Chapter 3

Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Describe the basics of consumer research and have an understanding of available consumer behavior research techniques.
- Explain the complexities in doing international consumer research.
- Outline the steps in the research process.
- Describe generally how to ask consumers questions.
- Identify some of the changes the Internet brings to consumer behavior research and some of the problems of evaluating secondary research.
- Appreciate the ethical issues raised by market research.

Learning about Consumers

Adventure Travel

www.gorptravel.gorp.com

Check out www.gorptravel.gorp.com for adventure travel the world over, spanning Africa, Antarctica, Asia, and the Caribbean. A trip summary for Kahikatea, New Zealand, features a photo of white-water river rafting and promises eight days of adventure with upscale accommodations for the entire trip. And you can be back in your office on Monday morning. Or perhaps you'd prefer to sea kayak in Belize or take a white-water river expedition in Alaska with Adrift Adventures. To see what you are missing check out www.adrift.com. Adventure travel, including commercial white-water river rafting, is a fast-growing outdoor leisure services industry; commercial rafting trips are booked in many nations from Canada to Zimbabwe.

www.adrift.com

Our example focuses on Colorado and Utah, where many small firms operate on a half-dozen rivers and provide half-day to multiday trips to thousands of clients every year. The managers of a group of Colorado River Basin outfitters wanted to know how to increase consumer satisfaction and repeat business for their multiday river trips. They wanted to make their business more predictable. We conducted applied consumer research with several river-outfitting companies to help answer questions of interest to managers. Depth interviews with management and river-rafting guides suggested the hypothesis that customer satisfaction is related to concerns with the quality of food and amenities provided, safety, and lore about the natural and historical setting of the trips. We then collected written descriptions of river rafting from experienced rafters. Through content analysis of these descriptions, we found that rafters rarely mentioned food, safety, or information. Instead they spoke of exhilaration, personal growth, and growing closer to family and friends through their rafting experiences.

Next, we undertook participant observation research with rafters. That is, we accompanied participants on a number of multiday river trips to explore the experience of rafting and the meaning of rafting to customers. In addition, we conducted posttrip focus groups, and we sent mail surveys to customers both before and after their river trips. Our research revealed that participants had difficulty expressing what was really important to their satisfaction. It included experiencing personal growth, a sense of harmony with nature, and community with family, friends, and other participants. Management was only vaguely aware of these benefits to customers because their perception of what customers wanted was primarily based on pretrip inquiries rather than posttrip memories and reminiscences.

Our research showed that river guides are critical in orchestrating customer satisfaction, but customers hardly ever mention the guides' role. We, as researchers, didn't know why. We undertook surveys, focus groups, and further participant observation to describe more adequately the guides' role in orchestrating customer satisfaction. Because of the duration, intimacy, and purpose of the trips (fun, fantasy, and adventure), effective river guides became like friends to customers over the course of the trip. When things went well, customers were satisfied with the guides; but when things went badly they tended to blame the weather or other external factors rather than guides. The role of temporary friend is one that guides find stressful, management vaguely understands, and customers take for granted. These findings helped reorient some outfitters' training and promotional efforts.

Articles written about river rafting in specialized marketing journals contribute to basic consumer research. These articles increase marketers' general understanding of extended service encounters, through the long-term relationships between guides and customers. This research exposes the types of experiences that customers seek in leisure consumption contexts, and it also highlights the behaviors of frontline personnel in communicating expectations, values, and meanings to customers. In turn, our understanding of these concepts can be linked to a more general theory about relationships in social life.[1]

Overview

Learning about consumers is the key to implementing the marketing concept and exercising marketing imagination. The aim of this chapter is to introduce you to consumer research. Consumer research is not the only way we learn about consumers, but it is certainly

one of the most important ways. **Consumer behavior research** is *the systematic and objective process of gathering, recording, and analyzing data for aid in understanding and predicting consumer thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.* With the globalization of markets, consumer research has assumed a truly international character, and this trend is likely to continue. At the simplest level, international consumer research involves studies in a single market outside the firm's domestic market. More elaborate and complex are international consumer research programs that are intended to help solve multicountry marketing problems. We will discuss examples of each type in this chapter.

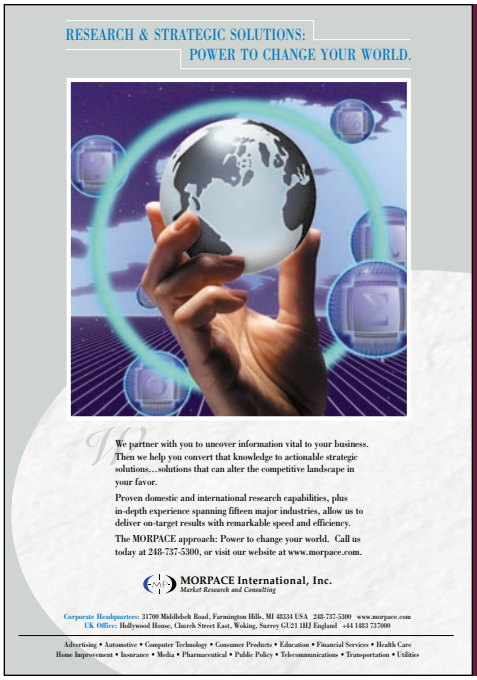
The opening vignette mentions several kinds of research as well as several techniques for conducting it. We discuss these issues in more detail in this chapter. The value of consumer research can be measured by its contribution to solving practical problems or by advancing our general understanding of human behavior. The practical problems addressed by consumer behavior research range widely from those of organizations seeking to increase their customers' purchase frequency (see Chapter 12) to those of advocacy organizations seeking to enlist increased support from their constituents. It could even include research on disadvantaged consumers designed to promote changes in society or changes in the marketplace. Public policymakers also use consumer behavior research (e.g., to study how to enhance healthy or life-saving behaviors).

Consumer Research in the Twenty-First Century

This chapter illustrates the dramatically changing role of consumer behavior research in marketing. At no time has it been truer that there is nothing so useful as good theory, as marketing research professionals and marketers struggle to make sense of and use consumer behavior research effectively. Random sampling (introduced in the 1940s) and telephone interviewing (introduced in the 1970s) revolutionized consumer research during the twentieth century. The consumer researcher of the twenty-first century will be affected by four important factors: speed, the Internet, globalization, and data overload.[2] Compared to their predecessors, today's consumer researchers will need to be better trained, work smarter and faster, and have more varied skills.

Speed

Speed is becoming increasingly necessary to provide consumer insight more rapidly. Many technologies and services have speeded up delivery of information. Big companies such as Ford Motor Company used to spend several years researching and developing a new product. Now they attempt to shorten the length of time between the idea for a new product and the introduction of that product to the market. In addition, they attempt to better gauge not just what consumers say they want but how consumers actually use the product. The importance of observing use was brought home when Ford unsuccessfully introduced Fiesta into Thailand in the 1970s. Thai vehicles are regularly overloaded two to three times beyond their designed capacity, and so the Fiesta had frequent breakdowns. A sturdier model was introduced, but too late, and Ford incurred heavy losses.[3] Market research companies increasingly emphasize speed, combined with international research capabilities. The two ads shown on page 74 illustrate how the need for smarter, faster, more global marketing decisions is effecting market research promotion and practice.



These ads illustrate the increasing value firms place on speed, global research capabilities, and data base tracking.

