

### SELECTED RESEARCH METHODS: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Surveys	Mail: Low cost; ability to show text and graphics Telephone: Moderate cost; ability to screen select respondents meeting desired criteria Mall intercept: Able to reach more potential respondents; able to pre-screen respondents for desired criteria Online: Conditional branching, fast, limited data entry	Mail: Slow; low response rate Telephone: Cannot show stimuli; can only ask a limited number of questions; question answer options have to be repeated Mall intercept: More expensive than most other survey research (but less costly than focus groups and experiments). Online: Respondents often fail to read instructions
Experimentation	Able to eliminate extraneous influences and identify causes of choice and/or behavior	Expensive; difficult to set up; limited information collected in one setting
Observation	Consumer is in natural environment	Cannot get at consumer's thoughts; labor intensive and expensive
Focus groups	Flexible method to gauge consumer response to entirely new products and questions; issues of interest to respondents can be identified without specific prior knowledge of specific questions to ask	Expensive; unable to generalize from small sample size; respondents are vulnerable to social influence so that answers are not independent. <b>NOTE THAT THE TEXTBOOK SAYS THAT FOCUS GROUP COSTS ARE LOW. THIS IS <u>NOT</u> THE CASE FOR LARGE BUSINESSES THAT USE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES.</b>
In-depth interviews	Able to explore consumer feelings in depth; more independent than focus groups	Expensive; small sample size; unable to generalize
Projective techniques	Useful in assessing topics about which respondents are not comfortable talking or motivations of which they may not be consciously aware.	Cumbersome
Physiological Measures	Able to pinpoint responses to stimuli over time (and thus identify good and bad parts of ads); able to gauge feelings of which respondents may not be aware	Expensive; cumbersome
Online research	Able to take advantage of existing data (e.g., search engine queries; click stream sequences); conditional branching; able to customize questions; recording is usually automatic; often fast	Lack of respondent willingness to follow instructions; concerns about privacy; possible response bias toward those more technically savvy
Scanner data	Able to identify which variables (e.g., sales, shelf placement, coupons) affect behaviors such as purchase, brand switching	Access to data may be expensive; does not get at opinions, attitudes, and feelings underlying behavior. <b>GENERALLY ONLY AVAILABLE FOR FREQUENTLY PURCHASED ITEMS; MOSTLY "GROCERY"—E.G., FOOD, PAPER TOWELS, SOAP.</b>