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Techniques And Methods In Survey Research

By

David McCallum
TECHNIQUES AND METHODS
IN SURVEY RESEARCH

PREPARED BY: DAVID MCCALLUM

ON BEHALF OF:

ASIAN MASS COMMUNICATION
RESEARCH AND INFORMATION CENTRE

MARCH 1986
SINGAPORE
WHY CONDUCT RESEARCH?

GENERAL
  - TO COLLECT AND ASSEMBLE RELEVANT INFORMATION IN ORDER TO BROADEN KNOWLEDGE AND IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING

BROADCASTING
  - TO ASSIST DECISION MAKING
  - TO GUIDE POLICY
  - TO MAXIMISE BENEFITS FOR THE AUDIENCES

SOURCES
  - INTERNAL
  - EXTERNAL
    - PRIMARY
    - SECONDARY
EFFECTIVE RESEARCH

EFFECTIVE RESEARCH IS ACTIONABLE.

IT INVOLVES :-

- CLEAR DEFINITION AND UNDERSTANDING, BY ALL PARTIES, OF SPECIFIC RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.

- APPLICATION OF APPROPRIATE METHODS AND TECHNIQUES.

- WELL CONTROLLED AND CONTINUOUSLY MONITORED, FIELDWORK (DATA COLLECTION) DATA PROCESSING AND SAMPLING - WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

- CONCISE AND INFORMED INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS.
APPROACHES TO RESEARCH

i) AD HOC
- 'ONE-OFF' PROJECTS TO ASSIST IN PROBLEM DEFINITION OR UNDERSTANDING
- TAILORED TO SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES - E.G. A CERTAIN PROGRAMME

ii) CONTINUOUS
- REGULAR REPEATED SURVEYS
- MONITORS RESPONSES AND CHANGES
- EVALUATES PERFORMANCE
- REQUIRES CONSISTENCY

iii) QUANITITATIVE
- GENERALLY LARGE SCALE
- CONCERNED WITH MEASUREMENT
- ALLOW COMPARISON ACROSS DIFFERENT VIEWER/LISTENER TYPES

iv) QUALITATIVE
- DIAGNOSTIC RESEARCH
- DEVELOPS UNDERSTANDING
- ASSISTS HYPOTHESIS FORMATION
RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

SAMPLING
- RANDOM PROBABILITY
- 'QUASI' RANDOM
- QUOTA
- PURPOSE

DATA COLLECTION
- FACE-TO-FACE
- TELEPHONE
- METER/CABLE
- POSTAL

QUESTIONNAIRE/
FORM DESIGN
- STRUCTURE
- SEQUENCING
- LENGTH
- VOCABULARY
- LANGUAGES

REPORTING
- VERBAL DEBRIEF
- VISUAL PRESENTATION
- MANAGEMENT SUMMARIES
- DETAIL REPORT
- COMPUTER TAPE
- DIRECT TO DISC
AUDIENCE MEASUREMENT

- CONTINUOUS RESEARCH TO MONITOR :

  AUDIENCE SIZE

  AUDIENCE TYPES

  VIEWING BEHAVIOUR

TECHNIQUES USED :

- VERBAL RECALL

- DIARY PANELS

- TELEVISION METERS
RECALL METHODS

EXAMPLE : 3-DAY RECALL (SINGAPORE)

SAMPLE : RANDOM PROBABILITY 600 ADULTS PER MONTH
       c.20 PER DAY DESCRIBING LAST THREE DAYS VIEW

ANALYSIS : AGGREGATED TO GIVE DAY OF WEEK ESTIMATES
OF VIEWERS BY CHANNEL & TIME ACROSS
VARIOUS DEMOGRAPHICS

CONSIDERATIONS

- NO. OF CHANNELS
- LENGTH OF VIEWING TIME
- ACCURACY OF MEMORY

- RECALL TENDS TO UNDER-ESTIMATE OFF-PEAK VIEWING

- REPORTING USUALLY 2 WEEKS AFTER END OF FIELDWORK

- RELATIVELY LOW PRICED
DIARY PANEL

METHOD: A DIARY IS FILLED IN DAILY THEN COLLECTED AT REGULAR INTERVALS FOR ANALYSIS

SAMPLE: PANEL DESIGN USED REPRESENTATIVE OF NATIONAL TELEVISION VIEWING POPULATION HOUSEHOLD OR INDIVIDUAL BASIS

ANALYSIS: ALLOWS EACH SEPARATE DAYS AUDIENCE TO BE REPORTED FOR A GIVEN MONTH, AGAIN BY CHANNEL, TIME AND DEMOGRAPHICS

CONSIDERATIONS

- NO. OF CHANNELS
- LENGTH OF VIEWING
- DEGREE OF LITERACY
- PANEL MAINTENANCE

- GIVES A BETTER COVERAGE ACROSS VIEWING 'DAY'
- PANEL APPROACH HAS STATISTICAL BENEFITS
- CONSIDERABLY MORE EXPENSIVE THAN RECALL
TELEVISION METERS

METHOD: 

a) COLLECTED DIRECT FROM T.V. INTO MODULE

b) COLLECTED DIRECT FROM T.V. VIA TELEPHONE INTO MAINFRAME COMPUTER

SAMPLE: PANEL DESIGN AS PER DIARY PANEL

DATA COLLECTED ON HOUSEHOLD BASIS

ANALYSIS: GENERALLY AS PER DIARY PANEL

CONSIDERATIONS

- TELEPHONE PENETRATION
- NO. OF SETS
- PRESENCE OF VIDEO
- PANEL MAINTENANCE

- ALLOWS FOR 'DAY' SUMMARY

- HAS STATISTICAL BENEFITS

- CAPITAL COST IS HIGH, THUS OVERALL COST HIGH
PROGRAMME RESEARCH

A VARIETY OF COMBINATION OF APPROACHES CAN BE USED:

- GENERAL MARKET SURVEYS
- QUANTITATIVE AD HOC SURVEYS
- QUALITATIVE FOCUS GROUPS
- OMNIBUS TRACKING

THE RESEARCH METHODS USED WILL BE INFLUENCED BY:

- NATURE OF PROBLEM
- EASE/VIABILITY OF OPERATION
- COSTS & TIMINGS
CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROGRAMME RESEARCH

* ARE PROGRAMMES - ENTERTAINMENT?
  - INFORMATION?
  - EDUCATION?

