more groups, based on age, gender, financial level, etc.

1.17 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Conducting interviews via telephone or in-person is one of the survey methods. Through a well-structured questionnaire or a study agenda created by the researcher, a succession of questions can be asked during an interview.

In-person interviews can be costly and time-consuming. However, the rate of refusal would be lower than for telephone interviews. When the researcher phones, it may not be an ideal time. The respondent, if uninterested, may provide an excuse of being busy or simply reject until the researcher is skilled in his or her work and able to encourage the person on the other end of the line to participate in the interview.

The researcher must also select this sample scientifically, i.e., arbitrarily, systematically, or representatively.

1.18 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The focus group interview technique is derived from the marketing research technique, which social science academics have adopted in a beneficial manner.

For performing public relations initiatives, surveys, secondary data analysis, and focus groups might be effective.

This research method has the potential to provide a comprehensive insight of the attitudes and opinions of the target group. However, only researchers with proper training can express them. According to Daymon and Holloway, the key characteristics of focus-group research are: "they provide evidence from many voices on the same topic; they are interactive; they provide a supportive forum for expressing suppressed views; and they allow you to collect a large amount of data in a relatively short amount of time."

1.19 RESEARCH ANALYSIS

Typically, the moderator or test researcher analyses replies in qualitative research. In quantitative research, the analyst is supervised by the researcher.

The responses to a closed-ended questionnaire are statistically analysed using numbers. Responses to open-ended questions are coded and converted to a numeric score before being collated and analysed. Most of these polls utilize computer analysis.

Report: The research report for both qualitative and quantitative surveys include a brief executive overview of the findings as well as full findings presented in tables, graphs, and charts. Occasionally, it may also include recommendations, if requested.

1.20 MEDIA RESEARCH

A considerable number of public relations is accomplished via mass media. Similarly, media portrayals of organisations influence their reputation and engagement with diverse stakeholders. What is media writing, why is it written, are there biases in the media's position, and do media have an impact are perennial concerns that plague the ordinary public relations professional.

Media Content Analysis:

The application of systematic processes to determine objectively what is being said in the media is defined as content analysis. Press clippings and broadcast monitors simply reveal what was covered, not necessarily what is being read and seen. In addition to news, researchers track editorials, op-eds, and letters to the editor to comprehend the media's stance and bias on problems that affect organisations, as well as letters and phone calls from readers to gauge public sentiment.

Grunig and Hunt allude to the research's effects, which must include the following:

- Was the message received and comprehended?
- Was the message recalled" Were actions done in response to the communication?

In the case of the media, it should describe how the media covered the news, if it was based on the press release, whether additional information was included, and what the overall impact of the story was, i.e., good, neutral, or negative.

Organizations typically maintain track of at least some media through press clippings and may employ scientific or crude methods to determine whether media coverage is positive, negative, or neutral.

Numerous organisations use outside PR/CC firms to monitor the media, including print, electronic, and internet, to remain informed of its coverage in the media and the media's stance on its issues. Professional media tracking services use the proper technology and tools to conduct scientific media tracking.

There are numerous areas that can be tracked through media coverage that can be uncovered through media research.

Here is a checklist:

- Which periodicals and electronic media reported the news?
- How frequently?
- How many articles have by-lines?
- How many items are obtained through wire services?
- coverage of opponents
- Have images and visuals been used?
- What is the primary message carried?
- What is the area occupied by articles?
- Are their spokesperson's quotes featured in the articles?"
- Mention of rivals in the same narrative
- Overview of the subject or sector

The stories' perspectives, namely good, negative, and neutral.

It is a matter of contention in professional circles, but many public relations professionals measure coverage in terms of ad space and provide it to management or clients to demonstrate the effort's value in terms of ad space.

1.21 WEB SEARCH

The ephemeral nature of web material makes it difficult for academics to monitor it. It is possible to locate everything on the Internet using various search engines, however certain content may be password-protected. Without the necessary proprietary software, information generated in chat rooms and discussion forums is inaccessible.

According to the "conversation tracker" software, participants' comments, news graphs, mailing lists, and message boards provide a summary image. There are numerous types of content tracking tools available. For example, Com Audit and media monitor-CARMA Asia Pacific are window-based, Com Audit

COMA Audit is among the tools used by researchers for most global markets. The most used spreadsheet application is Microsoft Excel. The growth of websites has led to an increase in software promotion.

The new Vocus programme aims to monitor social networking sites and promises a "fully integrated PR software solution that enables you to communicate with, monitor, and analyse traditional media, bloggers, and the social media world."

Many in the West use the evaluation system devised by the English PR firm Hallmark. Through the procedure, the organisation performing the tracking selects six notifications (the number is limited to six to minimise confusion with too many issues). The messages are associated with corporate objectives, products, promotions, and vital contact information, among other things.

Publications, television media, and the Internet are routinely scanned to ensure that they continue to target the same demographic. The data entry may feel like a tedious administrative task, but it is the analysis that provides value. The evaluation system permits the collecting of alternate communications, such as a negative comment and a response from a competitor. It gathers data on media versus the activity that created media coverage, journalists who are writing about the organisation, corporate spokespersons quoted by the media, and article placement by position in print and electronic media.

When assessing websites, Treadwells' suggests the following:

Ownership: Whose website, is it? Is it sponsored by a recognisable person or organisation?

Authorship: Who wrote the content? What are the qualifications of the author or institution?

Bias: Is the bias visible or latent in favour of or against a certain subject, organisation, or person? " Obtain the other viewpoint, we must search different websites.

Authority: Is the content reviewed" Are there identifiable criteria, reviewers, or editors by which the material is screened or chosen for the web site"

Links: Exist their credible links? "Do you know of any reputable websites that connect to this page?"

Currency: Is the information current?" Not updated websites demonstrate a lack of professionalism and reflect poorly on the author and website.

Analysis of media material can be both quantitative and qualitative. In the former, the research seeks to determine how much, i.e., in terms of quantity, is being covered, whereas in the latter, it seeks to determine what is being said and from what perspective, i.e., positive, negative, or neutral.

1.22 DESK RESEARCH

Internal records/archives, published reports, material in the public domain, the media, websites, publications, reports, court rulings, etc. contain a wealth of valuable information. These are also referred to as secondary data, as the information already exists, whereas survey data is referred to as primary or raw data, which requires interpretation. Using secondary data sources can yield a wealth of information for a PR professional.

Secondary Data Sources:

Information about the media can be obtained from sources within the media as well as from some external sources. The following are examples of media source books and other database publications frequently used by media strategists in the Indian context:

Population Census:

The Census, conducted every ten years, is the most comprehensive database that provides a profile of the Indian population. The census data offer information on the population number, demographic strata, age, sex ratio, literacy level, family size, and forms, among other things. The data also includes information regarding various castes, religions, beliefs, and faiths.

Annual Economic Analysis:

This presents an SEC-based (gender, education, caste, income, and occupation, etc.) industrial survey.

India – Yearbook:

The India - Yearbook, published by the Publications Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, provides a comprehensive picture of facts on government, demography, progress, etc. Since the data are derived from numerous official sources, they are quite accurate and dependable.

INFA:

The Indian News & Feature Alliance Yearbook, also known as the INFA Yearbook, is published annually in Delhi and provides information on numerous newspapers and periodicals. The data includes basic information about India, who is who in the press, marketing, and advertising, a list of publications with information about the number of editions, mechanical data about the size of the publication, and the type of advertisement. Material that will be acceptable to them, circulation, and names of the relevant advertising department personnel, etc.

Audit Bureau of Circulation:

In the early days of advertising, each medium's circulation levels were mirrored in its format.

The figures' veracity is called into question by inconsistencies in reporting and the proclivity of certain media outlets to exaggerate numbers. With the help of newspaper publishers, magazine publishers, advertisers, and advertising agencies, the Audit Bureau of Circulation, sometimes known as ABC, was founded to give an objective evaluation. ABC offers advertisers a neutral and reliable audit of circulation statements from member publications.

The ABC has made modifications to the system to improve its accuracy.

Syndicated Research:

Syndicated research is frequently based on a certain sample or panel survey, the entirety, or a portion of which is distributed to multiple consumers. Numerous marketing research agencies, such as the Indian Marketing and Research Bureau [IMRB], Marketing and Research Group [MARG], and MODE, as well as academic and economic institutions such as the National Council for Applied Economic Research [NCAER] and others, are continually engaged in measuring the pulse of markets and consumer behaviour.

Additionally, client organisations can launch syndicated research. Numerous blue-chip organisations, particularly in the consumer sector, conduct this type of research for the fundamental aim of understanding the market, consumer psychology, and altering paradigms. Over the past couple of decades, there has been a growing need to understand the "media-consumer," his or her media habits, accessibility, and shifting perceptions. This is a result of the expansion of media, particularly in the setting of satellite channels and the ultimate ability of the "remote" to switch channels or choose one media vehicle over another.

Previously, the National Readership Survey (NRS) and now the Indian Readership Survey (IRS) provided marketers and media professionals with a comprehensive database. The IRS conducts a nationwide field survey every quarter.

According to the Media Users Research Council (MURC), the IRS is "Modelled on internationally accepted annual sample spread, the IRS is the world's largest ongoing readership research study with an annual sample size reaching 2.56 lakh respondents. It evaluates newspaper and magazine readership as well as other media consumption, such as television viewing, radio listening, movie attendance, and Internet usage. It provides an in-depth insight of media behaviour through expanded media measurements such as time spent using various media and frequency of media use.

Database for Digital Media:

The Doordarshan and All India Radio publish two publications extensively used by media strategists, namely 'Doordarshan Today and 5adio Handbook. With the explosion of satellite channels and hundreds of hours of daily programming available to the average metropolitan household, media strategists frequently cite television rating point data to support their views.

1.23 LET'S SUM IT UP

The importance of research and evaluation in public relations is highlighted, addressing the lack of value placed on research by professionals and the practice of pseudo-research. The strategic nature of research is emphasized, helping in communication methods, messaging, and image development. The chapter introduces the PRE process, consisting of audit, objective-setting, research prioritization, and ongoing research. The PII model proposed by Cutlip, Center, and Broom is discussed, encompassing background knowledge evaluation, content assessment, and outcome evaluation. Overall, the chapter underscores the significance of research and evaluation in public relations and provides frameworks and models for effective assessment of PR campaigns.

In McNamara's Pyramid Model of PR Research, the emphasis is on gathering vast amounts of information and making strategic choices to deliver specific messages to target audiences through various media channels, achieving defined goals. The model builds on Cutlip et al.'s PII model and provides additional value by detailing evaluation procedures for each level. Informal research techniques commonly used in the PR industry include personal contacts, gatekeepers, mail analysis, field reports, focus groups, media reflections, and blog monitoring. Formal research methods encompass attitude and opinion studies, image surveys, communication audits, media studies, and secondary data analysis. Research is viewed as a planning instrument that should complement experience and judgment. A survey revealed that CEOs drive the demand for measurement, opinion polling is seen as effective, and cost, time, and lack of knowledge are obstacles to measurement.

Research is the exploration of hidden or elusive knowledge. It involves establishing the aim and determining what needs to be investigated, such as audience access to messages or stakeholder reactions. Research

methods can include analysing media content, assessing message quality, and conducting public opinion surveys. It is important to consider the reach, comprehension, and credibility of messages, as well as the desired action from the target audience. Qualitative research methods like interviews and focus groups are valuable for understanding reasons behind actions. Ongoing research is necessary, and findings should be communicated to stakeholders. Surveys are used to gauge opinions on various subjects, and sampling is an important aspect of research design, with sample size and method depending on the researcher's goals.

The text discusses different sampling methods, including simple random sampling, stratified sampling, cluster (area) group sampling, and non-probability sampling methods such as convenience sampling, judgment sampling, and quota sampling. It also mentions in-depth interviews and focus group interviews as survey methods. Research analysis techniques, media research, media content analysis, web search, and evaluation systems for tracking media coverage are discussed. The importance of evaluating websites based on ownership, authorship, bias, authority, links, and currency is emphasized. The analysis of media material can be both quantitative and qualitative, focusing on quantity and content perspective.

The text discusses desk research and secondary data sources in the context of public relations. Desk research involves using internal records, published reports, media sources, websites, and other publicly available information to gather valuable data. Secondary data is contrasted with primary or raw data obtained through surveys. Examples of secondary data sources in India include the Population Census, Annual Economic Analysis, India - Yearbook, INFA Yearbook, Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC), and syndicated research conducted by marketing research agencies and institutions. The Indian Readership Survey (IRS) provides comprehensive data on media consumption habits, while publications like Doordarshan Today and Radio Handbook offer information for media strategists, including television rating point data.

Check Your Progress:

1. Write a note on McNamara’s Pyramid Model
2. Explain the methods involved in Formal Research
3. Discuss research instruments.
4. Define sampling? Explain Probability and Non-Probability Sampling.
5. Explain what you understand by Media Research

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2

WHAT MAKES NEWS – A STUDY OF NEWS VALUES

Unit Structure

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- The definition of news
- The evolution of news from information to content
- The debate around what"s news in the current setting and its implications.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

None of us is unfamiliar with the term News. We all live in a world of news; we are surrounded by it all the time and there are many indirect and direct platforms that serve news to us in myriad formats today. News is what we often wake up to or see breaking before we sleep.

The news wasn"t always available in all these varieties; however, news has always played quite a pivotal role in shaping society, culture, behaviour patterns and even customs. Not long ago, locals gathered at shops to watch and discuss the news. Before that people used to wait for a 30-minute broadcast of news on a radio that was shared by a community. Today, we can not only choose what format we want to see the news in, we even have access to news from all around the world, in whatever narrative and tonality we want it in.

The extremely straightforward question of "What is news?" stays fitting even as we wonder about the future of journalism in the digital age.

What is news?

News is a source of information and it‟s available in several formats. News is the spinal cord of journalism. The basic assumption of journalism is the collection, presentation and interpretation of news which is meant to inform the people about new and novel. News is expected to be objective, honest, and informative.

Definition of news:

News has been defined differently by different experts. Some of the definitions are given below:

1. News is anything out of the ordinary
2. News is the unusual picture of life.
3. News is anything that people talk about; the more it excites the greater its value.,
4. News comprises all current activities which are of general human interest and the best news is that which interests most of the reader.
5. News is the report of an event that is fresh, unusual and which is interesting to a greater number of people.

A journalism professor at Stanford University, USA, Chilton R. Bush, defined news as "…. the report of an event that a reader can and will understand." Another oversimplified yet practical definition can be: "News is an account of an event which a newspaper prints in the belief that by so doing it will profit."

William Metz, professor of journalism, University of Nevada, USA, explains: "While it may not be possible to describe it precisely in words, every news reporter must come to a personal understanding of nature of news, must reach some conclusion about its essence before it is possible to recognise „news‟ when it happens."

News values:

There are many elements that determine whether a piece of information becomes a piece of news or not. We can think about them as filters that will help you weed out all the other information from the news itself. Every piece of news in some way should reflect these values. In this age of information overload, each day you will be presented with hundreds of pieces of information. As news is subjective, you will have to look at them from an unbiased lens and news values help you do that. If you work in niche media, this might differ. In the face of a crisis, these may change. But these are excellent tools for your determining process.

1. Timeliness/Newness:

Time as a lever plays a key role in the impact of a news story. This becomes more prevalent in the given times, as you receive information from every aspect of your life these days. With the boom of digital media and our infinite access to various platforms, the world is now smaller than

ever. You get text updates minutes after things happen, and push notifications to tell you all about global developments. This has turned time into an incredibly challenging aspect of news gathering and publication.

Journalism‟s famous slogan is “Today news is today.” If it is not new, it cannot be news. So, a virus breakout and its impact on people can be relevant, important, and even for people. But if it‟s not reported appropriately on time, it‟s not news.

But that also doesn‟t mean occurrences that happened in the past still can‟t be news, if it was only recently discovered and unreported, the newness takes precedence over the time factor. Very often we see on news, something that happened weeks ago that didn‟t receive media attention then but is now picked up. Its freshness makes it appealing to the audience.

2. Proximity or Nearness:

News‟s importance can also be measured by its place of origin. There are two aspects to proximity, geographical and interest based. If a certain something is happening in my immediate vicinity, like the floods in Assam, it‟s news to individuals in the region. But it‟s also news to the Assamese and Indian diaspora everywhere. While they might not be in the direct hit location, their interest in nearness determines news value. Racism faced by Asians in the United States after the breakout of COVID is a fine example. It was widely reported across Asia.

3. Prominence:

Just like everything else, prominent names make news more interesting. As a society, we are invested in and in awe of several people. This varies from country to country. In India, film stars and cricketers are the biggest names, while in many Western countries, musicians and basketball/soccer players get the maximum limelight. But one thing is common across, big names make news.

In India, there are several celebrities who do everyday activities but land up on news. A fine example would be election day. Every year when news houses cover elections, they ensure that they have a celebrity face on the front page the next day. We all do the very same activity. But we don‟t garner the same attention. An almost ridiculous trend around this is the Paparazzi who wait outside airports to cover celebrity sightings. They camp out there, waiting for a prominent individual to show up so that they can have an exclusive. This has then led to the origin of „Airport Fashion.‟

4. Magnitude:

Occurrences that lead to greater loss of life, damage or natural disaster create interest amongst readers. The California wildfires that burned right through a major part of the state created much buzz amongst all, including

Indians, a society that‟s not well-versed with wildfires as a disaster, simply because of how large it was.

Oftentimes when a tragedy hits, something like natural calamity, reporting last for days. In fact, these kinds of stories are some of the most followed up stories in the sector. The follow-ups often vary from the aftershock and the aftermath of the event and often even go to the extent of informing people about what kind of activities are happening to build back what we lost.

5. Conflict:

Confrontation and conflict between people, nations and groups are all themes of interest. Conflict leads to the extra-ordinary and that leads to the news. Geo-political conflicts can manifest as wars and in this global village, wars dominate the news. The Russian invasion of Ukraine gets massive coverage across the globe with multiple narratives.

A quite familiar format of conflict reporting happens in politics. During assembly sessions, there are often intense arguments and debates between the sitting political party and the opposition. You may observe these after every assembly session or newspaper. Both intellectual and physical conflicts are reported depending on how big the conflict is.

6. Oddity/Unusualness:

A dog biting an average person is not news but if a man bites a dog, it is news because it is distinctive. People enjoy reading about exceptional things - whatever the magnitude may be. Often small children who can speak multiple languages make it to the newspaper, although it makes no difference to the social fabric because it‟s unusual.

There have been reports of petroleum being present in borewells in some of the regions in India. While there is a perfectly empirical explanation as to why this happens when it happens, there are readers who are extremely intrigued by its nature.

7. Consequence:

Things that come with deep and wide consequences interest people. For instance, news about budget, rise in petrol price, electricity rates and a pay scale revision committee etc, are all themes that interest people. It's because these actions have an impact on their everyday life.

8. Human interest:

Humans are emotional beings. They try to connect dots and try to find commonalities between themselves and others to find a sense of belongingness. There‟s neuroscience research that proves that when you are reading someone‟s story, you start experiencing it/visualising it. That‟s why we feel upset after reading the news about children being abandoned. That‟s why we all love an underdog story. Because we put ourselves in

their shoes. Any story that speaks directly to human emotions, is a human-interest story.

Feature stories or a fine example of human-interest reporting. Sometimes you will see full-page coverage of certain individuals and their lives Journey. It‟s also an extremely popular format because it makes you feel connected to another individual.

Evolution of news as a content format:

No other form of information dissemination has undergone a radical shift like the news has in the last couple of decades. From format, shape, and structure, all the way to the actual purpose, the news is no more the same. A big trigger for this drastic shift is the unprecedented growth of technology and the tremendous growth in terms of internet penetration. News used to be something that was served to you along with your morning tea, now the news industry is so innovative and competitive, that you can read live tweets about the real-time sports match by your favourite journalist. News is now beyond newspapers, radio, and TV. It‟s delivered to you via WhatsApp chatbots, push notifications and even curated emails.

Even with the growth of news dissemination being so disorienting, the biggest shift is still the emergence so clear agendas, propaganda, and polarization. Many publishing houses changed the way they worked and are now often acting as a mouthpiece for a certain group. If you pick up 6 different national dailies from the same city, all of them will have different headlines. This contest to turn everything into bite-sized is also not actively advancing objectivity. This is why we need to look at news values now differently.

The importance of visuals, indicated by Caple and Bednarek (2015) and Dick (2014), informs us that halting audio-visuals are certainly worth listing as a news value in their own right. So, any coverage that comes with the most impactful visuals, may get the centre stage. It‟s not just about text and good storytelling anymore. There is also evidence to support the arguments of Phillips (2015) and Schultz (2007), among others, that conflict and exclusivity are both worthy of consideration for new news values. But something that only existed passively in the past, the importance of a concept we call “shareability” is striking. We all use that word in our everyday conversations. We describe the content and social media posts as „shareworthy.‟ Today's news also demands to be shareable. So, when one drafts the headlines, when they choose the visuals and tone, this becomes a key factor. Will this news be shareable?

While traditional news values haven‟t completely lost their purpose, there are emerging news values that one needs to be aware of. They are as follows:

Exclusivity:

Anything that‟s exclusive and available to a premium selective group makes news more interesting. People are extremely interested in

participating in things that other people don‟t have access to. Similarly, they are excited to read about things that other people haven‟t read. The exclusivity is what makes it interesting for them.

Sad news:

As much as you want to protect yourself from the doomsday narrative, unwelcome news works like a charm. If you do a quick analysis of your everyday newspaper, you will easily understand that there is more negative news and positive news out there. It is simply because there is a larger consumer base for negative news often. Any negative news with the same magnitude, conflict, consequences and is more interesting than positive news with the same values.

Surprise:

Stories that have an element of surprise, stories that make you gasp with a twist, are stories that generate a lot of interest.

Audio-visuals:

As we discussed earlier, powerful photography, videography, and even illustrations to support the story can help. Stories with no kind of visual aid find it hard to connect with audiences.

Shareability:

How will this news piece inspire its audience to share it on their own pages? A completely new age news value, shareability has become a big part of deciding the importance of a story even within the media house structure as well. Often Journalists approach issues from the perspective of whether this will intrigue people to re-share them on their own pages.

Entertainment and Drama:

News pieces with a certain drama quotient work well amongst the audience. An example would be the Anna Sorokin story from New York which otherwise has little to no impact on regular people and its popularity.

Follow-up:

Stories about subjects already in the news. As we discussed earlier, natural calamities are a particularly good example. People often follow up on those courses till the aftershock has left the region. Even in several crime-related stories, follow-ups happen as they arrest the accused, and the trial continues.

The power elite:

Stories concerning powerful individuals, organisations, institutions, or corporations. This is a very new element of news-with the boom of social media and the increase in accessibility to every prominent individual around the world, a new generation of celebrities has been born. Earlier

not a lot of people look that as business tycoons or entrepreneurs as heroes. That scenario has fully changed today. There are many self-made celebrities who wouldn‟t have been considered celebrities a decade ago on the digital media. Now news houses are not just expected to cover the traditional celebrities, they are also keeping track of the modern celebrities.

Good news:

Right in the wake of the pandemic, many celebrities started their own news segments that share positive and heart-warming stories. This has started a trend of many established publishing houses having a resolute subchannel for feel-good news.

News organisation's agenda:

While whether this is a value or not is a debate, what the news organisation wants to convey becomes a driving factor of news. As you will read further in this chapter, most news houses are acquired by private conglomerates. So, the possibility of being completely objective and biased is often questioned.

Check Your Progress

1. What are some filters you could use to identify news from a clutter of information?

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2. What are new-age news values and how are they different from the traditional news values?

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What constitutes news now?

We have just observed what the traditional news values are and what the new emerging news values are. One or more of these news values can determine what‟s news tomorrow.

