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This paper combines both the academic and the practitioner perspectives to highlight several emerging issues and trends that are shaping the role of marketing research. These include a redefinition of the marketing researcher, the ongoing nature of marketing research, secondary data, data collection, qualitative research, quantitative research, international marketing research, internet marketing research, marketing research and social media, ethical issues, and marketing research in emerging economies. We also emphasise the need for marketing research to earn a seat at the table for decision-making.

In this age of globalisation, internet connectivity and social media, marketing research or market research as it is also called is becoming more and more important as companies face intense competition. Due to technological advances, particularly the diffusion of digital technologies and communication devices, marketing research has developed more flexible and innovative methods to capture and process the voice of the consumer. Marketing research is changing in several fundamental ways; some of the emerging issues and trends include the following (Malhotra & Peterson 2001).

- Marketing researchers will participate more and more in marketing decision making, while marketing managers will participate more and more in marketing research. The line of demarcation between researchers and managers will become thinner and thinner, and ultimately will all but disappear. There will be movement of personnel in and out of marketing research to marketing management, and vice versa (Malhotra 2010).

- More and more marketing research will be undertaken as an ongoing business operation rather than in response to specific marketing problems or opportunities. Marketing research will become integrated with the decision support system.

- More marketing research problems will be addressed based on secondary data alone. The building of large databases that combine internal customer data with information available externally will be increasingly rewarding, enabling increased use of database marketing, leading to effective and efficient marketing strategies.

- Data collection will be guided by the availability and willingness of the respondents to participate and the need to reduce the data collection demands imposed on the respondents.

- More interpretive research methodologies (such as ethnography and grounded theory) will be employed. The analysis of qualitative data will become more sophisticated with increased use of computer software.

- Quantitative data analysis will make greater use of artificial intelligence procedures such as artificial neural networks and genetic algorithms. Sophisticated techniques, such as latent class analysis and structural equation modelling that have so far seen limited application in commercial marketing research, will increasingly be used.

- The growth of international marketing research will continue to outpace the growth of domestic research. The use of international secondary data and the collection of primary

data in multi-country/region projects will increase. The emergence of transnational market segments will lead to greater standardisation as well as sophistication of international marketing research procedures. For example, sampling methods used in cross-national studies will increase in sophistication, leading to greater use of probability techniques.

- The internet will be used more and more to conduct all forms of research (exploratory, descriptive and causal). It will become an increasingly important source of internal and external secondary data, qualitative research, survey research and experimentation.

- The use of social media as a domain to conduct marketing research will grow. The current challenges faced in collecting and analysing social media data will be overcome soon. Social media research will supplement rather than replace traditional marketing research (Malhotra 2012).

- Ethical conflicts between client and researcher will become less of a concern as the two form long-term partnerships rather than ad hoc project-based relationships. Ethical issues pertaining to the respondents will take centre stage. Greater attention will be paid to the rights, privacy concerns and welfare of respondents. Codes of ethical marketing research conduct will receive greater emphasis and prominence.

- The growth of marketing research undertaken for emerging economies will exceed the growth rate in developed economies. This is consistent with the greater growth rate in gross domestic product of the emerging countries. Moreover, the level of sophistication of marketing research in emerging economies will increase greatly and match that of research conducted in developed countries.

Marketing researchers should harness these trends to greatly enhance the value of marketing research and earn a place at the table where managers make decisions. This would address the current under-utilisation of marketing research because many managers don't include researchers as part of their decision-making sessions (Malhotra *et al.* 2006). To increase the value added, the researcher needs to understand the current context for decision makers and go beyond presenting 'just the facts' with a lot of detail. Instead, they must strive to synthesise or grasp the insights and larger meanings emerging from their analyses. A valuable concept for understanding how to increase the impact of marketing research is the Information Value Chain. This concept proposes that there is a progression in value for the manager as data are rendered into information, and then into knowledge, then into decisions and finally into what is needed to implement the decision. If researchers adopt the Information Value Chain, they will be the only junior people in the organisation invited to the table when senior managers meet with the CEO.

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