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Business Research Methods

A South-Asian Perspective

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Business Research Methods

A South-Asian Perspective

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BRIEF CONTENTS

Preface, xv

Part 1 Introduction, 1

1. The Role of Business Research, 2
2. Information Systems and Knowledge Management, 18
3. Theory Building, 38
4. The Business Research Process: An Overview, 52
5. The Human Side of Business Research: Organizational and Ethical Issues, 86

Part 2 Beginning Stages of the Research Process, 115

6. Problem Definition: The Foundation of Business Research, 116
7. Qualitative Research Tools, 142
8. Secondary Data Research in a Digital Age, 174

Part 3 Research Methods for Collecting Primary Data, 199

9. Survey Research: An Overview, 200
10. Survey Research: Communicating with Respondents, 224
11. Observation Methods, 258
12. Experimental Research, 276

Part 4 Measurement Concepts, 311

13. Measurement and Scaling Concepts, 312
14. Attitude Measurement, 336
15. Questionnaire Design, 358

Part 5 Sampling and Fieldwork, 413

16. Sampling Designs and Sampling Procedures, 414
17. Determination of Sample Size: A Review of Statistical Theory, 442
18. Fieldwork, 474

Part 6 Data Analysis and Presentation, 491

19. Editing and Coding: Transforming Raw Data into Information, 492
20. Basic Data Analysis: Descriptive Statistics, 516
21. Univariate Statistical Analysis, 538
22. Bivariate Statistical Analysis: Differences Between Two Variables, 560
23. Bivariate Statistical Analysis: Measures of Association, 590
24. Multivariate Statistical Analysis, 616
25. Communicating Research Results: Report Generation, Oral Presentation, and Follow-Up, 672

Part 7 Comprehensive Cases with Computerized Databases, 695

Appendix: Statistical Tables, 711 • Glossary of Frequently Used Symbols, 719 • Glossary, 720 •
Endnotes, 733 • Index, 740

CONTENTS CONTENTS

Preface, xv

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 The Role of Business Research, 2

Introduction, 3

The Nature of Business Research, 5
Business Research Defined, 5

Research Snapshot Good Fat and Bad Fat, 6
Applied and Basic Business Research, 6
The Scientific Method, 7

Managerial Value of Business Research, 8
Identifying Problems or Opportunities, 9
Diagnosing and Assessing Problems or Opportunities, 9
Selecting and Implementing a Course of Action, 9
Evaluating the Course of Action, 10

Research Snapshot Harley-Davidson Goes Abroad, 11

When Is Business Research Needed?, 11
Time Constraints, 11
Availability of Data, 11

Research Snapshot Business Class Success?, 12
Nature of the Decision, 12
Benefits versus Costs, 12

Business Research in the Twenty-First Century, 13
Communication Technologies, 13

Research Snapshot "Jacques" Daniels, 14
Global Business Research, 14

Overview, 15

Tips of the Trade, 16

Summary, 16
Key Terms and Concepts, 17
Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 17
Research Activities, 17

Chapter 2 Information Systems and Knowledge Management, 18

Introduction, 19

Information, Data, and Intelligence, 19

The Characteristics of Valuable Information, 20
Relevance, 20
Quality, 21
Timeliness, 21
Completeness, 21

Knowledge Management, 21

Research Snapshot RFID Technology Gets Cheaper—
Business Knowledge Grows, 22

Global Information Systems, 22

Decision Support Systems, 23

Research Snapshot Are Businesses Clairvoyant?, 24
Databases and Data Warehousing, 24
Input Management, 25

Research Snapshot Staying Home at Home Depot, 27
Computerized Data Archives, 28
Networks and Electronic Data Interchange, 30

The Internet and Research, 30

What Exactly Is the Internet?, 30
How Is the Internet Useful in Research?, 31
Navigating the Internet, 32
Interactive Media and Environmental Scanning, 33
Information Technology, 33
Intranets, 33
Internet2, 34

Summary, 34

- Tips of the Trade, 35**
 Key Terms and Concepts, 36
 Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 36
 Research Activities, 36
Case 2.1: Harvard Cooperative Society, 37
- Chapter 3 Theory Building, 38**
 Introduction, 39
 What Is a Theory?, 39
 What Are the Goals of Theory?, 39
 Research Concepts, Constructs, Propositions,
 Variables, and Hypotheses, 41
 Research Concepts and Constructs, 41
 Research Propositions and Hypotheses, 43
 Understanding Theory, 44
 Verifying Theory, 44
 Theory Building, 45
- Research Snapshot** Ballistic Theory, 46
- The Scientific Method, 46
 Practical Value of Theories, 48
- Tips of the Trade, 49**
 Summary, 49
 Key Terms and Concepts, 50
 Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 50
 Research Activities, 50
- Chapter 4 The Business Research Process:
 An Overview, 52**
 Introduction, 53
 Decision Making, 53
 Certainty, 54
 Uncertainty, 54
 Ambiguity, 54
 Types of Business Research, 55
 Exploratory Research, 56
- Research Snapshot** Cute, Funny, or Sexy? What Makes a
 Mascot Tick?, 57
 Descriptive Research, 57
- Research Snapshot** Whines for Wines, 58
 Causal Research, 59
 Uncertainty Influences the Type of Research, 62
- Stages in the Research Process, 63
 Alternatives in the Research Process, 64
 Defining the Research Objectives, 65
 Planning the Research Design, 68
- Research Snapshot** Rolling Rock, 70
 Sampling, 70
 Gathering Data, 71
 Processing and Analyzing Data, 72
 Drawing Conclusions and Preparing a Report, 72

