Chapter 2: Research Methodology

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Research methodology process includes a number of activities to be performed. These are arranged in proper sequence of timing for conducting research. One activity after another is performed to complete the research work. Research methodology includes the following steps:

1. **Type of Research**

The topic for the research study is sales promotion strategy and the nature of the topic is theoretical and descriptive. So the conduct the research study the type of research suitable is descriptive research only. The data are collected from sales records, dealers, customers and salesmen of the companies performing in FMCG sector. The descriptive research has met the requirement of research study.

2. **Sources of Data**

For the study purpose both primary and secondary data are used. The primary data collected from sales men of the companies, customers and dealers dealing in the products of the company. The secondary data collected from records of the company, retailers and dealers. The data of past sales also have been collected. The primary and secondary data have been collected to cover every aspect of the study. The primary data are related to behaviour and response of employees, dealers and customers. The secondary data shows the sales of the company product wise. These data used in combination as per need of the study. These data having different merits and demerits and have serves our purpose of the research study. These are explained below:

(a) **Primary Data**

Primary data are information collected by a researcher specifically for a research assignment. In other words, primary data are information that a company must gather because no one has compiled and published the information in a forum accessible to the public. Companies generally take the time and allocate the resources required to gather
primary data only when a question, issue or problem presents itself that is sufficiently important or unique that it warrants the expenditure necessary to gather the primary data. Primary data are original in nature and directly related to the issue or problem and current data. Primary data are the data which the researcher collects through various methods like interviews, surveys, questionnaires etc. The primary data have own advantages and disadvantages:

(i) **Advantages of primary data:**

Advantages of primary data are as follows:

- The primary data are original and relevant to the topic of the research study so the degree of accuracy is very high.
- Primary data is that it can be collected from a number of ways like interviews, telephone surveys, focus groups etc. It can be also collected across the national borders through emails and posts. It can include a large population and wide geographical coverage.
- Moreover, primary data is current and it can better give a realistic view to the researcher about the topic under consideration.
- Reliability of primary data is very high because these are collected by the concerned and reliable party.

(ii) **Disadvantages of primary data:**

Following are the disadvantages of primary data:

- For collection of primary data where interview is to be conducted the coverage is limited and for wider coverage a more number of researchers are required.
- A lot of time and efforts are required for data collection. By the time the data collected, analysed and report is ready the problem of the research becomes very serious or outdated. So the purpose of the research may be defeated.
- It has design problems like how to design the surveys. The questions must be simple to understand and respond.
- Some respondents do not give timely responses. Sometimes, the respondents may give fake, socially acceptable and sweet answers and try to cover up the realities.
• With more people, time and efforts involvement the cost of the data collection goes high. The importance of the research may go down.
• In some primary data collection methods there is no control over the data collection. Incomplete questionnaire always give a negative impact on research.
• Trained persons are required for data collection. In experienced person in data collection may give inadequate data of the research.

(b) Secondary Data
Secondary data are the data collected by a party not related to the research study but collected these data for some other purpose and at different time in the past. If the researcher uses these data then these become secondary data for the current users. These may be available in written, typed or in electronic forms. A variety of secondary information sources is available to the researcher gathering data on an industry, potential product applications and the market place. Secondary data is also used to gain initial insight into the research problem. Secondary data is classified in terms of its source – either internal or external. Internal, or in-house data, is secondary information acquired within the organization where research is being carried out. External secondary data is obtained from outside sources. There are various advantages and disadvantages of using secondary data.

(i) Advantages of Secondary Data:
Advantages of secondary data are following:

• The primary advantage of secondary data is that it is cheaper and faster to access.
• Secondly, it provides a way to access the work of the best scholars all over the world.
• Thirdly, secondary data gives a frame of mind to the researcher that in which direction he/she should go for the specific research.
• Fourthly secondary data save time, efforts and money and add to the value of the research study.
(ii) Disadvantages of Secondary data:

Following are the disadvantage of secondary data:

- The data collected by the third party may not be a reliable party so the reliability and accuracy of data go down.
- Data collected in one location may not be suitable for the other one due variable environmental factor.
- With the passage of time the data becomes obsolete and very old.
- Secondary data collected can distort the results of the research. For using secondary data a special care is required to amend or modify for use.
- Secondary data can also raise issues of authenticity and copyright.

