

# UNIT 19 DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORT WRITING

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## 19.0 OBJECTIVES

After having gone through this unit, you should be able to:

- state the importance of data analysis in the marketing research process
- evaluate the steps involved in the analysis process
- explain the need for classification and tabulation of data
- define a good research report and list the rules to be followed while writing a report
- discuss the contents of the report format
- prepare a checklist for informal and formal oral presentations.

## 19.1 INTRODUCTION

Data collection though very important, is not an end in itself. Having collected the relevant data either from the primary source or secondary source or from both, the next important step in the marketing research process is to analyse it properly and interpret it intelligently, so that relevant inferences can be drawn and the marketing executive can initiate appropriate action.

Analysis can be viewed as the ordering, the breaking down into constituent parts, and the manipulating of data to obtain answers to the research question or questions underlying the research project. Tightly interwoven with analysis is interpretation; it is so closely related to analysis that it may be considered as a special aspect of analysis rather than a separate activity. The process of interpretation involves appreciating the results of analysis, making inferences relevant to the research relationships studies, and drawing conclusions about these relationships. Since analysis represents the end of the research process (short of writing the report), everything done prior to this stage must be construed as having been done for the sole purpose of analysis. From a decisional context, all conclusions, recommendations, and decisions are based on the analysis of the raw data obtained from the research project. This points to the need for keeping in consideration

analysis or potential analysis, even at the beginning stage of planning and designing the project.

In this unit you will learn the importance and procedure of classification and tabulation of the mass of data, the steps one should follow for data analysis. You will also learn the important guidelines to prepare presentation of a research report.

## 19.2 CLASSIFICATION AND TABULATION

In the previous unit, we have discussed the process of data collection. The collected data, generally, is not in an easily assembled form. Hence, their prominent points are to be brought out. As a rule, before the work of analysis can start, the marketing researcher has to classify and tabulate the information collected, or, if secondary data (published or unpublished) have been employed, rearrange these into new groups and tabulate the new arrangement.

A first step would be to arrange as much of the material as possible in file folders by subject, corresponding to the main headings of the planned research report, e.g. prices, competitors, consumption, etc.

Often, bits of material such as articles will contain information related to more than one subject. Cross-reference sheets inserted in the appropriate folders will help the researcher find this material when he needs it.

If questionnaires have been used during field research, they will probably also contain data that would fall under several subject headings. Since this data must be tabulated before it can be used for further analysis, the questionnaire should be kept together at this point rather than being filed in a subject folder.

Much of the data that has been collected may be statistical, and will also have to be consolidated in preparation for analysis.

### 19.2.1 Classification

Classification means grouping the mass of data into different classes or groups on the basis of their similarities and resemblances. When the researcher arranges the material according to subject matter, he is actually taking the first step in classifying it - arranging it in categories. Before analysis can be carried out to any extent, it is necessary to continue the classification process in much greater detail, especially when a survey has been carried out or a substantial amount of statistical data has been collected. The reason is that hundreds of individual items of data can be involved, and unless they are grouped in some meaningful way, it will not be possible to discover any patterns or draw any conclusions.

Very often it is useful to classify data in terms of size or amount (number of employees, annual sales, population, annual income, value of purchases, etc.). It can also be relevant to classify data in many other ways - geographically, by years, or in terms of particular qualities. Classification helps in achieving the following objectives:

- It decides the mass of data based on characteristics and resemblances so as to enable comparison.
- It pinpoints the most significant features of the data at glance.
- It provides to give prominence to the important information, and
- It provides a basis for tabulation and analysis of data.

Once the areas of classification have been chosen, the data can be grouped into categories within each area.

The following examples will give you a clear understanding of the entire process:

**Example 1**

Following removal of quota restrictions on imports of a number of products by the Government of India, an Indian market research organisation made a market survey with the objective of estimating the market size for imported apples in the country. During the survey it was found out that apple consumption in India varied according to type, size, age composition, sex composition, and income of the family, etc.

The researcher suspects that there may be a relationship between the family's buying practices and these characteristics. So for each of these aspects he establishes categories into which he can group the data. As a basis for identifying a possible relationship between family income and buying practices, he classifies the consumers by annual family income, under the following categories:

- Under Rs 100,000
- Rs 100,000 - Rs 249,000
- Rs 250,000 - Rs 499,000
- Rs 500,000 - Rs 1,000,000
- Above Rs 1,000,000

Instead of trying to compare the habits of several families of many different income levels, the researcher now has to deal with only five categories.

**Example 2**

A researcher is investigating the market for chocolate candy, and has been able to acquire sales data for several dozen brands. He sees that sales of some brands are rising and others are falling - and at different rates. He believes there may be a relationship between the types of candy and their sales performance, so he classifies each brand under such categories as: (1) solid chocolate; (2) soft-centred; (3) wrapped; (4) unwrapped - or whatever other types occur. Now he can examine sales performance of each type of product and see if there is a relationship between the candy type and sales performance.