The Internet

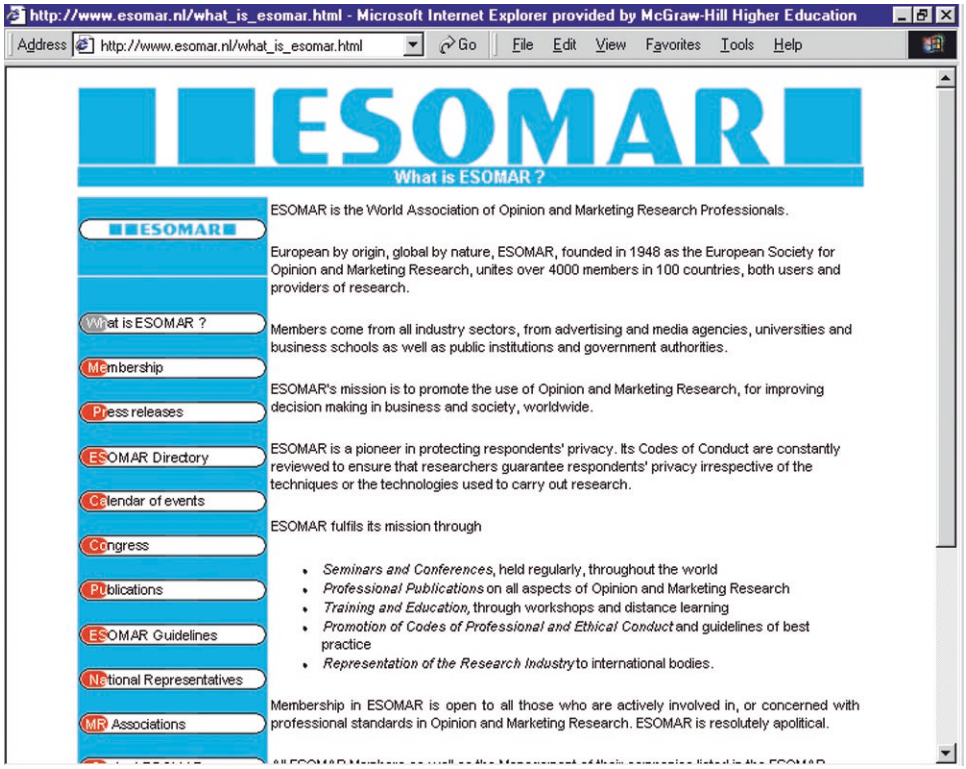
Consumers and professionals increasingly have access to the Internet. This represents a new data collection tool that consumer researchers must master to stay competitive. The unprecedented speed and low cost make greater use inevitable. Sotheby's site on the World Wide Web is typical. It posted a questionnaire to encourage visitors to give personal information and their tastes and opinions. Responses can help the art auction gallery modify its website to suit the needs of potential clients. In addition, the site provides a list of all the Sotheby's galleries around the world.

A 1999 study located and analyzed nearly 1,000 web surveys. Included were customer feedback questionnaires, various public opinion polls, university experiments, customer preference surveys, and other types of surveys. While we can't foresee the future of Internet survey technologies, experts see a lot of potential for use and for abuse. Prominent online marketing research firms predict that, based on current growth rates, the online research segment could account for 50 percent of all marketing research revenue. However, researchers' enthusiasm for the medium is lessened by their concerns for protecting respondent privacy and other potential misuses of the technology.[4] Experts fear oversurveying of users with quickly constructed and poorly implemented questionnaires targeted to whoever wants to answer; such data could be incorrectly interpreted as representing some broader population.[5]

Globalization

Globalization of business is so profound that it has been described as the second Industrial Revolution. Globalization demands that consumer researchers have experience and knowledge about individual countries and international conditions. Researchers must have the ability to synthesize data from different countries and interpret the factors on which they are based. Meaningful synthesis and comparison demands not just proficiency in statisti-

Exhibit 3.1 ESOMAR



Copyright © 2000 ESOMAR.

cal methods and languages but insights into cultural differences. Increasingly, international researchers understand that multicountry research requires comparability of meanings and not just comparable questions.[6]

Globalization and the Internet are dramatically changing the face of consumer research. Things move at lightening speed, and this in turn brings a sense of heightened vulnerability. Issues can spread rapidly across borders. A local mistake translates into a global blunder nearly instantly.[7] Globalization and the Internet have combined to create increased interest in standardizing both technical and ethical research procedures and reporting. For example, Canada, the United States, and Mexico are working to standardize how they report basic industry and demographic data. This is partially a response to NAFTA, but it also reflects marketers' needs to formulate strategy on a global basis. **ESOMAR** is the *WORLD ASSOCIATION OF OPINION AND MARKETING RESEARCH PROFESSIONALS.* Exhibit 3.1 displays the screen produced by ESOMAR in the spring of 2000. This association unifies more than 4,000 members in 100 countries and provides information about global research practices. For example, it reports a 10 percent global increase in market research between 1997 and 1998, about US$13.4 billion. Expenditures on market research respond to economic crises. This relationship is evidenced in a 9 percent decline in market research in Japan, which faced a difficult economic situation in 1998. ESOMAR members comply with a code of ethics endorsed by major national professional bodies around the world. To examine some of its recent press releases, check out the organization's website. In 2000,

Guidelines on Conducting Marketing and Opinion Research Using the Internet

Good Practice 3.1

- Respondents' cooperation is voluntary and no personal information should be sought from or about respondents without their prior knowledge and agreement.
- The researcher's identity must be disclosed to respondents.
- Respondents' rights to anonymity must be safeguarded.
- Adequate security of data must be provided.
- Survey reports should describe the methods used.
- Special care must be taken when interviewing children and young people.
- Researchers should not send unsolicited messages online to respondents who have indicated that they do not wish to receive such messages relating to that specific research project.

Source: www.esomar.nl/codes_and_guidelines.html.

www.esomar.nl

ESOMAR was concerned with setting guidelines for conducting marketing and opinion research using the Internet. A version of the guidelines, shown in Good Practice 3.1, has been endorsed by the International Chamber of Commerce and the World Federation of Advertisers. But check the website for updates, because this is an area that is changing daily.

Data Overload

Data overload is a reality for both consumers and professionals. Historically, managers faced the problem of insufficient information. Much has changed with the information revolution that has been driven by dramatic developments in computer and telecommunications technology, including the Internet. Now, the managers' problem has shifted because huge amounts of information are readily available to organizations, even to small ones. While some may struggle with collecting information in transitional and developing economies, most organizations are more concerned with the dissemination and effective use of information within their organizations.

A **database** is a *collection of data and information describing items of interest.*[8] **Data mining,** which essentially involves *"fishing" in large data sets using statistical concepts to glean useful information,* is not new. However, the extremely large datasets too cumbersome for traditional analyses are new. Extracting useful information from large databases is quickly becoming the next wave for consumer researchers to ride. Organizations need people who can make sense of data results. In addition, with enormous records and potentially useful information, miniscule errors can involve millions of cases. Data integrity, storage, and cleaning become critical. Decision makers must consider the purpose and objective of a data-mining project, implementation and integration problems, the type of data-mining tools available, what form the output should take, and ease of use.

In addition, they must have a specific plan for integrating data mining into everyday business operations.

Learning about Consumers

Successful companies try to gauge consumers in many different ways. The Coca-Cola Company uses a three-pronged approach to gather information from customers and potential customers in all the countries in which it operates. Trend research seeks to understand broad societal and cultural factors that influence customer behavior. Traditional market research seeks to track real-time purchase and consumption behaviors. Under this approach researchers predict sales and utilize sophisticated mathematical modeling techniques. Finally, research is employed to predict customer responses to changes in the marketing mix for Coca-Cola products. All of the products of this research are available to marketing managers through the company's user-friendly intranet information system.