Keeping in view the advantages and disadvantages of sources of data requirement of the research study and time factor, both sources of data i.e. primary and secondary data have been selected. These are used in combination to give proper coverage to the topic.

3. Instruments for Data Collection

For collection of data the following instruments have been used:

(a) Questionnaire

Questionnaire is a set of questions has been prepared to ask a number of questions and collect answers from respondents relating to the research topic. A number of questions usually in printed or electronic form are to be answered by the individuals. The forms often have blank spaces in which the answers can be written. Sets of such forms are distributed to groups and the answers are collected relating to research topic. A questionnaire is a series of questions asked to individuals to obtain statistically useful information about a given topic. When properly constructed and responsibly administered, questionnaires become a vital instrument by which statements can be made about specific groups or people or entire populations. Inappropriate questions, incorrect ordering of questions, incorrect scaling, or bad questionnaire format can make the survey valueless, as it may not accurately reflect the
views and opinions of the participants. A useful method for checking a questionnaire and making sure it is accurately capturing the intended information is to pretest among a smaller subset of target respondents. In a research or survey questions asked to respondents, and designed to extract specific information. It serves four basic purposes: to (1) collect the appropriate data, (2) make data comparable and amenable to analysis, (3) minimize bias in formulating and asking question, and (4) to make questions engaging and varied. For our study purpose a set of questions has been prepared to collect information relating to the topic of the study. In this study a structured questionnaire has been used with different types of questions such as closed ended and open ended. Special case has been taken to select the scales for the questions for collection of responses very effectively.

(b) Telephone, Mobile Phone and Facsimile
Telephone and other devices can be used for collecting data verbally and written on fax from respondents located away from the researcher and having these facilities plus the researcher having their contact numbers. Use of interviewers encourages sample persons to respond, leading to higher response rates. Interviewers can increase comprehension of questions by answering respondents' questions. It is fairly cost efficient, depending on local call charge structure. It is good for large national or international respondents and gives wider coverage. It cannot be used for non-audio information (graphics, demonstrations, taste/smell samples) this instrument is not suitable for the respondents where the telephone facility is not available.

(c) Mail
For collection of data from the respondents who are located at a long distance and do not have any communication facility. They can be contacted through mailed questionnaire. Only thing is required that the researcher should have the postal addresses of the respondents. The questionnaire may be handed to the respondents or mailed to them, but in all cases they are returned to the researcher via mail. The cost involved is very less but no clarification can be given to the respondents if required. Respondents can answer at their own convenience. The respondents cannot be biased by the researchers and the detail information can be collected
for the research purpose. Only one disadvantage this instrument gives is that the response rate is very less due to lack of interest in the topic of respondents and low literacy rate.

(d) Interview

In this method the interviewer personally meets the informants and asks necessary questions to them regarding the subject of enquiry. Usually a set of questions or a questionnaire is carried by him and questions are also asked according to that. The interviewer efficiently collects the data from the informants by cross examining them. The interviewer must be very efficient and tactful to get the accurate and relevant data from the informants. Interviews like personal interview/depth interview or telephone interview can be conducted as per the need of the study.

(i) Advantages:

Advantages of interview are following:

- In this method information can be gathered from illiterate people too.
- There are no chances of non-response as the interviewer personally collects data.
- The collected data is very reliable since the interviewer tactfully collects the data by cross examining the responders.

(ii) Disadvantages:

- The major disadvantages of interview are:
- There is a chance of bias.
- The informants may not answer some personal questions.
- It is a time-consuming process.
- Money and manpower requirements are very high.
- Some time the interviewers are involved in pressurising respondents to share their personal information.

To study the topic of the research out of available instruments for research mainly questionnaire, interview and telephone/mobile phones have been used because these
instruments were found suitable for data collection purpose. Mailed questionnaire has not been used because the need has not been felt during the study.

