

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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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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Tables

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