Some manufacturing companies go to great lengths to encourage information exchange between nonmarketing employees and customers. To cite one example, a manufacturer holds an annual open house for which manufacturing, not marketing, personnel hand delivers invitations to customers. Customers interact with shop floor personnel as well as white-collar employees. The president of this company notes that this impresses on manufacturing personnel that there are people who buy the product—"real, live-bodied, walking-around people."[9]

As another illustration of the range of ways to learn about consumers, consider Japanese companies. Many Japanese companies rely heavily on personal observation as a way of learning about customers. For example, when Canon Cameras was losing ground to Minolta, Canon sent three managers to the United States to look into the problem. The head of the team, Tatehiro Tsuruta, spent six weeks in the United States entering camera stores and acting like a customer. He noted how the cameras were displayed and how the clerks served customers. He realized that some dealers were not enthusiastic about Canon and drugstores and other discount outlets were not advantageous outlets. As a result of this research, Canon opened its own sales subsidiary.[10]

Finally, consider the strategy of a Weyerhaeuser sawmill for learning about customers. This sawmill was located far from company headquarters in the small community of Cottage Grove, Oregon. A cross section of employees, from the general manager to forklift drivers, began spending a week at a time as "employees" of their customers. For example, customer service representatives worked as sales assistants in Home Depot and other home centers. Buyers soon found that they were dealing with personnel who not only understood their problems but also frequently anticipated them because Weyerhaeuser employees were actively learning about them.[11]

Although there are many different ways of learning about consumers, the focus of our attention is on describing different types of consumer research. As we have noted, consumer research is increasingly an international enterprise. It is only natural that where marketing strategy is conceived on a multinational basis, consumer research would follow suit. Based on expenditures, about 40 percent of all marketing research is conducted in western Europe, 39 percent in the United States, 9 percent in Japan, and the rest in transitional economies or the developing world. There are more than 1,500 market research companies and consulting agencies in Europe. ACNielsen Corp. is ranked as the number one global research organization, based on revenues. Although ACNielsen is based in the United States, nearly 78 percent of its revenues come from other countries. We can expect the

share of research conducted outside of Europe, Japan, and the United States to increase dramatically in the new millennium.

International consumer research includes two different kinds of research. First, it includes **single-country consumer research—***research carried out in a country other than that of the research-commissioning organization.* For example, if a company is considering entering a new foreign market, it might conduct extensive research to understand foreign consumers as related to that product. In this case, the company is not necessarily trying to make comparisons between foreign consumers and other consumers of that product. Second, international consumer research includes **multicountry research—***research conducted in more than one country with the intent of making comparisons.* For example, a company might be interested in contrasting health attitudes in Russia with those in the United States. International consumer research presents challenges that arise out of political, legal, economic, social, and cultural differences between nations. These national and cultural differences also contribute to problems of comparability of research results, especially in multicountry studies.

We distinguish two different types of consumer research. Both basic and applied consumer research can be conducted in domestic, foreign, or multicultural contexts. **Basic consumer research** attempts to *expand the limits of knowledge about consumers.* It is not concerned with the solution to any particular pragmatic problem. For example, an anthropologist may undertake research to try and understand the physical properties, symbolic meanings, and practical qualities of things, such as those that create a sense of homeyness for North Americans or *hyuggli* (coziness) for Danes.[12] Such research contributes to an understanding of broad issues of interest to many social sciences—issues of self, family, meaning, and material culture. This research reveals that homeyness is not a simple sum of material parts but an intangible, illusive quality. However, homeyness does have several physical properties. For example, homey colors are warm colors: orange, gold, green, and brown. Objects are homey when they have a personal significance for the owner. Arrangements are homey when they combine diverse styles of furnishing in a single room. A favorite characterization of a homey place is a description that emphasizes that it looks "as though someone lived there." Hyuggli environments share some of these qualities, but in addition they feature warm pools of light such as those provided by candles or low-powered spotlights.

Applied consumer research is conducted *when a decision must be made about a specific real-life problem.* Although the homeyness study was a basic research project, the results may have many useful applications. For example, some resort areas have found that people take better care of a homey condominium than a stark rental unit. By leaving pictures and personal touches around the rental unit and welcoming people to their "home," owners of these units are able to minimize theft and unnecessary wear. Suppose that managers of a small specialty retail store are interested in creating a homey or hyuggli feeling to reach a particular segment of North Americans or Danes. They may find many of the basic research results we described useful in beginning applied consumer research to develop a homey retail environment.

The Research Process

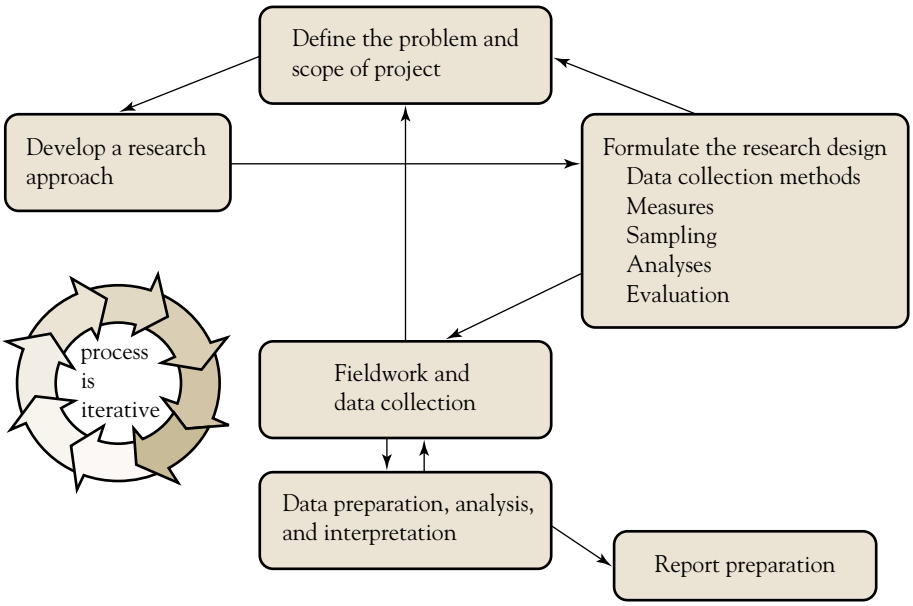
Whether consumer researchers are doing basic or applied research in domestic or foreign cultures, they engage in a research process to ensure that the consumer intelligence or understanding gained from the effort is relevant, timely, efficient, accurate, and ethical. The

research is considered **relevant** if it *anticipates the kinds of information that will be required by decision makers, scientists, or policy advocates.* This is information that improves the quality of exchanges between organizations and their customers or stakeholders. **Timely** research is *completed in time to influence decisions.* Research is **efficient** when it is of *the best quality for the minimum expenditure and the study is appropriate to the research context.* Research is considered **accurate,** or valid, when *the interpretation can account for both consistencies and inconsistencies in the data.* An important way to improve accuracy is to incorporate multiple methods and perspectives in the research effort as both Colgate-Palmolive and The Coca-Cola Company do, for example. Finally, careful attention to the research process can ensure that it is **ethical,** that it *promotes trust, exercises care, observes standards, and protects the rights of all the participants in the research process.*[13] We discuss research ethics in greater detail later in this chapter.