* DO A RANGE OR PROGRAMMES OR JUST ONE PROGRAMME REQUIRE RESEARCHING?

* DEPENDING ON NATURE OF PROGRAMME, WE NEED TO RESEARCH :-
  - UNDERSTANDING
  - ATTITUDES
  - BEHAVIOUR
UNDERSTANDING

* BESIDES ANY PROGRAMMES (ESPECIALLY EDUCATIONAL) CAN INFLUENCE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR, THEY MUST BE UNDERSTOOD

* QUALITATIVE RESEARCH EARLY ON IN A SERIES' LIFE CAN SHED LIGHT ON COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES E.G.

  - LANGUAGE OF PROGRAMME
  - PERCEPTION OF PRESENTERS
  - VISUAL AIDS USED
  - RELEVANCE OF CONTENT

* VIEWERS' 'CLASSIFICATION' OF PROGRAMME TYPES WILL DIFFER FROM PRODUCER'
ATTITUDES

- OFTEN MEASURED OVER TIME

- DIFFERENT PROGRAMME TYPES PROVOKE DIFFERENT ATTITUDES

E.G. - NEWS
- DOCUMENTARIES
- ENTERTAINMENT - MUSIC ETC.
- CHILDREN’S PARTY
- SITUATION COMEDIES
- PUBLIC INFORMATION
- DRAMA

- SOME ATTITUDES WILL BE GENERAL, SOME PROGRAMME SPECIFIC:

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<th>GENERAL</th>
<th>SPECIFIC</th>
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<tr>
<td>ENJOYABLE/UN-ENJOYABLE</td>
<td>DEGREE OF SCIENTIFIC INTEREST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSORBING/BORING</td>
<td>FUNNY/UNAMUSING</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAST MOVING/SLOW ETC.</td>
<td>VIOLENT/NOT VIOLENT ETC.</td>
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ATTITUDES (CON’T)

- ATTITUDE STATEMENTS CAN BE GENERATED THROUGH QUALITATIVE WORK INITIALLY. E.G. USING FOCUS GROUPS OR KELLY REPETORY GRIDS

- KELLY GRIDS SUBJECT THE RESPONDENT TO COMBINATIONS 3 PROGRAMMES AND ATTEMPT TO ELICIT THE ‘ODD ONE OUT’

- THE REASONS FOR BEING THE ‘ODD ONE OUT’ GO TO MAKE UP THE POSSIBLE ATTITUDE STATEMENTS

E.G. ‘IT’S MORE FOR OLDER PEOPLE’

‘IT’S UNROMANTIC’

‘IT DOESN’T INFLUENCE PEOPLE’

‘IT HAS NO ARTISTIC CONTENT’ ETC.

A GREAT MANY ATTITUDE STATEMENTS WILL BE GENERATED THIS WAY
ATTITUDES (CON’T)

THE VAST NUMBER, POSSIBLY 80 - 120 ATTITUDE STATEMENTS WILL BE DERIVED:

THESE CAN BE REDUCED BY:

- ADMINISTERING THEM TO A SAMPLE OF RESPONDENTS

- USING A FACTOR ANALYSIS TO GROUP SIMILAR STATEMENTS TOGETHER IN A SMALLER NUMBER OF ‘FACTORS’

- TAKING THE KEY STATEMENTS IN EACH FACTOR TO USE FOR THE ATTRIBUTES

E.G. - QUIET/NOISY

- SOFT/LOUD

MAY COME IN SAME FACTOR AT A SIMILAR LEVEL BUT ONLY ONE NEED BE USED
BEHAVIOUR

SOME PROGRAMMES, GENERALLY PUBLIC INFORMATION, ARE DESIGNED TO MODIFY BEHAVIOUR. TO MEASURE THEIR EFFECTIVENESS, OFTEN ATTITUDBINAL INFORMATION IS INSUFFICIENT. SOME BEHAVIOURAL MEASURE IS NEEDED.

THIS CAN BE OBTAINED BY:

- OBSERVATION
- REPORTED BEHAVIOUR
- MEASURED BEHAVIOUR - DIARY
- OTHER MEASURE
  E.G. SHOP SALES
DATA COLLECTION

'ACCESS' PANELS
- DIARY
- TELEPHONE
- FACE-TO-FACE
- POSTAL

AD HOC SAMPLES
- SPECIFIC PROJECTS
- OMNIBUS SURVEYS

DATA COLLECTION IS INFLUENCED BY:

* LOGISTIC PRACTICALITIES
* CULTURAL ASPECTS
* SPEED OF RESPONSE NEEDED
ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

* COMPARISONS BY:

- DEMOGRAPHICS

- FREQUENCY OF VIEWING/LISTENING

- WEIGHT OF TELEVISION VIEWING/
  RADIO LISTENING

- VIEWERS/LISTENERS V. NON-VIEWERS/
  LISTENERS

* 'TEST' AREA ANALYSIS

- POSSIBLE IF LIMITED TRANSMISSION
  AREAS CAN BE UTILISED