The second example illustrates two important points about how classification - grouping data into categories - can help the researcher in his analysis:

1. It reduces the number of items he has to compare. Instead of analysing the individual performance of several dozen brands, he can work with only four or five categories.
2. It makes it possible to develop quantitative data from qualitative data. Descriptive data about the type of chocolate being sold is qualitative data. But when categories have been established and sales for each category are added up, this becomes quantitative data. When data is quantified, it becomes easier to make comparisons and see trends.

**19.2.2 Tabulation**

Tabulation is the process of counting the responses (the 'data') given in a survey according to the categories selected. This is one of the most revealing devices for summarizing the data and presenting them in a meaningful fashion. Tabular presentation means arranging data in an orderly manner in rows and columns. The horizontal arrangement of data is known as rows and vertical arrangement is known as columns.

When a large number of respondents are involved, or when the questionnaires are very elaborate, tabulation is best done by machine, using one of the mechanical or electronic devices available. But in export market research, the numbers involved in surveys are usually small enough to allow manual tabulation, without the aid of special equipment.

The tabulation is carried out on tabulation sheets. These are pieces of paper on which the responses to one or more questions are recorded.

Simple tabulations in the manner described are usually only the first step in analysing survey returns. Much more information can be developed by using the techniques of cross tabulation - relating the responses to two or more questions.

This is done with the aid of cross tabulation sheets. Each sheet is set up to cross tabulate two questions. Tabulation and cross tabulation carry the researcher over the line between preparation for analysis and actually carrying it out.

In fact, classification and tabulation go together. Before the data are put in tabular form they have to be classified. The difference in between is that, in classification, the data is divided on the basis of similarity and resemblance, whereas tabulation is the process of recording the classified facts in rows and columns.

**Check Your Progress A--**

1. "Editing is a wasteful exercise in the analysis process". How does it matter if all the material whether relevant or irrelevant is included in the report - after all, lot of time and money has been spent in the collection of data and the researcher has passed through difficult and stressful situations during the entire exercise. Do you agree with the above statement?  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
2. Distinguish between classification and tabulation.  
.....  
.....  
.....
3. State whether the following statements are true or false:
  - a) Classification helps to divide the mass of data based on characteristics and resemblances.
  - b) Comparison is not possible with the help of classified data.
  - c) Tabulation is the technique of data analysis
  - d) Tabulation is a device for summarizing the data.
  - e) Data analysis facilitates marketing executives to initiate appropriate action to the problem
  - f) Editing is not useful to ensure maximum accuracy and unambiguity
  - g) The cause of check reliability of data is to avoid bias.

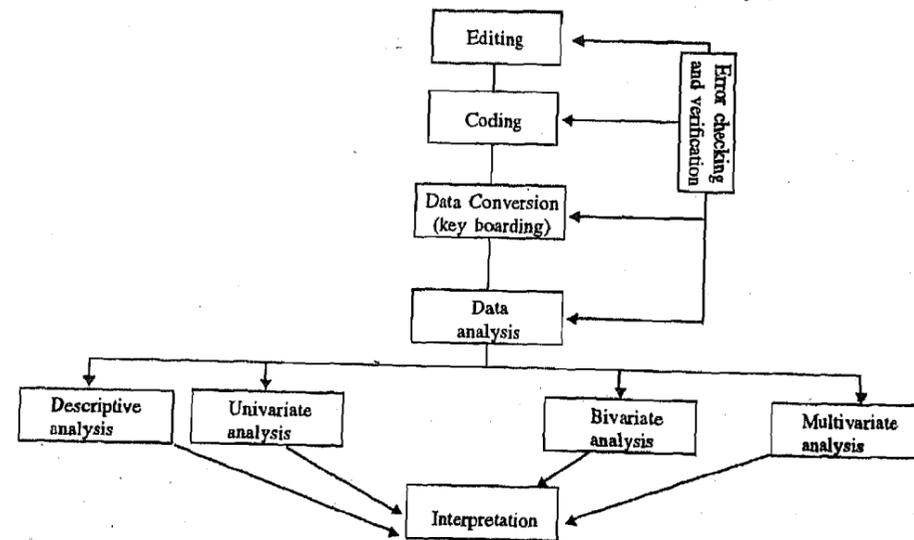
**19.3 DATA ANALYSIS**

In the data collection exercise, it is normal for a researcher to collect a mass of data, some of which may be relevant and some may be irrelevant. Hence the researcher may find himself face-to-face with a mountain of material, including information and statistics culled from various publications or simply photocopied, clippings of articles and notes taken from various journals and reference works, interview notes, questionnaires and a variety of other material. The data collected in its raw state does not give a clear picture to the researcher in answering the questions he has been seeking to fulfil the objective of research. Moreover, at the time of data collection, the attempt is to collect as much data as possible within the limited resources (to avoid the possibility of missing some relevant data) and look at it leisurely subsequently. The researcher will fail to understand the research problem only on the basis of classification and tabulation (which we have discussed in 19.2). He can get the results of solutions with the help of application of appropriate statistical analysis for a specific purpose. This depends mainly on the honesty of the researcher in selecting appropriate formulas and data inputs. Hence, after data collection is completed in order to make sense out of the data collected, it must be properly sorted out. To do this exercise, following steps should be followed.