Defining the Problem and Project Scope

A general outline of the research process is shown in Exhibit 3.2. The research process begins by defining the problem and scope of the project. Very often it will require numerous conversations with decision makers, experts, and consumers before the problem can be precisely defined. In the rafting research discussed in the vignette, for example, we would have misunderstood the nature of customer satisfaction, and indeed measured the wrong things, if we had relied solely on the impressions of the river outfitters. An especially important part of problem definition is clarifying the boundaries of the study. For example, we set out to study consumer behavior as it related to white-water river rafting in the United States; we quickly learned that such rafting in the eastern part of the country differs substantially from that in the west. After some preliminary research on both one-day trips and multiday rafting trips, we learned that these two types of trips have very different characteristics and attract different segments. We ended up focusing on multiday (mostly three- to five-day trips) white-water river-rafting trips in the Colorado River Basin.

Exhibit 3.2 Outline of the Research Process



Subsequently, in discussing this research in Europe we discovered that there are important differences in the meanings of nature and wilderness between the North American and European contexts that further limit the generalizability of our results.[14]

The Research Approach

The second step of the process shown in Exhibit 3.2 involves development of a research approach to the problem. This involves deciding on what types of research are implied by the research objective. We can outline three basic types of research: exploratory (such as the basic research described above), descriptive, and causal. The three types of research have complementary roles; that is, each can contribute something to the overall research process.

Causal research *investigates a very specific relationship between two or more variables.* To take a very simple example of causal research, a firm might like to know if coupons mailed to prospective customers result in an increase in sales subsequent to the mailing. In other words, do coupons cause increased sales? Measuring retail sales before and after the mailing provides the answer. To take a more complex example of causal research, a researcher might be interested in whether female college students exposed to highly attractive models in ads will be less satisfied with their own physical attractiveness. To answer this question, the researcher might conduct an experiment that exposes female college students to different kinds of advertising models, some of whom are very attractive, and then measures the students' satisfaction with their own attractiveness.[15]

After finding that highly attractive models in ads do make women feel less satisfied with their own appearance, the researcher might be interested in finding out more about the thoughts and feelings that lead consumers to report less satisfaction with their own appearance. In this case, as in the participant observation rafting research described in the opening vignette, the research approach is exploratory. **Exploratory research** *seeks insights into the general nature of the problem, possible decision alternatives, or identification of relevant variables.* In this case, the research is attempting to identify the thoughts and feelings associated with exposure to attractive models in ads. The researcher does not know what variables or relationships between variables will be identified. The researcher conducts a focus group in which female college students first look at ads taken from fashion magazines featuring highly attractive models. Then, the students are asked to write their thoughts and reactions to the ads on a blank piece of paper. Finally, they discuss them as a focus group. The thoughts and feelings shared in this session offer a more textured understanding of the types of comparisons that occur. For example, this research suggests women tend to focus on that part of the model's body that they are most dissatisfied with. One woman noted, "I have wide hips. I always look at the hips. I guess I'm just jealous." This type of discussion can also give a richer understanding of the intensity of feelings associated with these comparisons. Consumer Chronicles 3.1 illustrates selected negative self-feelings from viewing ads that came out of the focus groups. Researchers could also undertake a study to profile the characteristics of women most likely to make negative self-assessments following exposure to highly attractive models. This type of study would be **descriptive research—***research designed to profile some aspect of the consumer environment.*

The Research Design

The third step in the research process is to formulate the research design. A **research design** is *a framework or blueprint for conducting the marketing research project.* It includes deciding on the appropriate data collection method or methods. It also reports decisions about how to translate the research problem into specific measures (specific questions, observations, and stimuli), decisions about the sampling plan, decisions about how to analyze the data, and a critical evaluation of what the payoff from the research is likely to be. Many critical decisions are made in formulating the research design. Often the research design

will be revised as data collection proceeds, according to changing needs and understandings. For example, in international consumer research the unit of analysis may shift from a country to a region as the researcher gains greater insight into consumers. Consider Belgium, which is divided in half between Wallonia in the south and Flanders in the north. Walloons use butter, but Flemish people use margarine. As preliminary investigation uncovers regional differences, additional research might be modified to better represent these regions.

Data collection methods can be divided into secondary and primary data collection approaches, and then each of these approaches can be further divided into several additional types. In this chapter we just provide an overview of some of the major approaches used to learn about consumers. Exhibit 3.3 outlines some secondary data collection approaches, including some examples, uses, and advantages and disadvantages. **Secondary data** are *data that have already been collected for purposes other than the problem at hand.* These data can be located quickly, easily, and inexpensively, and they should represent the starting point for any data collection effort. Because secondary data have been collected for purposes other than the problem at hand, they may lack accuracy, relevancy, or currency.

Secondary data are especially important in the case of international consumer research because primary international research projects can be very costly in terms of time and money. H.J. Heinz Company failed to successfully introduce Ketchup in Brazil. A more intensive look at the Brazilian food distribution system through secondary research might have helped avert this problem. Heinz concentrated on distributing through neighborhood shops, a strategy that worked well in Mexico. However, 75 percent of grocery shopping in São Paulo, Brazil, is done in supermarkets and not the smaller shops.[16] Many countries offer extensive data about their populations through departments of commerce. Much of this information can be obtained online, and because of the importance of foreign trade, many national commerce departments offer links to trade data relevant to other countries.

The United States Department of Commerce provides access to fast-breaking results related to trade and the economy. Five minutes after economic indicators are released by other federal agencies they can be accessed through the Department of Commerce. If you are trying to learn something about the United States a good place to start is www.fedstats.gov. This site has links to 70 federal agencies that issue statistical data, and the site's search engine covers reports from the 14 major statistical agencies.[17] Many standard market research texts offer in-depth descriptions on how to access and use U.S. Census data. A quick online search such as "census Australia" will turn up the Australian Bureau of Statistics and provide access to a wealth of information about Australians, much

Consumer Chronicles 3.1

Selected Focus Group Comments: Negative Self-Feelings from Viewing Ads

"You look at these ads and you feel inadequate, like you can't measure up."

"It's frustrating when you start to realize you should look that way—I mean—I can't."

"I used to go through these magazines every day and look at [models in the ads] and wish I looked like them. I used to go running every day, and I really thought maybe I could look like them. I remember, I even picked one model in particular and cut out ads with her in them. I was pretty obsessed. And I finally realized this wasn't realistic. But I sometimes still look and think, 'Well, maybe.'"

"Sometimes [ads with models] can make you feel a little depressed."

"They make me feel self-critical" [participant viewing models in swimsuit ads].

Source: Marsha Richins, "Social Comparison and the Idealized Images of Advertising," *Journal of Consumer Research* 18 (June 1991), p. 75.

www.fedstats.gov

Exhibit 3.3 Secondary Data Collection Methods

Types	Examples	Uses	Pluses and Minuses
Scanner data	An "intelligent" terminal records the bar code on a product. Consumer panels are recruited to track purchase patterns and link to consumer profiles.	Scanners cover more and more product groups. Penetration is highest in the United States and Canada, but there is adequate scanner penetration in most European countries.	Large database that provides detailed information about consumer purchases; actual behavior. Often purchases can't be tied back to buyer, and in other cases buyers may not be very representative of general population. Links between retail outlets are not typically available.
Syndicated data sources	Global Scan provides detailed brand and category information on more than 1,000 products. Research International provides continuous panel data for 40 countries in the world. The ESOMAR website provides information on sources of syndicated data in various countries.	Syndicated data are collected for a set of information users with a common need. Scanner data, consumer panels, store audits, television viewer audits, and so on are examples of syndicated data.	The researcher must identify syndicated data sources for the country of interest. Subscription is expensive and data collection categories may not be relevant; quality is highly sensitive to sampling quality. Lots of information is available on a real-time basis.
Databases	National Trade Data Bank maintained by the U.S. Department of Commerce. World Atlas and World Development Report maintained by World Bank. Census of the Population from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.	There are thousands of sources of information that may be relevant to business decisions.	Many developing countries have data that are outdated or inaccurate. May be impossible to compare data collected from different countries. Very inexpensive and more accessible due to the Internet.
Internet	The PRIZM website provides extensive demographic and media use information organized by zip codes in the United States.	Information for research can be obtained at the company level, industry level, or macro level. Access to the information can be received directly by using the Internet address, but search engines and agents can also help obtain the information.	The Internet has only a limited number of search tools and does not provide extensive user support; information is not well structured; and quality of information is highly variable. The Internet is very low cost and offers information on a broad spectrum of topics.

of it in the form of reports to be purchased. The same is true for many other developed countries. Of course, secondary data are collected in different formats in different countries and are in some cases not comparable. Using secondary data for multicountry research can be challenging if not impossible.