Editors have their specific target audience in mind. Earlier there was little to no way to identify who your audience was and what they think. Today, feedback comes real-time. Everything is then there and if the audience is upset with a piece of news/coverage, there are avenues for them to display their disapproval. This also plays a key role in determining what news is for the popular audience.

Another element that has come into play today is citizen journalism. While it was a rare occurrence once to have a local reporter for a region, today with the massive popularity of video logs, citizens report on issues that affect them in real-time. Indian students in Ukraine gave us a day-by-day analysis of what was going on for weeks before they were evacuated.

Technology has also transformed the way news is gathered. It‟s more efficient now with chances of unverified news being published diminishing. At the same time, media is now more divided than ever and often competes with one another with contradictory narratives.

The evolution of news and the outcome:

Many of the changes around what constitutes news can be traced all the way back to the early 1960s. The 1980‟s played a pivotal role in accelerating these changes. Media companies were bought by large conglomerates and increased media concentration across the globe. Towards the middle of the 20th-century television network came along, however news was a public service. It changes quickly after the private entities got involved. There was a big shift in the way news changed its standards.

Another major element that played a key role and the evolution of news was market segmentation. Advertisers started receiving analysing massive amounts of data, which gave them a deeper understanding of what the audience was looking for. Sometimes this data indicated that a certain demographic watched or listened to a particular news source. A big indication of this was the emergence of magazines. Most magazines around this time were supremely niche and delivered to a very hyper-specific group of people.

As a by-product of these hyper-specific audience groups, echo chambers were created. This existed even before the arrival of the web. However, when the web arrived, it increases the number of echo chambers and give people an opportunity to connect with like-minded people. An essential part of the web is its algorithm, and which directly gives centre stage to a feedback system. It‟s in human nature to listen to and consume more similar opinions to your own. The web presented them with that opportunity like no other. It creates systems and patterns where you can choose to only look at or even only have access to a certain type of perspective that you already believe in.

This algorithm and pattern along with the echo chamber perfectly fit into what the marketers want. It tells them all about your aptitudes, likes, dislikes, interests and more. This equipped them to deliver content to us, in this case, news, tailor-made to suit our taste.

In the early 2000s, newspapers were yet to see their readership downfall. However, the arrival of the web drastically changed the way advertisers distributed their money. This meant that newspapers were losing a lot of their revenue. For instance, if you lived in India and if you wanted to buy a used motorcycle, a slightly older generation used to go into the

classifieds section of the newspaper, find a suitable ad and make calls before they were able to see the product in person. Due to a radical change in this, newspapers started to lose a lot of their revenue. Many media houses laid off massive numbers of journalists in the mid-2000s.

The natural next step for newspapers when they started losing the classified revenue, as well as readership, was to organically move towards having a web presence. However, the advertising money did not follow them there. Newspapers were thrown off from the agency of being the only people who produce stories. As blogs gathered popularity, many individual contributors started writing online their opinion pieces and original pieces started to lose their significance. The situation played a significant role in the creation of a model where news was no longer looked at as an authentic source of information and the only one at that.

A radical change that has happened since news moved online was how little new original reporting was available there. The only place where you find quality original reporting these days is on the traditional new sites run by traditional newspapers. However, there are other forms of news content that are being churned out. Most of them are opinion pieces.

As a consumer, this has changed a few things for us. We no more sit and wait for our favourite journalist to report an event or wait in the evening to listen to our favourite television anchor speak about the current realities. We are now a lot more specific in our news requirements. There are a few things that we want to know, and we have found our own avenues for that. Platforms that serve bite-size news are a popular outcome of this. Similarly, there might be completely contradicting pieces of news available on the internet. There is also the emergence of a new group of journalists who call themselves the alternative journalists who cover non-mainstream themes. It‟s also a very formal job responsibility right now to be able to verify the news. This indicates the growth in fake and misinformed news across platforms. In other words, there is some news outlet out there for everybody and their very peculiar interest.

It‟s also important to note that the role of journalists has also shifted drastically in the current climate. As most companies are owned by private entities, there is an expectation that they will be serving the narrative their owners want them to. We have also observed that the news values have changed. The digital landscape is changing every day. Beyond all this, there have been several attacks on journalists and news media organisations across the globe. There are many challenges for journalists and media houses to tackle. However, their job in the current society is not yet done.

2.3 LET'S SUM IT UP

While the news has stayed a consistent factor in our everyday life, the definition of news and news values have changed over time. The penetration of technology and the internet is a crucial factor that influenced this. If you are going to be a new age journalist, you are also

going to have to strike a balance between traditional and modern news values.

2.4 QUESTIONS

1. What‟s the definition of news?
2. What‟s the definition of news values?
3. What are news values?
4. What‟s the difference between traditional and latest news values?
5. What have been some factors that have influenced the shift of news values?

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3

DESCRIPTION VERSUS INFERENCE

Unit Structure

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand

- Meaning of Description
- Meaning of Inference
- Use in Public Relations Research

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research always begins with curiosity. Research in Public Relations is not a new phenomenon. There are plenty of research papers available in various media and public relations journals worldwide on various aspects of public relations. One can do research in so many areas of public relations. It could be publicity, media relations, crisis communication, audience research etc. Once the researcher has zeroed down to the research problem, research question and or hypothesis it becomes easier to put together a literature review for the body of the research to begin. The process of doing the next phase of research will involve putting a research design together before starting data collection for the said research question and or hypothesis.

Once the data collection is done it is now the process of putting together the data for analysis. Statistical Analysis is something that most students look for to understand. Begin, there are some basic points to remember as per Zina O"Leary who has authored books on doing research: 1. Nature of

variables needs to be understood clearly 2. Need and the use of descriptive and inferential statistics 3. The use of the statistical tests for the questions in the study and the data types.

Analysis of research can be done through various software that are available for both quantitative and qualitative studies. For the researcher it is imperative to understand the meaning of putting together the results of the analysis in the description/descriptive or inference/inferential format. The researcher needs to interpret what the numbers are in their research and if descriptive or inferential statistics needs to be used to understand the findings. This chapter will focus on the concept of descriptive and inferential statistics and its use in Public Relations research. Suitable examples will be given where necessary to make you understand the concept better.

3.2 UNDERSTANDING DATA

We need to first understand the meaning of data. Data is facts and numbers put together. The question here is how does one interpret the numbers that we obtain after we collect data? As Don Stacks, who has authored books in public relations research and communication research clearly states that "Quite simply, numbers (data) have no meaning, they only reflect a quantification of some theoretical position." So, once we understand this, we can now look at the data more carefully and with the help of statistical software we can further see how the data can be analysed. But before we go there, we need to understand the several types of data we will see while doing research.

3.3 TYPES OF DATA

There are several types of data. But foremost we need to define if data falls under the category of qualitative data or quantitative data.

Qualitative data can be put into categories consisting of nominal data: Here we can look at examples of gender: men, women, and the other gender. Hair colour: black, brown, blonde etc and ethnicity: Asian, American etc. can be another data which can be varied in the same data. The other kind of data is ordinal data which is also qualitative in nature. This data specifies that the number is in some order and is the difference between nominal and ordinal data. For e.g. First, Second Third. Letters A to Z. Economic strata of society.

Quantitative data can be categorized into discrete and continuous data. For e.g., discrete data can be the number of children in a class. Number of people travelling on a plane etc. Continuous data can be the height of a person, weight of an object, temperature of a place or thing. Continuous data can be further broken down into interval and ratio. E.g., The interval data is time, age. E.g., of ratio data is height or weight.

3.4 SCALES OF MEASUREMENT

It was psychologist Stanley Stevens who produced the four common scales of measurement: nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio. Each scale helps in analysing data appropriately. Once we understand the scales of measurement of the data being used in research studies one can then decide which statistical test needs to be applied to it.

1. Nominal scale of measurement:

These kinds of data cannot be multiplied, divided, added, or subtracted from each other. One cannot measure the difference between the data points. Some nominal data can be with order such as cold, very cold, warm, hot etc. The other kind without order is the gender male, female. Dichotomous data is simply a yes or no kind of category.

2. Ordinal scale of measurement:

This kind of data specifies order. The values have a rank. E.g., of such data would be ranking a college of preference, rating a restaurant, satisfaction data points in a survey for a retail outlet etc.

3. Interval scale of measurement:

This data has both properties of nominal and ordinal, but the difference in the data points can be quantified. For e.g., 20 degrees is not 1o degrees multiplied by 2. The number zero is also an existing variable in this kind of measurement. So, for e.g., zero degree is a valid temperature when measured.

4. Ratio scale of measurement:

It has properties of all the scales put together. Ratio scales have a „true zero.“ So, for e.g., height of a person or weight of a person cannot be zero cms or zero kgs. Neither can it have a negative connotation. This kind of scale of measurement helps in the calculation of company shares or product sales.

If we were to summarise the above kind of measurement scales, we can say that nominal scales help in labelling or describing values. Ranking a data or putting it up in specific order can be done using ordinals scales. The order and the differences between the order of the values can be understood using interval scale. Ratio scale makes it more detailed where it describes the following about the data such as its identity, the order and difference, and the details between the data points.

3.5 USE OF DATA IN STATISTICS

Data as we have now understood is collection of information in various nature as explained above used for the purpose of analysis. These are in raw form, from which statistics are made to be. The way the data is described or interpreted and finally presented becomes statistics of that

research. Statistics can be presented in various forms such as tables, graphs, and charts. Infographics takes over the next step in presenting the statistics in a very succinct way.

Statistics is the method to analyse numerical or quantitative data. It helps interpret data in the correct manner. It also helps to study the relationship between variables to be meaningful and significant and not merely by chance. The tests available in statistical tools give a meaning to the numeric that are obtained from data collection.

Check Your Progress

How is data important for public relations research?

What are the types of data? What are its uses in Statistics?

What are the various scales of measurement?

3.6 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive statistics is used to describe characteristics of data collected in a scholarly form. The most basic of how the data should be analysed is presented through descriptive statistics. Measures of central tendency, dispersion, and distribution shape can be presented while using this function of statistics. These are standard calculations in statistical programs and depending on the data type the results are accordingly present. As aptly put by Jay Lee in International Encyclopaedia of Human Geography (Second Edition), 2020 “The classical descriptive statistics allow analysts to have a quick glance of the central tendency and the degree of dispersion of values in datasets.”

He further adds that descriptive statistics cannot be ignored in the times of big data. As large volumes of data are being churned out in the era of the Internet, the use of descriptive statistics only grows. The distribution of a variable in each dataset is very crucial in data analytics. It describes the many ways the values of a given variable and the frequency with which it

occurs of each value. This distribution of values is presented using a table, function, or graph.

Measuring Central tendency:

Finding out the average is the most basic thing you do while examining data. For e.g., what is the average of students performing in an assignment, average of sales that has happened to a product in each period. What is the average price of a guitar in the market? So on and so forth. These are the following ways to measure central tendency in statistics: mode, median, and mean.

Mode:

This depicts the most common value noticed of a variable. Nominal data which is categorical in nature is measured by mode as a measure of central tendency.

Median:

This is the midpoint of a range. The easiest way to find the median of a data is to arrange the values in an ascending or descending manner and find the middle value. Ordinal data uses this kind of measure and extreme values can be avoided in such measures.

Mode:

This is the mathematical average. Find the mean you add up all the values for each given event and divide by the total number of events. This form of calculation is used to measure central tendency for interval and ratio data. This is not used to measure for nominal and ordinal data as they are not mathematical calculations and here numbers are used in code formats. E.g., you could code gender with 1 or 2, or names of countries with numbers etc.

Measuring Dispersion:

In statistical terminologies dispersion is how much is the distribution of your data stretched or squeezed. Dispersion is also called variability, scatter or spread. There are many ways to calculate dispersion.

Range:

This is calculated by subtracting the highest minus the lowest value. So, if test scores ranged between 16 and 30, the range would be 14. Remember this only looks at the extreme values ignoring the ones in between.

Variance:

This calculates by using up all the values surrounding the mean and is the „average squared deviation from the mean.“ This calculation can be done using the interval and ratio data and thus indicates dispersion.

Standard Deviation:

It is the square root of variance. It is the foundation of all statistical tests for all interval and ratio data. It assumes its importance by the fact with all the data found under the bell curve.

3.7 INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

Inferential statistics is derived from the word infer. At the outset this needs to be clear that inferential statistics does not „absolutely" demonstrate a cause-and-effect relationship or an explanation about a phenomenon. Infer is only limited to the fact as defined in the American Heritage Dictionary that it is „to conclude or judge from premises or evidence."

As we have observed that descriptive statistics helps in describing and summarising a given dataset. Inferentiality on the other hand helps in coming up to conclusions from the available data. It helps in testing relationships between the variables, helps in assessing if any difference observed wasn"t just by a matter of chance, or to look at the characteristics of a given sample from the population. Inferential statistics helps doing statistical tests that yield statistical significance.

Inferential Statistics will help come to conclusions of a population based only on the sample selected from it. It helps produce estimates based on the sample and hypothesis testing. So, for e.g., why did people watch a movie? Was it because of the director"s work? The storyline? the actors? or any other reason. Another e.g., why was a certain college more popular as compared to the rest: is it due to the location? the ambience? the way the courses are taught? the quality of academics? Etc. are some of the questions in both the situations that can be probed upon using inferential statistics.

Statistical Significance:

It is the concept which states that a specific outcome from a dataset done either by testing or experiment is not happening by chance or a random occurrence. This should ideally happen because of a specific reason. It points out to the concept of „p-value" which examines the chances of your findings being more than mere coincidence. Traditional p-values have values of .05, .01, and .001; Lower the p-values more the confidence that the research findings are authentic.

There are some points to be noted while going through your data to be used for inferential statistics:

1. Sample drawn from the population: Looking at the over picture.
2. Check for any major differences between respondents.
3. Change in respondents over time.
4. Checking for relationships between two or more variables.

There are many tests available to help in finding out the statistical significance, there are various software that help in performing these tests without the researchers needing to know the actual mathematical jumble mumble of the operations. But the crucial point here is knowing which the right statistical test is to be used in the study.

These are some of the inferential statistical tests often used: -

- One sample test of difference/One sample hypothesis test.
- Confidence Interval.
- Contingency Tables and Chi Square Statistics.
- T-test or Anova.
- Pearson Correlation.
- Bi-variate Regression.
- Multivariate Regression.

As we know by now that inferential statistics is used to infer from the sample taken from the population, one must be careful of certain things. There can be two kinds of error which may occur, i.e., sampling error and sampling bias which can lead to results not expected or even biased.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS STATISTICAL SOFTWARE

SPSS and SAS are more commonly used for analysing data through software. SPSS Statistics software is made by IBM for data management, advanced analytics, multivariate analysis, etc and most used by researchers in academics and industry. SAS was developed by SAS Institute for data management, advanced analytics, multivariate analysis, business intelligence, criminal investigation, and predictive analytics.

Microsoft Excel 2000 (version 9) provides a set of data analysis tools called the Analysis ToolPak. This can help develop complex statistical analysis. As you input the data and parameters for each analysis; the tool presents results based on the specific statistical macro functions. Even charts can be generated other than output tables to display results.

R analytics is data analytics programming using R programming language which is an open-source language used for statistical computing or graphics. It is now also being used in statistical analysis and data mining.

3.9 APPLICABILITY IN PUBLIC RELATIONS RESEARCH

Public relations research can be well explained by the following “Research gives the hard data necessary to provide value to the organization and helps provide information to make decisions that have real impact” - Gronstedt (1997). If not for research, it will be difficult for organisations

to really know where they are headed in terms of communicating with their audiences. Research helps discover the various areas of concern which can help organisations help in building relationships, making effective programmes, and taking on time needed actions that will stop issues from not being blown out of proportion and later becoming huge issues. -(Broom & Dozier, 1990; Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2000).

As the understanding of descriptive and inferential statistics becomes clear let us now look at. the various situations in which these can be applied in the field of public relations research. Studies on media relations and publicity using social media and other digital platforms can be a study where a descriptive study can be done to simply get an idea of the selected sample of public relations practitioners and journalists who were using various platforms to better their relations and generate publicity. Using various kinds of descriptive statistics tools, a descriptive result can be obtained. Inferential statistics can be used to evaluate the relationship between the variables present in the study and how that affects the smooth functioning of media relations. A lot of audience studies on social media can be done and later analysed using both the kind of statistics where the study focuses on communication and engagement between audience and organisation. A descriptive study here demonstrates how the audience behaves with the organisation on social media. Various variables can be looked upon in this study to check for the cause-and-effect relationship which could affect the interaction with the audience on social media. The understanding of both descriptive and inferential analysis is useful to results and findings which will help come to conclusions of a population based only on the sample selected from it.

3.10 LET'S SUM IT UP

- Research always begins with curiosity. Research in Public Relations is not a new phenomenon. There are plenty of research papers available in various media and public relations journals worldwide on various aspects of public relations. We need to first understand the meaning of data. Data is facts and numbers put together. The question here is how does one interpret the numbers that we obtain after we collect data? As Don Stacks, who has authored books in public relations research and communication research clearly states that "Quite simply, numbers (data) have no meaning, they only reflect a quantification of some theoretical position."

- Qualitative data can be put into categories consisting of nominal data: Here we can look at examples of gender: men, women, and the other gender. Hair colour: black, brown, blonde etc and ethnicity: Asian, American etc. can be another data which can be varied in the same data. The other kind of data is ordinal data which is also qualitative in nature. This data specifies that the number is in some order and is the difference between nominal and ordinal data. For e.g. First, Second Third. Letters A to Z. Economic strata of society.

- Quantitative data can be categorized into discrete and continuous data. For e.g., discrete data can be the number of children in a class. Number of people travelling on a plane etc. Continuous data can be the height of a person, weight of an object, temperature of a place or thing. Continuous data can be further broken down into interval and ratio. E.g., The interval data is time, age. E.g., of ratio data is height or weight. Statistics is the method to analyse numerical or quantitative data. It helps interpret data in the correct manner. It also helps to study the relationship between variables to be meaningful and significant and not merely by chance. The tests available in statistical tools give a meaning to the numeric that are obtained from data collection.

- Descriptive statistics is used to describe characteristics of data collected in a scholarly form. The most basic of how the data should be analysed is presented through descriptive statistics. Measures of central tendency, dispersion, and distribution shape can be presented while using this function of statistics. These are standard calculations in statistical programs and depending on the data type the results are accordingly present.

- Inferential statistics is derived from the word infer. At the outset this needs to be clear that inferential statistics does not „absolutely" demonstrate a cause-and-effect relationship or an explanation about a phenomenon.

- Statistical Significance is the concept which states that a specific outcome from a dataset done either by testing or experiment is not happening by chance or a random occurrence. This should ideally happen because of a specific reason. It points out to the concept of „p-value" which examines the chances of your findings being more than mere coincidence. Traditional p-values have values of .05, .01, and .001; Lower the p-values more the confidence that the research findings are authentic.

- There are many tests available to help in finding out the statistical significance, there are various software that help in performing these tests without the researchers needing to know the actual mathematical jumble mumble of the operations. But the crucial point here is knowing which the right statistical test is to be used in the study.

- SPSS and SAS are more commonly used for analysing data through software. Microsoft Excel 2000 (version 9) provides a set of data analysis tools called the Analysis ToolPak. This can help develop complex statistical analysis. As you input the data and parameters for each analysis; the tool presents results based on the specific statistical macro functions. Even charts can be generated other than output tables to display results. R analytics is data analytics programming using R programming language which is an open-source language used for statistical computing or graphics. It is now also being used in statistical analysis and data mining.

- Public relations research can be well explained by the following "Research gives the hard data necessary to provide value to the organization and helps provide information to make decisions that have real impact" - Gronstedt (1997).

3.11 QUESTIONS

1. How is the understanding of data important for descriptive and inferential statistics?
2. What is the difference between descriptive and inferential statistics?
3. Can you explain with examples the understanding of descriptive and inferential and its use in public relations research?

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4

CONDUCTING A CONTENT ANALYSIS

Unit Structure

4.1 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you shall be able to.

- Understand what is content?
- Analyse the various kinds of content qualitatively and quantitatively.
- Understand the parameters of content Analysis.
- Analyse the various kinds of content using multiple techniques.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

Content analysis is the deconstruction of pieces of events with a tendency towards qualitative or quantitative research methods. In other words, it‟s the quantification of text or its meaning. This exposition can be a web series, book, newspaper articles, lectures, interviews, movies etc. Conduct content Analysis of text, episodes must be broken down into parameters for Analysis. They can be the colour, the light, music used in a scene, camera angle etc in the case of a movie or web series analysis. Similarly in the case of text it can be the word sense, theme, phrase etc. After identifying the parameters, they can be then examined using any of the two basic methods of content Analysis i.e., relational Analysis or conceptual Analysis.

4.3 HISTORY OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis has been used since a long time in research with the idea of consolidating information for the community. However, media content Analysis direct us to a more structured and consequently gathering information from media clips. Media content analysis was initially introduced by Harold Laswell in 1927 to study propaganda. Today this helps in understanding media profiles by analysing and evaluating issues, messages, critics, media, and journalists by giving ratings to broadcast, social and electronic media coverage and ensuing apt PR action and response (Trueman, 2015). In the 1950s content Analysis were used by information scientists manually and with time we now see this process being increasingly automated. Content analysis explores cognitive, linguistic, social, and cultural significance.

4.4 USES OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

While the applications of content Analysis are spread across a lot of domains in media content Analysis it boils down to the following uses and application of content Analysis as suggested by Berelson (Berelson, 1952):

- Detects the element of propaganda.
- Identifies the trends of attitudinal change in communication responses.
- Shows the changes in international communication pattern changes.
- Also reveals the psychological and emotional states of the groups.

4.5 TYPES OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

Broadly, there are two types of content Analysis:

1. Conceptual or Quantitative
2. Relational or Qualitative

In the conceptual Analysis the existence and the number of times the concept is frequented in a text, i.e., it‟s the quantitative part. In the relational or qualitative part, it develops the conceptual Analysis by further examining the relationships amongst the text. Each type of analysis might lead to a different result, inference, conclusion, and interpretation. Let‟s now understand each of the two types in greater detail.

4.6 CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OR QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

In conceptual Analysis as you‟ve read briefly in the above section is how many times a term has occurred in the selected data, either explicitly or implicitly. Explicit terms are easy to identify; but coding of implicit terms

is complicated. Let‟s understand this through an example, we are analysing with a hypothesis that a certain document is about violence then you should be looking at synonymous words like vehemence, brutality etc. In the relational case we must look for the periphery words related appearing in conjunction to the word in study.

Start a qualitative analysis, you must first frame the research question then create a sample for Analysis bracketed into manageable parameters. This is the process of selective reduction and coding. By doing this the researcher can focus on particular words, patterns, themes that are defined by the research question.

Conceptual Analysis can be conducted by the following steps.

- Decide the level of Analysis, words, colours, themes, word sense etc.
- Decide how many concepts are to be coded i.e., pre-defined or flexible set of categories to conduct the coding. In the pre-defined set, the researcher is focused on the data and examining the specific concepts. In the flexible set the researcher can analyse new and important material which could add newer dimensions to the Analysis.
- Decide whether the code for occurrence or frequency of a concept. The decision changes the coding process; the researcher needs to decide whether he/she should count the word, what has been the frequency of the word in the data sample under the study. Only counting the occurrence of the word numerically will give the researcher a limited perspective. But if the context of the term is also taken then it‟s a much broader dimension to the Analysis. For example, in the term violence if we look for „violence on women‟ now we have funnelled it down to a specific contextual reduction and clarity.
- Decide on how you will distinguish among concepts. Here as a researcher, you need to decide whether you can use the word exactly as it appears or if they appear in different terms and how to classify them into logical word segments e.g., „violence‟ and „intensity of criminal activities‟ even though is similar the researcher needs to decide what meaning to be given.
- Develop the rules for coding the text. This is the ideation stage. The researcher will create translation rules after completing the coding process, it can be numbers, symbols etc to streamline and organize what the researcher wants. These rules are important since they allow the researcher to understand the relationship between related concepts and their importance of meaning and usage. This helps the researcher to eliminate redundancies.
- Decide what to do with “irrelevant” information. The puff words like and, of, the etc should be removed from the coding process especially the quantification process as they don‟t help in the coding technique.

