Research Methods for Business and Management

What is Research?- Session 1
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This Session

• Purpose of the Module
• The Research Process
• What to Research?
• Defining Research
• Types of Research
• Mind Map of Research
Purpose of the Module

• To present and ensure full understanding of the different approaches to research used in business/management

• To assist you in preparation for:
  – Your Dissertation
  – Your Research for Business and Management Assignment
The Research Process
Your Dissy Process

1. Complete Research Proposal during Research Methods for Bus and Mgt module
2. Selection of supervisor form would be sent
3. Assignment of Supervisor
4. Attend Dissertation Workshop: Ethics Training
5. Submit Research Ethics Application Form (Stage 1) to DREP
6. Work with Supervisor to complete Dissy

Submit
Typical Dissertation Structure

• Chapter 1 Introduction- Research Topic, Aim and Objectives/Questions
• Chapter 2 Literature review
• Chapter 3 Research Design and Methodology
• Chapter 4 Findings and Analysis
• Chapter 5 Conclusions and Recommendations
Your RM Assignment

• Research Poster (20%)
• Research Proposal (80%):
  – Chapter 1 Introduction
  – Chapter 2 Literature Review
  – Chapter 3 Research Design and Methodology
  – Research Timetable
  – 2500 words
Stimulus for Research

Simple Fact Finding

Pressing business problem

When an opportunity arises

Personal Experience

Conduct and Findings of Research
What to Research?

• Management Dilemma
  – Issues that requires a management decision

• Business Issues
  – Issues that can affect the competitiveness of an organization or industry

• Social issues
  – Issues that can impact the organization

Generally, the scope is Business Research
So where do you start?

• With a business issue
• Use your background and work experience
• Think of issues that you encounter at work
• Think of issues within the industry of sector
• Consider your strengths:
  – What’s my area of expertise
  – What’s my knowledge base
  – What’s my area of interest
• Look at trending areas in business research
Latest Business Research Sources

- [http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-business-research/recent-articles](http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-business-research/recent-articles)
Key point

• Try to marry:
  1. Practice with your area of expertise or interest
  2. Trending issues with Practice
  3. Trending issues with your area of expertise
Virtuous circle of Theory and Practice

- Research on managerial practice informs practically derived theory
- This in turn becomes best practice
- Essentially adding to relevant and practical management knowledge
- The Researcher must engage in both worlds of theory and practice

(PTP) Practice informs Theory which informs Practice
Let’s look at some Research areas

- Leadership
- Change management
- Organizational transformation
- Innovation
- Entrepreneurship
- Consumer behaviour
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Human Resources
- Production and Operations
- Information Systems
- E Business and Internet Technologies
- Customer Relationship Management
BA. vs M.B.A.

Depth of Study

Area of Study

Narrow
Narrowing your Research Idea

- **Aspect** - choose one lens through which to view the research problem, or look at just one facet of it
- **Components** - determine if your initial variable or unit of analysis can be broken into smaller parts, which can then be analysed more precisely
- **Place** - generally, the smaller the geographic unit of analysis, the more narrow the focus
- **Type** - focus your topic in terms of a specific type or class of people, places, or phenomena
What about this tree would you research?
• So say you’ve decided to research the area of INNOVATION
• First you would have to define it i.e. what is innovation.
  – “If you cannot define it you cannot analyse it”
• Secondly, what aspect of Innovation e.g. product, process, system
• Thirdly, what’s the scale of the research e.g. is it all departments, 3 companies, 2 branches
• Which industry? Type of product?
• The idea is that you should research ONE issue
• **Business research** is a systematic inquiry that provides information to guide **managerial decisions** in ways that mobilize the organization **to take appropriate actions** that in turn maximize business performance

  Cooper and Schindler (2006, pg. 4)

• The requirement for the research to have some **practical consequence**, the potential for taking some action

  Saunders et al (2007, pg. 5-6)
Consider this scenario:

– Assume that you are the manager of full service restaurant. You are experiencing significant turnover in your waiter/waitress pool and some long-time customers have commented that the friendly atmosphere is changing.

– Where will you begin in trying to solve this problem?

– Is this a problem for which business research should be used?

– **YES** but this seems to be an **OPERATIONAL** issue or problem, **Not suited for MBA research**
So what then Is Expected?

