Principles Express
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Sampling in Market Research

Fulfilling the core market research educational needs of individuals and companies worldwide.

Presented through a unique partnership between

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

MRII MARKET RESEARCH INSTITUTE INTERNATIONAL

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This online course will teach you how to select the best sample for your research project, including understanding how well the sample covers your target population and how any potential sample biases may impact your results. A reliable sample is the foundation of good research and this course teaches you the ingredients of a high-quality sample and the right questions to ask your sample supplier.

One of the most important questions to answer when designing research is, "How do I identify and reach the people whose opinions I want to hear in order to make an informed decision about the issue at hand?" In the language of sampling, these people are the "target population."

Sampling is the means of specifying how the members of a population will be selected for study. It is essential that the sample be representative of the target population, that is, a microcosm in terms of demographic, attitudinal, and behavioral characteristics. If the sample is not representative, conclusions from the research will be biased and any insights developed could be incorrect. Guidance from non-representative samples could be irrelevant or, at worst, harmful to the business.

One of the most important developments in Market Research over the last 20 years has been the ongoing migration away from traditional **probability** sampling, mostly for telephone and in-person surveys – methods which have become increasingly difficult to execute as lifestyles and technology changes – to **non-probability** sampling, mostly for online and mobile surveys. Probability sampling is a rigorous, scientific, and theory-based approach to sampling. Non-probability sampling is less rigorous but faster and significantly less expensive.

Both methods and their variations are discussed in this course. We describe the basics of probability sampling first because the overall principle of representation and many of the terms are also used in non-probability sampling

Learning Objectives

1. Explain how sampling works.

2. Discuss the sampling design process: definition of the target population, best modes to reach that population, determination of the sampling frame, selection of sampling technique(s), determination of sample size, and execution of the sampling process.

3. Explain the differences between probability and non-probability samples, the benefits, drawbacks, and when each might be used.

4. Discuss the major types of probability sampling (simple random, systematic, stratified, and cluster), their benefits, drawbacks, and when each might be used.

5. Discuss the major types of non-probability sampling (convenience, quota, and snowball), their benefits, drawbacks, and when each might be used.

6. Explain the differences between landline and mobile phone sampling.

7. Describe sampling techniques and sources specific to Internet data collection, including mobile research.

8. Discuss the survey assignment process and understand the potential bias implications of routing, targeting, prescreening, and prior survey exposure.

9. Describe the concept of consistent sampling both in terms of a consistent sample frame and how sample is drawn and quotas are set against that frame.

10. Discuss how a single sample frame is not necessarily connected to a single mode and that having multiple points of contact for the same person can increase response rates.

11. Describe how the screener section of the survey, as well as dropouts, data quality, and technical issues, will ultimately impact the "sample" that completes the survey.

12. Describe the challenges in obtaining representative samples and how representative samples can be improved at the selection stage or through weighting.

13. Describe when to use margin of error calculations and confidence levels when reporting results.

14. Explain how to use the principles of sampling to make judgments about representativeness and bias in secondary data.

15. Describe the challenges researchers face when developing samples for global studies.

16. Identify the ethical considerations in sampling as applied to both end users ("clients") and participants.

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For more information about the *Sampling in Market Research,*
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