### Steps in Data Analysis

The goal of most marketing research is to provide information for decision making. The raw data collected in the field must be transformed into information that will answer the marketing manager's questions. The conversion of raw data into information requires that the data be edited and coded so that they may be transferred to computer or other data storage media (Figure:19.1)

Figure 19.1 Overview of the Steps of Data Analysis



Source: William G Zikmund, Exploiring Marketing Research.

**Editing:** Editing is the process of reviewing the data to ensure maximum accuracy and unambiguity and removal of overlapping duplication and inconsistencies. Editing should be conducted quickly and thoroughly. This applies to the editing of the collection forms used for pretesting as well as for the full-scale project. Careful editing early in the collection process will often catch misunderstandings of instructions, errors in recording, and other problems at a stage when it is still possible to eliminate them from the later stages of the study. Early editing has the additional advantage of permitting the questioning of interviewers while the material is still relatively fresh in their minds.

Editing is normally centralised so as to ensure consistency and uniformity in the treatment of the data. If the sample is not large, a single editor usually edits all the data to reduce variation in treatment. In those cases where the size of the project makes the use of more than one editor necessary, it is best to assign each editor a different portion of the collection form to edit. In this way the same editor edits the same items in all forms, an arrangement that tends to improve both consistency and productivity.

While editing, the researcher must ensure the following requirements have been fulfilled.

1. **Legibility of entries:** Obviously the data must be legible in order to be used. If an entry cannot be deciphered, and clarification of it cannot be obtained from the interviewer, it is sometimes possible to infer what it should be from other data in the form. In cases where any real doubt exists about the meaning of the entry, however, it should not be used.
2. **Completeness of entries:** On a fully structured collection form, the absence of an entry is ambiguous. It may mean that the interviewer failed to attempt to obtain the data, that the respondent could not or would not provide it, or that there was a failure to record collected data. If the omission was the result of interviewer not recording the data, prompt questioning of the interviewer may provide the missing entry. If the omission was the result of either of the first two possible causes, it is still desirable to know which was the case.
3. **Consistency of entries:** As is the case with two watches that show different times, an entry that is inconsistent with another raises the question of which is correct. (If a respondent family is indicated as being a 'vegetarian', for example, and a later entry

indicates that it purchased meat/mutton during the past month, an obvious question arises as to; which is correct). Again, such discrepancies should be cleared up by questioning of the interviewer, if it is possible to do so. When they cannot be resolved, discarding both entries is usually the wisest course of action.

4. **Accuracy of entries:** An editor should keep an eye out for any indications of inaccuracies of the data. Of particular importance is the detecting of any repetitive response patterns in the reports of individual interviewers. Such patterns may well be indicative of systematic interviewer bias or dishonesty.

Editing also involves putting data into consistent form, or even converting it, so that it can be further analysed. For example, some trade data may be stated in different units of measure or value; it must be converted into a common unit before it can be compared. Or some sales figures may be given for fiscal years, others for calendar years. Again, adjustments have to be made.

One common problem in export market research is dealing with national import and export figures. They are usually calculated on different bases; CIF for imports, FOB for exports, for example. If a researcher wants to compare the imports of a product by Country A and Country B, but country A does not give detailed import data, he may have to calculate its imports by adding up the export data from supplying countries. But he would have to adjust this data to compare it with the import data of Country B.

**Coding:** Coding is the process by which responses are assigned to data categories and symbols (usually numbers) are assigned to identify them with the categories. Postcoding, the assignment of codes to responses after the data are collected is required for responses reported on unstructured forms. The assignment of codes to responses is normally done at the same time when the data are edited. Careful interpretation and sound judgement are required to ensure that the meaning of the response and the meaning of the category are consistently and uniformly matched.

Coding is an activity that should not be taken lightly. Improper coding can lead to poor analyses. Whenever possible (and cost allows) more than one person should do the coding, specifically the postcoding. By comparing the results of the various coders, a process known as determining intercoder reliability, any inconsistencies can be brought out into the open. In addition to the obvious purpose of eliminating them, the discovery of inconsistencies sometimes points to the need for additional categories for data classification and may sometimes mean that there is need to combine some of the categories.