• **Strategic Orientation**
  – Dealing with issues that can *change the direction* of the organization or industry
  – Research that leads to an organization implementing action in order to *adapt to the environment*
  – Research that leads to managers making decisions that would have a *Large impact* on the business
  – Research that lead to an organization gaining *competitive advantage, growth*
Strategic orientation cont’d

– Research that leads an organization to taking advantage of a **business opportunity**
– Research that develop strategies to **address organizational weaknesses**
– Research that can shed light on how to develop **core competencies** in HR, R&D, Innovation etc
Type of Work

• Your project should be **STRATEGIC** in nature
• That is your work must have implications for top level managers or executives
• How will they use your **outcome** to make some decision that can have a **strategic impact** on the organization or even industry?
  – Resolve an issue/s that plague the organization
  – Help to gain competitive advantage by grasping market opportunity
  – Develop new........ framework, method, policy or procedure
Further Expectations

• Issue should be suitable for *high level analysis*
• Should be managerial
• Research should solve a *high level problem* or issue
• Should explore *new business opportunities*
Some what exactly is Research?

• Research is defined “as something that people undertake in order to find out things in a systematic way thereby increasing their knowledge” Saunders et al (2007, pg. 5)

• “The good researcher is not one who knows the right answer but one who is struggling to find out the what the right questions might be” Phillips and Pugh (2000, pg. 48-49)
Why is it important to ask questions?
Other Definitions

• Research is the process through which new knowledge is discovered” Salkind (2003, pg. 3)

• Research is defined as an “original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding” HEFCE (1998)
Knowledge Gain

• Research should actually lead to a contribution to knowledge

Your knowledge and understanding

Your learning and development

Boundary of world knowledge

Contributions to knowledge
Knowledge in Business Context

- Knowledge is information that is contextual, relevant and **actionable**
- Having knowledge implies that it can be **exercised to solve business problems**
- The ability to act is an integral part of being knowledgeable
- For example, two organizations in the same context with the same information may not have the same ability to use information to the same degree of success
Key Points to Note

• Research:
  – Is a process of inquiry and investigation
  – Is systematic and methodical
  – Has a clear purpose
  – Increases knowledge
  – Is original
• Collis and Hussey (2003) summarize the purpose research as:
  – To investigate some existing situation or problem
  – To provide solutions to a problem
  – To construct or create a new procedure or system
  – To explain a new phenomenon
  – To generate new knowledge

• Essentially what all of this is saying to us is simply, our research must produce a meaningful OUTCOME
• Cryer (1996, pg.147) identifies originality from the perspective of the results of the research. Thus original outcomes might include:
  – A New product
  – A new theory
  – A new model
  – A new method
  – A new procedure/policy

• Also by-products might still represent originality e.g. why an experiment failed, why a particular technique did not work in a new era
### Classification of Types of Research

**Collis and Hussey (2003, pg. 10)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Research</th>
<th>Basis of Classification</th>
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<td>• Descriptive, Explanatory, Exploratory Research</td>
<td>Purpose of the Research</td>
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<td>• Quantitative and Qualitative Research</td>
<td>Process of the Research</td>
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<td>• Deductive and Inductive Approaches</td>
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<td>• Basic and Applied Research</td>
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Descriptive, Explanatory and Exploratory Research

- **Descriptive** - describes phenomena as they exist. It is used to identify and obtain information on a particular problem. E.g. what is profile of staff have a high absentee rate?

- **Explanatory** - goes beyond describing, to analyzing and explaining why or how. E.g. how can team work reduce employee absenteeism?

- **Exploratory** - seeks out new insights and assess phenomena in a new light. Likened to the activities of a traveller or explorer E.g. how can employee absenteeism be reduced?
Quantitative and Qualitative Research

• **Quantitative Research** - objective in nature and concentrates on measuring a phenomena. It involves collecting and analyzing *numerical* data and performing statistical tests.

• **Qualitative Research** - subjective in nature and involves examining and reflecting on *perceptions* in order to gain understanding.

Much more will be discussed on this later in the syllabus
What Comes First, Theory or Data?

(1) Theory

Data

(2)
Two alternate views

1. Theory is something that guides and influences the collection and analysis of data. That is, the research is done in order to answer questions posed by theoretical considerations.

2. Theory as something that occurs after the collection and analysis of some or all data associated with the research
Research Approaches

1. Deductive-
   • In the sense that we have developed a theory that we want to prove – in simple terms deduction amounts to a valid argument
   • The researcher on the basis of theoretical considerations deduces a hypothesis that must be subjected to empirical scrutiny
   • E.g. The introduction of loyalty cards will reduce the probability of customers switching to a competitor.
The Process of Deduction

Bryman (2008, pg.10)

1. Theory
2. Hypothesis
3. Data Collection
4. Findings
5. Hypothesis confirmed or Rejected
6. Revision of theory
2. Inductive-

• In the sense that one hopes that the theory emerges from the data analysis as we go along

• The researcher infers the implications of his or her findings for the theory that prompted the research.
Deductive and Inductive Approaches

Deductive

Theory → Data Collection/Findings

Inductive

Data Collection/Findings → Theory
Bibliography


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