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Types of research instruments in business research

What are research instruments? A research instrument is a tool used to collect, measure and analyze data related to your subject. Research instruments can be tests, research, scales, questionnaires or even checklists. To ensure the strength of your study, it is important to use previously validated instruments! Starting already know the full name of the instrument you're looking for? Finding a research instrument can be very time consuming! This process involves three concrete steps: it is common that resources will not provide the perfect instrument, but they will provide a quote from the publisher. In some cases, you may need to contact your publisher to get the full text. Research advice: Talk to your faculty. Many of them have expertise in working with research instruments and can help you with this process. CHOOSING THE RIGHT MEASURING INSTRUMENT FOR YOUR PROJECT: TIPS FOR USE May 14, 2014 Japheth A. Yaya Tweet The measuring instrument refers to the different methods by which the researcher obtains the data of the respondents for their research work. The term data refers to all forms of information obtained by researchers from the study participant. Adedokun (2003:57) resorted to the data relating to any fact, observation or fact relating to the subject matter of the study. There are different types of measuring instruments that researchers can use for their studies; depends on the nature of the research to be carried out. In this record, we will discuss the various measuring instruments that can be used together with studies that are suitable for them. However, data collection is an important part of any research activity. This is because; the conclusions of the study are based on what the data reveal. Therefore, no researcher is larger than his data. In fact, data can be obtained from two main sources; primary and secondary sources. The primary data represent the information collected by the investigator using a questionnaire or a personal interview or observation method; whereas, in secondary data, the researcher collects information already obtained and processed by government departments or different agencies before it was made available to other interested users. These are published and unpublished sources, e.g. Types of data collected in accordance with Aino, 2004; Adedokun, 2003; Awokeni, 2006; Adeniyi; Oyekanmi and Tijani, 2011. Researchers may collect the following types of respondents' data: Demographic information or data e.g. age, gender, gender, educational background, ethnicity, religion, etc. Test Events Answers to researchers' questions in an interview or written answers to the survey question Averages of classes that can be obtained from school records Essay written by students e.g. projects, thesis and dissertation. Anecdotal records kept by teachers or counsellors or researchers. In fact, the list of data to be collected is not limited to the list of abovementioned data. It is therefore important that each researcher decides what data they intend to collect and by what method it collects. Those methods used by researchers to collect their desired data are known as a research or measuring instrument. Data collection instruments These are the instruments used to collect data from study participants. They are important for collecting data in all types of research methods. Researchers mainly use them to collect reliable data that will be analyzed later (Aina, 2004). They include questionnaire, interviews, observations, group focus discussion and experiment. Each instrument is discussed in turn and also indicates their merits and reservations. The questionnaire is a frequently used instrument for collecting research data from study participants. In essence, it seeks the opinions of individuals in the sample or population on issues directly related to the objectives of the research study (Aina, 2004:348). The questionnaire consists of a set of structured and unstructured questions that the researchers designed to obtain data from respondents. No research is better than a questionnaire, and relentless research means relentless research. Therefore, the questionnaire formulated must be valid, reliable and not false in order for the data collected to confirm the survey. The questionnaire has a number of advantages, which include the anonymity of respondents; allows large amounts of data to be collected over a relatively short period of time and is cheap to manage. The main diligence of the method is that some confusing and misleading questions cannot be explained, as the researcher may not be able to explain the issues, but sometimes the questions may not be easily understandable to individuals who are illiterate, so the method is limited to educated respondents only. Furthermore, the characteristics of a good questionnaire according to popoolo (2011) consist of: Questions should not be questioned. That means she has to be able to have only one explanation. The issues need to be easily understood. The questions should have a precise answer. Questions must not contain vague words. The question should not require strict calculations. The issue should not require the defendant's survey to decide on classification. Questions must not be in such a way that the answers will be appropriate. The questionnaire must not be too long. It shouldn't be too verbal. V the exact subject matter of the investigation. The interview is a measuring instrument, otherwise known as an oral questionnaire. It involves a process in which the researcher requests information from respondents through verbal interaction. The researcher would previously draw up a list of structured questions relating to the study before meeting with respondents for their views on the matter. The researcher asks questions to respondents and the answers are recorded by the researcher. Materials that could be used during the interview period include a recorder, paper and bureau. The main advantage of this method is that it produces a high level of response. In addition, it is highly representative of the overall population of the study, and the personal contact between the researcher and the respondents gives the researcher a detailed explanation of confusing and unambiguous questions (Aina, 2004; Popoola, 2011). However, its weaknesses include the disadvantage of the interviewer; the inaccessibility of wealthy respondents for fear of uncertainty and the amount of data that can be collected by this method is usually limited compared to the questionnaire method. The interview can be conducted in person or through a telephone or electronic mail system. This is an instrument employed by a researcher in which individual behaviour or condition is observed and recorded. There are two types of observation: observation of participants and observation of the non-participants. In the observation of the participants, the researcher is a member of the observational group. Here, an accurate and