

Research Methods in Business Studies

This accessible guide provides clear and practical explanations of key research methods in business studies, presenting a step-by-step approach to data collection, analysis, and problem solving. Readers will learn how to formulate a research question or problem, choose an appropriate research method, argue and motivate, collect and analyse data and present findings in a logical and convincing manner. The authors evaluate various qualitative and quantitative methods and the consequences of their use, guiding readers to a deep understanding of the most appropriate research design for particular questions. Furthermore, the authors provide instructions on how to write reports and dissertations in a clearly structured and concise style. Now in its fifth edition, this popular textbook includes new and dedicated chapters on data collection for qualitative research, qualitative data analysis, data collection for quantitative research, multiple regression, and additional methods of quantitative analysis. In addition, cases and examples have been updated throughout, increasing the applicability of these research methods across various situations.

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Research Methods in Business Studies

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Contents

List of Figures	<i>page</i> xii
List of Tables	xiv
Preface	xv
Acknowledgements	xviii
Part I Challenges and Ambiguities of Business Research	1
1 Introduction	3
1.1 Purpose of the Book	3
1.2 Readership	5
1.3 On the Use of the Book	7
2 Research in Business Studies	8
2.1 The Nature of Knowledge Development	9
2.2 Why We Do Research	10
2.3 Research versus Common Sense	12
2.4 Different Research Orientations	16
2.5 Induction, Deduction, and Abduction	18
2.6 What Comes First: Theory or Data?	21
2.7 Knowledge Skills and Research	22
2.8 Why Research Never Stops	23
2.9 Research and Ethics	23
2.10 The Researcher and the Respondent	25
2.11 The Researcher's Moral Responsibility	27
Further Reading	30
Questions	30
Exercises	30
Part II The Research Process	31
3 The Research Process	33
3.1 The Process Perspective	33
3.2 Levels of Research	36
3.3 Research and Knowledge	37

3.4	What Comes First: Theory or Research?	38
3.5	Some Important Issues	39
3.5.1	Concepts	39
3.5.2	Definitions	39
3.5.3	Theory	41
3.5.4	Methods	42
3.6	Concluding Remarks	43
	Further Reading	44
	Questions	44
	Exercises	44
4	Research Problems	45
4.1	Research Ideas	45
4.2	Wrestling with Research Problems	47
4.3	Research Problem and Research Purpose	50
4.4	Models in Research	52
4.4.1	General Concepts and Specific Use	53
4.4.2	Model Purposes	54
4.5	The Role of Reviewing Past Literature	57
	Further Reading	60
	Questions	60
	Exercises	60
5	Research Design	61
5.1	The Design Problem	61
5.2	Problem Structure and Research Design	62
5.2.1	Exploratory Research	63
5.2.2	Descriptive Research	64
5.2.3	Causal Research	64
5.3	The Classic Experiment	66
5.4	Validity Threats	67
5.5	Other Research Designs	71
5.5.1	Cross-Section Data	71
5.5.2	Time-Series Data	72
5.5.3	Longitudinal Studies	73
5.5.4	Panel Data	73
5.6	Requirements in Research Design	74
5.6.1	Research and Choices	76
	Further Reading	77
	Questions	77
	Exercises	77

6	Measurements	78
6.1	The Operationalization of Variables	78
6.2	Scales of Measurement	81
6.2.1	Nominal Level (Scale)	81
6.2.2	Ordinal Level (Scale)	82
6.2.3	Interval Level (Scale)	82
6.2.4	Ratio Scale	83
6.3	Construct Measurement Using Multi-Item Scales	83
6.4	The Reliability and Validity of Measurements	85
6.5	Improving Your Measurements	87
6.6	Measurements in Qualitative Research	88
Further Reading		91
Questions		91
Exercises		91
Part III Implementation		93
7	Data Collection for Qualitative Research	95
7.1	Qualitative versus Quantitative Methods	96
7.2	Different Qualitative Methods and When to Use Them	98
7.2.1	Historical Review	99
7.2.2	Grounded Theory	100
7.2.3	Case Studies	101
	What Is a Case Study?	101
	When to Use a Case Study	103
	Preparing for a Case Study	104
	How to Select the Cases	106
	Sampling in Qualitative Research	108
	Theoretical Sampling	110
	Different Types of Case Study Design	110
7.3	Observations	111
7.4	Communication	114
7.5	Interviews	115
7.5.1	Preparing for an Interview	117
7.5.2	Pre-Interview	120
7.5.3	The Interview	121
7.5.4	Post-Interview	123
7.6	Focus Groups	124
7.6.1	Advantages and Disadvantages of Focus Groups	126
		126
7.6.2	Conducting Focus Groups	126

