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# Research methodologies in communications and media studies

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**Abstract**---Research is the most important and significant part of acquiring knowledge. Academics just cannot stand and meet the aspirations of today's society without research. Historically too, research has been linked with human endeavor for the better understanding of the environment. This has led the development and growth through different stages of history in every field. Research is an essential tool to gather facts, opinion and information pertaining to a specified problem, situation or opportunity. Research in media focuses on the communication process and examines the relationships among the media organizations and the target audience. Media research focus is on the social and psychological aspects and effects of the different mass media. Its objective is to get information pertaining to different mass media like the amount of time people spend on a particular medium, the effects of various medium on the society, the content and presentation of information or the effectiveness of the programmers to the audience etc. Therefore, mass media have come to depend on research results for all the major decision they make. The increased demand for information has created a need for research and researchers in all the sectors both private and public.

**Keywords**---communication process, psychological aspect, qualitative research method, quantitative research methods.

**Significance of the subject**

- Media Research discovers the trends and bring out useful information in the field of mass media and communication
- Media research helps in making decisions with respect to the composition and analysis of news, views and information
- Research brings objectivity and accuracy in news reporting. A good story is always the outcome of research and investigation.

- Media Research is also used in conducting surveys, public opinion polls, advertising and public relation campaigns.

### **Nature of communications research**

Communications research undertakes the scientific study of communication process; being scientific, it is objective, deterministic and parsimonious. It is interdisciplinary in nature as it borrows heavily - both in terms of theory and methods - from social and behavioral sciences, viz., psychology, sociology and anthropology. In essence, it involves applications of social and behavioral science methods to the study of communication issues and problems.

### **Areas of communications research**

The scope of communications research may well be delineated by outlining the major areas of its investigation. It deals with the nature of the elements of communication and their inter-relationship in the process. The major elements which are common to most communication situations include: communicator (source); message (content); channel (medium); receiver and effect. These elements are identified by most of the models.' In the field of communication, there are three main research methodologies: quantitative, qualitative, and rhetorical. Research Methodology in Media- Media research methods are the practical procedures for carrying out a research project. These methods include content analysis, surveys, focus groups, experiments, and participant observation. Research methods generally involve either test subjects or analysis of media.

Qualitative research involves the use of qualitative data such as interviews, documents and participant observation data, to understand and explain social phenomena. Qualitative researchers can be found in many disciplines and fields, using a variety of approaches, methods and techniques. Qualitative Research methods were developed in the social sciences to enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena. Examples of qualitative methods are action research, case study research and ethnography. Qualitative data sources include observation and participant observation (field work), interviews and questionnaires, documents and texts and the researcher's impressions and reactions. Qualitative research methods are designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live. There are various qualitative research methods. A research method is a strategy of inquiry which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to research designed data collection.

- Action Research- Action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework.
- Case Study Research- Case study research used to describe a unit of analysis or to describe a research method. A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context.

- Ethnography – Ethnographic research comes from the discipline of social and cultural anthropology where an ethnographer is required to spend a significant amount of time in the field. Ethnographers immerse themselves in the lives of the people they study and seek to place the phenomena studied in their social and cultural context.
- Grounded Theory - Grounded Theory is a research method that seeks to develop theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed. Grounded theory is an inductive, theory discovery methodology that allows the researcher to develop a theoretical account of the general features of a topic while simultaneously grounding the account in empirical observations or data.

### **Mass media research**

If you use social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, go online or watch television, you are involved in mass media. And if you've ever said yes to an Internet prompt that asks if it is okay to collect your browsing history so they can better adapt the ads to suit your needs, then you are actively participating in mass media research. Put simply, mass media research is the study of information related to any form of mass communication. Mass media includes older forms, like newspaper and radio but now, more encompasses television and the Internet, and even more recently, social media. Newspapers and magazines are still considered mass media if they have a wide enough reach, so papers like the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal fall into that category.

### **Mass media research importance**

Many businesses are trying to target advertising, but some people are also concerned with the well-being of a very plugged-in society. Businesses study mass media to see which form of mass media produces the greater result for its advertisements. In contrast, from a public health standpoint, studies have been performed to see what kinds of effects depictions of violence can have on children. While the studies conducted do show correlations, the results have never been consistent with regard to their significance. Nevertheless, media companies have adopted a better-safe-than-sorry approach with a lot of their programming, primarily by limiting the amount of violence portrayed in programs that don't fall under the adults-only or adolescence-plus ratings. Thus, the purpose of mass media research is mainly for business purposes and for public health reasons.

