**Market research - Quantitative and Qualitative**

The distinction between primary and secondary research is really about the different **sources** of market information. A different way of thinking about market research is to consider the two main **approaches** – qualitative and quantitative.

***Qualitative research***

Qualitative research is based on **opinions, attitudes, beliefs and intentions**. This kind of research deals with questions such as “**Why”? “Would?”, or “How?”**

Qualitative research aims to understand why customers behave in a certain way or how they may respond to a new product. Given that these opinions are often obtained from small numbers of people, the findings are not necessarily statistically valid. However, such data can highlight potential issues which can be explored in quantitative research.

**Focus groups and interviews** are common methods used to collect qualitative data. This kind of data is often revealing and useful, but it is costly and time-consuming to collect, particularly for a start-up or small business.

***Quantitative research***

This is research based on **larger samples** and is, therefore, more statistically valid. Quantitative **research is concerned with data** and addresses question such as “how many?”, “how often”, “who?”, “when?” and “where?”

The results of quantitative research will generally be numerical form – for example:

* 35% of customers rate the new product as “attractive”
* 70% of potential customers use the Internet to buy their hotel accommodation in Dorset
* 3 out of 5 customers will buy a new food product after being offered a free in-store sample

The main methods of obtaining quantitative data are the various forms of **surveys** – i.e. telephone, postal, face-to-face and online.

**Questionnaires**

Questionnaires are one the main tools in the use of field research. A questionnaire contains a series of questions which gather primary marketing research data for the business.

Questionnaires need to be designed carefully. The design of the questionnaire depends on the following:

**Objectives** of the questionnaire – what information is needed, at a minimum, from customers who complete the questions?

The **type of person** who is going to be asked – questions need be easy to understand and also easy to answer depending on the person who is answering.

**How the questionnaire is going to be taken?** – A face-to-face questionnaire might include different questions to an emailed questionnaire. An interviewer will be filling in a face-to-face questionnaire and the person may be able to ask for the question to be rephrased if they do not understand it the first time.

The types of questions that can be asked can be split into three groups:

**Simple yes/no answers** – e.g. have you seen the new advert for cornflakes

**Multiple choice** – a number of options are available to the answer

**Sliding scale** – a value is placed on an answer e.g. how do rate the performance of this product – less than satisfactory, satisfactory, excellent (or could use a scale of 1-10 with 10 being excellent and 1 being dreadful!).

Once the questionnaires are complete, the data is collated and analysed.