Exhibit 3.4 outlines some primary data collection approaches, again including examples, uses, advantages, and disadvantages. **Primary data collection** is *research carried out for a specific purpose.* Management decisions may seem in many cases as if they rely on pure instinct. Primary data collection can help managers counterbalance these intuitions, monitor consequences, and review and refine a course of action. Of course, as compared

Exhibit 3.4 Primary Data Collection Methods: Qualitative Techniques

Types	Examples	Uses	Pluses and Minuses
Depth interviews	A consumer tells a trained interviewer how she feels about a trip to the dentist. Consumer stories reveal the meanings they assign to "homemade" food and holiday meals.	Detailed probing of the respondent. Discussion of confidential, sensitive, or embarrassing topics. Situations where strong social norms exist and the respondent may be easily swayed by group. Detailed understanding of complicated behavior. Situations in which the product consumption experience is sensory in nature, affecting mood states and emotions.	Excellent method for understanding consumer motivation and the **why** of behavior. Time-consuming and costly, difficult to interpret. Should be used to identify the range of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors on a particular topic, but not the frequency or prevalence of those beliefs. Requires interviewing and interpretation skills; opportunities of interviewer bias.
Focus groups	A group of French consumers describe their image and use of herbal teas for a Chinese tea manufacturer. Focus groups with Japanese consumers reveal perceptions, preferences, and behavior regarding laundry detergent.	Understanding consumers' perceptions, preferences, and behavior concerning a product category; generating new ideas about products or impressions of new product concepts; developing creative ideas for marketing programs or preliminary consumer reaction to marketing programs.	Great opportunities for group synergies that result in unique insights. In international settings, the researcher must understand cultural traits and adapt process accordingly. Requires interviewing and interpretation skills; opportunities of interviewer bias.
Projective techniques	Word associations are used to help American marketers better understand Japanese consumers' perceptions of foreign countries. Consumers asked if their neighbor fears flying are able to discuss more openly reasons for fearing flying than when asked if they themselves fear flying.	Encourages respondents to project underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes, or feelings through use of unstructured, indirect forms of questioning. Projective techniques should be used when the required information can't be accurately obtained through direct methods.	Requires highly trained interviewers and skilled interpreters. Tends to be expensive. Analysis and interpretation are difficult and subjective. There is risk of interpretation bias. Establishing the equivalence of meaning across cultures is especially difficult in the case of projective techniques and their use in international research should be carefully considered. Can elicit responses that consumers would be unable or unwilling to give if they knew the true purpose of the study.
Ethnography	Intense observation combined with consumer interviews and consumer diaries are used to learn how U.S. consumers purchase beef. Interviews and participant observation are used to better understand an experience such as white-water river rafting. Mechanical observation (using video cameras) combined with consumer interviews is used to learn how consumers, especially children, using microwave ovens. Observation and consumer interviews are used to learn how Mexican women purchase and use laundry cleaning products.	Ethnographic research is especially useful for showing companies how consumers purchase and use products in their everyday lives. This technique was developed in anthropology, but it is becoming increasingly popular in market research. It can be used in new-product development, product promotion, and understanding competitive market structure from the consumers' perspective.	The diversity of the global marketplace and increasing demands for customization contribute to much greater interest in ethnographic studies. Such studies can offer rich insights into consumer meaning and use behavior. Ethnographic research requires very special training, and typically requires apprenticing with someone well-trained in this methodology. The research is very time-consuming and intensive, and data interpretation is difficult.

to secondary data collection, primary data collection is difficult, expensive, and time-consuming. Exhibit 3.4 overviews some qualitative techniques: **depth interviews, focus groups, projective techniques,** and **ethnography. Qualitative techniques** *provide insights and understanding of a problem or topic* rather than trying to quantify the data and apply some form of statistical analysis. Most accomplished researchers treat qualitative and quantitative data as complementary input into understanding and predicting consumers. Qualitative research typically relies on a small sample and should not be used to infer a population distribution. Analysis and interpretation of qualitative data are particularly challenging, requiring skills of categorization, abstraction, comparison, integration, and so on.[18] Qualitative techniques are gaining in popularity as consumer researchers attempt to stay in touch with global diversity and the demand for customization.[19] Successful international consumer research is highly dependent on qualitative research.

Observation, survey research, and experiments are other very important primary data collection techniques. They are overviewed in Exhibit 3.5. **Observational techniques** *record actual behavior* (e.g., consumers eating spaghetti) *or traces of actual behavior* (e.g., an audit of spaghetti sauces, noodles, and so on in the consumer's pantry). Observation may yield either qualitative or quantitative data. For example, an observer may simply count the number of cars crossing an intersection as input on a decision about whether to locate a minimart at that location. This observation would yield quantitative data. Alternatively, an observer could record all relevant aspects of children playing with new toys, including their emotional responses, how long they played with the toys, what they did with them, and so on. For each child this could render a unique, detailed, qualitative account of his or her interaction with the toys.

Survey research is probably the most popular way of collecting primary data. Surveys are usually *conducted with the help of questionnaires, and question and responses are typically structured.* There are a number of ways surveys can be administered, including via face-to-face interviews, telephone, mail, fax, e-mail, and the Internet. The survey method has several advantages. Questionnaires are simple to administer, and coding, analysis, and statistical interpretation are relatively simple. However, wording questions properly is not easy, and respondents may be unable or unwilling to provide the desired information. It is very important for the survey instrument to be applicable in a given country and in a given situation. The researcher must be culturally sensitive. For example, respondents in many Asian countries provide responses they think will please the interviewer; Japanese people consider telephone surveys impolite; Middle Eastern respondents tend to exaggerate class, income, and position; Latin Americans are touchy about alcoholism; and Indians consider sex a taboo topic.[20]

Experiments are based on the principle of *manipulating one or more variables (termed independent variables) and observing changes in some other variable or variables (dependent variables).* So, for example, a company might test consumer preference toward two different packages, or three different promotional appeals, or a set of price and package size combinations. Experiments are especially useful for doing causal research, but they are extremely difficult to implement meaningfully in multicountry studies. All experiments must balance the need for precision with the need to make the experiment meaningful for the decision at hand.