- Code the text. Here the coding is done either manually by hand or by the computer. Through the software it‟s a lot quicker by doing by hand researchers can recognise errors far more easily. But when it comes to implicit meaning coding via computer Is apparent because the category information separation is needed for accurate coding.
- Analyse the results. After coding is done the researcher will draw the inference from that coded data. The researcher shall now draw conclusions, determine the unused and irrelevant text, and then will identify the general trends and patterns.

Check Your Progress

1. Define all the steps involved in Conceptual Analysis.

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4.7 QUALITATIVE OR RELATIONAL ANALYSIS

Qualitative analysis begins when a concept is chosen for examination. These individual concepts in isolation have no meaning they need to be a product of relationships between the concepts.

Identify the summarised concepts the researcher must identify the redundancies and eliminate those from the Analysis. The other word for qualitative Analysis is „semantic Analysis‟ meaning looking out for meaningful relationships. These meaningful relationships can be culled out by methods:

Linguistics:

In this level the texts are analysed from a linguistic unit. Gottschalk in 1995 created an automated structure which Analysis each clause in a text and assigns a numerical score to that unit at various psychological and emotional scales.

Affect Attraction:

This method relates the implicit aspect of the text, as you read in the earlier section about coding implicit texts in this case the researcher needs to emotionally evaluate it. Emotions can vary over time, population, and space.

Cognitive Mapping:

Cognitive mapping creates a model for the overall mapping of the text that represents the relationship between concepts.

1. Steps for Cognitive Mapping:

- Identifying the concepts
- Defining the relationship type
- Coding the text units from the parameters
- Graphically presenting and numerically analysing the results

Relational Analysis: Summary

As read above the basic objective of relational content Analysis is to identify and understand the concept in question. Then to look at the sample mapping and its size. In the case of larger samples there is more vagueness and in the case of a smaller sample the reliability or the generalisation of the sample will be less accurate. Thus, making it important for a clear contextual information analysis.

Check Your Progree

- Define what is relational analysis. How does cognitive, linguistic and affect attraction affect it?

General Steps for Conducting a Qualitative Analysis

- Determine the type of Analysis: Once the research question has been identified and the sample size has been chosen the level of Analysis can be determined: themes, word sense, words, concepts etc.
- Reduce the text to specific categories and specific patterns: A researcher removes the ambiguity by standardisation of the terms, distinguishing between homonyms and synonyms. This will help the researcher to establish the strength, sign, and direction of the relationship.
- Codification of the relationship: The relationship between the words is identified and denoted with symbols. The integral difference between the quantitative and qualitative Analysis is that the statements are coded.
- Perform statistical Analysis: In this step the coded variables are further mapped into graphs to explore the differences or relationships between them.
- Mapping out the representations: Apart from statistical Analysis qualitative analysis is performed by a variety of theoretical approaches as well. We have read earlier about linguistics, decision mapping and mental models.

Content Analysis: Reliability and Validity

The reliability of content Analysis depends on the accuracy, reproducibility, and stability. Because researchers are human there will be codified errors, it cannot be eliminated.

- **Stability:** this refers to the tendency of the coders to re code the same data over a period.
- **Reproducibility:** Tendency of the coders to classify the categorization in the same way.
- **Accuracy:** The extent to which the coding of the text corresponds to the statistical norm.

The Validity of content Analysis refers to the categorisation, conclusion, and generalizability.

- **Categorization:** This refers to the variety of conclusive agreement agreed upon each specific category
- **Conclusion:** The level of implication, is the conclusion following the data? is the Analysis based on the data or can it be explained through another phenomena. For example, in the case of homonyms „real and factual" real can be a noun, adverb or an adjective depending on its usage, similarly factual is a noun, adjective and adverb too similar words with different meaning connotations. This can affect the ambiguity of the conclusion.
- Generalizations: this depends on the levels of all the above steps, but it parallels reliability the most.

4.8 ADVANTAGES OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content Analysis is a very potent and valuable tool for the researcher and the following are its advantages:

- It provides the researcher a social communication among researchers and scholars.
- Both qualitative and quantitative Analysis can be done. Establishing a conceptual relational analysis.
- Insights of ancient texts, historical epigraphy can be understood by the inscriptions.
- It allows closeness to the data that can alternate the categories, therefore making statistical Analysis and coding easier.
- Content analysis provides an unobtrusive means of analysing the relations.
- Provides a deepened insight into complex human behaviours, thoughts, and linguistics.

- Content Analysis give a detailed parameter for Analysis that makes it a highly comprehensible and detailed method of research methodology.

4.9 DISADVANTAGES OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

There are some disadvantages associated with content Analysis.

- It‟s an elaborate and time-consuming process.
- Qualitative Analysis require a lot of interpretation, and this can cause inaccuracies.
- It lacks a definitive theoretical base which affects the implication of the study.
- As you‟ve read earlier in content Analysis the larger study is coded to smaller units for Analysis, and this can cause a lot of information loss in the process.
- Content analysis is often disregarded as a mere word count.
- One of the most crucial aspects of content Analysis is when you must draw conclusion from the coded data it can have a multitude of interpretation and meanings.

Check Your Progress

1. Define the steps while conducting relational Analysis.

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4.10 MEDIA CONTENT ANALYSIS

Media content analysis is a subset of content analysis. According to Jim Macnamara describes content analysis as “a technique which aims at describing, with optimum objectivity, precision, and generality, what is said on a given subject in a given place at a given time” (Macnamara, 2005). Media content Analysis became extremely popular in the 1920s and 1930s for analysing rapidly expanding content in the movies. In the 1950s, media content Analysis entered the television world as a „research methodology‟ in mass communication (Importance of Media Content Analysis in Mass Media). The most important aspect of content Analysis in media was to study the portrayal of violence, racism, character Analysis, etc.

Media analysis focuses on a specific area of the media landscape. This landscape consists of online media aggregates news articles, investigative features, online reports, opinions, columns, features, radio broadcast, OTT

platform shows, as well as social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

As you have read earlier media content Analysis too has two kinds of Analysis where qualitative Analysis focus on the „narratives" in the media and the quantitative Analysis focus on the „statistics" of the media. Quantitative Analysis in the case of media refers to „media monitoring" and it's easier to obtain. This can include.

- Clip count (total number of mentions in any entity or topic)
- Circulation (number of copies circulated around)
- Media segmentation (A breakdown of media sources)
- Share Of Voice (How often the topic Is mentioned relative to its competitors)

Quantitative Analysis are easier in the media landscape since figures show the key performance metrics, it's easy to mine and straightforward while comparing the Analysis. When done well this can give us the results for automated sentiment analysis, which tells the researcher of whether the coverage is positive, negative, neutral, biased etc (What is Media Analysis, 2022). Many scholars and media researchers believe that the above parameters for Analysis are powerful proxies for evaluation audience impact and brand awareness . But numbers and statistics will not always provide the meaningful context e.g., a post getting a 1000 likes on Facebook might mean the post and account is getting traction but are the likes translating to any particular meaning or influencing the public will not be known until we understand the narrative behind it, which is quantitative Analysis comes into interplay.

Framework for Conducting the Media Analysis

A typical media Analysis would aim to answer the following questions:

- How does the media frame the minds of the public regarding learning and knowing?

An example would be there any repetitive genres, music, words, scenes etc that keep cropping up.

- What topics are being covered and what are being left out?
- What is the context of the show? What is it depicting on the screen? Is it violent? Is it showing secularism? Etc these are some examples to conduct the Analysis parameters.
- What topics are being covered and what are being omitted?
- What messages are being conveyed?

[1] http://customerthink.com/big-data-and-analytics-plays-an-important-role-in-

media/ and https://martechseries.com/analytics/audience-data/the-importance-of-data-analytics-in-marketing-strategies/.

Basic Steps to Conduct a Media Content Analysis:

- Make a list of all the media outlets in the genre that you are researching on, this way you have a clear landscape on what you‟re going to study.
- Develop a set of keywords. For example, the topic you are studying is say „media trial‟ you might want to include words like „CNN effect‟, „criminal justice‟, „trial by media‟; this isn‟t an exhaustive list, but key words would help you be more focused on what units to get into the parameters on Analysis.
- Use Google news and archives and web sources to extract the slice of media coverage over a set time frame for e.g., you want to study about the "Media coverage of elections from 2021 to 2022" by setting the year and time frame you are narrowing the sample size.
- After the sample size is created now you need to categorize the stories
- Once you‟ve created the parameters and identified the sample you now categorize it
- Next step is to eliminate all the irrelevant information which is why we categorized it in the previous step.
- Now you analyse the data collected you segment the who. Why? What? Where? Time? Etc over a spreadsheet and begin tabulation and Analysis to draw inferences.
- Finally, we come to the summary or conclusive findings. You then address the research question and answer it with substantiating the information.

4.11 CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING WEB DOCUMENT

Search engines and in the era of Google a plethora of information is available. In such a sea of information, it becomes very integral to filter out what is relevant from what is not relevant. Hence evaluation is important.

Here are the criteria to evaluate the web page data:

Author; Is there an author? Is the author clearly identified?

Are the author‟s credentials for writing the topic clearly stated? Does the author belong to any organization? What is the backing of the website? Does it represent an ideology of a particular organization, government body, institute etc? You are checking the credibility of the information source.

Accuracy: Is the web page a peer reviewed one or is it edited?

Can the information provided in the web page be reviewed by footnotes, bibliographies, and relevant citations? Is it clear as to who has the responsibility of the information put out? How clear cut is the data represented in tabulated graphs and charts?

Understand this clearly let‟s look at the following table distinguishing and showing us the difference in characteristics between scholarly journals and popular journals.

Examples	**Scholarly Journals**	**Popular Journals**
	Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Water, Science and Technology	Time Newsweek Psychology Today
Authors	Researchers, Professors, Scholars, Professionals who are usually experts in narrow fields	Journalists, Lay people Anonymous
Reference	Includes references, bibliographies, or footnotes	Rarely includes references, bibliographies, or footnotes
Edited By	Submitted articles are subjected to a rigorous peer-review process by researchers, professionals and/or students of the field	Submitted articles may be reviewed by journalists and lay people
Language	Specialized language of the discipline is used Often includes tabulated data, graphs, and diagrams	Language is non-technical
Contents	Always includes an abstract Lengthy articles of original research In-depth analysis of topic Substantial book reviews	Shorter articles of general interest Coverage of current events/news Some brief book reviews
Presentation and	Less flashy, more "serious" in appearance Advertisements are	More eye-catching appearance Many pictures

Graphics	rare (an exception is medical journals) Articles are often divided into explicitly named (and sometimes numbered) sections	Many advertisements

Source: (Stey, 2009)

Currency:

Is there any date stating clearly when the document was originally created?

Are you able to view when the website was last updated, edited, or revised?

Are there any additional links to decide how current the information on the website is...? We look for currency information on the website because it‟s an indicator of how updated the website is, and how frequently the information is being revised on the website. This ensures that the website is credible enough.

Objectivity:

If the web page has ads, then look at the relationship between the content of the page and the ads shown, this relationship will determine the objectivity and the sensibility of the page‟s objectivity. Check for clearly stated opinions, is the information backed sufficiently by the data or is it vaguely worded and available. Are the facts stated as facts? Is the author clear and forthcoming about the view? What is the tone of the author‟s language? Is it provocative or inflammatory? These are some pivoted questions to know the objectivity of the web page.

Coverage:

Is there any indication that the web page is still incomplete? If it is a portion of the work, the make sure the quotes are not taken out of context or information has not been misrepresented (Stey, 2009)

Purpose:

What is the main aim of the web page? Is it to sell a product? Is it to optimise an ideology? Or is it to create a broad base of information sharing. It is especially important to vet the purpose of the website, because if the purpose is to mock, conduct parody or give out biased information then it may not be the best to have them through.

4.12 LET'S SUM IT UP

Content analysis is the most crucial research methodology that is required to represent, identify, and analyse the media content available online and offline. In this unit we discussed two major types of Content Analysis:

- Qualitative or Relational Analysis
- Quantitative or Conceptual Analysis

Qualitative Analysis or conceptual Analysis are concept oriented where we draw meaningful narrative-based analogies. In other words, we are focused on exploring the semantics of the text and delve deeper into relational meanings.

Whereas quantitative Analysis are focused on the numerical aspect where we focus on how many times the event has occurred, we study the frequency of the occurrence here.

Apart from this you also have learnt how you can evaluate a web source/ document/website by following the above criteria to identify its credibility and quality.

4.13 QUESTION

1. Enumerate the steps involved in conducting a content analysis of a web document.

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5

REVIEWING AND SUMMARIZING LITERATURE

Unit structure

5.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to understand:

- The role of literature review in the research process
- How to review the literature?
- Developing theoretical framework for your study
- Developing a conceptual framework

5.1 INTRODUCTION

A literature review is often undertaken as part of authoring academic research papers or a dissertation or thesis. A literature review is an account of what has been published on a given topic by scholars and researchers. The objective of writing a literature review is to convey to your reader what knowledge and ideas have been established on a topic. As part of your literature review you may even highlight what were the strengths and weaknesses of each piece of work that you include in your literature review. Your literature review is where you demonstrate that you can

engage in scholarly review based on your reading and understanding of the work of others in the same field. Moreover, using the existing literature on a topic is a means of developing an argument about the significance of your research and where it leads.

The literature review makes a valuable contribution to every operational step in the research process. It is important even before the first step, that is, when you are merely thinking about the research question that you may want to find answers to through your research journey. In the initial stages of research, it helps you to clarify your ideas, establish the theoretical roots of your study and develop your research methodology.

A literature review is not just to include a summary of previously published works but also involves classification, synthesis, and analysis of previous works to see how they relate to your proposed research work. Since an important responsibility in research is to compare the findings of your research with those of others, it is here that the literature review plays an extremely key role. Finally, while authoring your research report/ dissertation it helps you to integrate your findings with the existing body of knowledge.

5.2 ROLE OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW IN RESEARCH

Researchers who conduct studies under the guidelines of scientific research never begin a research project without first consulting available literature to learn what has been done, how it was done, and what results were found. Experienced researchers consider the literature review to be one of the most important steps in the research process. It allows them to learn from (and eventually add to) previous research and saves time, effort, and money. Failing to conduct a literature review is as detrimental to a project as failing to address any of the other steps in the research process.

A literature review serves the following functions in the research process:

- Helps to develop research questions.
- Identify gaps in previous research to highlight areas that need further research.
- Identify other people working in the same field.
- Increase the breadth and depth of your knowledge in the research area.
- Access diverse viewpoints and perspectives on your research area
- Provides intellectual context to your work.

In relation to your own study, the literature review can help in four ways. It can:

- Bring clarity and focus to your research problem.
- Improve your research methodology.
- Broaden your knowledge base in your research area.
- Contextualize your findings i.e., integrate your findings with the existing body of language.

5.2.1 Bringing clarity and focus to your research problem.

The process of reviewing the literature helps you to understand the subject area better and thus, helps you to conceptualize your research problem clearly and precisely and makes it more relevant and pertinent to your field of enquiry. When reviewing the literature, you learn what aspects of your subject area have been examined by others, what they have found out about these aspects, what gaps they have identified and what suggestions they have made for further research.

5.2.2 Improving your research methodology.

Going through the literature acquaints you with the methodologies that have been used by other researchers to find answers to research questions like the one you are investigating. A literature review tells you if others have used procedures and methods like the ones that you are proposing, which procedures and methods have worked well for them, and what problems they have faced with them. By becoming aware of problems encountered by other researchers, you will be in a better position to select a methodology that can provide valid answers to your research questions. This will increase your confidence in the methodology you plan to use and will equip you to defend its use.

5.2.3 Broadening your knowledge base in your research area.

The most important function of the literature review is to ensure you read widely around the subject area in which you intend to conduct your research study. It is important that you know what other researchers have found regarding the same or related questions, what theories have been put forward and what gaps exist in the existing body of knowledge.

5.2.4 Contextualizing your findings.

Once you obtain the answers to your research questions the next step is to examine how your findings fit into the existing body of knowledge. How do answers to your research questions compare with what others have found? What contribution have you been able to make to the existing body of knowledge? How are your findings different from those of others? Undertaking a literature review will enable you to compare your findings with those of others and answer these questions. It is important to place your findings in the context of what is already known in your field of

inquiry, that is, to integrate what you have found with the existing literature.

5.3 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LITERATURE REVIEW AND A SUMMARY OF LITERATURE

Some people use the terms 'literature review' and 'summary of the literature' interchangeably. However, there is a difference between the two. A summary of the literature is a description of the significant findings of each relevant piece of work that you have gone through as a part of your literature search. The summary involves listing under each pertinent source, the major findings of relevance to your study. The sources searched can be listed in any order. However, in a literature review the findings are organized around main themes that emerge from your literature search.

Check your progress:

Select the most appropriate answer.

1. Conducting a literature review helps you to:

   a. Pay a visit to the library.

   b. Submit your thesis.

   c. Broaden your knowledge base on the subject.

   d. Compels you to change your research topic.

2. Which among the following is a function of literature review in the research process:

   a. Find out existing knowledge in the field of study.

   b. Develop an argument for your own study.

   c. Helps in developing research questions.

   d. All the above

3. A summary of literature is different from review of literature as it is merely a:

   a. Critical analysis of other's work

   b. Description of major findings of others research projects/ work

   c. Questionnaire from another related study

   d. Insights about research methodology

5.4 HOW TO REVIEW THE LITERATURE?

When you have settled on the topic for your research you should begin to read as much as you can about it. Read any key literature, but also read around your subject area; investigate related areas or related topics for ideas on theoretical approaches and methods of analysis.

If you do not have a specific research problem, you should review the literature in your broad area of interest with the aim of gradually narrowing it down to what you want to find out about. Once you have narrowed your research problem, the literature review should then be focused on your research problem. There is a danger in undertaking the review of literature without having a specific idea of what you want to study. It can condition your thinking about your study and the methodology you might use, resulting in a less innovative choice of research problem and methodology than otherwise would have been possible. Hence, you should try to broadly conceptualize your research problem before undertaking your major literature review.

There are four steps involved in conducting a literature review:

- Searching for existing literature in your area of study
- Reviewing the selected literature
- Developing a theoretical framework
- Developing a conceptual framework

5.4.1 Searching for the existing literature:

Search effectively for the literature in your field of enquiry, it is imperative that you have at least some ideas of the broad subject area and of the problem you wish to investigate, to set parameters for your search. The research project is an opportunity for you to add to the knowledge which already exists, but you can't do this until you are aware of what is already known and written about your subject. If you find that there are hundreds of books and articles on your research problem, you have not narrowed it sufficiently. Read the most frequently cited and/or recent books and articles on the topic and find out which are the principal areas of contention. Could you find out something about these? Is there an area which the literature seems to have missed? Or a new phenomenon which the research hasn't caught up with yet? If, however, you find nothing has been written, you are not looking in the right place or you are being much too specific. Redefine your search terms and try again. As you read, take careful notes on what research has been done in your area of interest and by whom; you will need this information when you come to write your literature review.

Usually, students will have in mind a few initial references when they begin on a project. These will come from recommended reading in course modules, or from textbooks. The bibliographies provided at the end of

textbook chapters or articles will usually provide you with several useful relevant references that can also be followed up. Here is a list of sources that you ought to go through for your literature review:

Books:

Though books are a central part of any bibliography; they have their disadvantages as well as advantages. The main advantage is that the material published in books is usually important and of excellent quality, and the findings are integrated with other research to form a coherent body of knowledge. The main disadvantage is that the material is not always completely up to date, as a year or more may pass between the completion of a work and its publication in the form of a book.

When you have selected 10-15 books that you think are appropriate for your topic, examine the bibliography of each one. Go through these bibliographies carefully to identify the books common to several of them. If a book has been referenced by several authors, you should include it in your reading list. Prepare a final list of books that you consider essential reading.

Journals:

You need to go through the journals relating to your research in an analogous manner. Journals are one of the best resources to get the most up-to-date information. You should select as many journals as you can, though the number of journals available depends upon the field of study. There are several ways to find the journals you need to examine to identify the literature relevant to your study.

Conference papers:

Another important source for the literature review is the papers presented at professional conferences. These can provide you with the most recent research in the area. You should try to get copies of the papers presented at recent conferences in your area of interest.

The internet:

In every academic discipline and professional field, the internet has become a valuable tool for finding published literature. Through an internet search you can identify published material in books, journals and other sources with immense ease and speed. An internet search is conducted through search engines. Search engines such as Google Scholar are particularly useful for research.

Getting the most from your reading

When you are reading the existing literature, try to do the following:

- Take good notes, including the details of the material you read. It is irritating to find that you forgot to record the volume number of an article you read that needs to be included in your Bibliography.

- Develop critical reading skills. In reviewing the literature, you should do more than simply summarize what you have read. You should, whenever appropriate, be critical in your approach. It is worth developing these skills and recording relevant critical points while taking notes. Developing a critical approach does not simply mean criticizing the work of others. It involves moving beyond simple descriptions and asking questions about the significance of the work. It entails addressing such issues as: how does this piece of work relate to others you have read? Are there any apparent strengths and deficiencies – in terms of methodology or in terms of the conclusions drawn?

- Use your review of the literature as a means of showing why your research questions are important. For example, if one of your arguments in arriving at your research questions is that, although a lot of research has been done on X (a general topic or area, such as crisis communication) little or no research has been done on X1 (a specific aspect of crisis communication say crisis communication using social media), the literature review is the point where you can justify this assertion.

- Do not try to get everything you read into a literature review. Trying to force everything you have read into your review (because of all the challenging work involved in finding and reading the material) is not going to help you. The literature review must assist you in developing an argument.

Keywords and defining search parameters:

For all the online databases, you will need to work out some suitable keywords that can be entered into the search engines and that will allow you to identify suitable references. Journal articles often include lists of keywords. When you find two or three articles that are relevant to your research and that have lists of keywords, it may be useful to use some of these keywords that are relevant to your research for searching other articles. You will also need to think of synonyms or alternative terms and try to match your language to that of the source you are searching.

5.4.2 Reviewing the selected literature:

Now that you have identified several books and articles as useful, the next step is to start reading them critically to pull together themes and issues that are of relevance to your study. Unless you have a theoretical framework of themes in mind to start with, use separate sheets of paper for each theme or issue you identify as you go through selected books and articles. Once you develop a rough framework, slot the findings from the material so far reviewed into these themes, using a separate sheet of paper for each theme of the framework so far developed. As you read further, continue slotting the information where it logically belongs under the themes so far developed. Keep in mind that you may need to add more themes as you go along.

5.4.3 Developing a theoretical framework:

Examining the literature can be a never-ending task, but to keep it focused it is important to set parameters by reviewing the literature in relation to some main themes pertinent to your research topic. As you start reading the literature, you will soon discover that the problem you wish to investigate has its roots in several theories that have been developed from different perspectives. The information obtained from different books and journals now needs to be sorted under the main themes and theories, highlighting agreements and disagreements among the authors, and identifying the unanswered questions or gaps.

Literature pertinent to your study may deal with two types of information: universal or general; and more specific (local trends). In writing about such information, you should start with the general information, gradually narrowing it down to the specific.

5.4.4 Developing a conceptual framework:

Whereas the theoretical framework consists of the theories in which your study is embedded, the conceptual framework describes the aspects you selected from the theoretical framework to become the basis of your inquiry. For instance, for a study on 'War news on television,' the theoretical framework may include media theories such as Agenda Setting Theory, Framing, and Propaganda theories, among others. However, out of these, you may be planning to evaluate only one, say the agenda setting theory with respect to the topic 'war news on television.' The conceptual framework grows out of the theoretical framework and relates only and specifically to your research problem. The conceptual framework becomes the foundation of your study.