Further Reading	128
Questions	128
Exercises	128
8 Qualitative Data Analysis	129
8.1 Characteristics of Qualitative Research	129
8.2 Qualitative Data	130
8.3 Analytical Procedures	131
8.3.1 Analytical Activities	134
8.3.2 Data Reduction	139
8.4 Interpretation	139
8.5 Strategies for Qualitative Analysis	140
8.5.1 Departure from Theory	140
8.5.2 Departure from Data (Observations)	142
8.5.3 Analysing Case Studies	142
8.6 Quantifying Qualitative Data	143
8.7 Validity in Qualitative Research	146
8.8 The Use of Computers in Qualitative Research	146
8.8.1 A Word of Warning	147
8.9 Case Studies and Triangulation	147
8.10 Case Studies and Generalization	150
Further Reading	152
Questions	152
Exercises	152
9 Data Collection for Quantitative Research	153
9.1 Secondary Data	154
9.1.1 The Advantages of Secondary Data	158
9.1.2 The Disadvantages of Secondary Data	158
9.2 Primary Data	159
9.2.1 The Advantages of Primary Data	160
9.2.2 The Disadvantages of Primary Data	160
9.3 Why Take Samples?	161
9.4 Probability Sampling	163
9.4.1 Simple Random Sampling	163
9.4.2 Systematic Sampling	164
9.4.3 Stratified Random Sampling	164
9.4.4 Cluster Sampling	164
9.4.5 Non-Response Bias	165
9.5 Non-Probability Sampling	166

9.6 Sample Size	168
9.7 Survey Research	169
9.7.1 Survey Administration	171
9.7.2 Questionnaire Design	172
9.7.3 Guidelines for Constructing Questionnaires	175
9.7.4 Improving Response Rates	178
9.8 Experimental Studies	179
Further Reading	181
Questions	181
Exercises	181
10 Description and Preliminary Analysis of Quantitative Data	182
10.1 How to Describe the Data	183
10.1.1 Bar Charts, Histograms, and Scatter Plots	183
10.1.2 Measures of Central Tendency	187
10.1.3 Measures of Dispersion	188
10.1.4 Measures of Skewness	190
10.2 How to Analyse the Data	191
10.2.1 Hypothesis Testing	191
10.2.2 Comparison of Means (Independent Samples)	195
10.2.3 Comparison of Means (Paired Samples)	197
10.2.4 Correlation Coefficient (Continuous Variables)	199
10.2.5 Correlation Coefficient (Ordinal Variables)	204
10.2.6 Correlations between Nominal and/or Ordinal Variables	206
10.3 The Use of Computers in Quantitative Research	206
Further Reading	208
Questions	208
Exercises	208
11 Multiple Regression	210
11.1 The Determinants of Export Performance	211
11.2 The Regression Model	212
11.2.1 Operationalization of the Variables	213
11.2.2 Functional Form	215
The Linear Relationship	215
The Semi-Logarithmic Relationship	216
The Quadratic Relationship	217
11.2.3 Time Lags	219
11.3 Estimation Methodology	219
11.3.1 OLS Estimation	220

11.3.2	The Coefficient of Determination	221
11.3.3	The Assumptions Underpinning OLS Estimation	223
	The Omission of Relevant Explanatory Variables	224
	Multicollinearity	226
11.3.4	The Residual Plot	228
11.3.5	Estimation Methodology with Nominal or Ordinal Dependent Variables	230
11.4	Hypothesis Testing	231
11.4.1	Testing for the Significance of Individual Regression Coefficients	231
11.4.2	Testing for the Joint Significance of Several Explanatory Variables	232
11.4.3	Testing for Common Method Variance	234
11.4.4	Statistical Significance and Effect Sizes	234
11.5	The Determinants of Export Performance Redux	236
11.6	What Constitutes a Good Regression Model?	239
	Further Reading	241
	Questions	241
	Exercises	241
12	Additional Methods of Quantitative Analysis	243
12.1	Factor Analysis	243
	12.1.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis	244
	12.1.2 An Example of Factor Analysis: Burnout on Oil Rigs	246
12.2	Structural Equation Modelling	247
	12.2.1 Estimation of Structural Equation Models	250
	12.2.2 An Example of Structural Equation Modelling: Green Innovation	252
12.3	Event Studies	253
	12.3.1 The Estimation Procedure	254
	12.3.2 The Applicability of Event Studies	256
	12.3.3 An Example of an Event Study: Cross-Border Acquisitions	258
12.4	Final Comments	259
	Further Reading	261
	Questions	261
	Exercises	261
13	Cross-Cultural Research	262
13.1	The International Dimension	262