- The Research Program Strategy, 73
 Different Stages of Research Process with Indian Examples, 73
 Research for Hero Honda Pleasure Scooter, 75
- Tips of the Trade, 80**
 Summary, 81
 Key Terms and Concepts, 82
 Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 82
 Research Activities, 83
Case 4.1: A New "Joe" on the Block, 83
*Case 4.2: A Small Caselet on Indian Company Explaining Research
 Process, 84*
- Chapter 5 The Human Side of
 Business Research: Organizational
 and Ethical Issues, 86**
 Introduction, 87
 Organizational Structure of Business Research, 88
 Business Research Jobs, 88
 The Director of Research as a Manager, 90
 Sources of Conflict between Senior Management and
 Research, 91
- Research Snapshot** Marketing Research Pays, 92
 Reducing the Conflict between Management and
 Researchers, 93
 Cross-Functional Teams, 95
- Research Snapshot** Finding Häagen-Dazs in China, 96
 Research Suppliers and Contractors, 96
 Syndicated Service, 96
 Standardized Research Services, 97
 Limited Research Service Companies and Custom
 Research, 97
- Ethical Issues in Business Research, 98
 Ethical Questions Are Philosophical Questions, 99
 General Rights and Obligations of Concerned Parties, 99
 Rights and Obligations of the Research Participant, 100
 Rights and Obligations of the Researcher, 104
- Research Snapshot** Is It Right, or Is It Wrong?, 105
 Rights and Obligations of the Client Sponsor (User), 108
 Privacy, 109
- Tips of the Trade, 110**
 Privacy on the Internet, 110
 A Final Note on Ethics, 110
- Summary, 111
 Key Terms and Concepts, 112
 Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 112
 Research Activities, 113
Case 5.1: Global Eating, 113
Case 5.2: Big Brother Is Watching?, 113

PART 2: BEGINNING STAGES OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Chapter 6 Problem Definition: The Foundation of Business Research, 116

- Introduction, 117
 Importance of Starting with a Good Problem
 Definition, 117
 Problem Complexity, 118
- Research Snapshot** Good Answers, Bad Questions?, 119
 The Problem-Definition Process, 120
 Problems Mean Gaps, 120
- Research Snapshot** What Features Indian Women
 want in a Scooter?, 121
 The Problem-Definition Process Steps, 121
 Understand the Business Decision, 122
- Research Snapshot** Opportunity Is a "Fleeting"
 Thing, 125
 Identifying the Relevant Issues from the Symptoms, 125
 Writing Managerial Decision Statements and
 Corresponding Research Objectives, 125
 Determine the Unit of Analysis, 128
 Determine Relevant Variables, 128
 Write Research Objectives and Questions, 129
- Clarity in Research Questions and Hypotheses, 130
- Research Snapshot** Pricing Turbulence, 131
 How Much Time Should Be Spent on Problem Definition?, 132
- The Research Proposal, 133
 The Proposal as a Planning Tool, 134
 The Proposal as a Contract, 134
 Anticipating Outcomes, 136
- Tips of the Trade, 137**
 Summary, 137
 Key Terms and Concepts, 138
 Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 139
 Research Activities, 139
Case 6.1: E-ZPass, 140
Case 6.2: Cane's Goes International, 140
Case 6.3: Deland Trucking, 140
Case 6.4: Bharti Airtel Ltd. (BAL) Goes Global, 140
- Chapter 7 Qualitative Research Tools, 142**
 Introduction, 143
 What Is Qualitative Research?, 143
 Uses of Qualitative Research, 143
- Research Snapshot** Surprises at P&G!, 144
 Qualitative "versus" Quantitative Research, 144
- Research Snapshot** Kirana Stores, 145
 Contrasting Qualitative and Quantitative Methods, 145
 Contrasting Exploratory and Confirmatory Research, 146
- Orientations to Qualitative Research, 147
 Phenomenology, 147
 Ethnography, 148
 Grounded Theory, 149