Check your progress:

1. How can you ensure that you get the most from your reading?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What are the main sources to find existing literature on your subject?

_____

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_____

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3. How do keywords help in searching databases for review of literature?

_____

_____

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5.5 WRITING ABOUT THE LITERATURE REVIEWED

The two broad functions of a literature review are (1) to provide a theoretical background to your study, and (2) to enable you to contextualize your findings in relation to the existing body of knowledge besides refining your research methodology. The content of your literature review should reflect these two purposes. Fulfil the first purpose, you should identify and describe various theories relevant to your field and specify gaps in existing knowledge in the area, recent advances around study, current trends and so on. Fulfil the second, you should integrate the results from your study with specific and relevant findings from the existing literature by comparing the two for confirmation or contradiction.

While reading the literature for the theoretical background to your study, you will observe that certain themes will emerge. List the main ones, converting them into subheadings. These subheadings should be precise, descriptive of the theme in question and follow a logical progression. Now, under each subheading, record the main findings with respect to the theme in question (thematic writing), highlighting the reasons for and against an argument if they exist, and identifying gaps and issues.

The second broad function of the literature review – contextualizing the findings of your study – requires you to compare very systematically your findings with those made by others. Quote from these studies to show how your findings contradict, confirm, or add to them. This will place your findings in the context of what others have found. One must provide a complete reference for any quoted material, in an acceptable format.

5.6 LET'S SUM IT UP

Reviewing the literature is a continuous process. It begins before a research problem is finalized and continues until the report is finished. There is a paradox in the literature review: you cannot undertake an effective literature review unless you have formulated a research problem, at the same time your literature search plays a key role in helping you to clearly define your research problem. The literature review brings clarity and focus to your research problem, improves your research methodology and broadens your knowledge base. A literature review identifies the main themes from the literature studied that are of relevance to your study.

Reviewing the literature involves several steps: searching for existing literature in your area of study; reviewing the literature selected and using it to develop a theoretical framework from which your study emerges. The main sources for identifying the literature are books, journals, conference papers, and the internet.

Your writing about the literature reviewed should be thematic in nature, that is, based on main themes, the sequence of these themes in the write-up should follow a logical order; various arguments should be substantiated with specific quotations and citations from the literature, adhering to an acceptable academic referencing style.

5.7 QUESTIONS

1. What are the main reasons for writing a literature review?
2. How should the literature review section be organized and written in a research report/ dissertation?
3. Describe the differences between theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

5.8 REFERENCES

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6

CONDUCTING A CASE STUDY

Unit Structure

6.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Meaning of Case Study Research
- Process of Case Study Research
- Use of Case Study Research in Public Relations

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The researcher will come across various kinds of research methods while doing research. Case studies are one of them. It is a highly specialized method used to study complex real-life situations. Case studies are studies in real life situations, they are not a part of an experiment being done in a laboratory with pre-defined parameters. It is recorded as they occur. The researcher gets to examine crucial events occurring in organisations, in people‟s lives, consumers etc. which will throw insight into how these phenomena occur and have an effect. It will also be interesting to note that such studies will have multiple data points and variables beyond being studied through other methods (Yin, 1994, p. 15).

6.2 WHAT IS CASE STUDY?

According to Yin (1994) the research questions of the study will determine the kind of research design to be used in the study. "Case studies are the preferred strategy when „how‟ or „why‟ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (p. 1). The researchers study real life events and try to explore and look for any causal relationships. This can happen even if there is not much clarity observed between a situation and the corresponding entities within it. Ideally a case study should have a theoretical base before starting off the

research process. Validity check should also be kept in mind and as far as possible. A case study rests on the same thoroughness as it would apply to any other research method. The quality of the case study quality will stand by the following standard tests as applicable. These tests are construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability. Case studies unlike surveys depend on "analytical generalization." This means that the researcher generalises a set of the results obtained to a theoretical concept (Yin, 1994, p. 36). Examples of use of case study method are many like for e.g., using an in-depth longitudinal study can be useful if one was studying some event over a prolonged period where then data can be collected, analysed, and reported for the said time. Studies on child language development can be done using the above method. Another e.g., could where the reading process of a subject can be explored over a given duration of time. So, this only emphasizes that the case study method is useful for looking at a specific natural phenomenon occurring in a space, in its entirety (Yin, 1984). A survey method would thus study trends in data at the macro stage whereas case study looks at the micro stage.

Though one thing must be kept in mind that by the fact the issue at hand is a case study it cannot be generalised beyond the case at hand being examined.

6.3 USE OF CASE STUDY METHOD IN RESEARCH

Case study methodology is qualitative in nature. This helps researchers to do an in-depth study of specific phenomena occurring in each situation. It is especially useful as one can do a detailed study of individuals, communities, and organizations through this method. The data collection is done through various sources and different methods are used such as observations and interviews. Though case study is used a lot in qualitative research (Yazan, 2015), it is still given a legit place in social science research as it lacks a structural and protocol driven rigor (Yin, 2002). Precisely why young researchers do not have a definitive process in mind when intending to start using this method is also its difference from other methodologies (Merriam, 1998).

Case study methods tend to go beyond the standard quantitative statistical results and observe behaviours from a respondent‟s viewpoint. But if both quantitative and qualitative are combined then a case study method will show the complete occurrence of a phenomenon through examination, rebuilding and evaluation of the case being studied (Tellis, 1997). This method can be applied in many genres and practices. Name a few, area of Sociology (Grassel & Schirmer, 2006), Law (Lovell, 2006) and Medicine (Taylor & Berridge, 2006). Other fields include government, management and in education. For e.g., there have been studies which have been done to check if government programmes have been effective, goals of a programme were achieved. In some more examples, education efficacy applications were done to check for if education programmes reached their mark. If only quantitative methods were used in such studies some crucial observations would be missed to be recorded.

Some of the names that played a key role in influencing this method are Robert K. Yin, Sharan Merriam, and Robert E. Stake. They put together procedures for using case study research (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007). They are considered for laying the foundation of this method where researchers can rely on their acumen to decide when putting down a case study research design (Yazan, 2015). A lot of books known for case study research (Merriam, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2011) though put case study research together but they stress more on the theory than the practice and many don‟t explain the basics of the case study method process for someone starting out in research (Hancock & Algozzine, 2016).

6.4 PROCESS AND RIGOR OF DOING A CASE STUDY METHOD.

An article by (Yasir Rashid, et al) on case study method "Case Study Method: A Step-by-Step Guide for Business Researchers" in an article in Sage Journal clearly lays down steps on doing a case study research step by step. They put down the case study process with the following steps: Foundation phase which comprises Philosophical consideration, Inquiry techniques consideration, Research logic consideration. The next step is the pre-field phase which includes decide and case study protocol steps. This is followed by the Field phase which includes contact and interaction steps and finally the reporting phase which comprises the case study reporting steps. The details of the steps are described in the subsequent paragraphs below.

The foundation stage is most basic and especially important as the entire research rests on this step and it describes the research philosophy. There should be clarity at this stage as rest everything you do in your research rests on this stage (Wilson, 2014) e.g., what is your research about, how do you perceive going about it etc. Research paradigms need to be used here and the knowledge of ontology, epistemology, and other paradigm options should be used and will be part of the process adding more depth to your research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). This will formalise the basis of the research approach. There are two common inquiry techniques that researchers use while starting off any research is quantitative and qualitative. Our own philosophical stance influences the selection of the techniques. If one is choosing the positivist research approach, then it is linked to quantitative research methods; if one chooses interpretive research then it is linked to qualitative research methods. E.g., as a researcher knowing which approach one is taking to do say a study on media relations and publicity is crucial.

An interpretivist will seek answers related to credibility, conformability, transferability, and dependability while the positivist will look for criteria of reliability and generalizability (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). These are research jargons whose understanding is especially important. There are two research logic approaches in social science research: Induction and deduction. Järvensivu and Törnroos (2010) that those researchers who

have the realistic ontological stand will go for deductive research. Deductive research logic starts off with a theory and will evaluate arguments. The Relativist will begin with the subjective perspective of personal experience based on which theory is then put together in an inductive manner. These two kinds of research logics are more common than a not much used one that is abduction formed by Peirce (1903). The next stage is the pre-field stage where the researcher now puts together the operational intricacies. There are two steps to this. One is the Decide step where the researcher confirms if the case study method is the best choice. Methods by their very definition are "techniques for gathering evidence" (Harding, 1986) or "procedures, tools, and techniques" of research (Schwandt, 2001). Next step is the Case study protocol where a formalised document is put together which contains the set of steps needed in collection of empirical data (Yin, 2009). This also leads the researchers to collect any proof, analysis tools and finally one puts together the findings (Yin, 1994). The field phase consists of the Contact step. As this kind of study is qualitative in nature it is important to know that with an interpretive approach the researchers play an integral role in the collection of data and interpretation of the same. The researcher thus needs to know the cases, respondents well who are going to be part of the study. This will make for an obstacle free process. E.g., in case studies especially knowing the respondent well helps as sometimes studies can be prolonged and detailing would be required. The next step in the phase is the Interact step. Here the case study methods will go through a lot of numerical data collection tools so that the research questions that were initially put together for the study will yield the subsequent findings. At this stage semi-structured interview tools can be used other than observation methods and any other document collection. Triangulation happens when one uses more than one method for collection of data (Yin, 2009). This not only adds value but also but using these multiple ways of data collection adds a rigour, the depth, the breadth to the study (Flick, Kardorff, & Steinke, 2004). The reporting phase is the final phase of the case study process and equally crucial as the collection and interpretation steps (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). It has long been advised that putting a report together is like telling a story. So, adding crucial points like the various descriptions of the case, participants, the details of them, the field protocols as discussed above and finally the analysis and conclusion will sum up the report.

6.5 CASE STUDY RESEARCH IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public Relations has been an evolving practice, its origin and growth has traversed many years across the world. Sriramesh quotes James Grunig‟s definition of public relations that it is "the management of communication between an organization and its publics (Sriramesh & White, 1992). Public relations serve the functions of information, communication, persuasion, image building, continuous building of trust, management of conflicts, and the generation of consensus" (Sriramesh K., 2003). So, from the above Public Relations is a profession which practitioners of it will have to look very seriously into the relationship of an organization with its

stakeholders and always try to improvise upon its communications and activities to maintain it.

Public relations research can be well explained by the following "Research gives the hard data necessary to provide value to the organization and helps provide information to make decisions that have real impact" - Gronstedt (1997). If not for research, it will be difficult for organisations to really know where they are headed in terms of communicating with their audiences. Research helps discover the various areas of concern which can help organisations help in building relationships, making effective programmes, and taking on time needed actions that will stop issues from not being blown out of proportion and later becoming huge issues. -(Broom & Dozier, 1990; Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2000). Research helps discover the various areas of concern which can help organisations help in building relationships, making effective programmes, and taking on time needed actions that will stop issues from not being blown out of proportion and later becoming huge issues. -(Broom & Dozier, 1990; Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2000).

A public relations practitioner is a storyteller and that to a persuasive one. Persuasive communication was used in public relations way back in 320 B.C when Emperor Asoka used rock tablets to make announcements of orders. But in current times a case will do the work of persuasion which will help an organisation to reach out to their stakeholders. They are constantly producing different stories that they write on the behalf of the client to put up to their audience. It is an especially useful tool as a client can be projected in a positive light by putting together a piece of them connected to their works. A public relations case study examines the organisation in context with its stakeholders. It highlights the works being done for the client to better their image and reputation. It studies and hopefully helps improve the relationship between the two entities. The findings of the study are quantifiable in nature and serve as a historical account of public relations in times to come for people who need to understand this profession better. Case studies also allow for the combination of being qualitative or quantitative or both and as they look into the intricacies of an individual or organisation they examine in public relations parlance the opportunities or challenges that an organisation faces while communicating, crisis communication, issues that a customer faces, the prescribed solution given by the company to the problem at hand, and finally an empirical evaluation and presentation of the results of the services being used by customers. E.g., any increase in profit, engagement findings or any poll undertaken. The cases provide for a window to describe in detail the practices being done for the client, organisation, stakeholders, or target audience: the beneficiaries. Another very crucial point is that Cases serve as promotional text for future clients. Your work done and recorded in text always helps in showcasing yourself in the world of business.

Public Relations functions are important to understand as the only one can examine and prepare cases pertaining to them. A case study on APSRTC

states the functions that they have laid down for their organisation. Please find below:

1) Corporate objectives, programmes and passenger amenities of the organisation should be known to the public.

2) The issues that the organisation can face such as violence to the crew operating the buses during unrest situations so that people as far as possible cooperate with the organisation and do not resort to any unruly behaviour.

3) It reiterates traffic rules and behaviour amongst commuters so that they follow queues, avoid any footboard travel, buy the right ticket, maintain slight change in hand, etc.

4) Obtain feedback from the passengers and opinion leaders on the behaviour of the bus crew in writing or verbal communication.

5) It is important to keep the press informed about any untoward incident such as accidents and the subsequent relief measures, department enquiry undertaken.

6) It is crucial to train the staff on the concept of public relations and code of etiquette.

7) It is the function of the public relations team of the organisation to maintain internal communication to ensure that employees feel a bonhomie as part of the organisation and helps improve their work productivity.

8) It is vital for the management to know passenger feedback and their complaints. This comes crucial especially in case there is negative publicity of the organisation. Continuous feedback is needed from various stakeholders to ensure smooth function of the organisation.

Sources for looking up cases in Public Relations are as below. They will also help in understanding how cases are written.

1. Arthur W. Page Society:

These include some cases originally written by students in accredited business schools or communication or journalism streams. Their degree was focussed on corporate communications and the practice of public relations.

2. PR Council Case studies

These consist of cases and best works in public relations.

3. PR Newswire

This site keeps a list of case studies and white paper in public relations.

4. PRSA Case studies

The Public Relations Society of America website includes cases under the database by the name silver Anvil case studies. One needs to be a member of this organisation to be able to view the complete works.

There are various books too in Public Relations that reflect upon cases in Public Relations:

- How Fifteen Transnational Corporations Manage Public Affairs

ISBN: 0872510395

- PR News Casebook: 1000 Public Relations Case Studies

ISBN: 0810389053

- Public Relations Inquiry as Rhetorical Criticism: Case Studies of Corporate Discourse and Social Influence

ISBN: 0275951502

- Public Relations Practices: Managerial Case Studies & Problems

ISBN: 0130981532

Check your progress.

1. What is a case study method? Where do you think you can use it?

2. What is the use of case study methods in research?

3. What is the process of doing a case study method?

4. Explain the use of case study methods in Public Relations research.

6.6 LET'S SUM IT UP

Case studies are studies in real life situations, they are not a part of an experiment being done in a laboratory with pre-defined parameters. It is recorded as they occur. The researcher gets to examine crucial events occurring in organisations, in people‟s lives, consumers etc. which will throw insight into how these phenomena occur and have an effect. According to Yin (1994) the research questions of the study will determine the kind of research design to be used in the study. The researchers study real life events and try to explore and look for any causal relationships. This can happen even if there is not much clarity observed between a situation and the corresponding entities within it. Ideally a case study should have a theoretical base before starting off the research process. Validity check should also be kept in mind and as far as possible. A case study rests on the same thoroughness as it would apply to any other research method. Case study methodology is qualitative in nature. This helps researchers to do an in-depth study of specific phenomena occurring in each situation. It is especially useful as one can do a detailed study of individuals, communities, and organizations through this method. The data collection is done through various sources and different methods are used such as observations and interviews. Case study methods tend to go beyond the standard quantitative statistical results and observe behaviors from a respondent‟s viewpoint. But if both quantitative and qualitative are combined then a case study method will show the complete occurrence of a phenomenon through examination, rebuilding and evaluation of the case being studied (Tellis, 1997). Some of the names that played a key role in influencing this method are Robert K. Yin, Sharan Merriam, and Robert E. Stake. They put together procedures for using case study research (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007). A Step-by-Step Guide for Business Researchers' ' in an article in Sage Journal clearly lays down steps on doing case study research step by step. The case study process consists of the following steps: Foundation phase which comprises Philosophical consideration, Inquiry techniques consideration, Research logic consideration. The next step is the pre-field phase which includes decide and case study protocol steps. This is followed by the Field phase which includes contact and interaction steps and finally the Reporting phase which comprises the case study reporting steps. So, these are steps to do a case study method as explained in detail above. A public relations practitioner is a storyteller. They are constantly producing different stories that they write on the behalf of the client to put up to their audience. It is an especially useful tool as a client can be projected in a positive light by putting together a piece of them connected to their works. Public relations serve the functions of information, communication, persuasion, image building, continuous building of trust, management of conflicts, and the generation of consensus” (Sriramesh K., 2003). A public relations case study examines the organisation in context with its stakeholders. Public relations research can be well explained by the following “Research gives the hard data necessary to provide value to the organization and helps provide information to make decisions that have real impact” - Gronstedt (1997). If not for research, it will be difficult for organisations to really

know where they are headed in terms of communicating with their audiences. Research helps discover the various areas of concern which can help organisations help in building relationships, making effective programmes, and taking on time needed actions that will stop issues from not being blown out of proportion and later becoming huge issues. -(Broom & Dozier, 1990; Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2000). A public relations case study examines the organisation in context with its stakeholders. It highlights the works being done for the client to better their image and reputation. Case studies also allow for the combination of being qualitative or quantitative or both and as they look into the intricacies of an individual or organisation they examine in public relations parlance the opportunities or challenges that an organisation faces while communicating, issues that a customer faces, the prescribed solution given by the company to the problem at hand, and finally an empirical evaluation and presentation of the results of the services being used by customers. Another very crucial point is that Cases serve as promotional text for future clients. Your work done and recorded in text always helps in showcasing yourself in the world of business.

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7

MAKING QUESTIONNAIRES AND IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Unit Structure

7.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to understand:

- The diverse types of interviews and their use in research
- How to design a questionnaire
- The advantages and disadvantages of the interview method and questionnaires

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Interviewing is a commonly used method of collecting information from people. Interviews are an effective way of accessing people‟s perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations and constructions of reality. It is one of the most powerful ways of understanding others. An interview is an extended conversation, but it has a purpose and is highly focussed. Unstructured or depth interviews help in collecting a great deal of information, ask follow-up questions and in acquiring unexpected data.

7.2 DEFINING INTERVIEWS

There are many definitions of interviews, but it is a person-to-person interaction, either face-to-face or otherwise, between two or more individuals with a specific purpose in mind. According to Monette et al. (1986, p. 156), „an interview involves an interviewer reading questions to respondents and recording their answers". According to Burns (1997, p. 329), „an interview is a verbal interchange, often face to face, though the telephone may be used, in which an interviewer tries to elicit information, beliefs or opinions from another person".

When interviewing a respondent, as a researcher, you have the freedom to decide the format and content of your questions, choose how to word them, decide how you want to ask them and in what order. The process of asking questions can be either very flexible, where you as the interviewer have the freedom to think about and formulate questions as they come to your mind around the issue being investigated, or inflexible, where you have to keep strictly to questions decided on beforehand – including their wording, sequence and the manner in which they are asked. Interviews are classified according to this degree of flexibility.

7.3 UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The main strength of an unstructured interview lies in having almost complete freedom in terms of its structure, contents, question wording and order. You are free to ask whatever you want, and in a format that is relevant to the situation. You also have complete freedom in terms of the wording you use and the way you explain questions to your respondents. You may formulate questions and raise issues impulsively, depending upon what occurs to you in the context of the discussion.

7.4 STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

In a structured interview, the researcher asks a predetermined set of questions, using the same wording and order of questions as specified in the interview schedule. An interview schedule is a written list of questions, open-ended or closed, pre-tested for standardized wording, meaning and interpretation, prepared for use by an interviewer in a person-to-person interaction. Note that an interview schedule is a research tool/ instrument for collecting data, whereas interviewing is a method of data collection.

One of the main advantages of structured interview is that it provides uniform information, which assures the comparability of data. Structured interviewing requires fewer interviewing skills than does unstructured interviewing.

7.5 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE STRUCTURED INTERVIEW AND THE QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW

Qualitative interviewing is usually quite different from interviewing in quantitative research in several ways:

- The approach tends to be much less structured in qualitative research. In quantitative research, the approach is structured to maximize the reliability and validity of measurement of key concepts. It is also more structured because the researcher has a clearly specified set of research questions that are to be investigated. The structured interview is designed to answer these questions. Instead, in qualitative research, there is an emphasis on the interviewee‟s own perspectives.

- In qualitative interviewing, there is much greater interest in the interviewee‟s point of view; in quantitative research, the interview reflects the researcher‟s concerns.

- In qualitative interviewing, interviewees can depart significantly from any schedule or guide that is being used. They can ask new questions that follow up interviewees‟ replies and can vary the order and even the wording of questions. In quantitative interviewing, none of this is possible because that will compromise the standardization of the interview process.

- In qualitative interviewing, the researcher wants rich, detailed answers; in structured interviewing the interview is supposed to generate answers that can be coded and processed quickly.

7.6 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire is a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by the respondents. Thus, the respondents read the questions on their own, interpret as per their understanding and then write down the answers. The only difference between an interview schedule and a questionnaire is that in the former it is the interviewer who asks the questions (and if necessary, explains them) and records the respondent‟s replies, and in the latter the replies are recorded by the respondents themselves. This distinction is important in accounting for the respective strengths and weaknesses of the two methods and their respective use in the research process.

In a questionnaire, because there is no one to explain the meaning of questions to respondents it is important that the questions are clear and easy to understand. Also, the layout of a questionnaire should be such that it is easy to read and pleasant to the eyes. Further, the sequence of questions should be easy to follow. A questionnaire should be developed in an interactive style. This means respondents should feel as if someone is talking to them. In a questionnaire, a sensitive question, or a question that respondents may be hesitant to answer should be prefaced by an interactive statement explaining the relevance of the question.

7.7 WAYS OF ADMINISTERING A QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire can be administered in several ways. Your selection of a particular method of administration depends upon the assessment of your respondent population and your impressions about how they would prefer to participate in your study. The many ways in which you can administer a questionnaire are as follows:

The mailed questionnaire:

The most common approach to collecting information is to send the questionnaire to prospective respondents by mail. This approach presupposes that you have access to their email addresses. It may not be easy to get addresses, so before you decide to collect your data through this method, ensure the availability of addresses of potential respondents.

Collective administration:

One of the best ways of administering a questionnaire is to obtain a captive audience such as students in a classroom, people attending a function, participants in a programme or people assembled in one place. This ensures an extremely high response rate as you will find few people refusing to participate in your study. Also, as you have personal contact with the study population, you can explain the purpose, relevance and importance of the study and can clarify any questions that respondents may have.

Online questionnaire:

With the advancement in communication technology, the use of the online questionnaire to collect information for research has become quite common. You must develop a questionnaire in the same way as you normally do use a program that is designed for the purpose. The main difference is that instead of personally delivering, collectively distributing, or individually mailing, you post it either on social media groups or provide a link in your email/ social media feed for potential respondents to access it and respond. One can analyse the data collected through online questionnaires using an appropriate program.

Administration in a public place:

Sometimes you can administer a questionnaire in a public place such as a shopping centre, health centre, hospital, school, or recreational place. Of course, this depends upon the type of study population you are looking for and where it is likely to be found. Usually, the purpose of the study is explained to potential respondents as they approach and their participation in the study is requested.

7.8 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

Questionnaire design is a systematic process in which the researcher contemplates various question formats, considers several factors

characterizing the survey, words the various questions very carefully, and organizes the questionnaire‟s layout.