Fieldwork and Data Collection

The fourth step in the research process is fieldwork or data collection employing some or all of the techniques outlined in Exhibits 3.4 and 3.5. Many researchers agree there is no substitute for doing a portion of the fieldwork or data collection themselves. This is particularly true of data collection techniques that require enormous skill and flexibility, such

Exhibit 3.5 Other Primary Data Collection Methods

Types	Examples	Uses	Pluses and Minuses
Observation	Ford Motor Company invites guests to test drive prototype models through a predetermined route. A trained observer rides along, making notes on the driver's reaction to the car. Content analysis is used to compare the information content in American and Japanese magazine advertising. A trained researcher participates with other consumers in a Harley-Davidson Brandfest to learn more about the behaviors and activities associated with these events.	Observational techniques can range from direct or even mechanical observation of particular consumption behaviors to observation of the natural "residue" of consumption behaviors (e.g., consumer's garbage). It is useful for learning what consumers do and can provide new ideas for product development, product complements, and substitutes.	Certain types of behavioral data can only be collected through observation. Observation, used alone, cannot determine underlying motives, beliefs, attitudes, and preferences. Observation can be difficult and time-consuming and in some cases may be unethical. The researcher's observations may be selective and biased.
Survey research	Interviewers are stationed at the entrance to a shopping mall in Toronto, Canada, to invite respondents to answer a questionnaire about snack-food preferences. Telephone interviews are conducted with members of a small art theater located in Lincoln, Nebraska, to profile members and learn more about their film and theater preferences. Busy German executives are first contacted by phone and then e-mailed a brief questionnaire to e-mail or fax back. The questionnaire is used to measure market potential for a U.S. software company's products.	Personal interviewing is the most flexible method of survey research and used most frequently in international consumer surveys. Telephone interviews are dependent on the quality of lines and also telephone etiquette, and these vary considerably between countries. Mail surveys depend on the availability of mailing list and literacy levels, which can also vary substantially between countries.	Conducting a survey is a complex task of gaining trust and building rapport with a respondent. The researcher needs to be familiar with important national and cultural traits of the countries where the research is being conducted and fluent in the local language. Designing good questions and good questionnaires requires considerable expertise laced with creativity. There are vast differences in the way different cultures react toward surveys. The respondent, the interviewer, and the topic can all bias the research results.
Experiments	How will a point-of-purchase promotion affect juice sales in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan?	Firms that sell on the Internet can create field experiments that test different prices, atmospheres, or service details.	Experiments by their very nature incorporate cultural differences. Transferring the same design across countries could result in erroneous conclusions. Experiments are probably the best way to do causal research. It is very difficult to ensure that all relevant variables have been measured or controlled. Laboratory experiments may be too contrived or artificial to provide much information about real consumer settings.

as depth interviews, participant observation, and certain projective techniques. However, this is also true of other data collection techniques. Even if the primary investigators intend to contract with a service to do a large-scale telephone interview, they may do a small number of calls themselves to get a firsthand feel for the survey process, response types, and potential problems. Proper selection, training, supervision, and evaluation of the field force helps to minimize data collection errors. Research experience can make a difference in the quality of the data attained. For example, research has found that inexperienced interviewers are more likely to commit coding errors, misrecord responses, and fail to probe; have a difficult time filling respondent quotas; and have larger refusal rates and more "don't know" responses or unanswered questions.[21]

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The fifth step involves data preparation and analysis or interpretation. This step will proceed very differently depending on the type of data collected and the general purposes of the research. For example, for some research projects, the data collected might include garbage, photos, videotapes, brain waves, eye movement traces, as well as or instead of written or recorded responses to probes and questions. In general, preparing data for interpretation includes editing, coding, transcribing, and verifying data. Data analysis includes all of the techniques used to interpret and give meaning to the collected data.

Analysis includes a broad range of techniques, both statistical and nonnumerical. In Chapter 2 we introduced the concept of perceptual maps, a product positioning tool based on a statistical technique called *multidimensional scaling.* In the river-rafting research, by contrast, interpretation was based on coding interview and observational data into thematic categories related both to progression through time and typical events that occurred on a given day.

As mentioned in the introduction, interpretation is one of the biggest problems that leading organizations face today. Their problem is that they are drowning in data compiled from secondary sources, **syndicated data,** and exploratory, descriptive, and causal consumer research. Managers are often too busy to examine all the data available to them. In many cases, they lack the training that would enable them to interpret one or more of the specialized studies they receive. One response to this problem is to standardize report formats. Thus, when managers are constructing reports from diverse data sources, they cannot reanalyze data or modify reporting formats. While this simplifies their task, it also robs them of opportunities to mine the data available to them.

Report of Findings

Generally, the final step of the project is a written or oral report describing the entire research process and presenting the results and major findings. Decision makers are likely to evaluate the report in terms of whether it addresses the problem, has a complete and understandable research design, uses appropriate research procedures and executes them correctly, provides a complete and objective interpretation, and clearly identifies the boundaries of the study and the generalizability of the findings. One of the most important and difficult aspects of market research is evaluation. A marketing manager needs to know what the research *means.* In a study of the Norwegian food marketing industry, one researcher found that managers felt deeply insecure about the meaning of research conducted by well-regarded advertising and marketing research firms. Since market success or failure often hangs on the meaning of research, their anxiety is understandable. In evaluating any explanation of data, readers will look for "symptoms of truth." These symptoms of truth are summarized in Good Practice 3.2.[22] These symptoms provide guidelines for evaluating the quality of a research project. Together these guidelines suggest that re-

Symptoms of Truth for Evaluating Interpretations

Good Practice 3.2

1. The interpretation must be **exact,** so that no unnecessary ambiguity exists.
2. It must be **economical,** so that it forces us to make the minimum number of assumptions and still explains the data.
3. It must be mutually **consistent,** so that no assertion contradicts another.
4. It must be **externally consistent,** so that it conforms to what we independently know about the subject matter.
5. It must be **unified,** so that assertions are organized in a manner that subsumes the specific within the general, unifying where possible, discriminating when necessary.
6. It must be **powerful,** so that it explains as much of the data as possible without sacrificing accuracy.
7. The interpretation must be **fertile,** so that it suggests new ideas, opportunities for insight.

Source: Grant McCracken, *The Long Interview* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1988), pp. 50–52.

searchers must "tell a good story," a story that holds together internally and externally, grabs our attention, explains the data, and provides future direction.

In addition to the problem of data interpretation mentioned earlier, another major problem involves the dissemination and use of the results of consumer research, or *market intelligence* as it is sometimes called. Relevant decision makers don't necessarily use even good research that is well reported. Simplifying access, monitoring use of data sources by managers, and institutionalizing interfunctional teams of stakeholders to discuss how to use research results are just some of the ways organizations try and improve the dissemination and use of information.

Summary Features of the Research Process

Several general features characterize the research process we have just outlined. First, as suggested in Exhibit 3.2, *the research process is iterative.* The initial research problem may be completely reformulated as the researcher learns more about the consumer from initial data collection efforts. For example, Avon Products, Inc., which markets cosmetics to women, began a strategic initiative with the research question how to capture an increased share of the Hispanic market. At first, this seemed like the appropriate question since secondary data from the U.S. Census Bureau treats Hispanic females as one cultural group. However, depth interviews, pilot surveys, and observations of Hispanic communities revealed many segments of Hispanic females that differ in cultural and historic background as well as in attitudes and beliefs. On the basis of this early research, Avon redefined the research problem as one of how best to segment the Hispanic female market. Similarly, if Avon or any other firm were to conduct research in Australia, it would want to be sure to distinguish between the many national varieties of Asian-Australians such as Koreans, Vietnamese, and Chinese. A study of how women express assertiveness

conducted by The Coca-Cola Company revealed that it needed to look at the issue in many national contexts.