Case Studies, 150

- Research Snapshot** It's Like Riding a Bike!, 151
 Common Techniques Used in Qualitative Research, 151
 What Is a Focus Group Interview?, 151
- Research Snapshot** Overworked and Overpaid? Ethical
 Issues in Choosing Focus Group Respondents, 155
 Transcript of Focus Group Discussion, 159
 Analysis and Interpretations, 161
 Depth Interviews, 161
 Characteristics of Depth Interviews, 162
 Conversations, 162
 Free-Association/Sentence Completion Method, 164
- Exploratory Research in Science and in Practice, 167
 Misuses of Exploratory and Qualitative Research, 167
- Tips of the Trade, 168**
 Summary, 170
 Key Terms and Concepts, 171
 Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 171
 Research Activities, 171
Case 7.1: Disaster and Consumer Value, 172
Case 7.2: Edward Jones, 172

Chapter 8 Secondary Data Research in a Digital Age, 174

- Introduction, 175
 Advantages of Secondary Data, 175
 Disadvantages of Secondary Data, 175
- Typical Objectives for Secondary-Data Research Designs, 178
 Fact-Finding, 178
 Model Building, 179
 Data Mining, 182
 Database Marketing and Customer Relationship
 Management, 183
- Sources of Secondary Data, 184
 Sources of Internal and Proprietary Data, 184
 External Data: The Distribution System, 185
 Information as a Product and Its Distribution Channels, 185
- Research Snapshot** Water, Water Everywhere (in a
 bottle), 189
 Single-Source Data-Integrated Information, 191
 Panel Data, 191
 Scanner Panel Data, 192
 Sources for Global Research, 192
- Research Snapshot** Around the World of Data, 193
- Tips of the Trade, 194**
 Summary, 195
 Key Terms and Concepts, 195
 Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 196
 Research Activities, 196
Case 8.1: Demand for Gas Guzzlers, 197
Case 8.2: An Indian Case, 197

PART 3: RESEARCH METHODS FOR COLLECTING PRIMARY DATA

Chapter 9 Survey Research: An Overview, 200

- Introduction, 201
- Using Surveys, 202
 - Advantages of Surveys, 202
- Research Snapshot** Intuit Gets Answers to Satisfy Customers, 203
- Errors in Survey Research, 204
 - Random Sampling Error, 204
 - Systematic Error, 204
 - Respondent Error, 204
- Research Snapshot** Overestimating Patient Satisfaction, 206
 - Administrative Error, 210
 - Rule-of-Thumb Estimates for Systematic Error, 211
 - What Can Be Done to Reduce Survey Error?, 211
- Classifying Survey Research Methods, 211
 - Structured/Unstructured and Disguised/Undisguised Questionnaires, 211
 - Temporal Classification, 212
- Research Snapshot** makemytrip.com Survey for Consumer Satisfaction, 214
 - Suitability of Cross-sectional vs. Longitudinal Design, 214
- Total Quality Management and Customer Satisfaction Surveys, 215
 - What Is Quality?, 215
 - Internal and External Customers, 215
- Research Snapshot** Fairfax Library's Survey for Satisfaction, 216
 - Implementing Total Quality Management, 216
- Tips of the Trade, 219**

- Summary, 220
- Key Terms and Concepts, 220
- Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 221
- Research Activities, 221

- Case 9.1: SAT and ACT Writing Tests, 222*
- Case 9.2: The Walker Information Group, 222*
- Case 9.3: An Indian Case On Survey Research: Census Of India—"Our Census - Our Future," 223*

Chapter 10 Survey Research: Communicating with Respondents, 224

- Introduction, 225
- Interviews as Interactive Communication, 225
 - Noninteractive Media, 225
- Research Snapshot** Winning the Indian Consumer, 226
 - Advantages of Personal Interviews, 226
- Research Snapshot** The Challenge of Assessing Adult Literacy, 227
 - Disadvantages of Personal Interviews, 228

- Door-to-Door Interviews and Shopping
 - Mall Intercepts, 229
 - Global Considerations, 231
- Telephone Interviews, 231
 - Phone Interview Characteristics, 232
 - Central Location Interviewing, 234
 - Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing, 234
- Research Snapshot** Automated Phone Surveys of Teens, 235
 - Computerized Voice-Activated Telephone Interview, 235
 - Global Considerations, 236
- Self-Administered Questionnaires, 237
 - Mail Questionnaires, 237
 - Response Rates, 239
 - Increasing Response Rates for Mail Surveys, 239
 - Global Considerations, 243
- Self-Administered Questionnaires Using Other Forms of Distribution, 243
 - Fax Surveys, 243
 - E-Mail Surveys, 244
 - Internet Surveys, 245
 - Kiosk Interactive Surveys, 248
 - Survey Research That Mixes Modes, 249
 - Text-Message Surveys, 249
- Selecting the Appropriate Survey Research Design, 249
- Tips of the Trade, 251**
- Pretesting, 251
- Ethical Issues in Survey Research, 251

- Summary, 252
- Key Terms and Concepts, 252
- Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 253
- Research Activities, 254

- Case 10.1: National Do Not Call Registry, 254*
- Case 10.2: Royal Bee Electric Fishing Reel, 254*
- Case 10.3: Telephonic Survey in South India, 255*

