

Tharenou, P., Donohue, R., & Cooper, B. (2007). *Management Research Methods*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

The stated goal of this book is to foster an understanding of basic research processes and cultivate a capacity to identify management-related research questions. Students looking for an introduction to research methods would find this a useful resource, as would practitioners who are trying to apply academic studies to real-world questions. The book is clearly written and presented in an engaging manner. Additionally, although the book covers a broad range of topics, the presentation is fairly parsimonious. Overall, the authors make the often complex issues associated with research methodology and design quite accessible. The initial chapter of the book lays out a detailed road map of the following 13 chapters, which are organized into 5 sections: research design, data collection, measurement, data analysis, and a final potpourri section on writing up studies and ethical issues. Each chapter begins with a set of learning objectives, includes key citations to the respective topics, and concludes with a series of review questions.

The first section of the book focuses on research design, with chapter topics including experimental and quasi-experimental designs, field studies, case studies, and action research. Chapter 2 covers a number of common design types, including an array of quasi-experimental approaches. This chapter is fairly brief—11 pages—so the treatment of this material is limited. Chapter 3 covers field studies and is limited by the implication that measurement issues are relevant to field studies but not to experimental or quasi-experimental designs. This chapter also acknowledges a number of topics that will appear in more detail in subsequent chapters, such as mediators and moderators, reliability and validity, and so on. By foreshadowing these other topics, the authors help to tie together the different sections of the book. Chapter 4 focuses on case study analysis. It is perhaps an overstatement to describe case studies as “one of the most common forms of research design in management research,” at least from the perspective of North American journals. The application of case studies is described in fairly general terms, such as broad topic areas where this approach would apply. Because the book is framed as an introductory text, it could benefit by steering readers to specific studies as exemplars. The use of specific examples is done selectively in various chapters and would make a useful addition to this chapter. The chapter also addresses a diverse set of issues associated with qualitative research. There is an obvious challenge of trying to distill a substantial literature into a short amount of space, an issue common to many of the chapters. Still, the authors make a fine effort at keeping an eye on the big picture. The last chapter of this section examines action research, which is described at a hybrid of a consulting approach with research design. Because action research is very different from more traditional approaches, this chapter would have benefited from more detail and the inclusion of one or more concrete examples.

The focus of the next section is on data collection. Chapter 6 covers surveys and interviews as data sources. This chapter offers a number of guidelines for creating better questions. However, the focus is often on very basic issues, such as avoiding leading questions and compound questions. In contrast, questions on survey layout and design are only minimally addressed. More critically, the use of mail and electronic surveys as sources of

data are almost completely ignored. This gap is a substantial weakness, given the many surveys being administered by Survey Monkey, Zoomerang, and other providers. Chapter 7 covers documentation and observation as data sources. The use of archival data is given limited attention in the book, despite its extensive use in many management studies. Additionally, the authors observe that data based on company documents and online databases are often more applicable to qualitative studies in which no hypotheses are tested—a conclusion that may be particularly surprising to scholars working in strategy and organization theory, among others. In the section on observational research, the authors include a detailed description of a published exemplar. This example helps to make the ideas in the chapter seem less abstract, and similar examples in other chapters would be helpful in a revised version of this book.

The following section covers measurement, with chapters on reliability and validity, and scale development. The chapter on reliability and validity could benefit from additional detail but does cover the key concepts needed by the target audience. The chapter on scale development is more detailed and includes appendices on sources for existing measures and templates for the design of original survey items. This chapter also includes a discussion of how exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis can be used to develop more effective scales.

The following section addresses methods of data analysis and includes chapters on both quantitative and qualitative methods. Chapter 10 covers data setup and initial analysis. Topics include types of data and key properties such as normality, colinearity, and outliers. This chapter also covers missing data and describes the merits of different solutions to missing data problems. Basic analytic tools are also presented, including correlation, chi-square, *t* tests, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of significance levels, statistical power, and effect size. Overall, I think the chapter does a good job of explaining such a wide range of topics. Chapter 11 covers multivariate methods. The chapter appropriately devotes more attention to multiple regression and includes both interactions and mediators in this section. The chapter also includes other tools such as multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), factor analysis, and structural equation modeling. Although the description of these latter tools are necessarily brief, they should be sufficient to give a student or manager who is reading an academic article a general understanding of the use of these methods. The chapter concludes with a section on meta-analysis. Although meta-analysis is consistent with the goal of the book, it does not fit well with the chapter's focus on multivariate analysis of original data. Next, Chapter 12 covers content analysis of qualitative data. As with the companion chapter on multivariate, the authors have a broad domain of topics to address. Despite this challenge, they cover a range of issues in a clear and parsimonious manner. One area of potential weakness in the section on content analysis is that many of the citations are 10–20 years old. Presumably, there may be more recent references on the topic that are relevant as well.

The final section covers presentation of research projects and ethical issues in conducting research. Chapter 13 walks the reader through the mechanics of preparing a journal article or research report, including basic concepts, and the elements of each section (e.g., literature review, methodology) of a report. This chapter also devotes extra attention to write up the results of qualitative research. Finally, Chapter 14 concludes with a discussion of common ethical issues that can surface in the research process.

Overall, I found this book helpful as an introductory resource on research methods that are applied in studies of management topics. It is clearly written and explains a number of important topics. Consequently, this book can be very useful in making academic studies more accessible to a wider audience, particularly students and managers.

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