

## Definition of Consumer Research

The discipline of consumer research has its roots in marketing research. There are two paradigms of consumer research – qualitative and quantitative. While qualitative deals with consumer insights in a visual form or in words, quantitative is primarily number driven. Some researchers now use both these techniques together to get more accurate insights. The consumer research process focuses on defining the research problem, conducting exploratory and evaluation, conclusive research design and qualitative and data collection, analysis, and report.



# **The Consumer Research Process**

- **Six steps**
  - defining the objectives of the research
  - collecting and evaluating secondary data
  - designing a primary research study
  - collecting primary data
  - analyzing the data
  - preparing a report on the findings



# **Developing Research Objectives**

- Defining purposes and objectives helps ensure an appropriate research design.
- A statement of objectives helps to define the type and level of information needed.



# Secondary Versus Primary Data

- **Secondary data:** data that has been collected for reasons other than the specific research project at hand
- **Primary data:** data collected by the researcher for the purpose of meeting specific objectives





# **Quantitative Research**

- Descriptive in nature.
- Enables marketers to “predict” consumer behavior.
- Research methods include experiments, survey techniques, and observation.
- Findings are descriptive, empirical and generalizable.



# **Positivism**

A consumer behavior research approach that regards the consumer behavior discipline as an applied marketing science.



# Observational Research

- Helps marketers gain an in-depth understanding of the relationship between people and products by watching them buying and using products.
- Helps researchers gain a better understanding of what the product symbolizes.
- Widely used by interpretivist researchers.



# Qualitative Research

- Consists of depth interviews, focus groups, metaphor analysis, collage research, and projective techniques.
- Administered by highly trained interviewer-analysts.
- Findings tend to be subjective.
- Small sample sizes.



## **Interpretivism**

A postmodernist approach to the study of consumer behavior that focuses on the act of consuming rather than on the act of buying.



**Table 2.2 Comparisons between Positivism and Interpretivism**

**PURPOSE**

<b>Positivism</b>	<b>Interpretivism</b>
Prediction of consumer actions	Understanding consumption practices