Detailed code numbers have been evolved for almost all the products/product groups that enter international trade by organisations such as United Nations Organisation and these numbers are used by most of the countries, with or without minor modifications. Two of the widely used systems in this regard are Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) codes and Harmonised System (HS) codes. The Indian system of coding issue in foreign trade data classification, which is based on HS codes is called the Revised Indian Trade Classification (RITC) codes. Another widely used coding system, mainly for tariff purposes is called the Customer Cooperation Council Nomenclature (CCCN), which is also referred to, at times, by its earlier name, Brussels Tariff Nomenclature (BTN).

The advantages of coding to a researcher engaged in international marketing research are obvious. Since different countries use different terms to refer to a product and every country brings out its trade publications in its own language, use of code makes identification of products easy. For example, if one wants to find out the total quantity and value of "Chillies" imported by a country during a particular period from the country's trade publication, if the publication is not in English, or the publication is in English, but does not refer to the item as "Chillies" but as "Green Pepper", what one has to know is the coding system used in the publication and the relevant code for chillies/green pepper.

**Checking Reliability:** One of the most important functions of editing is to eliminate data which is unreliable. For example, when examining survey questionnaires, the researcher may find inconsistencies in the answers of a particular respondent, which casts doubt on his credibility. Or statistics from one source may not agree with statistics collected later from other sources known to be reliable.

The reliability of data should be checked (validated) during the research stages, and the unreliable or clearly inaccurate data should be discarded. The researcher is in a better position to do this once he has all the data assembled.

**Bias:** One of the main reasons why data must be checked for reliability is the ever-present danger of bias. The worst sort of bias starts with an error in the selection of data or sources of data, which sets the research off in the wrong direction and affects all the data collected. There is also the less fundamental type of bias which distorts information from a particular source. This, too, can lead to wrong conclusions. Bias can be caused by a variety of factors and can creep in during any phase of research, from the planning of the work to the interpretation of the results.

Some of the most common factors leading towards bias are:

- Errors in original sample selection. For example, unintentionally carrying out a high proportion of interviews among samples which may not fully represent the population as a whole.
- Interviewing the wrong people - for instance a low-level executive who has no actual decision-making powers and whose opinions do not reflect those of his superiors, or a purchasing officer who does not have sufficient knowledge of technical requirements.
- Inexperienced interviewers.
- Interview questions phrased in a way that do not invite correct responses.
- Dishonesty on the part of the person being interviewed.
- A low response rate in surveys. This is frequent in postal surveys.
- Reliance on secondary sources which are inaccurate or see a situation from a narrow or unbalanced point of view.

One way to reduce bias is to collect as much 'control data' as possible along the way. For example, questionnaires may include 'control questions'. If a survey is concerned with industrial buying patterns, instead of the question:

'How often do you purchase testing tools?' the control question might be:  
'When did you last purchase testing tools?'

Aside from building such controls into questionnaires, collecting information from as many primary and secondary sources as possible and then cross-checking it will help ensure that bias in some of the information is recognised in time, before it leads to incorrect interpretations.

Finally, every effort should be made to ensure that questionnaires are well designed and pre-tested and interviewers properly trained.

#### Data Conversion

Data conversion is the process of transforming data from a research project to computer. Dates back, key punch machines have been utilised to put the data on computer cards. As computers have become more sophisticated, data entry tends to be either instantaneous, or in computer-assisted telephone interviewing, or converted to magnetic media, such as disk or tape, for storage.

## 19.4 REPORT WRITING

Report writing is the final phase of marketing research procedure. It is the function through which findings of research are communicated to decision makers. Thus, research report is the culmination of all that has gone before. Irrespective of the quality of the research on a project, much of the acceptance that the results receive depends on the way in which they are presented. The research director's standards are likely to be different from those of the executive to whom he submits the report. The executive is not likely to be very much interested in the methodology followed. He is more interested in the final outcome. Thus, while the report may look for in a project. If the executive is expected to act on the basis of the results, he must first be convinced of their utility to

him. Thus, the research director must not only ensure that the report is technically accurate but he must also make it 'sell' the results. It is, therefore, of utmost importance to the marketing researcher that he studies the needs of reporting as well as fact-finding itself, and also devises means of achieving good reports, perhaps in spite of a number of limitations. Good writing goes beyond the mere recording of facts. To have effect, writing must communicate facts to readers.... Readers want careful organisation in what they read. They desire concreteness to help them picture and apply ideas. They like variety; it maintains their interest. They prefer short but variable sentences and not too rich a mixture of hard words.