Chapter 11 Observation Methods, 258

- Introduction, 259
- Observation in Business Research, 259
 - What Can Be Observed?, 259
 - The Nature of Observation Studies, 260
- Observation of Human Behavior, 260
- Research Snapshot** This Trend Brought to You by DDB SignBank, 261
 - Complementary Evidence, 261
 - Direct Observation, 262
- Research Snapshot** Hero Honda Research of Direct Observations Method, 263
- Research Snapshot** Clean as We Say, or Clean as We Do?, 264
 - Combining Direct Observation and Interviewing, 264
 - Ethical Issues in the Observation of Humans, 264

- Observation of Physical Objects, 265
- Content Analysis, 266
- Trace Analysis, 267
- Mechanical Observation, 267
 - Television Monitoring, 267
- Research Snapshot** NeoTech's Mobile-Trak Observes Fleet Vehicles, 268
 - Monitoring Web Site Traffic, 269
 - Scanner-Based Research, 270
- Research Snapshot** Neuroco Peers into the Consumer's Brain, 271
 - Measuring Physiological Reactions, 271

Tips of the Trade, 273

- Summary, 273
- Key Terms and Concepts, 274
- Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 274
- Research Activities, 274

- Case 11.1: Mazda and Syzygy, 275*
- Case 11.2: Texas Instruments and E-Lab, 275*

Chapter 12 Experimental Research, 276

- Introduction, 277
 - Causality, 277
 - Conditions of Cause-and-Effect Relationship, 277
- Creating an Experiment, 277
 - An Illustration: Can a Self-Efficacy Intervention Enhance Job Attitude?, 278
- Designing an Experiment to Minimize Experimental Error, 280
 - Manipulation of the Independent Variable, 280
- Research Snapshot** Does Promotion Cause Intoxication?, 282
 - Selection and Measurement of the Dependent Variable, 283
 - Selection and Assignment of Test Units, 284

PART 4: MEASUREMENT CONCEPTS

Chapter 13 Measurement and Scaling Concepts, 312

- Introduction, 313
- What Do I Measure?, 314
 - Concepts, 315
 - Operational Definitions, 315
 - Relationship Between Measurement Error and Scaling Concepts, 316
- Levels of Scale Measurement, 317
 - Scale Characteristics, 318
 - Nominal Scale, 318
 - Ordinal Scale, 319
 - Interval Scale, 320
 - Ratio Scale, 321
 - Mathematical and Statistical Analysis of Scales, 322
- Research Snapshot** Football Follies, 323
- Index Measures, 324
- Research Snapshot** Recoding Made Easy, 325

- Demand Characteristics, 287
 - What Are Demand Characteristics, 287
 - Experimenter Bias and Demand Effects, 287
 - Hawthorne Effect, 288
 - Reducing Demand Characteristics, 288

- Establishing Control, 289
 - Problems Controlling Extraneous Variables, 290
- Ethical Issues in Experimentation, 290
- Practical Experimental Design Issues, 291
 - Basic versus Factorial Experimental Designs, 291
 - Laboratory Experiments, 291
 - Field Experiments, 292

Research Snapshot The Hidden in Hidden Valley Ranch, 293

- Experiments Conducted in Laboratory and Infield, 293
- Within-Subjects and Between-Subjects Designs, 295
- Issues of Experimental Validity, 295
 - Internal Validity, 295
 - External Validity, 298
 - Trade-Offs Between Internal and External Validity, 298

- Classification of Experimental Designs, 298
 - Symbolism for Diagramming Experimental Designs, 299
 - Three Examples of Quasi-Experimental Designs, 299
 - Three Alternative Experimental Designs, 300
 - Time Series Designs, 302
 - Complex Experimental Designs, 303

Tips of the Trade, 307

- Summary, 308
- Key Terms and Concepts, 309
- Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 309
- Research Activities, 309
- Case 12.1: Tooheys, 310*

- Indexes and Composites, 325
- Computing Scale Values, 325
- Three Criteria for Good Measurement, 327
 - Reliability, 327
 - Validity, 328
 - Reliability versus Validity, 330

Tips of the Trade, 331

- Sensitivity, 331
- Summary, 332
- Key Terms and Concepts, 332
- Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 332
- Research Activities, 333

- Case 13.1: FlyAway Airways, 333*

Chapter 14 Attitude Measurement, 336

- Introduction, 337
- Attitudes as Hypothetical Constructs, 337
 - Importance of Measuring Attitudes, 338

Techniques for Measuring Attitudes, 338

Research Snapshot Is It Positive Emotionality, or Is It LOVE?, 339

Attitude Rating Scales, 339
Simple Attitude Scales, 339

Research Snapshot Students Ask—Are You Responsible?, 340
Category Scales, 340
Method of Summated Ratings: The Likert Scale, 342
Semantic Differential, 343
Numerical Scales, 344
Stapel Scale, 344
Constant-Sum Scale, 344