13.2 Data Collection in Some Cross-Cultural Research	265
13.3 Collecting Cross-Cultural Data	267
13.4 Analysis of Cross-Cultural Data	270
13.5 Enhancing Trustworthiness of Cross-Cultural Research	273
Further Reading	275
Questions	275
Exercises	275
14 Writing the Final Report	276
14.1 Purpose and Importance of a Written Presentation	276
14.2 Guidelines	277
14.2.1 Audience	277
14.2.2 Good Communication	278
14.2.3 Language and Flow	279
14.2.4 Form and Style	280
14.2.5 Headings	281
14.3 Structure of the Report	281
14.3.1 Title Page	282
14.3.2 Table of Contents	282
14.3.3 Executive Summary	282
14.3.4 Introduction and Problem Statement	283
14.3.5 Theoretical Background	283
14.3.6 Methodology	284
14.3.7 Findings	284
14.3.8 Conclusions	285
14.3.9 Footnotes	286
14.3.10 Bibliography and References	287
14.4 Oral Presentation	288
14.5 Writing for Publication	290
Further Reading	292
Questions	292
Exercises	292
Appendix A: Sample of Manufacturing Firms, 2018	293
Appendix B: Simple Comparative Tests	299
Appendix C: Formulae	300
References	302
Index	319



Figures

2.1	Theory or data as starting point	<i>page</i> 22
2.2	The wheel of research	24
2.3	Factors influencing research	29
3.1	The research process	34
3.2	From research topic to research problem	35
3.3	Two levels of research	37
3.4	Production and use of theory	38
3.5	Example	41
3.6	Use of methods	42
4.1	Problem, methods, and research practice	50
4.2	Organizational chart (a model)	54
5.1	The classic experiment	69
6.1	Responses and sense-making	89
7.1	Quantitative and qualitative methods and techniques	98
7.2	Number of firms in the US transistor industry	100
7.3	The data structure	102
7.4	A process model for case research	105
7.5	Basic design for case studies	110
7.6	Choices for collecting primary data through observations	112
7.7	A typology of interviews	115
7.8	Steps in conducting a focus group	127
8.1	Components of data analysis: interactive model	132
8.2	Problem recognition – raw materials (last purchase)	141
8.3	Case study research: theory building and theory testing	151
9.1	Planning a survey	170
9.2	An example of an open question	172
9.3	An example of a category question	173
9.4	An example of a multiple-choice question	174
9.5	An example of a ranking question	174
9.6	An example of a rating question	175
10.1	Distribution of firm sizes by region	184
10.2	Distribution of firm sizes by sector	184
10.3	Symmetric and skewed distributions	186

10.4	Scatter plot of export intensity against firm size	187
10.5	Strong and weak correlations	201
11.1a	A positive linear relationship	215
11.1b	A negative linear relationship	216
11.2a	A positive semi-logarithmic relationship	217
11.2b	A negative semi-logarithmic relationship	217
11.3a	A U-shaped relationship	218
11.3b	An inverse U-shaped relationship	218
11.4	The sample regression line	221
11.5	The relationship between fire damage and firefighter numbers	225
11.6	A residual plot from a correctly specified regression model	228
11.7	A residual plot showing an incorrectly specified model	229
11.8	Residual plots indicating heteroskedasticity	229
11.9	Scatter plot of the residuals from the OLS regression of export performance	239
12.1	A path diagram for structural equation modelling	249
12.2	PLS-SEM estimation of green innovation	253
12.3	The time line for event studies	255
12.4	Share price reactions to earnings announcements	257
13.1	Managing the international dimension in the research process	263
13.2	Steps in operationalizing emic and etic approaches	269
13.3	Defining the unit of analysis	271
13.4	Cross-country data analysis	272
13.5	Ensuring equivalence in cross-cultural research	274
14.1	An example of a table of contents	283



Tables

2.1	Different research orientations	<i>page</i> 18
2.2	Ethical issues in the researcher–participant relationship	26
5.1	Cross-table	65
5.2	Reading of advertisement and purchase	71
5.3	A cross-sectional design	72
5.4	A time-series design	72
5.5	A panel design	74
6.1	Example of the operationalization of nominal variables	82
6.2	Example of the operationalization of ordinal variables	83
6.3	Summary of scales of measurement	84
7.1	The difference in emphasis in qualitative versus quantitative methods	97
7.2	Strategies for case selection	109
7.3	Different qualitative approaches	112
8.1	An example of a matrix display in case study analysis	133
8.2	Concept list	144
8.3	The advantages of using NVivo in IB research	148
9.1	Selected publicly available secondary data sources	155
9.2	Selected commercially available secondary data sources	157
10.1	Summary statistics for the sample of 100 manufacturing firms	188
10.2	Summary statistics for two sub-samples of manufacturing firms	189
10.3	Decision criterion for the skewness coefficient	191
10.4	Possible errors in hypothesis testing	193
10.5	Comparison of firm export intensities by sector	196
10.6	Correlation matrix	199
11.1	OLS estimation of the export performance model	237
12.1	Example of exploratory factor analysis: job-related burnout	248



Preface

We are very pleased to present the fifth edition of our book on research methods. The first edition of this book, published in 1995, received considerable recognition and attention, mainly from scholars in the United Kingdom, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands.