### 19.4.1 Guidelines for Report Writing

Good research report begins with clear thinking on the part of a researcher. The researcher should be careful analysis the reader's need and prepare a detailed outline prior to writing the first draft. No two persons will write a research report the same way. Differences in educational qualification, personality, imagination, experience, training and interest show up in the method of presentation. The content, quality and presentation of the report determine how effectively the results of the market research are communicated to the company or government executives who are expected to initiate action on its conclusions. A poorly written report can cancel out even the benefits of the best research. Every good research report is expected to follow a number of rules such as the following:

**Consider the Readers:** Make the report clear; use only words familiar to the intended readers, and define all technical terms. To make the comparison of figures easier, use percentages, rounded-off figures, ranks, or ratios; put the exact data in a table within the text or in the appendix. Use graphic aids (charts, graphs, pictures, etc) whenever they help clarify the presentation of data.

**Address the Information Needs:** Remember - the research report is designed to communicate information to decision makers. Make sure it clearly relates the research findings to the objectives of management.

**Be Concise, Yet Complete:** Most managers may not be interested in the details of a research project. Knowing what to include and what to leave out is not an easy task. It is up to you, the researcher, to take into account the requirements of the sponsor when writing your report.

**Be Objective:** You may probably face a situation where you feel that the findings may not be easily accepted by the client. The findings may conflict with the decision maker's experience and judgement, or they may reflect unfavourably on the wisdom of the sponsor's decisions or his interests. In these circumstances, there is likely to be a strong temptation to deliberately slant the report, making the results seem more acceptable to management. For instance, a company may assign a project to explore the possibilities to enter the export business in a particular item. The researcher, after detailed research may come to the conclusion that the time is not opportune for the company to enter export business. Feeling that the company may resent this finding, the researcher may be compelled to recommend what pleases the company. A professional researcher, however, should present the research findings in an objective manner (i.e. without bias) and should defend their validity if challenged by the client.

**Style:** Writing style is a topic for an English or communications course, but here are a few tips to help you write a report that is easy to read.

- Write in brisk, businesslike English
- Use short words and sentences: "economy of words and not economy of facts".
- Be concise
- Consider appearance. White space (portions of the page that are blank) makes a long report easier to read. Graphs and charts, used primarily to visually illustrate statistical data, are also useful for creating white space.
- Avoid clichés
- Write in the present tense

- Use the active voice
- Placing short quotes from respondents throughout the report makes it more interesting and readable, and may provide insight or spark new ideas.

### 19.4.2 The Report Format

There is no one ideal format for all reports. However, the physical format itself can be effectively employed to create favourable impression. The use of widely spaced paragraphs, varied margins, separate headings, tables and charts, different type fonts and colours - all go to emphasise major points and to clarify the sequence and relationship of ideas. A report must use the format that best fits the needs and desires of its readers. The report format, which should have sufficient flexibility to meet most situations, can be structured into following parts:

- The preamble
- The summary of findings and conclusions
- The main body/executive summary
- The appendices

We shall discuss each of these structural parts in that order, although the actual writing of a report should be carried out 'from back to front'. In other words, the researcher will usually begin by collecting the material for his appendices, write the main body of his report next and finally summarize the conclusions and recommendations. For reasons which will be discussed in due course, however, the summary of conclusions and recommendations should always be the first thing covered in the report itself, after the preamble.

#### The Preamble

The preamble of the report simply presents basic introductory information about the research project. It usually consists of the following four parts:

- a) **Letter of Transmission:** It indicates to whom the report is directed. This letter tells the reasons of doing research work.
- b) **Title Page:** The title page should be a single sheet of clean paper on which the following should be neatly typed:
  1. The title of the research report
  2. The name of the company / government division which sponsored the research
  3. The name, address, telephone number, and other particulars of the research organisation
  4. The date of the report's presentation.If the research report is confidential, the fact should be clearly indicated in the title page and each copy should be numbered on the title page.
- c) **Table of Contents:** The table of contents, or index, should present as the title indicates, full, but not excessively detailed, list of the main sections and chapters into which the report has been broken down. Each section, as well as the various appendices, should be referred to by title, section number where relevant, and page number. As a general rule, the table of contents may be confined to one page in length.
- d) **The Introduction/Preface:** The introduction should just be a brief statement of how the survey came about and why it was commissioned. In short, it should be a simple, basic statement of purpose.

The terms of reference agreed in the original research survey should be briefly restated. At times the original terms of reference set out for a research project may have been changed as the research progressed. If so, any such changes should be described and brief explanation for the same offered. The preface should also acknowledge the help and support extended by individuals and organisations in the conduct of the study mentioning them by name.

### Summary of Findings and Conclusions/Executive Summary

Very often, company executives at the decision-making level may have very little knowledge of and/or interest in, the intricate details of the market research survey. They may simply want to know the basic findings, what conclusions can be drawn and how they might act on them.

For this reason, the summary is a vital section of the research report. It may be the only portion of the report ever read by many who may like to profit from the study. Hence, it should summarise the main findings of the research in a clear, brief and concise manner. Supporting data should not be included in this section; the reader should simply be directed to where he can find it in the main body of the report.