Research Snapshot A Measuring Stick for Web Site Usability, 345
Graphic Rating Scales, 345
Thurstone Interval Scale, 347

Research Snapshot How Much Is a Healthy Home Worth?, 348

Measuring Behavioral Intention, 348
Behavioral Differential, 349

Ranking, 349
Paired Comparisons, 349
Sorting, 350

Other Methods of Attitude Measurement, 350

Selecting a Measurement Scale: Some Practical Decisions, 350
Ranking, Sorting, Rating, or Choice Technique?, 351
Monadic or Comparative Scale?, 351
What Type of Category Labels, If Any?, 351
How Many Scale Categories or Response Positions?, 352
Balanced or Unbalanced Rating Scale?, 352
Use a Scale That Forces a Choice among Predetermined Options?, 352

Tips of the Trade, 353
Single Measure or an Index Measure?, 353

Summary, 353

Key Terms and Concepts, 354

Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 354

Research Activity, 355

Case 14.1: *Measurement and Scaling*, 355
Case 14.2: *Roeder-Johnson Corporation*, 355
Case 14.3: *Attitudes toward Technology and Lifestyle*, 356

Chapter 15 Questionnaire Design, 358

Introduction, 359

Questionnaire Quality and Design: Basic Considerations, 359
What Should Be Asked?, 359
Questionnaire Relevancy, 359
Questionnaire Accuracy, 360

Ordering Questions, 360
Open-Ended Response versus Fixed-Alternative Questions, 360

Research Snapshot Corporate Reputations: Consumers Put Johnson & Johnson, Microsoft, and Google on Top, 362
Types of Fixed-Alternative Questions, 363

Phrasing Questions for Self-Administered, Telephone, and Personal Interview Surveys, 364

Research Snapshot What to Do with the Clubhouse?, 366

Guidelines for Constructing Questions, 366
Avoid Complexity: Use Simple, Conversational Language, 366
Avoid Leading and Loaded Questions, 367
Avoid Ambiguity: Be as Specific as Possible, 369
Avoid Double-Barreled Items, 369
Avoid Making Assumptions, 370
Avoid Burdensome Questions That May Tax the Respondent's Memory, 370
Make Certain Questions Generate Variance, 371

Interactive and Adaptive Questions, 372

What Is the Best Question Sequence?, 372

Research Snapshot What Citizens (Don't) Know about Climate Change, 373

What Is the Best Layout?, 375
Traditional Questionnaires, 376
Internet Questionnaires, 377

How Much Pretesting and Revising Are Necessary?, 384

Research Snapshot Pretesting the CAHPS Hospital Survey, 385

How to Administer a Questionnaire?, 386
Analyzing the Respondent, 387
Overcoming Unwillingness to Answer, 388
Providing All Possible Alternatives and Avoiding Generalization, 389
Peer Review of Questionnaire, 390

Designing Questionnaires for Global Markets, 390

Tips of the Trade, 391

Summary, 392

Key Terms and Concepts, 393

Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 393

Research Activity, 394

Case 15.1: *Agency for Health Care Research and Quality*, 394
Case 15.2: *Canterbury Travels*, 399
Case 15.3: *McDonald's Spanish Language Questionnaire*, 401
Case 15.4: *Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna*, 401

Appendix 15A Question Wording And Measurement Scales For Commonly Researched Topics, 403

Questions about Advertising, 403
Awareness, 403
Unaided Recall/Top of the Mind Recall, 403
Aided Recall, 404
Recognition, 404
Message Communication/Playback (Sales Point Playback), 404
Attitude Toward the Advertisement, 404
Attitude Toward Advertised Brand (Persuasion), 405
Readership/Viewership, 405

Questions about Ownership and Product Usage, 405
Ownership, 405

Purchase Behavior, 406
Regular Usage, 406

Questions about Goods and Services, 406
Ease of Use, 406
Uniqueness, 406
Attribute Ratings/Importance of Characteristics, 407
Interest, 407
Like/Dislike, 407
Preference, 408
Expectations, 408
Satisfaction, 408
Quality, 408
Problems, 409

Benefits, 409
Improvements, 409
Buying Intentions for Existing Products, 409
Buying Intentions Based on Product Concept, 409
Reason for Buying Intention, 410

Questions about Demographics, 410
Age, 410
Education, 410
Marital Status, 411
Children, 411
Income, 411
Occupation, 411

PART 5: SAMPLING AND FIELDWORK

Chapter 16 Sampling Designs and Sampling Procedures, 414

Introduction, 415

Sampling Terminology, 415

Why Sample?, 415
Pragmatic Reasons, 415
Accurate and Reliable Results, 416
Destruction of Test Units, 416

Practical Sampling Concepts, 416
Defining the Target Population, 417

Research Snapshot Finding Out about Work Is a Lot of Work!, 418
The Sampling Frame, 418