The second, third, and fourth editions, published in 2002, 2005, and 2010, were used in several American and Asian schools, in addition to many European schools, and have been translated into several languages, such as Chinese, Portuguese, and Estonian. The fourth edition in particular was widely praised for its direct and concrete approach to research methods not only for business studies but also for social sciences in general. Over the past fifteen years, we personally received many positive comments on the accessibility and directness of the text from our colleagues and the students who used it. But at the same time, we also received a lot of feedback on what was missing from the book and valuable input on how it could be improved.

About a year ago we approached Cambridge University Press about a possible fifth edition and at that time we started a more systematic collection of comments from colleagues who have been using the book. The publisher also sent the fourth edition to ten anonymous reviewers and asked for their comments as to the strong and weak points of the book and their recommendations as to how it could be improved. We have thus received an abundance of comments on the previous editions, how the book should be improved, and what a fifth edition should include. In this respect, we would like to thank the following colleagues for their valuable advice and comments: Jose-Pla Barber, Peter Buckley, Tamer Cavusgil, Agnieszka Chidlow, Jeremy Clegg, Ulf Elg, Philippe Gugler, Amjad Hadjikhani, Maria Karafyllia, Saba Khalid, Jorma Larimo, Jean-Paul Lemaire, Leigh Anne Liu, Ulrike Mayrhofer, Niin Nummmela, Rebecca Piekkari, Stefan Schmid, Rudolf Sinkovics, Veronika Tarnovskaya, and Sari Wahyuni.

Following the comments from the above-mentioned colleagues, we have worked on the fifth edition and have considerably changed and, hopefully, improved it. Not only have we replaced and added three new chapters and about 50 pages of new text, we have also reorganized the whole book. It is now divided into three parts: (I) Challenges and Ambiguities of Business

Research, (II) The Research Process, and (III) Implementation. We have made the language and approach more neutral and have provided additional examples in almost all the sections. We have also invited a third co-author, Professor Roger Strange, for his 25+ years of experience in teaching research methods, particularly quantitative methods.

This fifth edition has therefore been thoroughly reworked and reorganized and now has clear guidelines for doing qualitative and quantitative research. This approach is considered useful for students as they can go directly to parts that are relevant to them. We have made several additions to the qualitative and quantitative data analysis sections and how researchers can make their research more trustworthy and reliable. Moreover, new sections have been added on ontological and epistemological considerations while doing research.

Part III provides concrete guidelines for designing and conducting quantitative and qualitative research, the two most commonly used research methods in our field. We first discuss these two types of research method and explain which type is more appropriate for which type of research question. Then, qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis are dealt with in separate chapters, instead of covering both in the same chapters, as was done in the fourth edition. Special attention has been given to international and cross-cultural business research, and the sections on ethical issues have been expanded. A number of examples have been added to make the text more accessible and easy to understand. The last chapter gives section-by-section guidelines for report writing depending on the purpose of the report.

A number of new features have been introduced. (1) Boxed examples provide illustrations and help make the book readable to students without a considerable background in statistics. (2) At the end of each chapter, a short list of further reading has been provided for those researchers who want to pursue their research using statistical/qualitative methods. These may be particularly useful to teachers and students who want to probe deeper into a particular topic. These additional readings have been selected with great care to present a balanced and up-to-date view (classical as well as new perspectives) on the different issues discussed in a particular chapter. (3) More questions are posed at the end of each chapter. These can be used to test the reader's knowledge and could also be used as exam questions. (4) There are exercises at the end of each chapter to encourage discussion and debate in the class.

We believe the fifth edition is more comprehensive and better structured, but still to the point and focused, and provides a set of guidelines for research methods in business studies.

We take this opportunity to thank our families who afford us time and stimulate us in these endeavours. Diletta Pegoraro, Emily Pickering, and Saad Ghauri deserve our special thanks for helping us in preparing the manuscript and for typing and retyping several versions of the book. Finally, we are grateful to Valerie Appleby at Cambridge University Press, for her enthusiasm for this project, her professional help, and for sending us encouraging emails to finish the manuscript on time.

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