The summary of findings should not take up more than two or three pages, with no more than one or two summary tables. As far as possible the researcher should give graphic presentation of tables (in bars, pie, graphs, etc). For instance the summary of a report dealing with market prospects for an industrial product might contain information on the following, in very brief form:

- 1) Total market size (with no details) and past and likely future growth rate
- 2) Government policies concerning product's import etc relevant to the product
- 3) Main using industries, their importance (e.g. 'The principal outlets are in motor vehicles, electric motors and pumps. These together account for 60% of the market. Their importance is unlikely to change in future') and their future growth prospects
- 4) Global market share and nature and extent of principal competition.
- 5) Strengths and weaknesses of the client vis-à-vis competition and opportunities and threats before the client.

Following the above, each conclusion and recommendation for action should be listed, perhaps with short explanations. This summary should also be brief; the conclusions and arguments for them can be spelled out in greater detail in the main body of the report.

#### Main Body of the Report

We now come to the most important part of the report i.e. the main body. The main body of the research report must accurately cover all the facts of the study, from its inception right through to the framing of conclusions and their supporting rationale. It should clearly explain the methods of analysis used.

This section of the report must contain all the information necessary for decision makers to draw their own conclusions from the research findings, independently of any interpretations offered by the market researcher himself. Irrelevant or unreliable data should, however, be omitted.

Though the exact structuring of the main body of a report may vary, it can basically be broken down into four sections:

- A description of research methods
- General background information about the market
- Nature of the market
- Conclusions and recommendations

#### Research Methods

This section should cover a brief explanation of the research methods chosen for the study because it helps to establish the credibility of the research findings. Basically this should discuss:

- 1) Establishment of the sampling frame
- 2) Selection of the sample
- 3) The methods used to obtain information e.g. personal or telephone interviewing, questionnaires etc., sources used for secondary data
- 4) Depth of the research, in terms of numbers of interviews conducted and rate of questionnaire response

- 5) The methods used to quantify the data obtained.

In case the researcher has used a formal questionnaire, it is advisable to include it as an appendix to the report.

#### Market Background Information

This section should cover some basic information about the market such as geography, climate, economic trends, industrial trends, political trends, social and cultural trends, laws and regulations etc so as to help the people for whom the report is prepared and are likely to know very little about the market. How much of such basic information about a country should be included in the report is a matter of judgement; if the country is well known or if the terms of reference are highly specific, it may not be necessary to cover all those aspects. Information which is relevant to the project should be included in the report.

#### Nature of the Market

Under this section, the researcher should give a detailed information about the market features which are likely to influence positively and negatively, the manner and scale of the exporter's marketing effort and his prospects. The following information should be detailed in this section, in particular as much data and information on market potential, market access and market characteristics:

- Market size
- Market trends and forecast
- Market structure and segmentation
- Marketing channels and distribution methods and structure
- Existing competitors and their market shares, the nature and extent of competition
- Competing products and how these compare with the exporter's product
- Market access factors such as import restrictions, trade arrangements, exchange restrictions, membership of trade blocs etc.
- Tested reactions to the exporter's product
- Information on potential customers' tastes, habits and attitudes
- Prices and pricing policy and the factors governing pricing such as freight cost, distribution costs, duties, etc.
- Advertising and sales promotion efforts currently in use and recommended
- Market characteristics such as trade practices
- Packaging and labeling requirements and practices.

#### Conclusions and Recommendations

This is the concluding segment of the Report. The researcher should explain, with appropriate justification, what the research findings mean to the company for which he has carried out the research.

The conclusions can be presented in the form of options, explaining what courses of action are open to the company, and what the costs and results of each are likely to be. Ideally, the researcher should be able to make a forecast of the annual sales that the company can expect to make in the market over the next reasonable period if it takes specific action, as recommended by the report. If the terms of reference provided for it, the researcher would then go on to make specific recommendations as to which options the company should take. Each recommendation should be supported by an explanation, referring to relevant information already presented in the main body of the report.

The exact nature of the recommendations suggested will depend on the terms of reference, the product and the market situation. Usually, they will cover such things as:

- The type of ideal agency arrangement
- The product packaging and branding strategy type of promotion

- Optimum distribution strategy
- The pricing strategy
- The best means for combating competition
- The technique of market entry to be adopted
- In general, strategy to take maximum advantage of the positive factors in environment and reduce to the minimum the influence of negative factors.

Most of the recommendations should be positive - they should state specific steps that should be taken to achieve success or otherwise deal with the problems that have been identified; reduce prices, hold local stocks, promote the product at the distributor level, etc.