Research Snapshot How Much Does Your Prescription Cost? It Depends on Who You Buy It from, 419
Sampling Units, 421

Random Sampling and Nonsampling Errors, 421
Random Sampling Error, 422
Systematic Sampling Error, 422
Less Than Perfectly Representative Samples, 422

Probability versus Nonprobability Sampling, 423

Nonprobability Sampling, 423
Convenience Sampling, 424
Judgment Sampling, 424

Research Snapshot American Kennel Club Tries to Keep Pet Owners out of the Doghouse, 425
Quota Sampling, 425
Snowball Sampling, 426

Probability Sampling, 426
Simple Random Sampling, 427
Systematic Sampling, 428
Stratified Sampling, 428
Proportional versus Disproportional Sampling, 429

Research Snapshot Who's at Home? Different Ways to Select Respondents, 430
Cluster Sampling, 430
Multistage Area Sampling, 431

Concepts of Accuracy and Diversity in Sampling, 432

What Is the Appropriate Sample Design?, 433

Degree of Accuracy, 433

Research Snapshot New on Campus: Student Adjustment to College Life, 435
Resources, 435
Time, 435
Advance Knowledge of the Population, 435
National versus Local Project, 436

Internet Sampling Is Unique, 436
Web Site Visitors, 436
Panel Samples, 437

Tips of the Trade, 438
Recruited Ad Hoc Samples, 438
Opt-in Lists, 439

Summary, 439

Key Terms and Concepts, 440

Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 440

Research Activities, 441

Case 16.1: *Who's Fishing?*, 441
Case 16.2: *Scientific Telephone Samples*, 441

Chapter 17 Determination of Sample Size: A Review of Statistical Theory, 442

Introduction, 443
Descriptive and Inferential Statistics, 443
Sample Statistics and Population Parameters, 443

Making Data Usable, 443
Frequency Distributions, 443
Proportions, 445
Measures of Central Tendency, 445

Research Snapshot The Well-Chosen Average, 446
Measures of Dispersion, 447

The Normal Distribution, 451

Population Distribution, Sample Distribution, and Sampling Distribution, 454

Central-Limit Theorem, 455

Estimation of Parameters, 457
Point Estimates, 458
Confidence Intervals, 459

Research Snapshot Accuracy of Political Polls, 460

- Sample Size, 462
 - Random Error and Sample Size, 462
 - Factors in Determining Sample Size for Questions Involving Means, 463
- Research Snapshot Target and Wal-Mart Shoppers Really Are Different, 464**
 - Estimating Sample Size for Questions Involving Means, 464
 - The Influence of Population Size on Sample Size, 465
 - Factors in Determining Sample Size for Proportions, 465
 - Calculating Sample Size for Sample Proportions, 467
 - Determining Sample Size on the Basis of Judgment, 467
 - Determining Sample Size for Stratified and Other Probability Samples, 467
 - Determining Level of Precision after Data Collection, 467
 - Determination of Sample Size, 468
 - Non-Response and Handling of Non-Responses, 469

Tips of the Trade, 470

- Handling Non-Responses, 470

A Reminder about Statistics, 471

Summary, 471

Key Terms and Concepts, 472

Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 472

Research Activities, 473

Case 17.1: *Pointsec Mobile Technologies*, 473

Chapter 18 Fieldwork, 474

Introduction, 475

The Nature of Fieldwork, 475

Who Conducts the Fieldwork?, 475

In-House Training for Inexperienced Interviewers, 476

PART 6: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Chapter 19 Editing and Coding: Transforming Raw Data into Information, 492

Introduction, 493

Stages of Data Analysis, 493

Editing, 494

Field Editing, 494

In-House Editing, 495

Research Snapshot Do You Have Integrity?, 496

Editing for Completeness, 497

Editing Questions Answered Out of Order, 498

Facilitating the Coding Process, 498

Pitfalls of Editing, 498

Pretesting Edit, 499

Coding, 499

Coding Qualitative Responses, 499

The Data File, 502

Research Snapshot Building a Multi-Petabyte Data System, 503

Code Construction, 503

Making Initial Contact and Securing the Interview, 476

Research Snapshot Interviewing for Horizon Research Services, 477

Asking the Questions, 478

Probing When No Response Is Given, 478

Research Snapshot Why Is "Why" Important?, 479

Research Snapshot Probing for Deeper Meaning at Olson Zaltman Associates, 480

Recording the Responses, 480

Terminating the Interview, 481

Principles of Good Interviewing, 481

The Basics, 481

Required Practices, 482

Fieldwork Management, 483

Briefing Session for Experienced Interviewers, 483

Training to Avoid Procedural Errors in Sample

Selection, 484

Supervision of Fieldworkers, 484

Research Snapshot Total Quality Management for Interviewing, 485

Sampling Verification, 485

Interviewer Cheating, 486

Verification by Reinterviewing, 486

Tips of the Trade, 487

Summary, 487

Key Terms and Concepts, 488

Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 488

Research Activity, 488

Case 18.1: *Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Library*, 489

Case 18.2: *Margaret Murphy O'Hara*, 489

Precoding Fixed-Alternative Questions, 503

More on Coding Open-Ended Questions, 504

Devising the Coding Scheme, 506

Research Snapshot Coding Data "On-the-Go," 508

Code Book, 508

Editing and Coding Combined, 508

Computerized Survey Data Processing, 508

Error Checking, 509

Tips of the Trade, 510

Summary, 510

Key Terms and Concepts, 511

Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 511

Research Activities, 511

Case 19.1: *U.S. Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service*, 512