When used for business purposes, mass media research is important, as it helps businesses figure out which forms of advertising work. Businesses want to see more sales, so mass media research for business focuses more on conversions, the number of people watching or reading a mass media form and then turning into customers. This is important, as the numbers found through mass media research helps the business decide whether a certain form of advertising is financially worth it. Mass media research for health and well-being reasons is important, as scientists are still learning about how technology is affecting people in both positive and negative ways. For example, with the increasingly prevalent use of smart phones, some scientists are concerned that the increased exposure to radiation will negatively impact people's health. This is something that

scientists are still trying to figure out through mass media research. Significance of media research in today's world:

Mass media plays a role in shaping people's preferences and shaping how they think about a situation, incident, product, or idea. There are various psychological, physical, and social effects of mass media on people all over India. As one of the leading market research firms worldwide, we believe that what you see is a reflection of either who you are or who you might turn out to be. So, there is a strong need to study the relationship between mass media channels and their audiences and analyze how they communicate with each other. This research study is called media research. It is a handy tool to understand how different forms of mass media, such as television, cinema, newspapers, magazines, and radio, meet the needs of people and entertain them.

Media research also includes studying the growth of these channels and their achievements and categorizing people based on what kind of content they have been consuming. It involves several aspects, such as the medium's nature, how it works and functions, technologies that make it what it is, similarities and differences between it and other media forms, services provided by it, its effectiveness, how it can be enhanced, and the cost associated with it. It is a market survey that allows you to evaluate data in an unbiased manner. So, media research is thorough and beneficial in many ways when it comes to understanding how your audience perceives your products or services and what aspects of it they like and what parts of it they want better. In fact, it is essential to manage and regulate media channels to deal with socio political or economic issues. Furthermore, since the decision process depends on the data you've, many survey companies provide media research services that are meant to be utilized in the long run, so it is incredibly useful in the growth phase as it also allows you to understand a media agency's competitors.

It also makes you gauge how much time someone is spending on a particular media form and how that media channel is affecting society. So, media research results play a huge role in helping various types of media forms with their significant decisions. Moreover, there is an enhanced demand for new and transparent information these days, as people long for transparency, which has actually enhanced the importance of media research and made it absolutely necessary for both the public and private sectors. Here are certain factors that reflect on the importance of media research in today's world:

- Gives useful information  
As one of the leading market research firms in India, the US, the UK, and other parts of the world, we believe that media research helps you understand and determine new trends and get valuable insights into the field of mass media and communication, which further enables you to determine how you can reach out to more people within a short span of time.
- Helps you frame news better  
A thorough media research study helps you understand how you can frame news better and make it more accessible to your target audience. It helps you with the analysis and composition of views, news, and data.

- Makes your story better and more accurate  
Thorough media research also helps you create more accurate and objectively apt stories. It is impossible to do so if your efforts are not directed towards investigating each aspect of a story.

And, here are the steps involved in an extensive media research study:

- Pick a problem.
- Go through currently existing research and theories that are relevant.
- Come up with well-articulated research questions and a hypothesis or hypotheses.
- Figure out an apt research design or algorithm and then gather relevant data.
- Conduct a thorough analysis of the results and determine their feasibility.
- Present those results in a structured format.
- Leverage the valuable insights of the study whenever it's required.
- Our range of media research services also includes campaign testing, advertising (ad) testing, and OTT platforms viewership.
- Campaign testing is basically the idea of experimenting for your marketing campaigns with a hypothesis and creating response files, which eventually leads to optimization in future.
- Ad testing is the process of running your ads in front of a sample target audience, in order to collect their valuable feedback, which helps to find out what aspects of your ads you need to fine-tune to make them more impactful.
- OTT viewership is an extensive study of content consumption on OTT platforms and trends related to it, in order to identify consumers' preferences and interests.
- Since media research is utilized to conduct a market survey, public opinion poll, or campaign, many survey companies opt for extensive media research to understand how they can get helpful facts, opinions, and information. So, if you want to know how media research is still significant, consume some content from channels you don't usually consume to realize how much some media forms lack transparency.

In the digital age, researchers find it increasingly a possibility – and thus an obligation – to maintain awareness of other research in one's field and to consider one's work within the context of other's work, wherever these researchers are geographically located. Through digital technology, researchers are increasing their evaluation not only relative to their home and national institutional peers, but also with respect to their peers around the world.

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