Question development is the practice of selecting appropriate response formats and wording questions that are understandable, unambiguous, and unbiased. Here are a few tips for designing a good questionnaire:

Do not cram the presentation:

Because of the well-known problem of low response rates especially in mailed questionnaires, it is sometimes considered preferable to make the instrument appear as short as possible so that it does not deter prospective respondents from answering. However, this is always a mistake. Experts suggest that an attractive layout is likely to enhance response rates.

Clear presentation:

A self-completion questionnaire with a layout that is easy on the eye facilitates the answering of all questions that are relevant to the respondent.

Vertical or horizontal closed answers? Bearing in mind that most questions in a self-completion questionnaire are likely to be of the closed nature, one consideration is whether to arrange the fixed answers vertically or horizontally. Very often, the nature of the answers will dictate a vertical arrangement because of their sheer length. Many writers prefer a vertical format whenever possible, because, in some cases where either arrangement is feasible, confusion can arise when a horizontal one is employed. Consider the following:

What do you think of the sports supervisor‟s performance since he took office?

Very good – Good – Fair – Poor - Very poor:

There is a risk that, if the questionnaire is being answered in haste, the required tick will be placed in the wrong space – for example, indicating „Good‟ when „fair‟ was the intended response. Also, a vertical format more clearly distinguishes questions from answers.

7.8.1 Four “Dos” of Question Wording:

The question should be focussed on a single topic or issue:

The researcher must stay focussed on the specific issue or topic. For example, take the question, “What type of hotel do you usually stay in when on a trip?” The focus of this question is ambiguous because it does not narrow down the type of trip or when the hotel is being used.

The question should be brief:

Unnecessary and redundant words should always be eliminated. This requirement is especially important when designing questions that will be administered verbally, such as over the telephone. Brevity is important.

For example, “What are the considerations that would come to your mind while you are confronted with the decision to have some type of repair done on the automatic icemaker in your refrigerator assuming that you noticed it was not making ice cubes as well as it did when you first bought it?”

The Question should be a grammatically simple sentence (if possible):

A simple sentence is preferred because it has only a single subject and predicate.

The Question should be Crystal Clear:

One tactic for clarity is to develop questions that use words that are in respondents‟ core vocabularies; that is, the public does not use marketing jargon such as „price point‟ or „brand equity.‟

7.8.2 Four “Don'ts” of Question Wording:

The question should not lead the respondent to a particular answer (A Leading Question): such a question is worded or structured in a way as to give the respondent a strong cue or expectation as to how to answer. Therefore, it biases responses.

For example, “Don‟t you see any problems with using your credit card for an online purchase?”

Or

“Do you see any problems with using your credit card for an online purchase?”

The first question may lead respondents to assume the role of a critic regarding the use of credit cards because of the way it is worded and may prevent respondents from giving honest answers.

The question should not have loaded words or phrasing: In contrast to leading questions, loaded questions are more subtle, yet they are also biased questions. Identifying the bias here requires more judgment.

For example, “Should people be allowed to protect themselves from harm by using pepper sprays as self-defence?” Here, the bias in favour of using lethal measures may not be evident at first sight. However, a careful reading of the question will reveal that the question is likely to make people reply in the affirmative.

Avoid Double-Barrelled questions:

A double barrelled question is really two different questions posed as one. With two questions posed as one, it becomes difficult for the respondent to

answer. For example, “Were you satisfied with the restaurant‟s food and service?”

The question should not use words that overstate the condition:

An overstated question is one that places undue emphasis on some aspect of the topic. For example, imagine a survey being conducted for Ray-Ban sunglasses? An overstated question might ask: “How much do you think you would pay for a pair of sunglasses that will protect your eyes from the sun‟s harmful ultraviolet rays, which are known to cause blindness?” In this case, there is an overstatement concerning the effect of UV rays.

Check your progress: Select the most appropriate answer.

1. The problem with double-barrelled questions is that they:

a. contains two questions requiring only one answer.

b. suggests what answer is right.

c. require long answers.

d. suggests what answer is wrong.

2. One of the advantages of interviews as a data collection method is that:

a. helps you analyse data.

b. get short answers.

c. get numerical data.

d. allows you to ask follow-up questions.

3. An instrument comprised of a series of questions that are filled in by the respondent herself is called a:

a. transcript

b. questionnaire

c. sampling

d. interview schedule

4. The problem with loaded questions is that they:

a. suggests what answer is right.

b. suggests what answer is wrong.

c. have two questions in one.

d. requires „yes," „no" type answers.

5. „An extended conversation with a purpose and highly focused," this is the definition of:

a. content analysis

b. an interview

c. a survey

d. case study

6. Non-standardized, in-depth, open-ended interviews are known as:

a. unstructured interviews

b. structured interviews

c. surveys

d. observation

7.9 CHOOSING BETWEEN AN INTERVIEW SCHEDULE AND A QUESTIONNAIRE

The choice between a questionnaire and an interview schedule is important and should be considered thoroughly as the strengths and weaknesses of the two methods can affect the validity of the findings. The nature of the investigation and the socioeconomic demographic characteristics of the study population are central in this choice. The selection between an interview schedule and a questionnaire should be based upon the following criteria:

The nature of the investigation:

If the study is about issues that respondents may feel reluctant to discuss with the researcher, a questionnaire may be a better choice as it ensures anonymity. This may be the case with studies on drug use, sexuality, indulgence in criminal activities and personal finances. However, there are situations where better information about sensitive issues can be obtained by interviewing respondents. It depends on the type of study population and the skills of the interviewer. As a researcher, you need to explore which method is better suited for your study and respondents.

The geographical distribution of the study population:

If potential respondents are scattered over a wide geographical area, you have no choice but to use a questionnaire as conducting interviews in such a situation would be extremely expensive.

The type of study population:

If the study population is illiterate, incredibly young, or old, there may be no option but to interview the respondents.

7.10 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF A QUESTIONNAIRE

Advantages of a questionnaire

A questionnaire has the following advantages:

It is less expensive:

As you do not interview respondents, you save time and resources. The use of a questionnaire, therefore, is comparatively convenient and inexpensive, especially when it is administered collectively to a study population.

It offers greater anonymity:

As there is no face-to-face interaction between respondents and interviewer, this method provides greater anonymity. In some situations where sensitive questions are asked it helps to increase the likelihood of obtaining accurate information.

Disadvantages of a questionnaire:

Although a questionnaire has several advantages, it is important to note that not all data collection using this method has these advantages. The prevalence of a particular disadvantage depends on several other factors. Some of these disadvantages are as follows:

Limited application:

One of the main disadvantages is that its application is limited to a study population that can read and write. It also cannot be used on a population that is incredibly young or old.

Low response rate:

Questionnaires are notorious for their low response rates; that is, people fail to return them. If you plan to use a questionnaire, keep in mind that because not everyone will return/ answer the questionnaire, your sample size will in effect be reduced. The response rate depends upon several factors: the interest of the sample in the topic of the study, the layout and length of the questionnaire, and the methodology used to deliver the questionnaire.

Self-selecting bias:

Since not everyone who receives a questionnaire returns it, there is a self-selecting bias. Those who return their questionnaires may have attitudes, attributes, or motivations that are different from those who do not. Hence, if the response rate is exceptionally low, the findings may not be representative of the total study population.

Lack of opportunity to clarify issues:

If, for any reason, respondents do not understand some questions, there is almost no opportunity for them to have the meaning clarified unless they contact the researcher (which is mostly rare). If different respondents interpret questions differently, this will affect the quality of the information provided.

No opportunity for spontaneous responses:

Mailed questionnaires are inappropriate when spontaneous responses are required, as most respondents will glance through the whole questionnaire before answering. This gives them time to reflect before answering, which may make them change their answers to some questions.

The response to a question may be influenced by the response to other questions:

As respondents can read all the questions before answering (which usually happens), the way they answer a particular question may be affected by their knowledge of other questions.

Others can influence the answers:

With mailed questionnaires respondents may consult other people before responding. In situations where an investigator wants to find out only the study population‟s opinions, this method may be inappropriate, though requesting respondents to express their own opinion may help.

A response cannot be supplemented with other information:

The information gathered by interviewing can sometimes be supplemented with information from other methods of data collection such as observation. However, a questionnaire lacks this advantage.

7.11 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE INTERVIEW METHOD

Advantages of the interview method

More appropriate for complex situations:

It is the most appropriate approach for studying complex and sensitive topics as the interviewer can prepare a respondent before asking sensitive questions and to explain complex ones to respondents in person.

Useful for collecting in-depth information:

In an interview situation, it is possible for an investigator to obtain in-depth information by probing. Hence, in situations where in-depth information is required, interviewing is the preferred method of data collection.

Information can be supplemented:

An interviewer is able to supplement information obtained from responses with those gained from observations of non-verbal reactions.

Questions can be explained:

It is less likely that a question will be misunderstood as the interviewer can either repeat a question or put it in a form that is understood by the respondent.

Disadvantages of the interview method

Time consuming and expensive:

This is especially so when potential respondents are scattered over a wide geographical area. However, if you have a situation such as an office, a hospital, or an agency where potential respondents come to obtain a service, interviewing them in that setting may be less expensive and less time consuming.

The quality of data depends upon the quality of the interaction:

In an interview the quality of interaction between an interviewer and interviewee is likely to affect the quality of the information obtained. Also, because the interaction in each interview is unique, the quality of the responses obtained from different interviews may vary significantly.

The quality of data depends upon the skills of the interviewer:

In an interview situation the quality of the data generated is affected by the experience, skills, and commitment of the interviewer.

7.12 LET'S SUM IT UP

Interviewing is a method of data collection which helps the researcher to access people‟s perceptions and constructions of reality in their own words. The interview method offers the freedom to decide the format and content of questions, their wording, sequence, and number of questions.

Interviews are broadly classified into two types – structured and unstructured interviews. Unstructured interviews help in collecting a great deal of information, ask follow-up questions and in acquiring unexpected data. Structured interviews, on the other hand, ask a predetermined set of questions. Structured interviews are mostly used in quantitative research while unstructured interviews see higher application in the qualitative tradition.

A questionnaire is a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by the respondents. The major difference between interviews and questionnaires is that in an interview, the interviewer asks the questions and records the answers whereas in a questionnaire the replies are recorded by the respondents themselves. Since questionnaires are often characterized by low-response rates, its layout should be such that it is easy and pleasant to read.

A questionnaire can be administered in several ways. Questionnaires can either be sent through email, conducted face-to-face with a captive audience, administered at a public place, or uploaded to public online platforms including social media for potential respondents to access it in the form of a hyperlink.

7.13 QUESTIONS

1. What factors will you keep in mind while deciding between a questionnaire and an interview schedule for your research study?
2. What makes unstructured interviews a suitable data collection tool for qualitative research?
3. Design a questionnaire for a research study on „Preferred Social Media Platforms for Influencer Marketing for Fashion Products".

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8

CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Unit Structure

8.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to understand:

- Difference between a group interview and focus group discussion.
- Practical aspects of conducting focus group sessions
- Challenges of using focus group sessions as a data collection method

8.1 INTRODUCTION

We are used to thinking of the interview as something that involves an interviewer and an interviewee. The focus group technique is a method of interviewing that involves more than one, usually at least four, interviewees. It is a group interview. Some authors draw a distinction between the focus group and the group interview techniques. Three reasons are put forward to suggest a distinction:

- Focus groups typically emphasize a specific theme or topic that is explored in depth, whereas group interviews often span very widely.

- Sometimes group interviews are conducted to save time and money by conducting interviews with a few individuals simultaneously. However, focus groups are not conducted for this reason.

- The focus group practitioner is invariably interested in the ways in which individuals discuss a certain issue as members of a group, rather than simply as individuals. In other words, with a focus group the researcher will be interested in such things as how people respond to each other‟s views and build up a view out of the interaction that takes place within the group.

Most focus group researchers undertake their work within the traditions of qualitative research. They are, therefore, keener to observe how the group participants view the issues with which they are confronted; the researcher will aim to provide an unstructured setting for the extraction of their views and perspectives. The person who runs the focus groups session is usually called a moderator, and he or she will be expected to guide each session but not to be too intrusive.

Focus group discussions are by no means a new technique. It has been used for many years in market research, where it is employed for such purposes as testing responses to new products and advertising initiatives.

8.2 THE FOCUS GROUP METHOD

The focus group method is a form of group interview in which there are several participants (in addition to the moderator); there is an emphasis in the questioning on a particular tightly defined topic; and the emphasis is upon interaction within the group and the joint construction of meaning.

Focus groups are a form of interaction in qualitative research in which attitudes, opinions, or perceptions towards an issue, product, service, or programme are explored through a free and open discussion between members of a group and the researcher. Both focus groups and group interviews are facilitated group discussions in which a researcher raises issues or asks questions that stimulate discussion among members of the group. Because of its low cost, it is a popular method for finding information in every professional area and academic field. Social, political, and behavioural scientists, market research and product testing agencies, and urban and town planning experts often use this design for a variety of situations. For example, in marketing research this design is widely used to obtain consumers‟ opinion and feedback on a product, their opinions on the quality of the product, its acceptance and appeal, price and packaging, how to improve the quality and increase the sale of the product, etc.

8.3 USES OF FOCUS GROUPS

- This technique allows the researcher to develop an understanding about why people feel the way they do. In a normal individual interview, the interviewee is often asked about his or her reasons for

holding a particular view, but the focus group approach offers the opportunity of allowing people to probe each other‟s reasons for holding a certain view. This can be more interesting than the sometimes-predictable question-followed-by-answer approach of normal interviews.

- In focus group sessions, participants can bring to the fore issues in relation to a topic that they deem to be important and significant. This is an aim of individual interviews too, but, because the moderator must relinquish a certain amount of control to the participants, the issues that concern them can surface better in a focus group. This is clearly an important consideration in the context of qualitative research since the viewpoints of the people being studied are an important consideration.

- In conventional one-to-one interviewing, interviewees are rarely challenged; they might say things that are inconsistent with earlier replies or that may not be true, but researchers are often reluctant to point out such deficiencies. In the context of a focus group, individuals will often argue with each other and challenge each other‟s views. This process of arguing means that the researcher may stand a chance of ending up with more realistic accounts of what people think, because they are forced to think about and revise their views.

- The focus group offers the researcher the opportunity to study the ways in which individuals‟ collectively make sense of a phenomenon and construct meanings around it.

8.4 CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUPS.

There are several practical aspects for conducting focus group research that require some discussion.

8.4.1 Recording and transcription:

As with interviewing for qualitative research, the focus group session will work best if it is recorded and subsequently transcribed. Recording is mostly preferred for focus group research because of the following reasons:

- One reason is the simple difficulty of writing down not only exactly what people say but also who says it. In an individual interview you might be able to ask the respondent to hold on while you write something down, but to do this in the context of an interview involving several people would be extremely disruptive.

- The researcher will be interested in who expresses views within the group, such as whether certain individuals seem to function as opinion leaders or dominate the discussion. This also means that there is an interest in ranges of opinions within groups; for example, in a session,

does most of the range of opinion derive from just one or two people or from most of the people in the group.

- A major reason for conducting focus group research is the fact that it is possible to study the processes whereby meaning is collectively constructed within each session. It would be exceedingly difficult to do this by taking notes, because of the need to keep track of who says what. If this element is lost, the dynamics of the focus group session would also be lost, and therefore a major reason for conducting focus group interviews rather than individual ones would be undermined.

- Like all qualitative researchers, the focus group practitioner will be interested in not just what people say but how they say it, for example, the language that they employ. There is every chance that the nuances of language will be lost if the researcher must rely exclusively on handwritten notes.

It should be kept in mind that transcribing focus group sessions is more complicated and hence more time-consuming than transcribing traditional interview recordings. This is because you need to take account of who is talking in the session, as well as what is said. This is sometimes difficult since people"s voices are not always easy to distinguish. Also, people sometimes talk over each other, which can make transcription even more difficult. Therefore, it becomes important to ensure that you have a high-quality microphone for the session, which can pick up voices, some of which may be quite faint, from many directions.

8.4.2 Size of groups:

How large should groups be? Experts suggest that the typical group should consist of six to ten members. One major problem encountered by focus group practitioners is people who agree to participate but who do not turn up on the day of the session. It is almost impossible to control for such „no-shows" other than consciously over-recruiting participants for the study.

Smaller groups are recommended when participants are likely to have a lot to say on the research topic. This is likely to occur when participants are incredibly involved in or emotionally preoccupied with the topic. Smaller groups may also be preferred when topics are controversial or complex. Larger groups, on the other hand, are recommended when involvement with a topic is likely to be low or when the researcher wants to hear numerous brief suggestions from members.

8.4.3 Level of moderator involvement:

How involved should the moderator be? In qualitative research, the aim is to understand the perspectives of those being studied. Consequently, the approach should not be intrusive and structured. Therefore, there is a tendency for researchers to use a small number of broad questions to guide the focus group discussion. Further, it would be better for the moderator to allow quite a lot of latitude to participants, so that the discussion can range

widely. However, if the discussion moves significantly away from the core topic, it may be necessary to refocus the participants‟ attention, but even then, it may be necessary to be careful, because what may appear to be digressions may in fact reveal something of interest to the group participants.

8.4.4 Skills required of a moderator:

- A good moderator must have excellent observation, interpersonal, and communication skills to recognise and overcome threats to a productive group discussion.
- The moderator must be prepared, experienced, and armed with a detailed list of topics to be discussed.
- The best moderators are experienced, enthusiastic, prepared, involved, energetic, and open-minded.

Focus group moderators - "Tricks of the trade."

Question	Tricks of the trade
How do you make your groups great every time?	• Be prepared. • Be energized. • Be nice but firm. • Make sure everything about the experience is comfortable.
How do you build rapport quickly?	• Make meaningful eye contact during each person‟s introduction. • Learn and remember names.
How do you bring a drifting group back into focus?	• Tell them the topic is "for another group" and that they need to focus on the topic for this group. • Make a note and tell them that they will come back to this topic if there is time.
How do you get them to talk about deeper things than top-of-the-mind answers?	• Play naïve or dumb and ask them to help you understand by explaining. • Use probes such as "tell us more about that," or "can you go deeper on that?" • Ask for specifics such as "Tell me about the last time that you…" • Pair them up and give them 10 minutes for each pair to produce a solution or suggestion.

Check your progress:

Select the most appropriate answer.

1. Who among the following plays the most key role in a focus group discussion?

a. moderator

b. respondents

c. people who are taking notes or recording the discussion on tape

d. Business client

2. One of the advantages of focus group discussion is that:

a. they sound good.

b. they are more expensive.

c. they have client presence.

d. the security of being in a crowd encourages some members to speak out.

8. One of the disadvantages of focus group discussion is that:

a. the cost per participant is high.

b. they generate fresh ideas.

c. they allow clients to observe their participants.

d. a group interview situation is more exciting.

4. A data collection method in which small groups of people are brought together and guided by a moderator through a discussion is known as:

a. focus group discussion.

b. interviews

c. observation

d. survey

5. Which among the following is an essential requirement for a moderator of focus group discussions?

a. good looking and presentable

b. loud voice

c. ability to build rapport.

d. fluent in English

8.4.5 Selecting participants:

Who can participate? Anyone for whom the topic is relevant can logically be a suitable participant. Sometimes, certain topics do not require participants of a particular kind. A wide range of people may be required, but they are organized into separate groups in terms of stratifying criteria, such as age, gender, education, occupation, and having or not having had a certain experience. Participants for each group can then be selected randomly or through some kind of snowball sampling method. The aim is to establish whether there is any systematic variation in the ways in which diverse groups discuss a matter.

8.4.6 Asking questions:

An issue that is close to the question of the degree of involvement on the part of the moderator is the matter of how far there should be a set of questions that must be addressed. Some people prefer to use one or two broad questions to stimulate discussion, with the moderator intervening, as necessary.

8.4.7 Beginning and finishing the discussion:

It is recommended that focus group discussions begin with an introduction of the participants. The moderator can also thank the participants for joining; discuss the objective of the research, the need for recording the session, and the format of the session. It is also important to mention some of the conventions of focus group participation, such as: only one person should speak at a time (help them explain the problems that occur when people speak over each other in a recorded session); emphasize on the confidentiality of the data collected, that the session is open and everyone‟s views are important; and the amount of time that may be required. During the introduction round or just before that, it is possible that respondents may be asked to fill in forms providing basic socio-demographic information about themselves, such as age, gender, occupation, and address etc. Participants may even be encouraged to write out their first name on a card placed in front of them, so that everyone‟s name is known.

At the end, moderators should thank the group members for their participation and explain very briefly what will happen to the data they have supplied. If a further session is to be arranged, steps should be taken to coordinate this.

8.5 FOCUS GROUPS IN MARKET RESEARCH

On 23rd April 1985, a product was launched that proved to be one of the greatest marketing blunders in business history. On that day, Coca-Cola Company not only launched what it called „New Coke,“ but it removed the old one from the market, on which success the massive corporation had been built. Thereafter, New Coke wasn‟t quite successful, and people demanded the return of the Old Coke, despite assurances by the company that they will eventually get used to the taste of New Coke and get to like

it better. Yet close attention to the data collected from focus group discussions that the company had commissioned in the lead-up to the launch of New Coke might have prevented the disaster from happening in the first place. In 1982 and 1983, focus group research was conducted across the USA for this new launch. At one point in each session, consumers were presented with a scenario in which they were told that a new formula for a certain product had been introduced and that the response to it was very favourable. The new product i.e., New Coke was introduced, and the original formula (Old Coke) was withdrawn from the market. This turned out to be a big mistake. The issue with the taste tests and focus group research was that consumers were not told that only one product would be marketed. Thus, they were not asked whether they would give up the original formula for New Coke. Eventually, the company reintroduced the original formula as Coke Classic and tried to market the two products. Ultimately, New Coke was withdrawn from the market (Bryman, 2008, p. 474).

8.6 LIMITATIONS OF FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups clearly have considerable potential for research questions in which we wish to understand how meaning is jointly constructed. Focus group sessions allow the participants" perspectives to be presented openly and freely which is an important criterion of qualitative research. However, this method of data collection has also got its own limitations some of which are as follows:

- The researcher has less control over proceedings than is the case in an individual interview. Also, a delicate balance needs to be maintained between how involved moderators should be and how far a set of prompts or questions should influence the conduct of a focus group. The moderator can introduce serious biases in the interview by shifting topics too rapidly, verbally, or nonverbally encouraging certain answers, failing to cover specific areas, and so on.

- There are chances that participants may go along with the popular opinion instead of expressing their own which may be contrary to the popular opinions.

- The data are often difficult to analyse. A huge amount of data can be quickly produced through a focus group session. Developing a strategy of analysis that incorporates both the themes in what people say and patterns of interaction is not easy.

- They require more planning and money to organize. Not only do you have to secure the agreement of people to participate in your study; you also need to persuade them to turn up at a particular time. Small payments or a gift card/ voucher are sometimes given especially in marketing and advertising research to encourage participants to turn up but even then, not all participants may turn up on the day of the focused group discussion. Since focus group sessions typically last

one-and-half to three hours and take place at a central location, securing cooperation from a random sample is difficult.

- The recordings are more time-consuming to transcribe than equivalent recordings of individual interviews, because of variations in voice pitch and the need to figure out who says what.
- A widespread problem in focus group discussions is the tendency for two or more participants to speak at the same time which is not seen in individual interviews. It is exceedingly difficult to make sense of and therefore transcribe the proceedings when this occurs.
- There is a likelihood of occurrence of group effects. This includes the problem of dealing with quiet speakers and with those who try to dominate the discussion. One way of dealing with it is to mention at the very beginning that everyone‟s view is important to hear. For those who do not speak very much, it is recommended that they are actively encouraged by the moderator to say something. Further, there are chances that participants may go along with the popular opinion instead of expressing their own which may be contrary to the popular opinions.
- Related to this is another issue, that in group contexts, participants may be more prone to expressing culturally expected views than in individual interviews.
- There could also be situations when focus groups may not be appropriate, because of their potential for causing discomfort among participants. When such discomfort might arise, individual interviews may be better suited. Situations in which unease might be encountered are when intimate details of private lives need to be revealed; when participants may not be comfortable in each other‟s presence (for example, bringing together people in a hierarchical relationship in front of each other); and when participants are likely to disagree with each other.

