

INFORMATION GATHERING.

Definition:

Information gathering is the process of collecting information from various sources. These sources can be books, journals not forgetting , the internet . There are various techniques, ways and processes that can be employed for information gathering to be achieved. This is as will be discussed below.

INFORMATION GATHERING TECHNIQUES.

These are tools used to collect information. The parameters used are for various purposes such as enhancing accurate and effective information. These are :

a) **QUESTIONNAIRES.** These are a list of questions with gaps left to be filled after data collection , normally written on paper . The questionnaires are distributed to a number of people or participants , then , after carrying out their research they write their findings as per the questions.

There are two types of questionnaires; open-ended and close-ended questionnaires. Open-ended questionnaires are those that not restricted to that topic in question , the observer can add other essential information while close-ended are questionnaires that are restricted to only that topic in discussion.

b) **SURVEYS.** In this 21st century, technology has risen tremendously . A large number of people are in the social media platforms globally . A survey is how people rate a particular subject in question as poor, good, very good or excellent. With the help of social media , now the surveys can reach a lot of people as advertisements , especially in YouTube and thus they can rate the information and how they see it. This will make the observer draw conclusions.

c) **INTERVIEWS.** This is a chit-chat or rather an interrogation of an individual or a group of people either face-to-face or through social media platforms concerning that particular information being gathered. The interviewer must know the age of the interviewee and the language used mostly by them to avoid language barrier. This also builds a connection between them thus the interviewee will be more comfortable hence free to talk and express himself or herself more.

d) **OBSERVATION.** Observing means that a party sees keenly and learn the behaviours of the environment of the information being gathered. The environment can be hostile or calm hence he or she can tell how the people in that surrounding carry themselves thus learning and articulating the information needed. However, the observer should be very careful not to be biased especially in harsh environment since the information gathered will be inaccurate and this might distort that information.

e) Another technique is by putting a number of people of the same characteristics, whether age, personality, ethnicity, together into groups to carry out their research then to come up with their conclusion. The research should be extensive in order for them to relay accurate information.

PROCESS OF GATHERING INFORMATION.

This process of gathering information are sequential, meaning the steps are tied. These steps are as follows:

- a) The party gathering information should define and give reasons for gathering that information. This will help the community or people to understand and be willing to engage themselves in that particular research. It will give the researcher an ample time and thus easy time in gathering the said information.
- b) The researcher should know the source to gather information from. This is according to the type of information needed. From there he or she articulates that information and relay it when it is supposed to.
- c) Having a research plan is very important in the field of gathering information. It will save a lot of time since the researcher knows where and when to carry out the research. This is achieved by setting realistic goals. Furthermore, having a research plan makes one to concentrate in carrying out the task.
- d) Everything being set, findings have been found. The researcher collects information and preserve it awaiting to relay the data collected. He or she ensures the findings are true and accurate.
- e) Reviewing that the findings found is accurate. Being a researcher, no information is relayed till verified that it's true. The information is perused repeatedly until the researcher is at a satisfaction that it is true and accurate.
- f) Then the researcher comes at a conclusion of articulating and organizing his or her work. The information is organized in a manner that the people will understand. Furthermore, this helps the researcher to relay information easily without confusion since the data have now been reduced to be less cumbersome, processed now into information.
- g) The researcher comes into a conclusion and finally communicating to the people about the information he or she has gathered. This is after his or her satisfaction about the information with little or no drawbacks. The information is relayed in various forms and nowadays social media platforms have come in hand making it much easier and delivered to a large number of people.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF INFORMATION GATHERING.

Everything has its own pros and cons and information gathering is not left behind.

ADVANTAGES.

- a) Builds a bond with the people in your field of study. This will make them more comfortable hence one will receive much information as needed.
- b) It creates job opportunity. Most people are busy nowadays and can't do research on their own due to limited time thus employs someone to do that particular task for them hence, saves life.
- c) It creates awareness to people. In the process of doing your research, the researcher also educates people. For example to the communities who still practise Female Genital Mutilation, while doing their research as why they are still practising, they can tell them the risks and dangers a girl is being exposed to when subjected to FGM.
- d) It boosts confidence. One can carry out research to a large number of people hence he or she has to be brave to articulate the information in relay it in an excellent manner.
- e) It sharpens one's brain. Research is a process and it makes one to be alert and concentrate in that particular task. He or she does the research, analyzes the information, comes into conclusion and finally relaying the information, brain being at work.

DISADVANTAGES

- a) It wastes a lot of time. Every researcher should undergo all the steps while carrying out the research thus time consuming to come up with an accurate information.
- b) Information can be distorted in the process. This is especially in a harsh environment where the safety of the researcher is not guaranteed. He or she opts to guess his or her findings to be safe thus inaccurate information being relayed.
- c) The researcher can be biased. This is especially during an interview with a particular group of people whom he or she is familiar with. The outcome is that information relayed will be false.

However, information gathering is an important tool in the communication industry hence should be carried out effectively to increase durability of the information being relayed.