Second, *the use of different methods and perspectives affects the research results.* It is impossible to be completely objective. That's why it is so important to incorporate multiple approaches and perspectives in research efforts. Very often researchers will find from observation that consumers behave in ways that are very different from how they report they behave in a questionnaire. For example, Ernest Dichter, the famous expert on consumer motivation, once conducted a study on the reasons people wear sunglasses. Sunglass-wearing people who were questioned on a cloudy day in New York City frequently maintained that sunglasses protected their eyes from the sun. Clearly their behavior contradicted their verbal responses, suggesting, as we all know, that there are other reasons for wearing sunglasses. The task of the researcher is to provide an interpretation that makes sense of the differences between the results of different kinds of data.[23] Similarly, by incorporating only one perspective on the research, findings may underrepresent or misrepresent other perspectives. For example, a study of consumer research showed that much of it makes inappropriate assumptions and presents misleading findings because researchers fail to take into account differences in the viewpoints and behaviors of men and women.[24]

Third, *no research is perfect.* Researchers must constantly make trade-offs between the costs and benefits of conducting different types and amounts of research as well as different types of error. For example, by asking several questions to measure a concept, researchers can feel more confident that they have actually measured the concept and not omitted important aspects of it. However, asking more questions can lead to respondent fatigue, resentment, and nonresponse, which can significantly bias the findings. Of course, the more researchers ask, the more it costs to collect, analyze, and interpret the data.

Asking Questions

One of the most important problems in data collection is how to ask research questions. Even if researchers collect data by observing behaviors, they generally want to be able to relate those behaviors to consumers' thoughts and feelings. To do this, they need to know how to ask questions. In this section we focus on a simple review of the basics for asking questions; but it's important to keep in mind that the type of questions asked in a focus group or depth interview will differ from those asked in telephone, mail, or mall-intercept surveys. Even mail and telephone formats cannot be used to ask the same type of questions. For example, mail questionnaires can generally ask people to make finer discriminations (using 7- or 10-point scales) than telephone surveys. Similarly, mall-intercept surveys or personal interviews can use visual and other sensory stimuli, whereas telephone interviews cannot.

The Importance of How Researchers Ask Questions

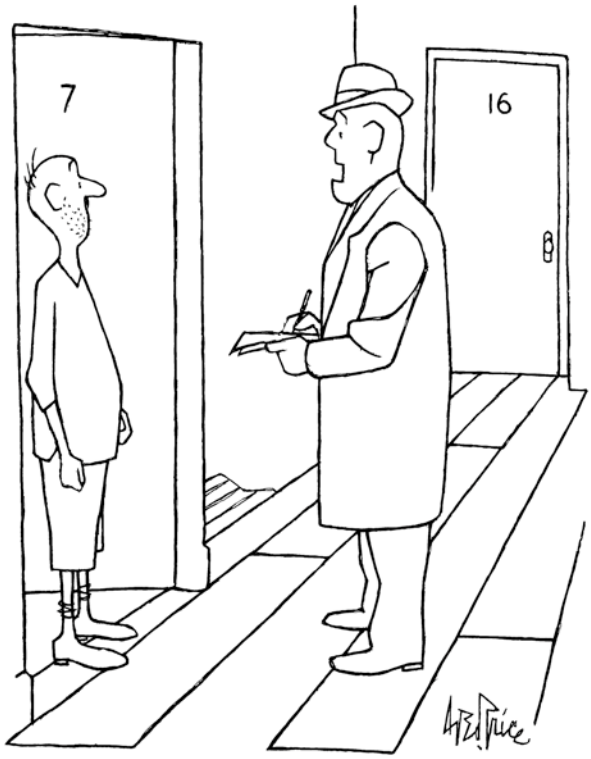
You may be able to recall examples of promotions that feature responses to consumer surveys of one sort or another. For example, a car company may claim that it is number one in customer satisfaction, or a cough syrup manufacturer may claim to be the brand doctors recommended most, or a pharmaceutical company may claim a specific brand of aspirin is preferred by physicians if they are going to be stranded on a desert island. All of these claims imply valid research. In fact, the results are often based on biased questions.

Similarly, polls conducted for particular political parties report voter preferences based on very specific questions that may bias the results. What happens if the companies that make these claims ask questions differently? Some years ago, fast-food company

Burger King ran a series of commercials in which it claimed that consumers preferred its method of cooking hamburgers over that of McDonald's by three to one. The question used to generate this data was Do you prefer your hamburgers flame-broiled or fried? An independent researcher asked the "same" question a different way: Do you prefer a hamburger that is grilled on a hot stainless-steel grill or cooked by passing the raw meat through an open gas flame? This version of the question resulted in 53 percent preferring McDonald's grilling process. When further description was added by noting that the gas-flame hamburgers are kept in a microwave oven before serving, the preference for grilled burgers was 85 percent. In this case, three technically correct descriptions of cooking methods produced preferences ranging from 3 to 1 for Burger King to 5.5 to 1 for McDonald's.[25] This example illustrates a critical principle of consumer research: How researchers ask questions is very important.

Three Questions Researchers Should Ask about Research Questions

To build a quality questionnaire, the researcher should begin by asking three questions about each research question.[26] First, *can potential study participants understand the question?* The cartoon shown on this page illustrates the reaction of more than one consumer to what seems like gobbledygook from the researcher. Researchers bring their own perspectives and biases to questions, and these can be very different from those of the respondents.



Next question: I believe that life is a constant striving for balance, requiring frequent trade-offs between morality and necessity, within a cyclic pattern of joy and sadness, forging a trail of bittersweet memories until one slips, inevitably, into the jaws of death. Agree or disagree?

New Yorker 198x ????????????? info to come

Several types of unacceptable lapses in the obligation to avoid deception can be identified. Perhaps the least of these problems concerns deceiving participants about the length of a research task. If a personal interview is going to take 30 minutes, but the researcher does not specify this, it may be considered an unethical deception by omission. Reaction to this type of time deception varies a lot from culture to culture. For example, Germans are very conscientious about time and will cut off the interview if you go over. French and Italians are more flexible with their time, and many people living in Mediterranean countries like to converse.

More serious is misidentification of the researcher or research sponsor. Sponsor concealment is acceptable if it serves legitimate purposes of interviewer security or data integrity, not if disclosing the sponsor's identity will affect peoples' willingness to participate in the study. Worse still is sales prospecting and fund-raising under the guise of surveys. In one case, a major car company conducted a large phone survey. Participants were told the purpose of the survey was to measure their buying intentions and attitudes about cars. However, the data were turned over to local dealers who made sales calls to likely buyers. This example illustrates an unethical deception of respondents and leads to reduced cooperation in legitimate surveys.[41]

Emerging technology creates ethical dilemmas. For instance, the creators of websites may want to remember facts about a customer's visit to that site. Thus, many websites include "cookies," a mechanism for remembering details of a single visit or store facts between visits. A **cookie** is *a small file (not more than 4K) stored on the consumer's hard disk by a web application.* Thus, a cookie is a kind of instant, and automated, research tool that records details about consumer behavior.[42] A website like CNN uses cookies to customize its service. That is, CNN uses a cookie to remember that a site visitor is mainly interested in news about basketball or cooking. A cookie might also be used to determine what pages a person views on a particular website so as to improve site design. Similarly, a cookie can be used so that particular advertisements can be targeted to specific consumers. For example, if you frequently visit travel sites, you might get a banner ad from Delta popping up the next time that you do a search (e.g., on Yahoo).

Of course, some consumers do not like the fact that the creators of websites are secretly monitoring their behavior. Such an intrusion is viewed as an invasion of privacy. Both Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator allow surfers to set options for various levels of warnings about the use of cookies. Concerned consumers can turn these features off altogether. Some marketers feel that service levels are diminished when cookies are turned off and the flow of information from consumer to website owner is disrupted. In this way, the advent of new technology creates ethical dilemmas. To what extent are firms allowed to collect information in an electronic way? Does such automated information collection provide better service, or does it invade consumer privacy?