8.7 LET'S SUM IT UP

The focus group is a group interview that is concerned with exploring a certain topic. The moderator tries to provide a free rein to the discussion. However, there may be contexts in which it is necessary to ask specific questions. Focus group discussions need to be recorded and transcribed. There are several important considerations concerning the recruitment of focus group participants – in particular, whether to use natural groupings and whether to employ stratifying criteria. Group interaction is a vital component of focus group sessions.

8.8 QUESTIONS

1. What advantages might the focus group method offer in contrast to an individual depth interview?

2. How involved should the moderator be in focus group sessions?

8. Why might it be important to treat group interaction as a critical issue when analysing focus group data?

4. Does the potential for the loss of control over proceedings and for group effects damage the potential utility of the focus group as a method?

5. How far do the problems of transcription and difficulty of analysis undermine the potential of focus groups?

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9

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Unit Structure

9.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Meaning of Ethnography
- Understanding of observation methods: Participant and Non-Participant
- Public Relations and Participant Observation

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Research is a process which begins with curiosity and eventually formal steps laid down to implement it. As explained by an internationally recognized leader in research methodologies Zina O'Leary: Research can be thought of as a ―thinking game‖ and a ―whole brain‖ activity that often demands that researchers think outside any set of prospective ―rules.‖ It is a creative and strategic process that involves constantly assessing, reassessing, and making decisions about the best possible means for obtaining trustworthy information, conducting appropriate analysis, and drawing credible conclusions about the problem under study. Once the researcher has thought of a research topic, research problem, research question and or hypothesis it can then become easier to write a literature review to build an argument for the study. The process of doing the next phase of research will involve putting the research methodology together before starting data collection. Analysis is the next big step where the findings emerge after all the work done in the research process so far. The step where research methodology is involved is important as that puts down the actual approach, method and tools in place which explains how the research is done. As Zina O'Leary appropriately defines this term ―The framework associated with a particular set of paradigmatic assumptions that you will use to conduct your research, i.e., scientific method, ethnography, action research.‖ This unit focuses on the observation method which is a method under the methodology ethnography.

9.2 WHAT IS ETHNOGRAPHY?

Ethnography is a methodology having its basis in cultural anthropology and is defined as _the recording and analysis of a culture or society, usually based on participant-observation and resulting in a written account of a people, place or institution‘ (Simpson & Coleman 2017). According to Walter K. Lindenmann, _Ethnographic research relies on the tools and techniques of cultural anthropologists and sociologists to obtain a better understanding of how individuals and groups function in their natural settings.‘ These kinds of research are conducted by unbiased and trained researchers who completely involve themselves into the day-to-day lifestyles of the community or cultural set up using a mix method approach such as −observation, participation, and role-playing techniques" to really get a hang of the phenomenon at hand from the cultural point of view. A case study of a community can be done by studying extensively using mix methods such as −observation, participation, role-playing, secondary analysis, content analysis, formal and informal interviewing techniques' '. Ethnography helps in sustained amount of time helps investigate how people perceive themselves in a particular set up, it explores why a certain _way of life,‘ or _way of work‘ is the way it is or as Emerson says that ethnographic descriptions are a researcher‘s _theory informed re-presentations‘ (1983: 21). They carry a researcher‘s perspective, with its own biases from where he/she comes from, and from the theoretical and analytical frames.

This is understood by becoming a participant in the process or being a non-participant observer in the process. As Zina O‘Leary explains −To _write a culture.‘ Involves exploration of a cultural group in a bid to understand, discover, describe, and interpret a way of life from the point of view of its participants.‖ She further adds that groups are bound together beyond their physical and mental make-up. It is even beyond their communal thoughts and beliefs that binds say a group of people at work or live in a particular culture, or celebrate a certain festival etc. It is an attempt to −_see‘ things the way group members do,‖ and how they make meanings of things they do or as ethnographers make sense, interpret this, and put it together like a case, or as Geertz (2000) calls it _thick descriptions.

Process of Ethnography:

The data collection for this methodology is heterogenous and involves various methods. It is prolonged and very tenacious. John Brewer, an eminent social scientist, explains that data collection methods should capture the "social meanings and ordinary activities" of people in "naturally occurring settings" popularly known as "the field."

A researcher is a participant observer, so the method of participant observation; Sometimes the researcher may not be a participant observer and will merely observe as a non-participant observer. As a participant observer he may come across situations where he is expected to be flexible and produce on-the-spot decisions to take the research ahead with what

was best suited at that time and to observe the world as it is of that group. The group is beyond the physical and mental or any other demographic make-up but like in a case study the group here needs to be defined, which is the _cultural' group. The group could be a tribe, a workplace group, a migrant group, school students etc. But the essential point to be noted here is that the cultural group we are talking about is that they need to share a culture here. A group could be chosen based on _pragmatics, intrinsic interest, theory, or any combination thereof.' Sometimes groups are chosen because nobody really understands what they are doing, like in the case of public relations as a practice is rarely understood outside of the profession, often misunderstood to be another name for advertising. Such work cultures and work practice need more attention as a subject of study. The most important criteria like in the case of case study method the researcher needs to be having consistent access to the group of study even while doing ethnography. While _performing' the observation method the observer needs to go beyond what is being shown and see that which is explicitly not being shown. Methods that can be used are participant or non-participant observation, interviews, and content analysis. Though quantitative data may be produced, the study is qualitative in nature and that is the focus and that is how data will be described.

9.3 OBSERVATION METHODS: PARTICIPANT AND NON-PARTICIPANT

Observation method:

MARSHALL and ROSSMAN (1989) define observation as "the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study" (p.79). Observations help the researcher to talk about current situations by observing through the five senses, and thus creating a "written photograph" of the subject under study (ERLANDSON, HARRIS, SKIPPER, & ALLEN, 1993). Observation methods give an insight to researchers to look for _nonverbal expression of feelings, determine who interacts with whom, grasp how participants communicate with each other, and check for how much time is spent on various activities' (SCHMUCK, 1997).

DeWalt and DeWALT (2002) say "the goal for design of research using participant observation as a method is to develop a holistic understanding of the phenomena under study that is as objective and accurate as possible given the limitations of the method" (p.92).

Participant Observation method:

Participant observation is one of the oldest methods in anthropological studies, especially in the field of ethnographic studies, and has been used extensively as a data collection method for more than a century now. Go more deeper into the participant observation method, which is the focus of this unit, the researcher needs to build a bond, empathy with the members of the group to have an exchange which is as if he was _living' the same reality. BERNARD (1994) ― defines participant observation as the process

of establishing rapport within a community and learning to act in such a way as to blend into the community so that its members will act naturally, then removing oneself from the setting or community to immerse oneself in the data to understand what is going on and be able to write about it.‖ It will take a while for the researcher to immerse himself into the daily dynamics of that group but once done more rich observations will emerge. As put together by Signe Howell, ―It is undertaken as open-ended inductive long-term living with and among the people to be studied, the sole purpose of which is to achieve an understanding of local knowledge, values, and practices _from the ―native‘s point of view‖‖. Participant observation can also be a revelation as one can observe what people say and what they do. Participant observation needs the person observing to have _an open, non-judgmental attitude, being interested in learning more about others, being aware of the propensity for feeling culture shock and for making mistakes, the majority of which can be overcome, being a careful observer and a good listener, and being open to the unexpected in what is learned‘ (DeWalt & DeWALT, 1998).

Non-Participant Observation method:

In this method the researcher will have a structured checklist to observe that he will note in his dairy, like observing the working of a film set, observing children in a classroom etc. But both these examples can also be done using the participant observation method.

Ethnography as a methodology can be evaluated as suggested below:

In Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein's (1997) monograph, The New Language of Qualitative Method, which outlines ethnography in context of the "methods talk‖ as below: -

1. ―Substantive contribution: "Does the piece contribute to our understanding of social life?"
2. Aesthetic merit: "Does this piece succeed aesthetically?"
3. Reflexivity: "How did the author come to write this text…Is there adequate self-awareness and self-exposure for the reader to make judgments about the point of view?"
4. Impact: "Does this affect me? Emotionally? Intellectually?" Does it move me?
5. Expresses a reality: "Does it seem 'true'—a credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the 'real'?"‖

There can be some fundamental limitation of using the participant observation method which is as explained below: DeWalt and DeWALT (2002) explain that gender plays a key role. So male and female researchers may have access to diverse information, for they could be accessing different respondents, settings could be different, and the institutes of knowledge. Participant observation is conducted by a human who can be biased in his own right; In such complex situations it is must

for the researcher to discern how ‗his/her gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and theoretical approach may affect observation, analysis, and interpretation.' The researcher needs to be vigilant while especially using this method.

9.4 PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Public Relations has been an evolving practice, its origin and growth has traversed many years across the world. Sriramesh quotes James Grunig's definition of public relations that it is "the management of communication between an organization and its publics (Sriramesh & White, 1992). Public relations serve the functions of information, communication, persuasion, image building, continuous building of trust, management of conflicts, and the generation of consensus‖ (Sriramesh K., 2003).

Researchers and scholars in the field of communication studies have used ethnography to understand communication aspects like communication behaviors and phenomenon. They have gone into in depth analysis of not much appreciated routines, as well explained by this definition of ethnography ‒a method is a storied, careful, and systematic examination of the reality-generating mechanisms of everyday life‖ (Coulon, 1995). Public relations research is articulated well by the following definition ‒Research gives the hard data necessary to provide value to the organization and helps provide information to make decisions that have real impact‖ - Gronstedt (1997). Research points out to concern areas which can steer organisations into building relationships, making effective programmes, and taking on time needed actions that will stop issues from not being blown out of proportion and later becoming huge issues. - (Broom & Dozier, 1990; Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2000).

The studies done in the field of communication using ethnography as a methodology, explains the ‒how" of the mundane practices in the field of work or otherwise in establishing their identities of individuals through their daily actions. By doing this one understands the ‒why‖ and ‒how come‖ of communication by people.

There can be many examples where such studies can be done. One could study the work practices of how media relations is conducted, how is the daily work routine of a PR agency, how crisis communication is managed by a corporate communications department etc.

‒Campaigns are coordinated, purposeful, extended efforts designed to achieve a specific goal or a set of interrelated goals that will move the organisation towards a longer-range objective expressed as its mission statement‖- Doug Newsom, Judy VanSlyke, and Dean Kruckberg's ‒This is PR. The realities of Public Relations.‖ These can be cases which can be part of observation studies. Here the researcher can be a participant observer and immerse himself into the PR campaign done to communicate image building, selling a product or a crisis communication done with the target audience. Only by putting oneself into the shoes of the campaigner

can one really get the challenges that are faced while putting PR campaigns together.

A certain study focused on ―Public relations in the postmodern city: An ethnographic account of PR occupational culture in Mexico City‖ searching for meanings that the PR practitioners in the study gave to their day-to-day workings and how they _made use of social networks to help them negotiate their way through the potentially hostile waters‘ of making a work life in one of the big cities in the world. Indonesian research focused on ―concept of public relations with the cultural activities of Jakhu Suku focussing on communications‖ was studied using the methodology of Ethnography, it examined the culture-based public relations communication behaviour. Yet another study examined ―Cultures and places: Ethnography in public relations spaces‖ where the topic of women's leadership and public relations was studied using Ethnography.

Check your progress.

1. What is ethnography?

2. What is the Observation method and its process?

3. What is the use of participant observation methods in the communication and public relations field?

4. What is the limitation of the participation observation method?

9.5 LET'S SUM IT UP

Research is a process which begins with curiosity and eventually formal steps laid down to implement it. As explained by an internationally recognized leader in research methodologies Zina O'Leary: Research can

be thought of as a ‒thinking game‖ and a ‒whole brain‖ activity that often demands that researchers think outside any set of prospective ‒rules.‖

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aware of the propensity for feeling culture shock and for making mistakes, the majority of which can be overcome, being a careful observer and a good listener, and being open to the unexpected in what is learned' (DeWALT & DeWALT, 1998).

In a non-participant observation method, the researcher will have a structured checklist to observe that he will note in his dairy, like observing the working of a film set, observing children in a classroom etc. But both these examples can also be done using the participant observation method.

Researchers and scholars in the field of communication studies have used ethnography to understand communication aspects like communication behaviors and phenomenon. They have gone into in depth analysis of not much appreciated routines, as well explained by this definition of ethnography –a method is a storied, careful, and systematic examination of the reality-generating mechanisms of everyday life‖ (Coulon, 1995).

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Campaigns can be cases which can be part of observation studies. Here the researcher can be a participant observer and immerse himself into the PR campaign done to communicate image building, selling a product or a crisis communication done with the target audience. Only by putting oneself into the shoes of the campaigner can one really get the challenges that face PR campaigns.

There can be some fundamental limitation of using the participant observation method which is as explained below: DeWALT and DeWALT (2002) explain that gender plays a key role. So male and female researchers may have access to diverse information, for they could be accessing different respondents, settings could be different, and the institutes of knowledge. Participant observation is conducted by a human who can be biased in his own right; In such complex situations it is must for the researcher to discern how _his/her gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and theoretical approach may affect observation, analysis, and interpretation.'

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10

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES – WHAT IS THE RANDOM?

Unit Structure

10.0 OBJECTIVES

On completion, the learner will be able to:

1. Explain the terms "population" and "sample".
2. Describe the phases involved in sampling
3. Identify the different sampling procedures after completing this lesson
4. Define a probability sample and describe the many sorts of samples that exist
5. Describe the characteristics of an effective sample, what a non-probability sample is, and the various kinds of non-probability samples.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

As an example, think about the COVID-19 vaccination clinical trials. It is quite difficult to conduct the trials on the entire population since it requires

time, money, and resources. Sampling is a strategy that, in terms of research methodology, allows researchers to make judgments about a population based on the results from a sample of that group without having to look at every single person in that group. Predict customer retention or loss on its network, a telecoms company plans to build a machine learning model. Making a prediction model from all the customer data is one strategy. For this method, significant computational power and resources are required. Because of this, the best course of action is to create the machine learning model using a sample (a subset of customers) from the population (all customers), which represents the population. Work is spared, as well as money.

10.2 SAMPLING AND POPULATION

Sampling is a technique that involves selecting individuals or a small subset of the population to draw statistical conclusions from them and estimate the characteristics of the entire population. Get usable data, researchers commonly utilize a variety of sampling strategies in market research. This avoids the need to investigate the entire population. Since it is both a time-efficient and money-efficient method, it acts as the cornerstone of every research design. The election is a well-known example. A pollster interviews a portion of the voters to forecast the behavior of the complete set (the electorate or population) to determine the outcome of the elections. Studies are frequently conducted on samples since it is usually impracticable to examine the entire population. It is intended to extrapolate findings from samples to the entire population and, in certain cases, even to the future. The sample must thus be representative of the population. Using the right sample procedures is the simplest way to do this.

Representative Sampling:

A sample must meet two requirements: it must be 'representative' and 'sufficient.' If a sample is to be used to infer information about the nature of the population, it must accurately reflect the population. Additionally, it mandates that a representative "percentage" of the population be drawn. There might be a limited number of individuals or units in the population. In some cases, the population is "infinite." Therefore, it is essential to define a population clearly to dispel any uncertainty about whether a given unit belongs to the population or not. Otherwise, a researcher won't know which units to consider when selecting a sample.

The selection of the "sampling frame," or the division of the population's components into discrete groups, is the second issue with sample representation. A researcher may use a variety of sample frames, including male/female students, employed/unemployed students, etc. The sampling frame must be created in advance and should be thorough, accurate, and up to date.

A sample must be objective and impartial. Ideally, it should contain all valuable information on the population from which it was gathered. Such a

sample based on induction theory, or moving from the particular to the general, falls under the category of random sampling errors. 'Probability' is what the results will then be expressed as.

A sample should be adequate to offer stability to its qualities in addition to representativeness. What then is the ideal sample size? A sample that has enough occurrences to provide reliable results is considered adequate. A small sample is sufficient when the population being examined is homogenous. However, a much larger sample is needed if the population's unit variation is greater. Due to this, the approach used to determine the sample size varies based on the kind of property being investigated and how it is distributed in the population. The appropriateness of a sample will also depend on how well we understand the population and the sampling method.

10.3 HOW TO CHOOSE AN APPROPRIATE SAMPLE METHOD?

It is essential to choose a sampling approach with attention if you want to accomplish your study goals. The effectiveness of your sample will be influenced by a variety of factors. Here are a few methods that experts use to decide which sample technique is best.

1. Describe the study's goals. Usually, a trade-off needs to be made between price, accuracy, and precision.
2. Identify effective sample techniques that could be able to achieve the study's goals.
3. Put each of these tactics to the test to determine whether they can help you accomplish your goal.
4. Select the strategy that will assist the research the most effectively.

10.3 METHODS OF SAMPLING

We argued in the section before that the sample-drawing process is crucial to the validity of any findings or conclusions. This being the case, we will go over the various sample methods in the section that follows. Sampling methods may be classified into two categories:

a. Probability Sampling:

b. Non-Probability Sampling

a. Probability Sampling:

Probability sampling's fundamental principle is the random selection of units from a population. In other words, rather than relying on the researcher's judgment, the sampling technique is conducted in a way that guarantees there is an equal probability of including every unit in the population. In a lottery, for example, the odds of being picked are the

same for everyone. Some characteristics of a probability sample include the following:

1. There is a possibility that each unit in the sample will be present.
2. In the analysis of the sample, weights corresponding to the probabilities are applied, and
3. In one or more phases of the selection of the sample units, the sampling procedure is automatic.

Different techniques may be used for probability sampling, and each technique has advantages and disadvantages of its own. Below is a quick description of each of these:

A. 1. Simple or Unrestricted Random Sampling:

One of the best probability sampling techniques for saving time and resources is the Simple Random Sampling method. Each person in a population is chosen at random, purely by chance, and this method of data collection is dependable. Every candidate has the same chance of being chosen to join a sample.

For instance, it is likely that the HR staff would prefer picking chits from a bowl if they had to organize team-building activities in a 500-person organization. In this scenario, each of the 500 employees has an equal probability of being picked. You may create a simple random sample by completing the following steps one at a time.

i) Define the population

ii) Make a list of all the population units and give each one a number between 1 to N.

iii) Determining the sample's size—that is, the number of units that will make up the sample.

iv) Using the 'lottery approach' or 'random number tables,' select the units that will make up the sample.

Advantages of Simple Random Sampling:

1. It is a fair sample strategy that, when utilized appropriately, helps minimize bias when compared to other sampling procedures.
2. Since a large sample frame is needed, it is frequently easy to select a smaller sample size from the larger population that is currently present.
3. The information being gathered need not be familiar to the researcher beforehand. It is not necessary to have subject-matter knowledge to ask a question to gather information.

4. This sampling plan is a fundamental method of gathering data. One does not need technical knowledge. Just the minimum of listening and recording skills are required.

5. Because there are many participants in this type of sampling technique, the sample size that the researcher must create has no restrictions. A smaller sample can be quickly taken from a larger population.

6. The information acquired using this sampling method is accurate; the information's calibre increases with the number of samples used.

A. 2. Cluster Sampling:

Researchers used the probability sampling technique of cluster sampling to divide the population into several groups (referred to as clusters) for the purpose of conducting research. Then, using a simple random or systematic random sampling strategy, researchers select random groups to collect and analyse data. In this sampling approach, researchers examine a sample that comprises several sample factors, such as demographics, habits, background, or any other population trait that may be the subject of the research being undertaken. This approach is typically used when a statistical population consists of groupings that are comparable yet internally heterogeneous. Cluster sampling helps the researchers to get data by segmenting the data into smaller, more productive groups rather than picking the total population. Steps to conduct cluster sampling are:

1. **Sample:** Determine the sample size and target audience

2. **Develop sample frames and evaluate their efficacy:** To develop a sampling frame, use an existing framework or develop a new one specifically for the target population. The coverage and clustering of frameworks should be evaluated, and adjustments should be made as appropriate. These divisions will be various given the population, which might be both exclusive and all-inclusive. Participants in the sample are picked at random.

3. **Determine the number of groups** by allocating the same average number of individuals to each category. Make sure that every one of these clusters differs from the others.

4. **Use a random selection** technique when selecting clusters

5. **Establish sub-types:** Depending on how many steps researchers take to build clusters, it can be divided into two-stage and multi-stage subtypes.

Advantages of Cluster Sampling:

1. **When groups are geographically dispersed**, sampling requires less labour and costs less money. It is far more cost-effective to observe clusters than to do so randomly over a particular region by allocating a finite number of resources to those selected clusters.

2. **Convenient access:** By allowing researchers to choose large samples, this sampling approach enhances accessibility to various clusters.

3. **Data accuracy:** Any loss in information accuracy per individual may be made up for as each cluster may contain large samples.

4. **Cluster sampling**: makes it feasible to collect data from several groups and locations, making implementation straightforward. Unlike other probability sampling methods, it is quick for researchers to apply in practical contexts.

A. 3. Systematic Sampling:

Systematic Sampling is used by researchers to narrow in on the study's target population. The sampling interval may be calculated by researchers by dividing the desired sample size by the entire population. Systematic sampling, which entails randomly picking a sample from the entire group in regular time intervals, is a more extensive use of probability sampling. The researcher selects members of the target population using a random starting point and sample participants after a set 'sampling interval.' If you were to take a sample of 500 people from a population of 5000, you would need to assign a number to each person in the population. The researcher may select one at random once the numbers have been given, like 5. The fifth individual will be the first participant in the systematic sample. Then the sample will include the 10th person, and so on (15th, 25th, 35th, 45th, and members till 5000th). Steps to create Systematic Sampling:

1. Create a clearly defined structural audience to begin constructing the sampling component.

2. As a researcher, decide on the ideal sample size—that is, how many people should be chosen at random from the population to constitute the sample.

3. Sample size, assign a number to each sample participant.

4. Identify the time window for the sample. This will typically be how the components are separated.

Advantages of Systematic Sampling:

1. It is amazingly simple and convenient for researchers to create, perform, and analyse samples.

2. Since there is no requirement to number every sample participant, it is better for swiftly and simply representing a population.

3. The examples were carefully crafted, and member selection was done without bias.

4. Unlike other probability sampling methods like cluster sampling and stratified sampling or non-probability methods like convenience sampling, systematic sampling prevents the risk of highly biased

clusters being produced since the members are at a constant distance from one another.

5. There is minimal danger associated with this sampling strategy.

6. This sampling approach might be helpful when a population's members are diverse since the sample's members are uniformly dispersed.

A. 4. Stratified Random Sampling:

Using stratified random sampling, a research organization may divide the entire population into several distinct, homogeneous groups (strata) and select study participants at random from each stratum. This reduces expenses and improves efficiency. Members of each group should differ from one another to guarantee that every group member has an equal chance of getting selected using fundamental probability. Another name for this sampling strategy is random quota sampling. The term describes the process of choosing participants depending on characteristics including age, socioeconomic position, race, religion, and level of education. Consider that a research team is seeking opinions on how soap is used by various age groups. Instead of 1.4 billion people, 10,000 randomly selected Indians might be used as study subjects. These 10,000 persons can be divided into age groups, such as those between the ages of 18 and 29, 30 to 39, 40 to 49, 50 to 59, and those aged 60 and older. There will be a variety of people in each stratum, both in terms of type and quantity. Steps for creation of Stratified Random Sample are:

1. Determine the target audience.

2. After finding the stratification variable or variables, decide the number of strata to be used. These categorization criteria must be in line with the objective of the study. Any additional data is used to establish the stratification factors. For instance, if the research's objective is to understand every subgroup, the variables will be linked to these subgroups and will be influenced by all the information we know about them. The optimal number of stratification factors and strata for a sample is 4-6, as having more stratification variables makes it more likely that certain variables may cancel out the effects of other variables.