Case 19.2: *Shampoo 9-10*, 512

Chapter 20 Basic Data Analysis: Descriptive Statistics, 516

Introduction, 517

The Nature of Descriptive Analysis, 517

Tabulation, 518

Cross-Tabulation, 519

Contingency Tables, 519

Percentage Cross-Tabulations, 520

Elaboration and Refinement, 521

Research Snapshot Contingent Personalities, 522

How Many Cross-Tabulations?, 522

Quadrant Analysis, 523

Data Transformation, 524

Simple Transformations, 524

Problems with Data Transformations, 524

Index Numbers, 525

Calculating Rank Order, 527

Tabular and Graphic Methods of Displaying Data, 527

Research Snapshot Twitter and the ReTweetability Index, 528

Computer Programs for Analysis, 529

Statistical Packages, 529

Computer Graphics and Computer Mapping, 530

Interpretation, 532

Tips of the Trade, 533

Summary, 533

Key Terms and Concepts, 534

Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 534

Research Activities, 535

Case 20.1: *Body on Tap*, 536

Case 20.2: *Downy-Q Quilt*, 536

Chapter 21 Univariate Statistical Analysis, 538

Introduction, 539

Hypothesis Testing, 539

The Hypothesis-Testing Procedure, 539

Research Snapshot The "Freshman 7.8," 541

An Example of Hypothesis Testing, 541

Type I and Type II Errors, 545

Research Snapshot The Law and Type I and Type II Errors, 546

Choosing the Appropriate Statistical Technique, 546

Type of Question to Be Answered, 546

Number of Variables, 546

Research Snapshot Living in a Statistical Web, 547

Level of Scale of Measurement, 547

Parametric versus Nonparametric Hypothesis Tests, 547

The *t*-Distribution, 548

Calculating a Confidence Interval Estimate Using the *t*-Distribution, 550

Univariate Hypothesis Test Using the *t*-Distribution, 551

The Chi-Square Test for Goodness of Fit, 552

Research Snapshot Interested in Retirement? It Often Depends on Your Age, 554

Hypothesis Test of a Proportion, 555

Tips of the Trade, 556

Additional Applications of Hypothesis Testing, 556

Summary, 556

Key Terms and Concepts, 557

Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 557

Research Activities, 558

Case 21.1: *Quality Motors*, 558

Chapter 22 Bivariate Statistical Analysis: Differences Between Two Variables, 560

Introduction, 561

What Is the Appropriate Test of Difference?, 561

Cross-Tabulation Tables: The χ^2 Test for Goodness-of-Fit, 561

Research Snapshot Chi-Training, 564

The *t*-Test for Comparing Two Means, 565

Independent Samples *t*-Test, 565

Paired-Samples *t*-Test, 569

The Z-Test for Comparing Two Proportions, 570

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), 572

What Is ANOVA?, 572

Research Snapshot More Than One-Way, 573

Simple Illustration of ANOVA, 574

Partitioning Variance in ANOVA, 575

The *F*-Test, 576

Practically Speaking, 577

Tips of the Trade, 578

Summary, 578

Key Terms and Concepts, 579

Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 579

Research Activities, 581

Case 22.1: *Old School versus New School Sports Fans*, 581

Appendix 22A Manual Calculation of an F-Statistic, 583

Appendix 22B ANOVA for Complex Experimental Designs, 586

Factorial Designs, 587

ANOVA for a Factorial Experiment, 587

Partitioning the Sum of Squares

for a Two-Way ANOVA, 587

Chapter 23 Bivariate Statistical Analysis: Measures of Association, 590

Introduction, 591

The Basics, 591

Simple Correlation Coefficient, 591

An Example, 593

Correlation, Covariance, and Causation, 593

Coefficient of Determination, 593

Correlation Matrix, 594

Regression Analysis, 595

The Regression Equation, 596

Parameter Estimate Choices, 596

Research Snapshot What Makes Attractiveness?, 597

Visual Estimation of a Simple Regression Model, 599

Ordinary Least-Squares (OLS) Method of Regression Analysis, 601

Research Snapshot Size and Weight, 606
Concepts of Partial Correlation and Rank Correlation, 608

Tips of the Trade, 611

Summary, 611
Key Terms and Concepts, 611
Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 612
Research Activities, 612

