

16.5.6: Processing the Data

Processing the data obtained in a market survey involves transforming the information obtained into a report to be used by management. Four steps are involved: (1) editing the data; (2) tabulating the data; (3) interpreting the data; and (4) presenting the report. If, in the anticipation of the results of the survey, the procedures for handling the data have been set forth and the form of the final report conceived, these final four steps in the research procedure may be quite mechanical. A good plan for the analysis and interpretation of the data is of immense assistance in bringing a project to a successful conclusion, but it should never limit the kinds of interpretations that eventually are made or restrict the content of the final report.

The final report of a marketing research study should ordinarily be written. Since vast amounts of data often are involved, the written report is the only appropriate method of presenting these findings. The written report also has the advantage of being permanent, thus permitting management to study the findings carefully and to refer to them in the future. Unfortunately, many marketing research projects are never translated into management action—sometimes because the research conclusions do not directly contribute to the solution of the problem, sometimes because the report is too technical and difficult to understand, and sometimes because the report writer has not offered specific suggestions as to how the report should be translated into management strategy.

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