The Exciting World of Consumer Research

We present hundreds of examples of different types of consumer research conducted in different parts of the world and for different purposes throughout this book. For example, in our discussion of motivation (Chapter 11) we describe the use of projective techniques to examine consumers' reasons for behaviors. In the chapter on consumption meanings (Chapter 18) we describe the use of in-depth interviews to examine the meanings that consumers attach to common consumption activities such as shopping and less common consumption activities such as plastic surgery. We also describe some new market research

techniques that combine photographs and depth interviews with digital imaging technologies. In the chapters on purchase decisions (Chapters 10 and 13) we review some of the exciting developments with scanner technology. In the chapters on consumer satisfaction (Chapter 17), and recycling, reuse, and disposal (Chapter 19) we discuss a variety of observation techniques.

summary

Learning about consumers is the key to implementing the marketing concept and exercising marketing imagination. Consumer behavior research is concerned with systematically collecting and analyzing information in order to improve the quality of exchanges between organizations and their customers or constituents. That is, organizations create value by improving the quality of exchanges. Consumer research may be basic or applied. Basic consumer research attempts to expand the limits of knowledge about consumers. It is not concerned with the solution to any particular pragmatic problem. Applied consumer research is conducted when a decision must be made about a specific real-life problem. There are five main steps in the research process, including: defining the problem and project scope, developing a research approach, formulating the research design, field work and data collection and data interpretation and communication of results.

The research process is iterative; different methods and perspectives lead to different research results, and no consumer research is perfect. Because collecting verbal and written information from consumers is so central to the research process and because it throws many important issues in the research process into relief, researchers must be particularly careful that they ask questions effectively. To build a quality questionnaire, the researcher should begin by asking three questions about each research question. First, can potential study participants understand the question? Second, can potential study participants answer the question? Third, will potential study participants answer the question? Brevity, relevancy, objectivity, non-ambiguity and specificity are also important criteria for evaluating questions.

Conducting international consumer research is even more complicated than conducting consumer research in a single, national context, so we also explore some of the problems encountered in cross-cultural consumer research. Here, we review special problems associated with conceptual equivalence, and sources of response bias.

The Internet is likely to have a dramatic impact on how consumer research is done over the next five years: by replacing paper and pencil methods with electronic transactions or communications, by enabling the organization to communicate in new ways, and by creating completely new ways to collect data. Collecting and analyzing information about consumer behavior raises a host of ethical questions. Consumer researchers should resist pressures to construct even more intrusive data collection procedures and instead strive to construct and then adhere to professional standards for research practice.

key terms

accurate 000
applied consumer research 000
automate 000
basic consumer research 000
BRONS guidelines 000
causal research 000
consumer behavior research 000
cookie 000
data mining 000
database 000
depth interviews 000
descriptive research 000
efficient 000
ESOMAR 000

key terms

ethical 000
ethnography 000
experiments 000
exploratory research 000
extranet 000
focus groups 000
inform 000
international consumer research 000
Internet 000
intranet 000
multicountry consumer research 000
observational techniques 000
primary data collection 000
projective techniques 000
qualitative techniques 000
relevant 000
research design 000
secondary data collection 000
single-country consumer research 000
survey research 000
syndicated data 000
timely 000
transform 000

review questions

1. Go to the grocery store and observe four different consumers as they select a cereal brand to purchase. Write a diary to describe your experience. What process do the consumers go through? Do they look at packages and labels? Can you tell what specific aspect of the package they look at? Are prices important? How do consumers gather price information? Do some seem to purchase by habit. Do others (e.g., purchase pals, children) get involved in the decision?
2. Visit a local shopping district, such as a main street or mall. Go from store to store and observe the customers. Make a detailed composite portrait of the customers at each store using as many criteria as possible. Then, name the market segment you have described.
3. Outline a research design to determine the effects of attractive advertising models on males and females. Be specific. What is your design (e.g., experiment, survey, observation)? Who are your subjects? How are they selected? What do you measure? How can you be certain that your results are valid?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of secondary data? What questions should you ask when examining secondary data?
5. Conduct secondary research on the Internet to describe the auto industry in Brazil. How could a company such as Volkswagen use this information in understand their competitive marketplace in Brazil? (*Hint:* You might want to begin with a search on "Brazil automotive").
6. Write a questionnaire that you would use to carry out the research project introduced in question 3. Be certain to include the following measures: demographic data; perceived body image; media use (e.g., television programs watched, magazines read); estimated amount of time looking at ads on a typical day; overall attitude toward advertising in general. Also, include an introduction and an ending in your questionnaire. Include both open-ended and closed-end questions. Make certain that your questionnaire flows well. Pretest your questionnaire by having three friends fill it out. Ask them if they have any comments for improvement. Apply the criteria introduced in this chapter to evaluate the effectiveness and validity of your questionnaire.
7. British consumers are reluctant to talk about cockroaches in a focus group setting, but French consumers are happy to talk about them in a focus group. Describe at least five topics that people in your home country would be reluctant to discuss in a focus group.
8. Consider the focus group interview. Describe, in detail, a specific research question that could be well addressed by this method. Do the same for syndicated data.

9. What kinds of consumer behavior research do you consider unethical? Have you ever been asked to participate in a research study that you thought was unethical? If so, provide specific details.

You Make The Call

Blockbuster Brings Entertainment Home

www.block-buster.com

Blockbuster Inc. is the global leader in rentable home entertainment with approximately 7,100 Blockbuster video stores in 27 countries, including Argentina, Australia, Canada, Italy, Mexico, Spain, Taiwan, United Kingdom, and the United States. The company can be accessed internationally at *www.blockbuster.com.* In April 2000, Blockbuster launched a global advertising campaign with a "Bringing Home Entertainment" theme. The theme is intended to capitalize on the universal enjoyment of the home-viewing experience, and the campaign communicates that consumers in many international markets will enjoy the benefits of finding more copies of their most popular video releases at Blockbuster. It reinforces the emotional connection of watching a great movie at home and demonstrates the company's commitment to developing new ways to bring movies directly to people's homes through a range of alternatives from home delivery to digital streaming. A series of advertisements feature consumers anticipating the movie-viewing experience as they journey home with their evening movie rental. The campaign was launched in April in the United Kingdom, Australia, Mexico, Argentina, Chile, and Denmark. It subsequently aired in the United States, Canada, and Taiwan and was scheduled for release in Italy and Spain at the end of 2000.

Blockbuster is a successful global company, but it has made some big mistakes. For example in 1995, Blockbuster opened seven stores in Munich and ten in Berlin. Preliminary consumer research showed it had good name recognition among young and middle-aged consumers. The stores failed for a variety of reasons, however, and were closed down only two years later. German consumers prefer to watch movies in theaters, and although the stores were located in downtown shopping areas, most existing video stores were in residential neighborhoods. In addition, pornography accounts for a third of all rentals in Germany and Blockbuster did not want to sacrifice its family-oriented principles. Moreover, because of the prevalence of pornographic videos, all video stores were seen as unfit places for children in Germany.

1. What are some of the cultural factors that will affect the success of Blockbuster's global campaign, "Bringing Entertainment Home"? What kind of consumer research could Blockbuster undertake to examine consumer response to the campaign? (Think global.)
2. What consumer research lessons can be learned from Blockbuster's failure in Germany? What types of consumer research might have helped Blockbuster avoid its failure in Germany? (Be as specific as possible).

This case is adapted from press releases available on the Blockbuster website and from "Blockbuster Finds Success in Japan That Eluded the Chain in Germany," The Wall Street Journal, *August 19, 1998, p. A14.*

Khahn T. L. Tran

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27. This example is provided in Petersen, *Constructing Effective Questionnaires,* p. 19.
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