3. Use an existing sample frame or create one with all the information on the stratification variable for each segment of the target population.

4. Make changes after examining the sampling frame for under- or over-coverage or grouping.

5. Considering the entire population, each stratum should be different and contain every member of the population. There should not be much difference between layers, but there should be a lot of variety within each stratum. For each population segment, there should only be one stratum.

6. Assign a unique, random number to each component.

7. Determine the sizes of each stratum based on your requirements. The numerical distribution of all the components in all the strata will decide the type of sampling that will be employed. It is possible for stratified sampling to be disproportionate or proportionate.

8. The researcher can then select components at random from each stratum to build the sample. At least one element must be chosen from each stratum to guarantee that each is represented; however, if two items are chosen from each stratum, it will be easier to calculate the error margins of the computations of the acquired data.

Advantages of Stratified Random Sampling:

1. When compared to convenience sampling or other non-probability procedures, results are more accurate. The same is true for cluster sampling, simple random sampling, and systematic sampling, which are all probability sampling techniques. This accuracy will depend on how diverse the strata are; if they are all quite distinct, results will be fairly accurate.

2. This sampling strategy's accuracy makes it straightforward to train a group to stratify samples.

3. Lower sample sizes can also provide a researcher with incredibly valuable information because of the statistical accuracy of this strategy.

4. This sampling approach covers the broadest possible population since the researchers have complete control over the stratum division.

Check Your Progress

What is Sampling? What is the Importance of it?

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What is Representative Sampling? What do we need to take Samples?

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What are the advantages of Probability Sampling?

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2. A. Non - Probability Sampling:

The non-probability approach is a sampling methodology that depends less on a specified method of selection and more on the sample selection abilities of the researcher or statistician. The results of a survey drawn from a non-probable sample are typically biased and may not correctly represent the intended target demographic. Non-probability sampling will be significantly more beneficial in some situations than the other sort, such as the initial stages of research or financial constraints. Non-probability sampling is influenced by several factors, including the accessibility of the units, the researcher's prior experience, and the simplicity of the survey. Since they weren't produced using random sampling techniques, these samples are known as non-probability samples. Depending on the approach used, non-probability samples are classified as Convenience, Judgemental, Snowball and Quota Sampling

2. A. 1. Convenience Sampling:

The phrase "convenience sampling" refers to a method employed by researchers to collect data from a pool of conveniently available respondents for market research. Since it is so rapid, easy, and economical, it is the sampling procedure that is used the most frequently. If members choose to be part of the sample, they are often simple to contact. Researchers use several sampling techniques when there are large populations. Evaluating the whole community is sometimes impossible due to how difficult it is to contact everyone. Researchers employ convenience sampling when additional inputs are not necessary for the primary research. There are no prerequisites to joining this sample. Participants are chosen by the researcher only based on their proximity and without consideration for how well they represent the entire community. They can easily keep an eye on people's behaviors, viewpoints, and thoughts thanks to this technique. A straightforward example of a convenience sampling strategy is when companies distribute marketing materials and interview people who were picked at random in a busy street or at a mall. Businesses use this sampling strategy to gather information to address crucial market issues. They also use it to get feedback on a feature or a newly released product from the sample created.

Advantages of Convenience Sampling:

1. Quick data collection:

When time is of the essence, many researchers opt for this strategy. The criteria for gathering the sample's constituent pieces are the least complicated when compared to techniques like systematic sampling, stratified sampling, and simple random sampling. The ease of data collection makes it rapid.

2. Cost-effective to produce samples:

Alternative probability sampling approaches need a substantial time and money investment compared to convenience sampling. It makes it possible for researchers to swiftly, affordably, and effectively create additional samples.

3. Research is straightforward:

The name of this surveying technique makes it apparent how samples are produced. The components are readily available to the researchers, making it straightforward to compile a sample of individuals.

4. Low cost:

This method's affordability is one of the main explanations given by researchers for employing it. Students and researchers may use a limited budget to finance other parts of their studies.

5. Accessible sample:

Data collection is easy and practical. Most of the convenience sampling takes the present population into consideration. Samples are accessible to the researcher with ease. When acquiring data, they don't have to move around much. Data collection can begin as soon as a few hours because quotas are quickly filled.

6. There are less requirements to follow:

There is no need to run potential audience members via a checklist. Here, getting vital information and data is made simple.

2. B. 1. Judgemental or Purposive Sampling

The members of the sample are chosen exclusively based on the researcher's knowledge and judgment in a non-probability sampling technique known as authoritative sampling, purposive sampling, or judgmental sampling. Because the researcher's experience is crucial for creating a sample with this sampling strategy, there is a chance that the results will be exceedingly accurate with a narrow margin of error. The researchers carefully choose everyone who will be a member of the sample while utilizing judgmental sampling. This sampling approach relies heavily on the researcher's competence because the sample's participants are not chosen at random. For instance, due to the high possibility that the findings would be biased, researchers choose judgemental sampling to identify those academics who will supply 100% of their evaluation about their university when doing convenience sampling to choose those professors. The task of selecting each participant for the sample will be challenging for an intelligent researcher. It takes time to manually choose sample participants while making sure there is no bias present.

Advantages of Judgemental or Purposive Sampling

1. Takes the least time to complete:

This sampling approach relies heavily on the researcher's expertise and has no additional challenges, making the selection of a sample amazingly simple.

2. Allows for direct communication with the target market:

The researcher's preferences are the sole criteria used to choose a sample. As a result, he or she can speak with the target market of their choice directly and accomplish their objectives.

3. Quickly apparent results:

The sample's participants will be knowledgeable about the subject; therefore, a quick poll or survey might be conducted with them using judgmental sampling.

2. C. 1. Snowball Sampling:

Chain-referral sampling, commonly referred to as snowball sampling, is a non-probability sampling technique where the samples are difficult to find. With this sampling technique, sample populations are found by asking current research participants for recommendations. For instance, unless a club member agrees to speak with you directly and provides you with the contact information of the other club members, it would be exceedingly difficult to obtain primary data sources if you were researching the level of customer satisfaction among the members of a prestigious country club. A main data source proposes other potential data sources that could participate in the research as part of this sampling method. The only way a researcher may build a sample while using the snowball sampling technique is through referrals. This method is often referred to as the chain-referral sampling method. For business research, snowball sampling is frequently used. The snowball sampling strategy is widely used when a population is unknown or rare and it is challenging to pick people to assemble them as research samples.

Advantages of Snowball Sampling:

1. **Since referrals** come from reliable sources, samples may be obtained more rapidly owing to them. To free up time for the real study, a researcher is offered the chance to do another task.

2. **Cost-effective:** This tactic is cost-effective since the referrals originate from a primary data source. It is affordable and practical in comparison to other methods.

3. **Unwilling subjects:** Some people are reluctant to volunteer for research projects because they don't want their identities to be made public. In this circumstance, snowball sampling is helpful since they

seek references from acquaintances. Some segments of the target demographic are challenging to reach.

2. D. 1. Quota Sampling:

Using the non-probability sampling approach of quota sampling, researchers gather a sample of individuals who fairly represent a group. Researchers choose these individuals based on specific qualities or traits. Make sure the market research samples are efficient in gathering data, they make judgments and set quotas. Based on these samples, the complete population may be inferred. Only the interviewer's or researcher's understanding of the population will be used to choose the final subgroup. For instance, a chocolate and candy producer would be curious to know which age group prefers which type of chocolates and candy in a certain city. A survey quota applies to the age brackets of 21–30, 31–40, 41–50, and 51 and beyond. The researcher calculates the smoking trend in the city using these data. The sampling can be Controlled or Uncontrolled

Advantages of Quota Sampling:

1. **Saves time:** This sampling procedure is quick and simple since a quota is used to create the samples.
2. **Research convenience:** Interpreting data and survey replies is a simpler task for a researcher when quota sampling and proper research questions are used.
3. **Effective sampling** approach for researchers to obtain a precise representation of the population of interest. As this sampling method enables researchers to analyse the population using defined quotas, there is no possibility for over-representation.
4. **Savings:** The budget needed to use this sample technique is small.

10.5 LET'S SUM IT UP

This unit covers the terms population and sample, as well as the probability sampling and non-probability sampling. With careful consideration, one can also choose appropriate sampling type for the research.

Under Probability Sampling, we discussed Simple Random Sampling, Systematic Sampling, Stratified Sampling and Cluster Sampling as well as their advantages were discussed.

Under Non-Probability Sampling, the terms Convenience Sampling, Judgemental or Purposive Sampling, Snowball Sampling and Quota Sampling were discussed.

Some Key Terms Include:

Population:

Any group of individuals or objects that the researcher is interested in and that share one or more characteristics is referred to as a population. It could comprise every unit or individual belonging to a certain kind, or just a smaller subset of those individuals.

Sample:

A sample is a distinct portion of the population that has been picked for analysis. One can draw inferences about the population from the sample. Samples are carefully selected as opposed to randomly chosen to measure the influence of chance or probability.

Probability:

Probability is the proportion of all feasible outcomes to all feasible possibilities for an event. Between zero and one, when there is no chance that anything else will happen, there is 0% likelihood that the desired event will occur.

Probability Sampling:

In probability sampling, the units of a population are selected according to certain rules that ensure each unit has a specific chance of being included in the sample rather than at the researcher's whim. It is a technique for choosing the units that make up the population so that each unit has an equal and independent chance of being chosen for the sample.

Non-Probability Sampling:

In non-probability sampling, the researcher selects the units. The researcher uses his or her judgment or past information while selecting the sample.

Sampling Frame:

A sampling frame is an accurate and current full list of all the units that make up the population.

Representative Sample:

A representative sample is one that corresponds to the characteristics of the population that are important to the investigation.

Parameter:

Parameters are measurements that characterize a population.

Statistics:

Statistics are the measurements that are estimated from samples.

Sampling Error:

The statistics derived from samples frequently differ from sample to sample taken from the same population due to sampling variances. The

"parameter" is assumed to have a predetermined reference value, in contrast. Although a parameter cannot be determined, if certain conditions are satisfied, a statistical approach can be used to predict the value using sample data. The difference between the sample estimate (statistics) and the population value is referred to as sampling error.

Biased Sample:

A sample that is not representative of the population is said to be skewed. Biases can be caused by subpar techniques, subpar tools, subpar researchers, subpar tools, or subpar other things.

10.6 QUESTIONS

1. What are the types of Probability Sampling?
2. What are the types of Non-Probability Sampling?
3. What are the key terms to keep in mind regarding Sampling?

10.7 REFERENCES

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11

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN, CONTROL AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Unit Structure

11.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Meaning of Research in Public Relations
- Understanding Experimental design and Control
- Understanding Experimental Design, Control and Public Relations

11.0 INTRODUCTION

Public Relations has long been understood as a practice that revolves around creating mutually beneficial relationships between various kinds of stakeholders and "stakes seekers." The PR practitioners also need to connect and manage relationships between individuals and organisations from various demographics to reach organisational goals and objectives and meet the needs of the audiences. Stakeholders are "individuals, organisations, or groups that have a stake in or relationship with an organisation." They include employees, shareholders, suppliers, and others. Stake seekers consists of people and organisations who are keen on connecting with each other for mutual beneficial relationships.

Research requires curiosity to begin with. A lot of research can be found in media and public relations journals worldwide on various functions of public relations and public relations campaigns. These could be on functions of publicity, media relations, crisis communication, audience research, campaigns in public relations etc. Once the researcher has decided the research problem, research question and or hypothesis it becomes easier to put together a literature review for the body of the research to begin. The process of doing the next phase of research will involve putting a research methodology where one of the steps, methods and an important part of the study are decided and then data collection begins for the said research question and or hypothesis. Analysis is the

step which reveals the findings of the research after all the work done in the research process so far.

As explained by an internationally recognized leader in research methodologies Zina O'Leary: Research can be thought of as a "thinking game" and a "whole brain" activity that often demands that researchers think outside any set of prospective "rules." It is a creative and strategic process that involves constantly assessing, reassessing, and making decisions about the best possible means for obtaining trustworthy information, conducting appropriate analysis, and drawing credible conclusions.

The research process in public relations is multifaceted and dynamic. It requires a curious and inquisitive mindset to explore and uncover new insights. Public relations research encompasses various functions and areas, such as publicity, media relations, crisis communication, audience research, and campaign evaluation. By delving into media and public relations journals, researchers can gain access to a wealth of knowledge and scholarly articles that inform and shape their research endeavours. Initiate the research process, the researcher identifies the research problem, formulates research questions or hypotheses, and conducts a comprehensive literature review. The literature review serves as the foundation for the research, providing a thorough understanding of existing theories, concepts, and previous studies related to the research topic. It helps the researcher identify gaps in knowledge and opportunities for further exploration.

Once the research problem and questions are established, the researcher proceeds to design a suitable research methodology. This involves selecting appropriate methods, techniques, and tools for data collection and analysis. The choice of research methodology depends on the nature of the research problem, the available resources, and the desired outcomes. Common research methods employed in public relations research include surveys, interviews, content analysis, and case studies. Each method has its strengths and limitations, and the researcher must carefully consider which approach best aligns with the research objectives. Data collection is a crucial phase in the research process. It involves gathering relevant information and data that directly address the research questions or hypotheses. Depending on the chosen methodology, data collection can involve administering surveys, conducting interviews or focus groups, analysing existing media content, or observing and recording specific phenomena. The researcher must ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected to ensure the credibility of the research findings.

Following data collection, the researcher moves on to data analysis. This phase involves organizing, coding, and interpreting the collected data to derive meaningful insights. Statistical techniques, qualitative analysis methods, or a combination of both may be employed, depending on the research design and data characteristics. Through rigorous analysis, patterns, themes, and relationships within the data emerge, contributing to a deeper understanding of the research topic. The final stage of the

research process involves drawing conclusions and communicating the findings. The researcher interprets the results considering the research questions or hypotheses, discusses their implications, and offers recommendations for practice or further research. Clear and concise reporting of the research findings is essential to disseminate knowledge, contribute to the field of public relations, and guide future decision-making.

Public relations research is a systematic and rigorous process that requires a curious mindset, a strong theoretical foundation, and methodological rigor. By following a structured research process, PR practitioners can uncover valuable insights, inform strategic decision-making, and contribute to the advancement of the field. Research in public relations is a continuous and evolving endeavour, enabling professionals to adapt to changing communication landscapes, understand stakeholder needs, and build meaningful relationships that drive organizational success.

12.2 WHAT IS RESEARCH IN PUBLIC RELATIONS?

Public relations research can be well explained by the following definitions. Cutlip, Center, and Broom's (1985) emphasise research in public relations as “methodical, systematic research as the foundation of effective public relations”. “Research gives the hard data necessary to provide value to the organisation and helps provide information to make decisions that have real impact” - Gronstedt (1997). Research plays a crucial role for organisations to really know where they are headed in terms of communicating with their audiences. Research helps discover the various areas of concern which can help organisations build relationships, make effective programmes, and initiate on time needed actions that will stop issues from not being blown out of proportion. -(Broom & Dozier, 1990; Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2000). Donald K. Wright says, “research is important because public relations people are finding that research is part and parcel of their jobs when they offer communication strategies, counsel on communication problems, and educate clients as to the best public relations strategies or actions.”

Research is useful in Public Relations as it helps in knowing clients better, while pitching an idea to the client, suggesting a campaign plan, or persuading them to pick a particular medium over the other; it can be more convincing if research-based data is provided here. Knowing your demographics is so crucial for anyone in the promotion business. Whether to create an image or help in sales in both situations research is useful. Understanding demographics helps in knowing the way of life and the likings of the target audience. Message creation is the key in a campaign plan and the research really helps in getting there.

Research provides insights into the target audience's preferences, attitudes, and behaviors, enabling public relations professionals to tailor their messages effectively. By conducting thorough research, PR practitioners can gather data on consumer demographics, psychographics, and media

consumption habits. This knowledge helps in crafting messages that resonate with the target audience, leading to better campaign outcomes.

Moreover, research plays a pivotal role in crisis management within public relations. In times of crisis, organizations must respond swiftly and effectively to protect their reputation. Research helps in understanding the crisis context, identifying stakeholders' concerns, and devising appropriate communication strategies. By conducting research on public perception, sentiment analysis, and media coverage, PR professionals can gauge the effectiveness of their crisis communication efforts and make necessary adjustments.

In addition to audience analysis and crisis management, research is essential for measuring the impact and effectiveness of public relations campaigns. It allows practitioners to assess the outcomes and ROI of their efforts, providing evidence-based insights for future decision-making. Research methodologies such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, and content analysis enable the measurement of key performance indicators, such as message recall, attitude change, brand perception, and media coverage. These measurements contribute to evaluating campaign success and informing strategic adjustments for continuous improvement.

Furthermore, research in public relations helps in identifying emerging trends, understanding industry dynamics, and benchmarking against competitors. It provides PR professionals with valuable market intelligence, enabling them to stay ahead of the curve and develop innovative strategies. By monitoring industry publications, conducting competitor analysis, and engaging in primary research, PR practitioners can gain insights into best practices, industry benchmarks, and emerging communication channels. This knowledge empowers them to adapt their approaches, adopt modern technologies, and stay relevant in a rapidly evolving media landscape.

Check Your Progress

1. What is public relations research?

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2. What are the areas in public relations that require research? Explain with examples.

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12.3 WHAT IS EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN AND CONTROL?

In his first book of Public Relations Research (2002), Don Stacks explains that experiments are "the only way that we can definitely evaluate whether something actually causes a change in something else" (p. 196). Experiments are a kind of quantitative research where one examines causal relationship types of questions. The experimental design prescribes "how participants are allocated to the different groups in an experiment." The diverse types of experimental designs include repeated measures, independent groups, and matched pairs. Another concept we come across is the control group. This comprises participants in the group who are excluded from the experiment treatment and serve only as comparative entities.

How are Experiments designed?

According to Stacks (2002), experiments rely on three main concepts. The study must establish that: (1) "changes in one variable cause changes in the other variable", (2) "the effect follows the cause", and (3) "no third variable influenced the relationship" (p. 200). Here researchers can use "true, quasi-, or pre-experiments to evaluate theory or evaluate the effectiveness of communication tactics" (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002; Stacks,2002).

While designing the experiments the following points must be kept in mind:

1. Independent measures / between-groups: In this different participant are needed in each of the said situations of the IV or independent variable.

2. Repeated measures /within-groups: In this type of the same participants are needed in each of the said situations of the IV or independent variable.

3. Matched pairs: In this kind, each situation there are different participants, but they are commonly matched with respect to different demographics parameters.

4. Summarising Experiments designing is collecting data in a methodical manner, the focus being on the experiment design itself more than the outcome, to keep a tab on the changes to be introduced in the independent variable and its subsequent effect on the dependent variables and the varying results. Last but not the least the results should be valid and simply understood.

When conducting experiments, researchers carefully plan the design to ensure that they can draw accurate and reliable conclusions. The primary goal is to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between variables. By manipulating an independent variable and observing the resulting changes in a dependent variable, researchers can assess the impact of the

independent variable on the outcome. Experimental design involves the allocation of participants to diverse groups, depending on the specific design chosen. Independent measures, also known as between-groups design, require different participants in each situation or condition of the independent variable. This helps to eliminate potential confounding factors and ensures that each group represents a distinct experimental condition.

In contrast, repeated measures design, or within-groups design, involves using the same participants in each situation or condition of the independent variable. This allows researchers to observe individual differences and control for participant-related variables that may influence the results. Another approach is matched pairs design, where participants in each situation or condition are carefully matched based on relevant demographic or characteristic parameters. This design helps to minimize individual differences and ensures that the groups are as similar as possible, except for the independent variable being evaluated.

Regardless of the specific design, experiments must include a control group. The control group consists of participants who do not receive the experimental treatment but instead serve as a baseline for comparison. By comparing the control group's results with those of the experimental group, researchers can assess the specific effects of the independent variable. In summary, experimental design plays a crucial role in conducting rigorous and valid research. It allows researchers to evaluate causal relationships, determine the effects of independent variables, and draw meaningful conclusions. By carefully allocating participants and utilizing appropriate designs, researchers can minimize confounding factors and obtain reliable results.

12.4 EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN, CONTROL AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

It has been noted long back by Miller and Levine (1996) that persuasion research has depended on experiments to examine how good the impact by sources and message was on attitudes and behaviours of people. Very few experiments usage have been observed in public relations research. Broom and Dozier (1990) suggest that, in public relations, “every research plan to evaluate program impact includes either an explicit or implicit experimental design” (p. 99). Experimental designs are excellent in pointing out “specific causal variables in persuasion” (Miller & Levine, 1996, p. 265), for e.g., how self-esteem and other factors play a key role in influencing the message content to bring about any change in attitude or behaviour change. “Experimental designs allow the researcher the control necessary to precisely specify and manipulate the source or message characteristics he or she is interested in comparing” (p. 265), This allows researchers to evaluate and check for relationship between variables (Stacks, 2002). Various marketing and advertising researchers have used the experimental design method to do different studies: “how public accountability may predict corporate trustworthiness” (Sinclair & Irani,

2005), "the impact of issues advocacy advertisements on sponsor credibility" (Burgoon, Pfau, & Birk, 1995; Goldsmith, Lafferty, & Newell, 2000); "the relationship of source credibility and perceived purchase risk" (Grewal, Gottleib, & Marmorstein, 1994).

Various materials available on Experimental Design, Control and Public Relations state that the experimental design method is rarely used in the field of public relations as compared to the fields of advertising and marketing. There the application can be seen in the fields of consumer behaviour and media effects, As Don Stacks (2002) says that "probably the most rigorous kind of research conducted but, at the same time, is almost never found in public relations research" (p. 195). Not much change has been observed since this observation was made as told by other authors, Lois Boynton & Elizabeth Dougall too when they say that "This "avoidance" of the experimental method has persisted over time in spite of three critical factors: the growth of public relations postgraduate programs; the concomitant progress in producing trained researchers; and the method's usefulness in measuring key public relations-related and relationship-management-related topics such as trust, accountability, and credibility".

As mentioned in his study (Stacks, 2002) "the experimental method as the sine qua non of the research world" only 21 from several 400 articles had the findings of experimental research, in the studies published in well-known public relations journals namely Journal of Public Relations Research and Public Relations Review, between 1995-2004. The experiments were done on testing messages created in health and communication and studying the impact of public relations practice. Just 19 articles cited the experimental method. Three of these articles were part of Public Relations Review, which discussed at length methods which also included experimental research design (Fischer, 1995; Hallahan, 1999b, 2001). Fischer (1995) suggested "control construct evaluation procedures" (p. 45) simply and cheap method for evaluation of information campaigns. There were other mentions too in other journals, some even passing ones, or the process not explained in detail. These clearly explain that this experimental design method was not widely used. As explained by the authors Lois Boynton & Elizabeth Dougall in their paper "very few professional and academic questions are examined by public relations scholars using experimental research designs. Despite the rigour and reputation of this method in the world of science, if 10 years of scholarly articles are any indicator, experimental research is poorly used and even more poorly understood in public relations research." But of course, in the times we live in, especially with digital communication now becoming the norm, it is time that this method is given its due and place in the research of public relations practice.

The application of experimental design is still infrequent despite a few mentions in the literature on public relations. Fischer (1995) suggests using "control construct evaluation procedures" as an easy and affordable method of evaluating communication campaigns. Nevertheless, a better comprehension and implementation of experimental research are lacking

in public relations research. Boynton and Dougall deplore that, despite its rigorous and esteemed reputation in the scientific community, experimental research is rarely applied to and comprehended in the field.