Usually, it is also useful to state specifically what should not be done. Such negative recommendations should be stated briefly, probably in a single paragraph. An example of such a negative recommendation: It would be advisable, under the circumstances, not to waste resources in competing with the major brands, but to concentrate on different segments and try to penetrate them.

#### Appendices

The purpose of the appendices is, essentially, to include as much relevant data and information as possible to support, illustrate, or further elaborate on the information already contained in the report's main body. Each appendix should be numbered. The kind of data that would usually appear in the appendices include:

- Statistical tables and tabulations which have been summarized in the main body of the report
- A list of the names and addresses of sources and contacts used in the course of desk and field research
- Copies of any questionnaires used during field research, prefaced by a note of the survey objectives they were meant to satisfy
- Relevant details about the sample selected for the survey
- A copy of the interviewer's appointments schedule or diary for future reference, should any interviewee need to be contacted again.
- Interview write-ups
- A list of possible future contacts, such as sales agents or advertising agents in the marketing country
- A note of relevant documents on file such as import policy, exchange manual, etc., obtained during the course of the research, and a brief description of their contents.

#### 19.4.3 Check List for Report Writing

- Consider the reader, his outlook and experiences.
- Keep the report as short and concise as possible; never 'pad' with unnecessary words or sentences.
- Write in a natural style, using ordinary words and avoiding jargon to the extent possible.
- Make sure that all topics covered are relevant to the purpose of the report; exclude all extraneous information.
- Double-check all facts, figures and statistical data to be sure they are accurate.
- Use tables and charts to illustrate and emphasise material.
- Give space and emphasis to each item in accordance with its importance.
- Make sure the report is neat, well-typed and easy to read.
- All facts, figures and data given in the report should be supported by the sources of such information so that it becomes easy to subsequently recheck them, if necessary and update them.

## 19.5 ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Sometimes it may be necessary to present the study findings orally to a group of executives. This type of presentation is usually in addition to a written research report. Naturally, it is easier if the oral presentation follows the written report. Preparing an oral presentation, however, often requires considerable additional work and calls for different skills than the written report. The oral report demands the use of more dramatics, especially the use of visual aids.

The following guidelines are suggested for developing a good oral presentation:

- Have a central theme
- Use visual devices liberally
- Use specific examples
- Use illustrations and analogies freely
- Write in headline style
- Use physical demonstration devices
- Use simple language and short sentences
- Be matter of fact avoid use of adjectives

Oral presentation is of two types:

1. Informal Oral Presentation, and
2. Formal Oral Presentation

### Informal Oral Presentation

This is a simple 'sit-down and discuss' situation where much of preparation may not be required on the part of the researcher. The researcher presents a summary of findings and the audience seeks clarifications, if needed, on certain aspects. It is assumed that the audience has read the report before taking part in discussions. Depending on the situation, visual and physical demonstration devices may or may not be used. What is most important is the entire atmosphere is very informal and free from any tension.

### Formal Oral Presentation

This is not so simple. A researcher is expected to make exhaustive preparations and he has to be a good communicator so as to handle all questions, some of which may be very difficult, asked by the audience. In the formal oral presentation, the researcher makes his presentation to a formal audience covering all aspects of the study but emphasising the findings and recommendations. The audience may seek clarifications and the researcher is expected to provide the clarifications to the satisfaction of the questioners. The researcher may distribute the summary of findings and recommendations before commencing the presentation. For a successful presentation, it is advisable to ascertain, beforehand, the following:

- a) What is the profile of the audience? What is each one's rank in the organisation? How many of them are specialists and in what subject areas?
- b) What are the available facilities for visual aids/physical demonstration devices?
- c) Which of the aids should be selected for use?
- d) Which part of the presentation should be emphasised most and which can be passed over fast? and
- e) What sort of questions are likely to be asked by the audience?

### Checklist for Oral Presentation

#### Before Presentation

- Check all equipment (e.g. lights, microphones, projectors, and other visual aid equipments) thoroughly before presentation.
- Have a contingency plan for equipment failure and failure of electricity etc.

- Analyse your audience. How will they react to the presentation? Will they be in agreement? Hostile? Indifferent? Or appreciate? Plan your opening statements accordingly. It's usually wise to begin a presentation with areas about which there is agreement/appreciation.
- Rehearse the presentation several times. Have someone to comment on how to improve its effectiveness. In short, hold some mock presentations before hand.

### During the Presentation

- Start the presentation with an overview - tell the audience in brief, about the project and what you are going to tell them
- Face the audience at all times
- Talk to the audience or decision maker, rather than read from a script or a projection screen. Consult notes only to make sure you don't miss out on any important point and to keep the presentation flowing in an organised manner.
- Use visual aids effectively - charts and tables should be simple and easy to read.
- Avoid distracting mannerisms while speaking. Constant or unnecessary motion is bothersome - make certain your movements have purpose. Also refrain from adding 'fillers' such as 'uh', 'um' 'y' 'know', 'OK' and so on between words or sentences.
- Remember to ask the audience whether they have questions during presentation and after presentation is concluded.
- Use simple language and short sentences
- Be matter of fact
- Try to concentrate on the strong areas of the research and get the audience involved in such areas.