timely result would come from a researcher, but he has a problem of swearing. On the other hand, the non-cooperating observation is not a member of the observation group. The result here may be spent, as it is not present, but the problem is inaccurate and delayed. Both methods of observation reinforce first-hand information, flexible and cheaper to implement, require less active observational participation and their results are reliable for research activity. However, Akinade & Owolabi (2009) claim that the method of observation is a popular tool in research, especially in behavioural and social sciences; the authors argue that it requires specific knowledge and skills to observe behaviour in research. In carrying out behavioural observations, behavioural categories (coding schemes) should first be developed. This includes identifying specific attributes that will give clues to the problem at hand. The authors continued to stress that when developing the observation method, researchers can follow the following guidelines: Clearly define the objective of the instrument; make preliminary observations of your subjects under conditions that will prevail during the study in order to identify the behaviours that objects will be looking for; and build list of observed behaviour. It is also possible to develop behavioural categories by searching literature. This will provide an opportunity to determine whether a similar study has already been carried out. The outcome of such a similar study can be accepted or adjusted in the current study (Akinade & Owolabi, 2009:97). This data collection instrument refers to a process in which researchers simultaneously obtain data from a large group of people. This method differs from the interview method; in the interview method, the researcher focuses on one person at a time, but in the group discussion method focus, the researcher obtains data from a large number of (groups) of people for his research activity. Focus's discussion method is very popular in conducting research in the fields of behavioural science, library and information science, archival science, records and information technology. Here, we might find that there may be a need for the researcher to use more than 2 or 3 approaches to retrieve data for his research activity. It depends on the supervisor, the nature of the research or the problem to be investigated. However, in the group's discussion the focus; the researcher identifies key informants who can be contacted to extract the deserved information on the variable(s) of interest in the study. It is very important that, in an evaluation study or in access to the performance of a system or project or when working on a policy and its impact on a particular functioning in a company or organisation; the focus group discussion method could be used. The approach is used to generate qualitative data in the interpretation of a study or investigation phenomenon. Membership of a focus group debate shall not exceed 10 members at a time. It's like a mini-conference where members of the group could be grouped up in a suitable location. Before that, it is necessary that the researcher obtained his consent to participate in the study. In addition, the researcher must design a guide for the focus group discussion. The manual should contain obsesses covering variables of interest to the study. For example, in a study such as: Customer satisfaction with information services or products from the Babcock University Library. The researcher may draw up the following guidelines: Nature of library services; the nature of the products; the level of user satisfaction; Quality of users, etc. This method of data collection requires the following materials: research assistants; video recorder and cassette; Bureau and paper; Tape recorder and cassette tape and light refresh to entertain participants. After discussion in the focus group, the investigator should translate the data into qualitative information, e.g. in a group involving 10 members, if 7 members have agreed that they have good reference in the library, while the responses of the remaining members are negative. It can then be calculated/quantitatively as: $\frac{7}{10} \times 100 = 70\%$; this is the number that the researcher will report in his work. Moreover, the main advantage of this method is that the research activity has added credibility and originality, while the challenges include: too much implementation costs, too much time to implement, and some respondents may not be free to make a significant contribution, especially if their boss is invited to such a meeting. This type of data collection instrument is carried out in clean and applied scientific research. Here, researchers conduct some experiments in a laboratory environment to test some of the reactions that may be taking place in the subject of research. The advantages of this method are that it produces an immediate result, its results are justified and are error-free if they are well implemented under normal conditions/circumstances. While its problems include: it is too expensive to commit, and the chemicals used can cause permanent damage to the researcher if handled carelessly. Table 1: Classification of research based on S/N data collection instruments Types of research instruments for data collection 1. Questionnaire used, interview and observation. 2. Survey questionnaire, focus group discussion, interview and observation. 3. Questionnaire for case study, interview, focus and observation group discussion. 4. Ethnographic, e.g. correlational research Observation, questionnaire, focus group discussion and interview 5. Historical observations, focus group discussion and interview 6. Evaluation Focus group discussion, interview and observation 7. Clean Science Experiment and Observation 8. Action questionnaire and interview 9. Longitudinal questionnaire, observation, focus group discussion, interview and experiment in the case of pure scientific research. 10. Research questionnaire, observation and interview. Source: Japheth Yaya, June 18, 2014 Conclusion Could again point out that researchers are not limited to the different methods of instruments for data collection and classification as presented in this paper, but the choice of which method should be used depends on the investigator, nature or problem to be investigated and the prevailing circumstances at the time of the study. Thus, researchers are free to use any method they see fit for their research. Reference Adedokun, J.A. (2003). The basics of the research methodology. Sagamu: New Hope Publisher. Adeniyi, A.L.; Oyekanmi, A.O. & Tijani, M.O. (2011). Essential business research methods. Lagos: CSS Bookshops Limited. Aina, L.O. (2004). Library and Information Science Text for Africa. Ibadan: Third World Services Limited. Akinade, E.A. & Owolabi, T. (2009). Research methods: A pragmatic approach to social sciences, behavioural sciences and Lagos: Connel Publications. Awokeni, J.A. (2006). 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