UNIT 6
SURVEY RESEARCH - SOURCES AND METHODS OF COLLECTING DATA

1. QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

The first distinction in primary data collection is the goal of the inquiry: understanding *why* or measuring *how much*.

Feature	Qualitative Research	Quantitative Research
Objective	To gain a deep, exploratory understanding of underlying reasons, motivations, and consumer attitudes.	To quantify data and generalize the results from a sample to the population of interest.
Sample Size	Small number of non-representative cases.	Large number of representative cases.
Data Collection	Unstructured or semi-structured (interviews, observation).	Structured (surveys, questionnaires, experiments).
Data Analysis	Non-statistical; interpretation of words, images, and transcripts.	Statistical; focused on means, percentages, correlations, and hypothesis testing.
Outcome	Initial understanding, hypothesis generation, theory development.	Recommendation of a final course of action, numerical estimates.
Simpler Explanation	Think of it as listening to consumers to hear their stories and discover new ideas.	Think of it as counting consumers to measure opinions and confirm hypotheses.

2. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Qualitative research uses small, non-random samples to gather in-depth insights. Procedures are categorized based on whether the purpose of the study is clear to the respondent.

2.1 Direct Techniques

The purpose of the study is clearly disclosed to the respondents or is obvious from the questions asked.

2.1.1 Focus Groups

A discussion session of 8 to 12 participants, led by a trained moderator, discussing a single concept, product, or topic in a relaxed, informal setting.

Advantage	Explanation	Disadvantage	Explanation
Synergism	Group interaction produces more insights than individual interviews.	**Misuse**	Results are often taken as definitive, even though the sample is small.
Snowballing	One person's comment triggers a thought in another, leading to a chain of ideas.	**Misjudge**	Non-verbal cues or group dynamics can be misinterpreted by the researcher.
Security	Participants often feel more comfortable sharing in a group setting.	**Moderation**	The quality depends heavily on the moderator's skill; poor handling can ruin the session.
Spontaneity	Discussions can move in unexpected, productive directions.	**Messy**	Data is unstructured, making transcription and analysis difficult.
Speed	Several opinions can be gathered quickly in one session.	**Mis-representation**	Small, non-random samples mean results cannot be projected to the general population.

2.1.2 Depth Interviews (IDIs)

A one-on-one, unstructured interview with a single respondent, conducted by a highly skilled interviewer, to explore deep motivations, beliefs, and feelings on a topic.

- **Specific Techniques:**
  - **Laddering:** A technique to trace consumers' product-related knowledge back to their underlying values. The interviewer probes: *"Why is that important to you?"* (e.g., "I buy Brand X car because it's reliable → Reliability means I save money → Saving money means financial freedom → Financial freedom is my core value.")

- ○ **Hidden Issue Questioning:** Focuses on socially taboo or sensitive topics (e.g., health issues, addiction) by exploring common dreams, fantasies, and personal metaphors to uncover deep-seated anxieties or desires.
- ○ **Symbolic Analysis:** Asks the respondent to analyze the symbolic meaning of objects by asking them to imagine the object not existing (e.g., "What would life be like without coffee?"). This helps reveal the essential symbolic value the object holds.

2.2 Indirect Techniques

The true purpose of the study is disguised from the respondents, encouraging them to express their feelings onto another object or person, thereby bypassing defense mechanisms.

2.2.1 Projective Techniques

Techniques used to uncover hidden feelings, beliefs, and motivations by asking respondents to interpret or complete ambiguous stimuli.

- **Word Association:** Respondents are given a list of words and asked to respond with the first word that comes to mind.
- **Sentence Completion:** Respondents complete incomplete sentences (e.g., "People who fly in private jets are...").
- **Picture Response (Thematic Apperception Test - TAT):** Respondents are shown an ambiguous picture and asked to tell a story about what is happening, who the people are, and what they are thinking.
- **Role Playing:** Respondents are asked to act out the behavior or attitude of a third person.

3. SURVEY METHODS

Survey research involves collecting structured data from a large sample to draw statistical conclusions. The method of contact significantly impacts cost, speed, and data quality.

3.1 Telephone Interviewing

Interviews conducted over the phone.

- **Traditional:** Human interviewer reads questions and records responses.
- **CATI (Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing):** Interviewer reads questions displayed on a computer screen and enters answers directly into a database. This eliminates errors and automates skip patterns.

3.2 Personal Interviewing

Face-to-face interviews.

- **In-home Interviewing:** Interviews conducted at the respondent's home. Offers maximum quality but is highly expensive and time-consuming.

- **CAPI (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing):** Interviewer uses a laptop or tablet to read questions and record answers during the face-to-face session.
- **Mall-Intercept Interviews:** Respondents are stopped and recruited in public high-traffic areas (e.g., shopping malls) and interviewed on-site. Offers speed and lower cost than in-home but suffers from sample bias (only people who shop at that mall).

3.3 Mail Interviewing

Questionnaires sent and returned via postal mail.

- **Mail Interview:** A one-time survey sent to a random sample. Response rates are typically low.
- **Mail Panel:** A pre-recruited group of households who agree to participate in surveys frequently over a defined period. Response rates are much higher due to prior commitment.

3.4 Electronic Interviewing

Interviews conducted via computers and the internet.

- **Email Surveys:** Questionnaires embedded directly in an email or sent as attachments.
- **Internet Surveys (Web Surveys):** The most popular method. Questionnaires hosted on a dedicated website. Advantages include low cost, real-time data collection, and the ability to use complex logic and multimedia.

3.5 Mobile Interviewing

Surveys conducted specifically on smartphones and tablets.

- **In-App Surveys:** Short surveys integrated into a mobile application.
- **SMS Surveys:** Short questions delivered via text message, often used for instant feedback (e.g., after a service encounter).

4. SELECTION OF SURVEY METHODS

The selection of a survey method depends on balancing factors like cost, time, complexity, and required data quality.

4.1 Questionnaire Definition

A questionnaire is a formalized set of questions designed to elicit information from respondents. It is a structured technique for data collection that serves two key functions:

1. **Translates Research Objectives:** It translates the research objectives (e.g., "Measure brand loyalty") into specific questions that respondents can understand and answer.
2. **Standardizes Data:** It ensures consistency across all respondents, enabling valid statistical analysis.

4.2 Objectives of a Questionnaire

A well-designed questionnaire must achieve three main goals:

1. **Must Translate the Research Information Needs:** Ensure the questions accurately capture the necessary information to address the core research problem.
2. **Must Encourage the Respondent to Engage:** Motivate the respondent to complete the interview or survey accurately and willingly, minimizing non-response and careless answering.
3. **Must Minimize Response Error:** Phrase questions clearly, avoid bias, and ensure the format minimizes errors in understanding, answering, and recording the responses.