**METHODOLOGY**

<b>Positivism</b>	<b>Interpretivism</b>
Quantitative	Quantitative



## Table 2.2 continued

### ASSUMPTIONS

#### Positivism

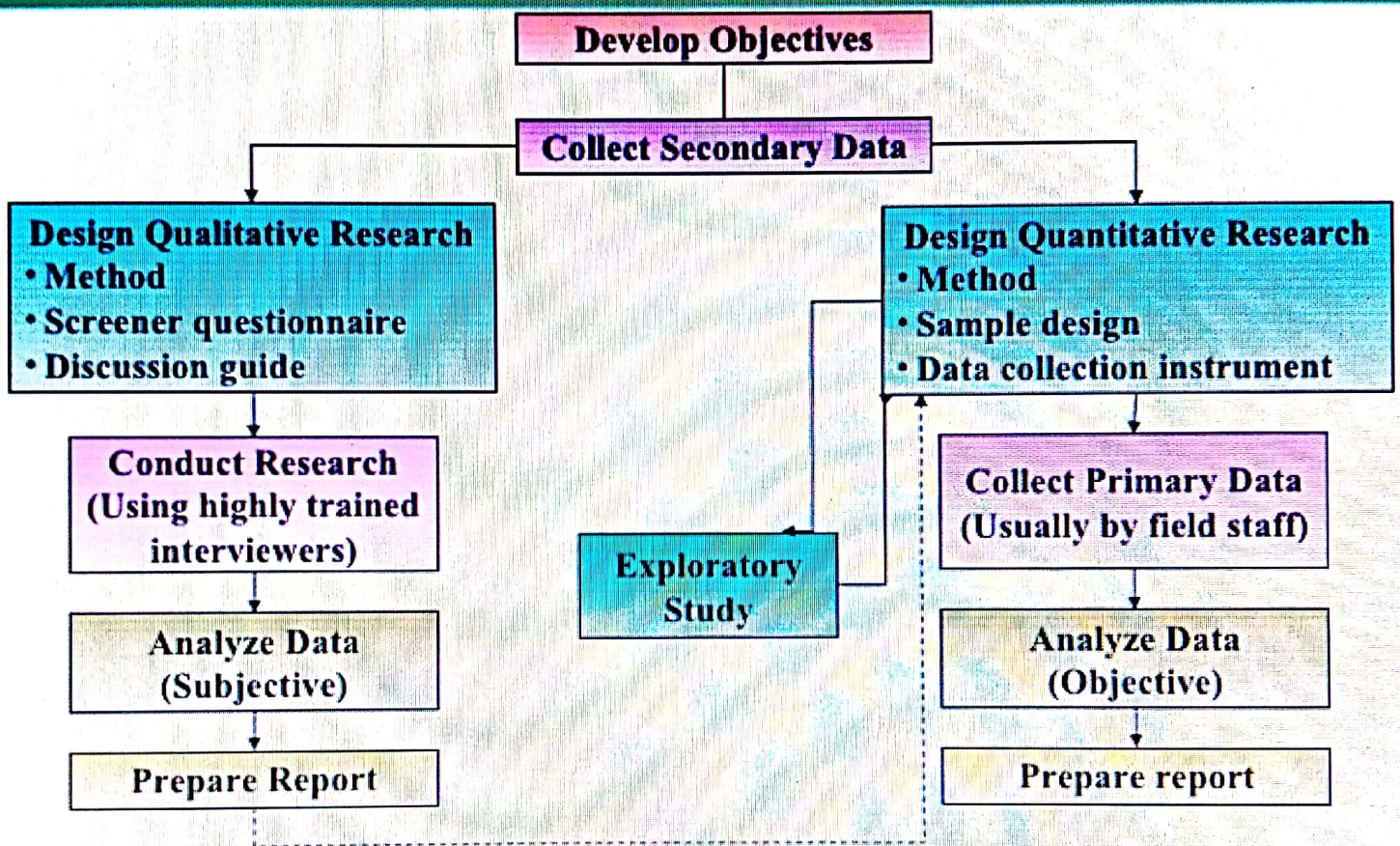
- Rationality; consumers make decisions after weighing alternatives
- The causes and effects of behavior can be identified
- Individuals are problem solvers
- A single reality exists
- Events can be objectively measured

#### Interpretivism

- No single, objective truth
- Reality is subjective
- Cause and effect cannot be isolated
- Each consumption experience is unique
- Researcher/respondent interactions affect research findings



## Figure 2.1 The Consumer Research Process





**Table 2.2 Major Sources of Secondary Data**

Government Publications	Periodicals & Books
Internal Sources	Commercial Data



# Data Collection Methods



Observation

Experimentation

Surveys



# Experimentation

- Can be used to test the relative sales appeal of many types of variables.
- Only one variable is manipulated at a time, keeping other elements constant.
- Can be conducted in laboratories or in the field.



# Survey Data Collection Methods

Personal Interview

Mail

Telephone

Online



**Table 2.4 Comparative Advantages**

	<b>MAIL</b>	<b>TELEPHONE</b>	<b>PERSONAL INTERVIEW</b>	<b>ONLINE</b>
<b>Cost</b>	Low	Moderate	High	Low
<b>Speed</b>	Slow	Immediate	Slow	Fast
<b>Response rate</b>	Low	Moderate	High	Self- selection
<b>Geographic flexibility</b>	Excellent	Good	Difficult	Excellent
<b>Interviewer bias</b>	N/A	Moderate	Problematic	N/A
<b>Interviewer supervision</b>	N/A	Easy	Difficult	N/A
<b>Quality of response</b>	Limited	Limited	Excellent	Excellent



# **Qualitative Data Collection Methods**

Depth Interviews

Focus  
Groups

Projective  
Techniques

Metaphor  
Analysis