Given the evolving communication landscape, particularly with the importance of digital platforms, it is imperative to recognise the relevance of experimental design in public relations research. This scientific methodology offers a detailed means to assess public relations practises, shedding light on the effectiveness of strategies, message, and communication tactics. By embracing experimental designs, researchers can advance their fields, increase their understanding of public relations phenomena, and contribute to the creation of evidence-based practises in the ever-changing communication landscape.

12.5 LET'S SUM IT UP

Public Relations has long been understood as a practice that revolves around creating mutually beneficial relationships between various kinds of stakeholders and "stakes seekers." The PR practitioners also need to connect and manage relationships between individuals and organisations from various demographics to reach organisational goals and objectives and meet the needs of the audiences.

Research can be thought of as a "thinking game" and a "whole brain" activity that often demands that researchers think outside any set of prospective "rules." Research requires curiosity to begin with. A lot of research can be found in media and public relations journals worldwide on various functions of public relations and public relations campaigns. These could be on functions of publicity, media relations, crisis communication, audience research, campaigns in public relations etc.

Public relations research can be well explained by the following definitions. Cutlip, Center, and Broom's (1985) emphasise research in public relations as "methodical, systematic research as the foundation of effective public relations". Research is useful in Public Relations as it helps in knowing clients better, while pitching an idea to the client, suggesting a campaign plan, or persuading them to pick a particular medium over the other it can be more convincing if research-based data is provided here. Knowing your demographics is so crucial for anyone in the promotion business. Whether to create an image or help in sales in both situations research is useful. Understanding demographics helps in knowing the way of life and the likings of the target audience. Message creation is the key in a campaign plan and the research really helps in getting there.

In his first book of Public Relations Research (2002), Don Stacks explains that experiments are "the only way that we can definitely evaluate whether something actually causes a change in something else" (p. 196).

Experiments are a kind of quantitative research where one examines causal relationship types of questions. The experimental design prescribes

"how participants are allocated to the different groups in an experiment." The diverse types of experimental designs include repeated measures, independent groups, and matched pairs. Another concept we come across is the control group. This comprises participants in the group where the experiment treatment is not given and only works as comparative standards.

According to Stacks (2002), experiments rely on three main concepts. The study must establish that: (1) "changes in one variable cause changes in the other variable", (2) "the effect follows the cause", and (3) "no third variable influenced the relationship" (p. 200). Here researchers can use "true, quasi-, or pre-experiments to evaluate theory or evaluate the effectiveness of communication tactics" (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002; Stacks,2002).

It has been noted long back by Miller and Levine (1996) that persuasion research has depended on experiments to examine how good the impact by sources and message was on attitudes and behaviours of people. Very few experiments usage have been observed in public relations research. Broom and Dozier (1990) suggest that, in public relations, "every research plan to evaluate program impact includes either an explicit or implicit experimental design" (p. 99).

Various materials available on Experimental Design, Control and Public Relations state that the experimental design method is rarely used in the field of public relations as compared to the fields of advertising and marketing. There the application can be seen in the fields of consumer behaviour and media effects, As Don Stacks (2002) says that "probably the most rigorous kind of research conducted but, at the same time, is almost never found in public relations research" (p. 195). But of course, in the times we live in, especially with digital communication now becoming the norm, it is time that this method is given its due and place in the research of public relations practice.

12.6 QUESTIONS

1. What are experiments?
2. What is a control group in experiments?
3. What is experimental design in public relations research?

12.7 REFERENCES

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12

WRITING A RESEARCH REPORT

Unit Structure

12.0 OBJECTIVES

- Discover answers to the meaningful questions through scientific procedures and systematic attempts.
- Find out the hidden truths which are not discovered yet can easily become known by research.
- Evaluate the content of the written proposal of the study.
- Examine its adequacy based on research proposal and research report.
- Gain familiarity or to achieve new insights into a phenomenon.
- Describe the accurate characteristics of a particular individual, situation, or a group.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

The importance of any research study is to evaluate the contents of the written proposal and report of the study. The merit of the problem and its adequacy is examined based on the research proposal and the contribution of the study is judged based on the research report of a thesis of the study.

A research report deals with the results of completed research work. It is produced in written form and is called a research report or thesis. A detailed description of research activities is provided in it. It is written in the past tense and third person. It is the final form of the research work.

A research report includes usually the following chapters: -

- Introduction or theoretical background.
- Review of related literature.
- Methodology.
- Data collection.
- Analysis of data.
- Discussion of results.
- findings of the study.
- Bibliography and Appendices.

It is also submitted for evaluating its contributions. It serves the purpose of communicating the results of a research work done.

12.2 WHAT IS A RESEARCH REPORT?

A research report is a well-drafted document that consists of the processes, data, and findings of a systematic investigation. It is an important document that serves as a first-hand account of the research process,

In many ways, a research report can be considered as a summary of the research process that highlights findings, recommendations, and other vital details.

12.3 FEATURES OF A RESEARCH REPORT

The basic features of a research report are as follows:

- It is a detailed presentation of research processes and findings, and it includes tables and graphs.
- a research report should be written in formal language.
- A research report is usually written in the third person.
- It is informative and based on first-hand experience.
- It is written with headings, sections, and bullet points.
- It includes recommendations for future reference.

12.4 TYPES OF RESEARCH REPORT

The research report is classified based on two things: nature of research and target audience.

Nature of Research

12.4.1 Qualitative Research Report:

This is the type of report writing for qualitative research. Qualitative research consists of the methods, processes, and findings of systematic investigation. A Qualitative research report provides an opportunity for one to apply researcher knowledge and develop skills in planning and executing research projects. it is always written in descriptive design.

12.4.2 Quantitative Research Report:

A quantitative research report is a type of research report that is written for quantitative research. Quantitative research is a type of systematic investigation that pays attention to numerical or statistical values in a bid to find answers to research questions.

In this type of research report, the researcher presents quantitative data to support the research process and findings. Unlike a qualitative research report that is descriptive, a quantitative research report works with numbers; that is, it is numerical.

Target Audience:

a research report can be recognised to be technical or popular which is based on the target audience. If you're dealing with a general audience, you would need to present a popular research report, and if you're dealing with a specialized audience, you would submit a technical report.

12.4.3 Technical Research Report:

A technical research report is a detailed document that you present after conducting industry-based research. This report is highly specialized because it provides information for a technical audience.

In a technical research report, the researcher is using data to provide specific information about the research process, including statistical analyses and sampling methods. Also, the use of language is highly specialized and filled with jargon.

Examples of technical research reports include legal and medical research reports.

12.4.4 Popular Research Report:

A popular research report is one for a general audience; that is, for individuals who do not necessarily have any knowledge in the field of study. A popular research report aims to make information accessible to everyone.

Research report written in amazingly simple language, which makes it easy to understand the findings and recommendations. Examples of popular research reports are the information contained in newspapers and magazines.

12.5 GENERAL FORMAT OF RESEARCH REPORT

The writing of a research report is usually the concluding task of the research endeavour. Everything is combined during the writing of the report. This is the point at which the research must be reproduced in written form. It is a matter of communicating what was done, what occurred, and what the results mean in a concise, understandable, accurate and logical manner.

A written format of research work is known as a thesis or research report. All such works may differ in the scope of treatment and details of the presentation. Even then all types of research reports are expected to follow a general uniform, common pattern of format, style, and structure. The general format of a report or thesis is an organized format of research work done. It is viewed in three major categories:

A. Preliminaries,

B. Textual Body, and

C. References.

Each category has been outlined further as follows:

12.6 A. PRELIMINARY SECTION

1. Title page
2. Preface or acknowledgements
3. Table of content
4. List of tables (if any).
5. List of figures (if any).

A. PRELIMINARY SECTION

As the preliminaries form a significant part of the whole thesis report, due care should be taken in preparing them. If the specifications are already laid down by some colleges or universities, they should be observed. However, a general standard pattern suggested here in each case will be helpful for a researcher.

1. Title Page

This is the first page of a thesis or a dissertation. It includes:

(a) Title of thesis.

(b) Name of the candidate.

(c) Purpose or relationship of the thesis to the course or degree requirement.

(d) College and/or department in which the candidate has been admitted for the degree.

(e) Name of the university to which it is submitted.

(f) Month and year of submission or acceptance.

The title should be accurate, concise, and printed in capital letters. It should convey the main theme of the problem investigated and if possible, one should give a clue about the method or type of research involved.

2. Preface or Acknowledgement:

A preface is different from an introduction. It is a brief account of the origin and the utility of the study for which the thesis is presented. It also includes the acknowledgement of the persons and sources that have been helpful to the investigator. If the researcher does not want to mention anything about the study on this page except acknowledging the debt to others, it will be desirable to use just the title and be restrained without flattery and effusive recognition for help by the family members and others. The preface should not be too long with too many details about the research work or its organization, which can appear in the introduction. The word PREFACE or ACKNOWLEDGEMENT should be typed in capital letters. It should be written impressively.

3. Table of Contents:

This section lists all the main chapter headings and the essential sub-heading in each with the appropriate page numbers against each. The listing of main chapters is preceded by some preliminaries like preface or acknowledgement, list of tables, list of figures, abstract or synopsis and their respective pages in small Roman numbers and followed at the end by appendices, and Indexes.

Contents should neither be too detailed nor too unsure. The table of contents should serve an important purpose in providing an outline of the contents of the report. The capitalized title 'CONTENTS' should be the central heading of the page and the capitalized word 'CHAPTER' and 'PAGE' should lead to the numbers of chapters and those of pages respectively on the left and right margins.

4. List of Tables:

The table of contents is followed by the list of tables on a separate page. This list of tables consists of the titles or captions of the tables included "in the thesis along with the page number where these can be located. It has been illustrated here. The capitalized title 'LIST OF TABLES' should be the central heading of the page and the capital words 'TABLE' and

'PAGE' should lead to the numbers and those of pages respectively at left and right margins.

5. List of Figures and Illustrations:

If any charts, graphs, or any other illustrations are used in the thesis, a list of figures on a separate page is prepared in the same form as the list of tables except that they are numbered with Arabic numbers. An example has been given here for this purpose.

12.7 (B) MAIN BODY OF REPORT OR TEXTUAL BODY

The text of the thesis is the most important section in the organization of the research report. The quality of worth of the thesis is examined. It is the original production of the researcher. The report of the main body serves the function of demonstrating the competence of the researcher. If any sentence, paragraph, or concept fails to serve the single function within a given section or chapter, it is irrelevant. The subject matter of any chapter should be relevant to that point. The main body of the research reports consists of five or six chapters.

Chapter Names:

1. Introduction or Theoretical Framework

II. Review of Related Literature

III. Design or Methodology

IV. Data Collection or Administration of Tools and Scoring.

V. Analysis and Interpretation of Data.

VI. Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research.

Chapter 1. Introduction or Theoretical Framework:

The main purpose of this chapter is to indicate the need and scope of the study. It consists of the statement of research inquiry. It is reported in the past tense form of work completed. The problem, objectives, hypotheses, assumptions, and delimitations of the study are reported precisely.

Chapter 2. Review of Related Literature:

This chapter is essential in most of the research studies. It presents the comprehensive development of the problem background. It Indicates what has already been studied by others, which has a bearing upon the present study.

The review of literature stresses two aspects: the first is the consideration of the subject matter and it is more important than the other. The second is related to methodology and design. The review chapter is devoted to the development of the problem statement or the object of the inquiry. The

review is utilized to retain direct relevance to the study at hand. It is the balancing chapter of the research report.

Chapter 3. Design or Methodology of Research:

This chapter indicates the line of approach of the study. The first aspect deals with the method, population, and sample of the study and the second part provides the tools and techniques employed in the research. It also presents the procedure of the study. The whole plan of the study is discussed in detail in this chapter.

Administration of tools and scoring procedures are reported systematically. The data organization and presentation should be given in this section. It may be reported in a separate chapter of the report.

Chapter 4. Analysis and Interpretation of the Data:

In this chapter analysis and results are reported to draw the inferences of the study. The analysis of data is presented in tabular form and figures or pictorial presentation. The results are interpreted at length. This chapter provides the original work or contribution by the researcher. Communicative accuracy is required in this chapter. The text must be developed to ensure an effective ordering of the evidence.

Chapter 5. Conclusions and Suggestions:

This is the most important chapter of the report. It requires the creative and reflective aspect of the researcher. The results are discussed to make a more meaningful comparison of the results with the evidence in the review section. It should be woven into the text whenever such a discussion can serve to clarify the points being reported. This is the concluding chapter of a report; thus, findings of the study are summarized and suggestions for further studies are also given. The implications and delimitations of the findings are also mentioned in this section. The main thrust in the section is the answer to the question or solution of the problem. The validity of the findings should be mentioned.

12.8 (C) REFERENCE SECTION

This is the third section of a research report. It consists of the bibliography and appendices. It is also essential to include a glossary and index for the convenience of the readers. The bibliography, appendix, glossary, and index are written on a separate page - in the centre with capital letters.

Bibliography:

The bibliography is a list of the printed sources utilized in the research work. The publications used for information-yield but not quoted in the report may also be included in the bibliography. The format of the bibliography depends on the footnote style. If the foot-notes reference in the text is numbered to refer to the source in the bibliography, the entries must be numerically listed in the order of appearance in the text. The various format manuals include information on a form for the

bibliography. If the list of sources is too large the bibliography should be categorized in the following sections:

- Books
- monographs
- documents and reports
- periodicals and journals
- essays and articles
- unpublished thesis and material and newspapers.

If selected sources are reported the words "Selected Bibliography' should be written. In writing a bibliography the surname is written first instead of the initials, year of publication, the title of the book, publisher's name, place, and the total number of pages are also mentioned. The following are the examples of writing bibliography:

(i) Example for single author:

Best, John. W (1977) Research in Education, 3rd ed., New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc. Englewood Cliffs, 403 pp.

(ii) Example for two authors:

The only difference is that the second author's name is written differently i.e., initial first and surname at the end in a usual manner. McGrath, J.H. and D. Gene Watts on (1970) Research Methods and Designs for Education Pennsylvania: International Textbook company, 222 pp.

(iii) Example for three or more authors:

Selltiz, Claire et al. (1959) "Research Method in Social Relations', New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 424 pp.

(iv) Example for editor-author:

Baros, Oscar K. ed. (1965) The Sixth Mental Measurement', Yearbook: Highland Park,

N.J.: Gryphon Press 1163 pp.

A bibliography reference is written in the following manner and arranged alphabetically to facilitate the readers:

- Name of the author with the last name first and initials afterwards.
- The year of publication is given in brackets after the name of the author and authors.
- Title of the book or the work is written, underlined, and followed by a full stop (.)

- Place of Publication followed by a colon (:).
- Name of the publishing agency and publishers and followed by a comma (.).

Total pages of the book are given:

The above sequence is employed in preparing bibliographical references. It is also used for giving footnotes reference with a little deviation. In the footnote, the name of the author with the Initials first followed by surname or last name is given. The specific page number of the work or the book is given but the total number of pages is not mentioned. Other things remain the same as mentioned in the bibliography. The bibliography pages are also written in Arabic figures in the sequence of the main body of the report.

2. Appendix:

An appendix is the important reference materials category. It includes the material which cannot be logically included in the main body or textual body of the research report or the relevant materials too unwieldy to include in the main body. The appendix usually includes tools of research, statistical tables, and sometimes raw data (when data were processed through the computer. Even material of minor importance e.g., forms, letters, reminders, interview sheets, blank questionnaires, charts, tables, lengthy questions, reports of cases if follow-up or case studies have been conducted). The tools and other material should be placed first and tables at the end and page numbers should be assigned in Roman Numbers (i, ii, xxi). The appendix serves the function of providing greater clarity and authenticity for the readers or consumers of the thesis. The items in the appendix are very essential for a good research report.

3. Index and Glossary:

When a research report is published, an index must be given. The index includes authors and subjects and topics or words in alphabetical order.

In the report, a glossary should be provided. It includes the meanings or definitions of some words and terms used in the research report. Some notations, symbols or abbreviations should be explained in terms of what they mean or indicate in the study.

12.9 MECHANICS OF REPORT WRITING

Research report writing is a highly technical activity. It includes various mechanics for a smooth flow of the thesis. The mechanical aspect has been standardized which must be followed by a researcher in preparing a thesis. Such mechanics involve the following issues:

(a) Footnotes and references,

(b) Style of writing,

(c) Headings,

(d) Tables,

(e) Figures,

(f) Pagination,

(g) Proofreading, and

(h) Binding and submission.

(a) Footnotes:

Sometimes it is desirable to quote some authoritative views or statements from written works of others in the research report. It may be necessary for various purposes to review the related literature, to support or to give the rationale for one's viewpoint.

Each quotation must have a footnote or reference indicating the sources from which it is borrowed.

All these sources and authority should be acknowledged both for intellectual honesty and for the validity of one's research.

Footnotes serve many purposes. They enable the researcher to substantiate his presentation by quotations or citations of other authorities, to give credit to sources of material that he has reported and to provide the reader with specific sources that he may use to verify the authenticity and accuracy of the material quoted. The citation or quoted statements are written using single-space whereas the text is written using double-space.

The footnotes are placed at the bottom of the page and are separated from the text by a three cm horizontal line drawn from the left margin. Footnotes are numbered consecutively within a chapter. The recent approach is that references are given in the place of footnotes. The reference of quoted material is inserted in parentheses at the end of the sentence. For example, (4:72) indicates that the statement refers to the bibliography listing number 4, page 72. Another procedure is that all the references are placed on one page at the end of the chapter in the sequence of quoted statements.

Method of Writing Footnotes: Usually the footnotes are given at the bottom of the page at the end of the text according to the number of quotations provided on it. The following examples illustrate the style of writing footnotes:

1. Single author:

John W. Best. (1977), 'Research in Education 3rd ed. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliff, 84 p. 2. Two authors:

J.H. MC. Grath and D. Gene Wattson (1970), 'Research Methods and Designs for Education, Pennsylvania International Text-book Company, 124 p.

Usually following three types of abbreviations are employed:

Ibid-In consecutive reference to the same work the Latin abbreviation Ibid (Indicates the same page as an earlier footnote), Ibid p. 36 (same work, but a different page 36) is used.

Qp. Ci.-When a reference to the same is not used in consecutive but after some other references, the Latin abbreviation op. cit. (indicates the work already cited in the report). The surname of the author and op. cit. is used. If the page number of the book is different, in this situation op. cit. and page number along with the surname is used. The examples are as follows: Chaube, op. cit (the work cited).

Chaube, op. cit. page 48 (the work cited on page 48).

Loc. Ci. - When a second but non-consecutive reference follows, referring to the same work and same page, the Latin abbreviation Loc-cit (previously cited) may be used. The author's surname along with Loc. it must be included. An example is given below:

Chaturvedi, Loc. cit (previously cited on page 48).

(b) Style of Preparing Thesis:

Important points for writing research report

The research report should be written in a style that is creative, clear, and concise. Therefore, the following considerations should be kept in view in authoring a research report.

1. The research must be reported in full, and its results are subjected to criticism and verification.

2. A research report is always written in the third person i.e., he, she, or the investigator. I, we, you, my, our and us should not be used.

3. It is prepared and written in past tense and present-perfect tense because it is usually reported after completion of the work.

4. The scientific language is used rather than literary language. The British-English pattern is followed in authoring a research report. The spellings of the words are employed in British English.

5. It is typed printed/cyclostyled on 12 size Times New Romans (thesis size) sunlit bond papers. There should be left a margin of 1-1/2" right margin one inch top and bottom margin should be 1-1/4" in each. The same machine of typing must be used for the typing of a research report.

6. The presentation of matter should be in a floating sequence. There should be consistency in the form and content organization.

7. An appropriate and proper format of a research report should be used.

8. The footnotes, references, tables, figures, heading, subheading, and bibliography should be provided in their standard form.

9. It should be typed in double space, quotations or citations should be given in single space. A word should not be split into two aspects due to the shortage of space in a line. A table, figure and diagram should always be given at a single pace. If the table size is large. a generous size paper should be used. It should not continue the next page.

10. A typist with wonderful experience and proficiency should be employed for preparing a thesis or dissertation because it is the responsibility of the researcher that a thesis should be typed in proper form. The correction of major errors is not the responsibility of the typist.

11. Good research reports are not written hurriedly. Even an expert and experienced researcher revises many times before he submits a manuscript for typing. Typographical standards for the thesis or dissertation are more exacting. Therefore, every typist cannot prepare a thesis, there are experts for typing thesis, who should be employed for typing thesis.

A research report is divided into chapters, each chapter begins from a new page. The title of a chapter is called the chapter heading. The work 'CHAPTER' is written in capital letters, in the centre of the page and the title is placed in three spaces of the chapter.

Check your progress.

1. Define the term literature review?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2.What is the hypothesis and what are the types of hypotheses?

_____

_____

_____

_____

12.10 CONCLUSION

A research report serves as an essential document that presents the processes, data, and findings of a systematic investigation. It provides a detailed account of the research work conducted and is written in a formal

and informative manner. The report typically includes sections such as introduction, literature review, methodology, data collection and analysis, discussion of results, and findings of the study. It is structured with headings, sections, and bullet points for easy comprehension. A research report can be categorized based on the nature of research (qualitative or quantitative) and the target audience (technical or popular). The general format of a research report consists of preliminary sections, textual body, and references. Preliminary sections include the title page, acknowledgments, table of contents, list of tables and figures. The textual body comprises the main content of the report, presenting the research processes and findings. Finally, the references section provides a list of sources cited in the report.

The preliminary section of a thesis or research report includes several important components. The title page contains the thesis title, candidate's name, purpose or relationship to the course or degree, college/department, university, and submission date. The preface or acknowledgement expresses gratitude to individuals and sources that contributed to the study. The table of contents lists chapter headings and subheadings with corresponding page numbers. The list of tables and list of figures provide titles and page numbers for included tables and illustrations. The main body of the report consists of chapters covering introduction, literature review, methodology, data collection and analysis, and conclusions and suggestions for further research. The chapters are structured to address the research inquiry, background literature, research design, data analysis, and final conclusions.

The third section of a research report includes the reference section, which consists of the bibliography, appendices, glossary, and index. The bibliography lists the printed sources used in the research, and its format depends on the footnote style. The appendix includes reference materials that are not included in the main body, such as research tools and statistical tables. An index should be provided for published reports, listing authors and subjects alphabetically. A glossary explains the meanings of words and terms used in the report. The mechanics of report writing cover footnotes, style of writing, headings, tables, figures, pagination, proofreading, and binding and submission. Footnotes are used to cite sources and are placed at the bottom of the page. The style of writing should follow established standards.

When authoring a research report, it is important to adhere to certain guidelines. The report should present the research in a creative, clear, and concise manner. It should be reported in full, allowing for criticism and verification of the results. A research report should always be written in the third person, avoiding the use of personal pronouns. The report is typically prepared and written in past tense or present perfect tense, as it is reported after the completion of the work. Scientific language should be used, following the British English pattern. The report should be typed on 12-size Times New Roman font on bond paper, with specified margins. Consistency in content organization is crucial. An appropriate format should be followed, including standard forms for footnotes, references,

tables, figures, headings, subheadings, and bibliography. Double spacing should be used for the main text, while quotations or citations can be in single spacing. Care should be taken to avoid splitting words across lines and to ensure that tables and figures fit on a single page. Employing an experienced typist is recommended for proper formatting, as major corrections are the responsibility of the researcher. It is advisable to revise the report multiple times before submission. Chapters should begin on new pages, with chapter headings centred on the page.

12.11 QUESTIONS

1. What is a report? What is the meaning of the Research Report?
2. What is the importance of a Research Report?
3. Describe the types of Research Report briefly?
4. List the preliminary steps and procedure of authoring a Research Report?
5. Select one problem and prepare a research project of the same?

12.12 REFERENCES

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