### During the Question Period

- Concentrate on the question. Don't think about the answer until the speaker has completed his or her question
- Repeat the question. If it is complicated or unclear, rephrase it. This ensures that everyone in the audience has heard and understood the question, and also gives you time to formulate the answer.
- If you are not sure of the answer to any question, admit that you don't know the answer, then tell the audience that you will try to find it. After the presentation, find out where that person can be reached as and when you get the answer to the question. (Make sure you follow up on your promise).
- Answer questions briefly and support your answers with evidence whenever possible.
- Do not get into arguments with any member of the audience even if you are convinced that you are right and the concerned member of the audience is wrong.

### Check Your Progress B

1. Should the researcher strictly follow the terms of reference while writing the reports? What is the importance of incorporating the research methodology in the body of the report?  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
2. State whether the following statements are true or false:
  - a) Good writing goes beyond the mere recording of facts
  - b) A poorly written report can cancel out the benefits of the best research.
  - c) There is no need to define technical term in research report.
  - d) A professional researcher present the research findings in an objective manner.
  - e) The main body of the research report must cover all the facts of the study.
  - f) Formal oral presentation is so simple than informal oral presentation.

## 19.6 LET US SUM UP

Data analysis is a very important step in the market research process as it is only through analysis, a researcher can draw relevant inferences and suggest appropriate course of action so as to facilitate the decision maker chalk out his strategy in any given marketing situation. Mere collection of data by any method, may it be primary data collection or secondary data collection, through published sources or field work, has no meaning unless the data is properly organised, classified, edited, coded and finally tabulated to get meaningful results. The researcher, while doing this exercise in a sequential manner, may have to delete the irrelevant data and information collected during the data collection process.

Having analysed and interpreted the data, the next and the last major step is to put it in the form of a report. In fact, the report is the culmination of all that has gone before. While the report is likely to be close to an anticlimax to the researcher, it may be the only thing the executive is looking for in the project. Hence, the researcher, while writing the report, must ensure a fine balance to the effect that the report conforms to the objectives of the research while at the same time, the executive gets convinced of the value of the report to his organisation.

The content, quality and presentation of the report determine how effectively the results of the market research are communicated to the company or government executive who is expected to act on its conclusions. A poorly written report can cancel out even the best research. The report should be written in clear, forceful, non-technical language using simple words and avoiding jargon wherever possible. How much information the report should contain obviously depends on the terms of reference and the wishes of its sponsors.

There is no ideal format for a report. A report must use the format that best fits the needs and wants of its readers on the one hand the subject matter of the research, on the other. The report format, which has sufficient flexibility to meet most situations, can be structured into four parts: the preamble (title page, table of contents, introduction); summary of findings and conclusions or executive summary; main body of the report (description of research methods, general background information about the market, description of market itself, and conclusions and recommendations); and the appendices (tables, charts, questionnaire form, names and addresses of sources and contacts, relevant details of sample, etc.).

Presentation of the report can be done in two ways: informal and formal. While informal presentation is a simple 'sit-down and discuss' situation and may not require much of preparation, formal presentation should be taken reasonably and should be made only after adequate preparation and the researcher should be thoroughly knowledgeable and be a good communicator to handle any complicated questions asked by the audience. The researcher is, therefore, advised to carefully follow the relevant checklist while preparing for oral presentation and rehearse the presentation in advance with "mock presentation" sessions.

## 19.7 KEY WORDS

**Analysis:** Analysis can be viewed as the ordering, the breaking down into constituent parts, and the manipulating of data to obtain answers to the research question or questions underlying the research project.

**Coding:** Coding is the process by which responses are assigned to data categories and symbols (usually numbers) are assigned to identify them with the categories.

**Editing:** Editing is the process of reviewing the data to ensure maximum accuracy and unambiguity.

**Tabulation:** Tabulation is the process of counting the responses (the 'data') given in a survey according to the categories selected.

## 19.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- A.3 a) True, b) False c) False d) True e) True f) False g) True  
B.2 a) True, b) True c) False d) True e) True f) False

## 19.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Why is analysis of data important in the market research process? Elaborate the steps involved in the data analysis process.
2. What do you understand by classification and tabulation.
3. What is the rationale of having a separate section on summary of findings and conclusions in the report when the main body of the report will also contain findings and conclusions? Explain.
4. "A marketing research report should merely present the findings. It must not comment on the possible course of action(s) to be taken on the basis of the study results". Comment.
5. "Poor presentation will undo the entire market research exercise". Comment.