Case 23.1: *International Operations at CarCare Inc.*, 613

Appendix 23A Arithmetic Behind OLS, 614

Chapter 24 Multivariate Statistical Analysis, 616

Introduction, 617
What Is Multivariate Data Analysis?, 617
The "Variate" in Multivariate, 617
Classifying Multivariate Techniques, 618
Dependence Techniques, 618
Interdependence Techniques, 618
Influence of Measurement Scales, 618

Analysis of Dependence, 620
Multiple Regression Analysis, 620

Research Snapshot Too Much of a Good Thing!, 623

Multicollinearity, 628
Heteroscedasticity, 629
Prediction of the Model, 629
ANOVA (n-Way) and MANOVA, 630

Research Snapshot How to Get MANOVA Results, 631

Discriminant Analysis, 632
Conjoint Analysis, 633
Orthogonal Design using SPSS, 641

Analysis of Interdependence, 645

Factor Analysis, 645

Research Snapshot Getting Factor Results with SAS or SPSS, 654

Cluster Analysis, 655

Multidimensional Scaling, 660

Tips of the Trade, 664

Summary, 665
Key Terms and Concepts, 665
Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 666
Research Activities, 666

Case 24.1: *The Utah Jazz*, 669

Case 24.2: *How Do We Keep Them?*, 671

Case 24.3: *A Case of Multidimensional Scaling on Telecom Service Providers in India*, 671

Chapter 25 Communicating Research Results: Report Generation, Oral Presentation, and Follow-Up, 672

Introduction, 673
Insights from the Communications Model, 673
The Report in Context, 674
Report Format, 675
Tailoring the Format to the Project, 675
The Parts of the Report, 677

Research Snapshot Research ROI, 679

Research Snapshot How Do We Stack Up? The Value of Business.gov, 680

Effective Use of Graphic Aids, 681
Tables, 681
Charts, 684

Research Snapshot The 10/20/30 Rule of PowerPoint, 688

The Oral Presentation, 688

Tips of the Trade, 689

Reports on the Internet, 689
The Research Follow-Up, 689

Summary, 690
Key Terms and Concepts, 691
Questions for Review and Critical Thinking, 691
Research Activity, 691

Case 25.1: *Annenberg Public Policy Center*, 692

PART 7: COMPREHENSIVE CASES WITH COMPUTERIZED DATABASES

Case 1: *Online Shopping Behavior of Customers in India*, 696

Case 2: *Running the Numbers: Does It Pay?*, 703

Case 3: *Attiring Situation*, 704

Case 4: *Values and the Automobile Market*, 706

Case 5: *TABH, INC., Automotive Consulting*, 708

Case 6: *The Atlanta Braves*, 709

Endnotes, 733

Index, 740

Appendix: Statistical Tables, 711

Glossary of Frequently Used Symbols, 719

Glossary, 720

PREFACE PREFACE

The world of business is certainly changing at a very fast rate. Businesses can't assume that continuing to produce the same old products, by the same old process, with the same old technology, managed in the same old way will continue to produce the same old good result. The need for intelligence supported by a connection to the real world is more important than ever. Business researchers are challenged with the job of producing just this type of intelligence. The eighth edition of *Business Research Methods* addresses the dynamic nature of today's business world while conveying the essential elements of the business research process.

Most readers understand that managers want answers to questions. What is not so obvious is that the search for the correct questions can be just as important as finding the right answers. After all, search is the biggest part of "research." The researcher must have some idea of how to begin the search process, how to best search through what is now terabyte after terabyte of information to pick out those elements which best hold the possibility of turning into intelligence, and then how to communicate that intelligence in a way that helps managers make decisions. When it works right, business research is a win-win proposition. The process enables a company to identify its customers and design products and processes that maximize value for all. In return, the company receives value as the customer spends their hard earned money. As a result, customers win and businesses win! All are better off.

Trying to find just the right piece of business information via the Internet can be like searching for a needle in a haystack. This information may well be hidden beneath piles and piles of irrelevant stuff! Or how about trying to find a key piece of business information that may be hidden in the mind of a consumer or some employee? A customer may not even be consciously aware of all his or her reasons for some preference or some behavior and, consequently, can't identify or talk about it. An employee may not even realize that he or she possesses important vital information. How do you go about finding this information that could be so crucial to making a good business decision? Effective business research is like applying a CAT scan to a business problem.

That's where this text comes in: *Business Research Methods* equips students with the knowledge and skills involved in this basic research process; these will simplify and provide more accuracy to their search for business intelligence. The process we describe includes six steps. Researchers must first work together with decision makers to decide what they are looking for—that metaphorical needle in the haystack. The next two stages plot out the way to go about finding the needle. Next are two stages that focus on the actual search for the needle. The process concludes when the business researcher communicates the benefits of finding "pointed" information that can help mend problems or create something really new and special for the decision-maker. Success in this process usually merits the researcher a reward that is a bit more valuable than that needle!