4. Research Methods

For collection of primary data for this research work survey and observation methods have been used. Experimental method is not found suitable for this study because the topic is a theoretical topic and there is no need to have experiments. These two methods are explained below:

(a) Survey Method

Survey is used to collect quantitative information about items in a population. Surveys are used in different areas for collecting the data even in public and private sectors. A survey may be conducted in the field by the researcher. The respondents are contacted by the research person personally, telephonically or through mail. This method takes a lot of time, efforts and money but the data collected are of high accuracy, current and relevant to the topic. When the questions are administered by a researcher, the survey is called a structured interview or a researcher-administered survey. When the questions are administered by the respondent, the survey is referred to as a questionnaire or a self-administered survey. It is an efficient way of collecting information from a large number of respondents. Very large samples are possible. Statistical techniques can be used to determine validity, reliability, and statistical significance. Surveys are flexible in the sense that a wide range of information can be collected. They can be used to study attitudes, values, beliefs, and past behaviors. Because they are standardized, they are relatively free from several types of errors. There is an economy in data collection due to the focus provided by standardized questions. Only questions of interest to the researcher are asked, recorded, codified, and analyzed.

(b) Observation Method

Observation is a complex research method because it often requires the researcher to play a number of roles and to use a number of techniques; including her/his five senses, to collect data. The observer puts himself in the actual situation and watch carefully. On the basis of
his knowledge, skills and experience he collects the data without contacting the respondents. The results of observation entirely depend on the talents of the researcher. This method can be used only by expert persons in the research. Observation methods have been developed with the objective of 'observing people in their natural setting - as they go about their everyday lives. Observation methods can overcome some of the criticisms of quantitative research methods (Validity, bias etc.) and can be useful when its subject can't provide information, or can only provide inaccurate information. Out of available methods for collecting primary data, survey and observation methods have been found suitable for the topic study. These have fulfilled the requirements for data collection properly.

5. Sampling

(a) Introduction

The research is a systematic study to examine or investigate the issue or problem and find out the relevant information for solution. For study data are to be collected from the respondents. It is not possible to collect data from everyone of the population. Population is a very large number of persons or objects or items which is not feasible to manage. A population is a group of individuals, persons, objects, or items from which samples are taken for measurement. For research purpose a part of the population is to be selected. Sampling is the process in which a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population is selected. This is called a sample. It is easier to contact a smaller part of the population for data collection. It can be done within a limited time, efforts and with minimum cost. For selection of a sample special care should be taken that the sample is proper representative of the whole population. Every segment of the population should be included but the number should not be very large which may become difficult to manage within time and cost limits. For this research study purpose out of different sampling methods the stratified random sampling has been selected. The universe includes salesmen, wholesalers, retailers and customers of selected companies located in different parts of Gujarat region. Out of Gujarat region main cities like Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat, Rajkot and Bhavnagar have been selected. The salesmen are selected from branches of companies and further on the basis of availability during visits. Cities are divided into areas and from each area the dealers, retailers and
customers have been selected from urban and rural areas of these cities. They have been selected randomly. So stratified random sampling has been used for the study. Keeping in view the proper representation of every segment of population and manageable size of the sample, the sample size selected is 400.

(b) Time Duration
The permitted time by the university for completion of research study for Ph.D degree is two years. Continuous efforts have been put to work on this research. It has been completed and submitted within the permitted time period.

(c) Statistical Tools for Data Analysis
For data analysis measures of central tendency, standard deviation, variance will be used. For testing of hypothesis F Test and T test will be used.

(d) Hypothesis
The following hypotheses have been tested with the help of statistical tools:

(i) Null Hypotheses: There is significant difference amongst sales promotion strategies of the selected companies.

- There is significant impact of sales promotion strategies on sales, number of customers, overall profitability and business performance of selected companies

(ii) Alternative Hypotheses: There is no significant difference amongst sales promotion strategies of the selected companies.

- There is no significant impact of sales promotion strategies on sales, number of customers, overall profitability and business performance of selected companies
6. Limitations of the Study

To carry out the research study the following limitations were expected and faced during the research study:

(a) Availability of secondary data from sales records of the companies were difficult.
(b) Salesmen, customers, dealers and retailers were reluctant or hesitant to share data.
(c) Management may not like to share their views on the topic.
(d) Time, cost and location factors become major difficulties in completion of research.
(e) Sample size may not be exact representative of the universe. There is possibility of some error to a limited extent.

However, to overcome the limitations and maintain the effectiveness of research work sincere efforts were put.